



# GRANT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2012

JUNE 20, 2012  
Marion Public Library  
Room B, 7 p.m.

**Program**  
**Wabash & Erie Canal**  
**Dan McCain**

Mr. McCain grew up with remains of the canal in his backyard. His mother and friends decided to do something with that swamp and the Canal Park was the result. The Wabash & Erie Canal Park and Interpretive Center is located in Delphi Indiana and Dan has been the president the last 12 years.

The park has 9 acres plus interpretive center, a restored 1840's home of canal engineer Reed Case, 3 log cabins, log schoolhouse, 7 miles hiking trails, plus 3 mile watered canal and a 2/3 scale canal boat.

Mr. McClain will talk on the history of the canal, facts of archeology of the lock, work camp and lime kilns. His family has been in Delphi since the canal days and has a long connection to the canal.

### **JULY MEETING CHANGED** **SATURDAY JULY 14**

The Grant County Historical Society program will be a "field trip" to the Wabash & Erie Canal Park at Delphi. It is a 60 mile trip and no bus will be provided so you will have to drive yourself or carpool. There is a charge of \$4 for the Reed Case home, \$7 for the boat ride. If walking is a problem, at least come see the buildings and ride the canal boat. We will talk about the trip at the meeting Wednesday.

**William James, Schoolmaster**

—William James is accredited as the first school teacher in Grant Co. He was born May 7, 1807 to John and Mary (Snead) James in North Carolina. In the spring of 1829, Mr. James located a claim and "put out a deadening" on Deer Creek, where the Big Four Railway crosses the stream.

—While he was working there the Quakers of the vicinity asked him to teach a school and the following article of agreement was the result. "While there are no firstlies and secondlies, nor parties of the first and second parts, as are common nowadays in binding contracts, this original document seems to have served every purpose. The agreement reads: "Indiana, Delaware county: Know all men by these presents that William James intends to commence a school on the first day of June next near the dwelling of David Branson for term of three months at rates of one dollar and twenty-five cents, and the said William James is to teach spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic and English grammar if required of him, and we the subscribers promise to pay the said William James one dollar and twenty-five cents at the expiration of said school for each and every scholar numbered opposite to our names, April 28 day, 1829." This was duly signed by William James and following patrons: David Branson, three scholars; Thomas Mason, two; Martin Boots, three; Richard Jones, one; Sarah Ballinger, one; Thomas Knight, one; Ephraim Overman and Thomas Branson, each one half scholar; Robert Massey, one; Reason Malott, one; Daniel Boyer, two; and Eli Overman, three.... the school must have netted the teacher about \$30.00, there being 19 scholars regularly signed and all entries made in splendid handwriting, once an art among teachers. While there has always been much capital made of the three "r's" in the common school curriculum of the past, William agreed to teach English grammar and his use of capital letters in the article of agreement was in conformity with present day usage.

—William James died on August 22, 1830 at the age of 23 years, 3 months and 15 days. He did not teach long but he has the title as the first teacher in Grant County.

—Taken from Centennial History of Grant Co. 1812-1912, Vol. 1

As I have been reading about the various graduation exercises in Grant County, I wondered just who was considered to be the first official teacher in this county. This is the information I found at the library.

—Kay Dougherty