



The Jasper County Historical Society
presents the Seventh Annual

Memories Alive

at

W E S T O N
C E M E T E R Y



September 21, 2024
Shelter Program 11:00 am CDT
Walking Tour 2:00 pm CDT

Walking Tour starts at the Hall Shelter in Brookside Park

Pre-Sale Tickets: Adults \$10; Under 12 \$5

Event-Day Tickets: Adults \$12; Under 12 \$6



50¢

Jasper County Historical Society

The Jasper County Historical Society (JCHS) was organized on June 30, 1966 and incorporated as a nonprofit on August 28, 1969. The JCHS meets monthly September to December and February to June. The Society has a museum that is open to the public on the first and third Saturdays of each month. It also maintains several historic structures at the Jasper County Fairgrounds that are open to the public during fair week.

The JCHS collects and preserves items of significance to the history of Jasper County and provides speakers for local groups, schools, and other groups outside the County. JCHS meets with individuals and families seeking genealogical information and photographs from its collections. It also publishes the *Vintage Views* magazine.

Weston Cemetery

The first burial in Weston Cemetery occurred on August 24, 1842, (five years after the first settlers appeared in what is now Rensselaer). The owner of the original section of the cemetery, Dr. Henry Weston who was the son-in-law of the eventual city's namesake, gave the land to the City of Rensselaer in 1868. When the city platted the cemetery in 1873, there were already about 200 recorded burials.

There are over 700 veterans buried in Weston Cemetery. Veteran burials encompass all wars beginning with the War of 1812. In Section A of the old section there is a row of Civil War veterans buried next to each other. This area is known to cemetery employees as "Civil War Row". The military ranks of those within Weston Cemetery range from General (two) to private/airman and seaman.

The cemetery has been added to numerous times through purchases or gifts to arrive at its current size. A board of trustees governed the cemetery until the 1980s at which time the board was dissolved and the City of Rensselaer assumed full responsibility of the cemetery operations.

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D) James Ellis Jr. (1893-1978) left Rensselaer to go into the advertising business and the story of his adventures in that business is told in his book, *The Jumping Frog from Jasper County: Hoosier Boy Lands on Madison Avenue*. He helped Buick become the fourth best selling car in America. His father, also named James Ellis (1858-1915), ran the Ellis Opera House, which in the days before movies brought traveling entertainers to Rensselaer, and was an early mayor of Rensselaer.

E) Agnes (1871-1887), Mary (1865-1888) and Lucy (1870-1888) Healy. Sylvester Healy (1837-1899) was born in Ireland and was a popular business owner who worked as a shoemaker. Three daughters, all young women, who died of illnesses in 1887-88.

F) Estella Purcupile Dwiggins Strawbridge's (1855-1938) first husband was Zimri Dwiggins (1848-1907) a banker who achieved national notoriety when his bank in Chicago failed in the panic of 1893, taking with it many small allied banks in the midwest. After his death, she married William Strawbridge (1843-1924) in 1912.

G) Simon Phillips (1823-1911) was an early settler of Jasper County. He was a farmer, auctioneer, town marshal, county sheriff, and superintendent of the county poor house. One of his sons, Augustus, was an actor in early movies. Elza and Abigail Streets are named after his daughters.

H) Louisa Paris Imes (1852-1936) had a millinery shop in Rensselaer until the end of 1909 when she sold it and moved to Indianapolis. Her husband Willis (1841-1924) was a druggist in early Rensselaer who built the Imes-Washburn-Paulus house on Jackson and College in 1879. Despite that show of prosperity, he was bankrupt in 1899.

Cast

Robert Parkison
Dorothy Parkison
Emmett Kannal

Robert Pfaff
Kathy Parkison
Isaac Wellsand

Truitt Wright
James Ellis

Daughters of Sylvester Healy

Estella Purcupile Dwiggins Strawbridge
Simon Phillips
Louisa Imes

Tour Guides: Kristi Slaby, Judy Kanne, Barb Lucas, Mary Sholey, Kathy Staddon, Nancy Studer, Janett Kingman

Planning, organizing, researching, etc.: Linda Buschman, Judy Kanne, Robert Schenk, Elizabeth Gray, Rob Pfaff, Kayla DeJong, Melissa Smith, Joan Lindstrom, Holly Ammann, staff of Weston Cemetery, Rensselaer Fire Department. Breck Drone, Holden Day, and Jackson Jones. Apologies to those who were omitted.

Rensselaer Printco printed the tickets and the program.

Biographical Notes

- Rob Pfaff taught chemistry and Core at SJC until its closure. An avid genealogist, he is a Past President of the Indiana Sons of the American Revolution and their National Trustee. • Kathy Parkison taught Business and Economics at IU-Kokomo until she retired in spring 2020. Her family has been in Jasper County since 1837. • Isaac Wellsand has been in several productions of the Carnegie Players and is currently president of that organization. • Andrew Boersma is a funeral director in Wheatfield and like the character he portrays, is the Jasper County Coroner • Born and raised in Rensselaer, Chris Grow's ancestors were the first white people to arrive in Jasper county in the 1830s. • Kayla DeJong, a life-long resident of Rensselaer, has acted in several Carnegie Players' shows and has been a guide in previous Cemetery Walks. • Nella Lakin, now a 7th grade student at RCMS, portrayed Pauline Mossler in the 2022 Cemetery Walk. • Lily Martin has been active in the Fendig Theater for Children, Carnegie Players,

and sketch comedy at Purdue. • Beverly Crynes has performed in several Carnegie Player productions. • Sean Egan is a Rensselaer native who has travelled the world, only to find himself living back in Northwest Indiana where he runs a school. • Elizabeth Gray is on the board of the Carnegie Players. She is employed at Purdue University's School of Engineering.

**Special thanks to the Jasper Newton Foundation,
the Jasper County Tourism Commission for
financial support.**



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Two Presentations

This year's program will be confined to people buried in the eastern section of Weston Cemetery. It will feature eight of the 7500+ graves in Weston Cemetery. Costumed actors will tell the stories of the featured deceased.

There will be two presentations. A morning presentation will take place in the Hall Shelter and will not involve any walking. Anyone who cannot or does not want to walk the roughly half mile of the route should attend this presentation. The afternoon presentation will keep the format of the original Walk. Those attending will be divided into groups, with each group starting at a different station on the tour.

We hope the event will be entertaining and educational.

Featured Decedents

A) Robert Hardy Parkison (1915-1959) and Dorothy Capps Parkison (1920-1988). Robert became an extension agent in 1937 after graduating from Purdue. Later that year an automobile accident left him confined to a wheelchair. He was active in a number of farm organizations and raised award-winning hogs.

B) Emmet Kannal (1849-1891) was a druggist and jeweler who built the large mansion on the corner of Kannal and Park that had served as a bed and breakfast until recently. He did not get to live in it very long because he died shortly after it was built. He was related to McCoys, Thompsons, and Hollingsworths, all prominent early Rensselaer families.

C) Truitt Parker Wright (1849-1901) was perhaps the first victim in Rensselaer to die of an opioid overdose. He was the county coroner. He inherited the funeral-home business of his father, Willis Jennings Wright (1818-1886) and on his death that business passed to his son, also named Willis Jennings Wright (1878-1929).