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THE HOOSIER GENEALOGIST



IN THIS ISSUE:

MOY KEE AND THE "CHINESE QUESTION" IN INDIANAPOLIS

CHUCK TAYLOR ALL★STAR

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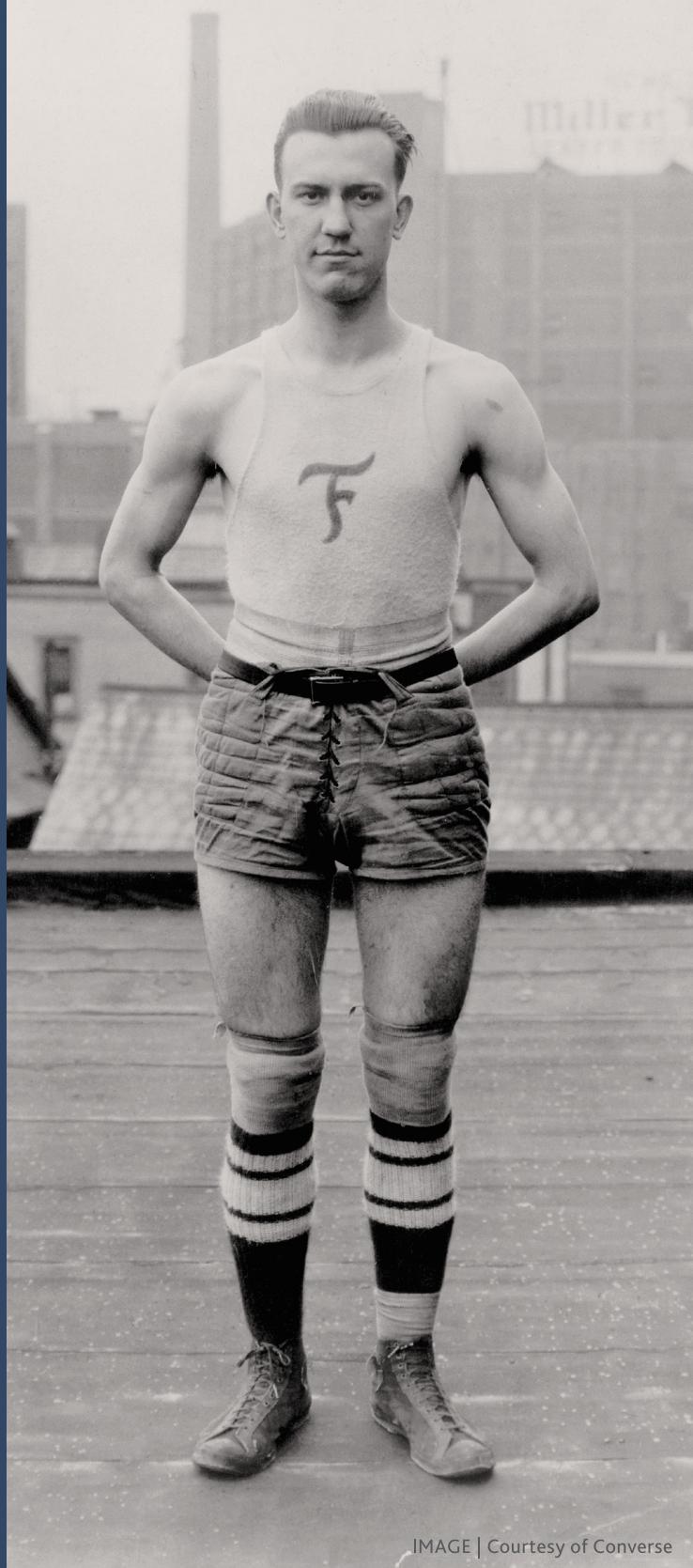


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On the cover

Quilt created by Ladies Aid Society of New Highland Christian Church, North Terre Haute, 1898 (Indiana Quilt Registry Project, *Quilts of Indiana: Crossroads of Memories* (1991), courtesy of Indiana State Museum)

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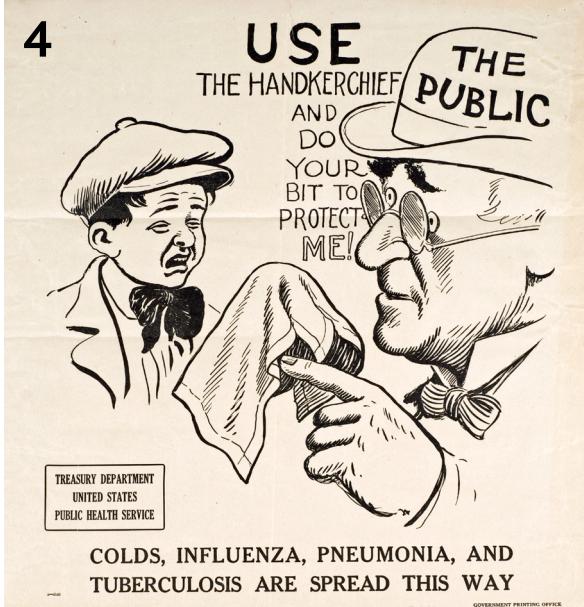
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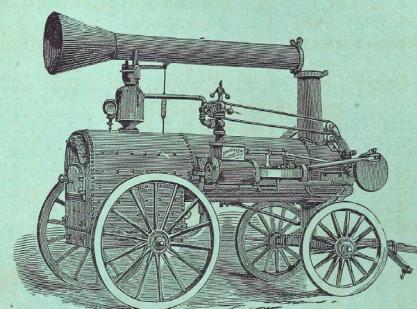
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Tell Me About My Boy

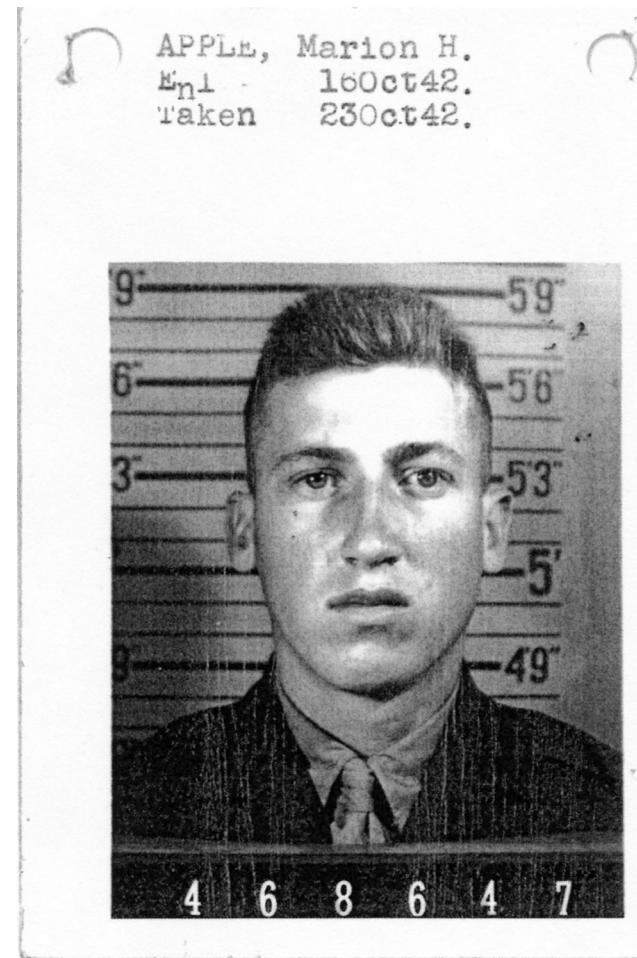
Pulaski County's Stories of Bravery and Death in World War II

JIM PHILLIPS

The Research Project

This article is the result of seven years of carefully collecting articles from two competing, local, weekly newspapers, the *Pulaski County Democrat* and the *Winamac Republican*, from one small rural community, Pulaski County, Indiana, between 1921 and 1950. Through the first half of the twentieth century, the two newspapers were on sale in downtown Winamac on Thursdays and delivered to homes in town or by mail to the farms. I supplemented this research with scans of a daily newspaper, the *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, from a nearby city, looking at issues from between 1939 and 1945. I obtained all three sources on microfilm from the Indiana State Library through interlibrary loan and viewed them at the University of Kentucky's William T. Young Library. Additionally, I used subscription services, including Ancestry and Newspapers.com, as well as free sources from government, genealogical, library, and World War II websites. For global events, particularly campaigns and battles, I read *New York Times* articles.¹ All in all, I curated more than 50,000 newspaper clippings about World War II veterans—my elders—and other residents of Pulaski County in northwestern Indiana.

In World War II, there were more than 400,000 deaths among the more than 16 million American men and women in service. Just after the war, the United States Quartermaster issued a pamphlet giving burial options to Gold Star families (families who lost “an immediate family member . . . as the result of active-duty military service”) for the final disposition of their fallen loved ones’ remains, including



NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER, SPANISH LAKE, MISSOURI

Marion Appel, October 23, 1942, from his official military personnel file. On July 22, 1944, Appel, twenty-two years old, was killed in action by an exploded hand grenade the day after he landed on the island of Guam. He was a Marine machine gunner, who served twenty-two months, including several months in the Pacific Theater. Growing up in northern Indiana, Appel attended schools in both Gary, Indiana, and in Winamac. His remains were returned to his mother in Winamac, where he was buried.

stateside reinterment. The pamphlet was titled *Tell Me About My Boy*. Inspired by this phrase, I am offering here a collection of stories of fallen Pulaski County service men—those who were lifelong residents, were born here, or had a close relative in the county. While about more than one hero or heroine, one battle, or one “band of brothers,” this collection introduces World War II from the perspective of one rural Indiana community—regarding actual brothers, sisters, cousins, and classmates. Having lived through the Great Depression and serving their country and community in a world war, they are part of what journalist Tom Brokaw has dubbed the “Greatest Generation.”²

Following is an example of how a mother’s wish to learn about her boy during the war was fulfilled. In a letter to his widowed mother, Marion Appel could not always say where he was stationed. He

even store clerks—away! They left for no one knew how long—maybe forever. From wherever you came, your community had its own set of “Our Boys.”

For me, “Our Boys” were connected to rural Pulaski County in northwestern Indiana, where I was born. In 1940 Pulaski County had about 12,000 residents. Its economy was mostly agriculture, farms that produced livestock and crops, mostly cattle, swine, and corn. The county seat, Winamac, had about 1,800 residents.⁴ There were also three small towns and several villages. The county was connected to more than 3,000 men and women who left for war. Most were lifelong residents or lived in the county during childhood or as adults. The rest had connections to the county through relatives or spouses. Of these service men and women, more than 160 did not return to their Gold Star families.⁵

Before they were our parents, grandparents, or other family members, the veterans of World War II were the sons and daughters of their communities.

wrote home in 1943 that “the country is beautiful and the people are nice.” Six months after her son’s death in July 1944, Nellie Appel, now a Gold Star mother, received a letter from Marion’s commanding officer describing her son’s last minutes. Late that year, one of Marion’s pals visited Nellie. The following year, Marion’s mother received pictures of his grave on Guam, taken by her son’s friend. Marion’s body was eventually returned to be buried near Nellie’s home almost five years after he was killed in the South Pacific.³

Pulaski County In The War

Close your eyes and imagine nearly every man between eighteen and twenty-five in your home-town—relatives, loved ones, friends, coworkers, and

Before they were our parents, grandparents, or other family members, the veterans of World War II were the sons and daughters of their communities. Whether volunteering or drafted, “Our Boys,” as the quartermaster dubbed them—both men and women—trained stateside, then were sent to fight in Europe, North Africa, and the South Pacific. Before then, most had not gone farther than Indianapolis, one hundred miles southeast from where they lived. The elders of the community saw them answering the nation’s call after leaving their work on farms and in towns, in the steel mills of Gary, the Studebaker automobile plant in South Bend, and in other jobs outside the county. For some, military service was their first “job.” Our Boys went off with their buddies to fight for their country and their loved ones back home. Most were away for three years or more. Nearly all are gone now, but



The Pulaski County Journal ran this photo in its October 22, 1997, issue, along with the following: "Meet the Winamac Indians, 1939 Sectional Champions, shown here posing in front of Chapman's Double Dip Shop just south of the Isis Theatre. Front: (l-r) Bob Shank, Edwin Applegate, Mary Thompson, Vern Planck, Betty Dilts, Bob Skillen, and Beryl Ash. Back: Harry O. Miller, Harold Lebo, Bob Hansen, Bernie Freeman, Dwight Fitz, Dudley Snyder, and Kenneth Poor." Of the 1939 Winamac basketball team and their friends pictured here, three of "Our Boys," Harold Lebo, Bernie Freeman, and Dudley Snyder, did not return from World War II.

they left a legacy of service to their communities and county, as well as to the country.

In 1940 there were about 2,300 men in Pulaski County between the ages of fifteen and thirty-nine. All ages enlisted in service, even old men of sixty-three and seventy-four and a fifteen-year-old runaway. Almost two-thirds of them were between eighteen and twenty-four. The enlistees were not racially diverse as very few Blacks resided in the county at the time.⁶

Fourteen of Frank and Magdalane Gilsinger's grandsons were in service across the three theaters of the war, including five sets of brothers. At least seven married couples were in service concurrently.

One mother and her son served at the same time.⁷ Adam and Sarah Lebo had thirteen World War II veterans in their extended family between grandchildren and their spouses. Two families had six members in service during World War II. Herschel and Edith Henry had six sons in service. Carl and Clara Dommer had "Uncle Henry," four sons, and a son-in-law in service. Four families sent five sons, and Joe and Mary Bauer sent three sons and two daughters. Nineteen families sent four sons, fifty-five sent three, and hundreds sent two.⁸

Although Pulaski County had no Medal of Honor recipients, newspaper accounts showed that there were 3 recipients of the next highest award,

the Distinguished Service Cross. There were also 20 Silver Stars, 3 Soldier's Medals, and 102 Bronze Stars. For aviators, there were 94 Air Medals and 14 of those also earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. Purple Hearts were earned by at least 311 individuals. There was 1 Meritorious Service Medal and 16 were in groups that received Presidential Unit citations. Had the Prisoner of War Medal been created before 1985, it would have been awarded to at least 25 of Our Boys. Additionally, there were thousands of campaign ribbons, Good Conduct Medals, and other awards and decorations.⁹

Of Our Boys, 3 pairs of brothers did not return. Another 157 families lost a son. Some men married just before they left for service. A few died before they could return to marry their loved ones. One of these was James Barnard. His fiancée, Dorothy Denny, sadly learned of his death from the newspaper.¹⁰

Some of those lost were already married and had children. John Sheppard wrote home of his time "somewhere overseas," losing a day crossing

the International Date Line, sailing the Indian Ocean, and seeing the Pyramids and the Holy Land, but missing the sight of "the feet of" his new baby girl. He would later return to see her. Others were not so lucky. Seven of Our Boys were also fathers and shared Sheppard's longing to see their children. In the month before his death, Ralph Koebcke saw his newborn son, but only in a photograph.¹¹ During a stateside training flight, bombardier Richard Roth saw his new baby daughter, possibly through his bombsight telescope, during a flyover of his hometown. Eight months later he was missing in action and later declared dead.¹² Nick Wason, Howard Jordan, Richard Long, Harry Kocher, and Chester Freel never got to see their babies.¹³

1930s: Distant Thunder

Since the Great War had ended twenty years before, the Greatest Generation had not known





Plunges To Death



Army Cadet Flier Raymond J. King, 23, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank King of Winamac, who was killed instantly when his training plane crashed in Alabama while on a routine flight. Cadet King was to have received his commission as a second lieutenant on March 8.

Winamac native Raymond King died in an air crash during a training exercise when his plane crashed into a wooded area after disappearing in a cloud bank near Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama. This happened on February 27, 1941, when he was just twenty-three years of age. King had enlisted as an Army Air cadet in August 1940 and was scheduled to receive his second lieutenant commission within two weeks of his death. His body was returned to Pulaski County where he was buried in the cemetery in Winamac. (King in flight uniform from collection of willija0379, Ancestry; Notice of death from Logansport Pharos-Tribune, March 1, 1941, Indiana State Library microfilm)

war. Instead, those in high school knew that folks were stressed about money as the Great Depression ramped up during the 1930s. While there was new trouble brewing on the other side of the world, it may have seemed a minor issue for most residents of Pulaski County compared to the problems closer at hand. However, Germany was already putting its plans into practice, opening its first concentration camp, Dachau, in March 1933.¹⁴

In 1938 the rumblings of the war in Europe began with Germany taking parts of Czechoslovakia and all of Austria. The next year, Germany

took control of Poland. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany in fall 1939. In November that year the United States Congress passed a final version of its Neutrality Act, which authorized the sale of war materials—in strict exchange for cash—to these countries to aid in their upcoming fight with Germany.¹⁵

1940: The Draft

In 1940 the war in Europe advanced with Germany taking control of Norway, Denmark,

Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. Meanwhile, it attacked parts of Great Britain by air. Italy, which had invaded the northeast corner of Africa in the mid-1930s, now partnered with Germany and Japan and invaded Greece.¹⁶

With the memory of the Great War still fresh in the minds of older residents, the first registration for the military draft was conducted on October 16, 1940. On that date, more than 1,200 of Our Boys between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five registered and were assigned a lottery number. Numbers were drawn annually, and those assigned a drawn number were subject to conscription. Two years later, the age range widened to include those between ages eighteen and thirty-seven. After registration, it was up to each man to decide whether to volunteer or wait and see if his "number came up" in the months or years to come. During those subsequent war years, additional men came of age and had to register and be assigned a number for the next lottery drawing. Whether volunteering or drafted, individuals were required to pass a preinduction physical. While most passed, many failed or were otherwise exempted.¹⁷

1941: Preparing for War

While continuing to attack British cities by air, Germany took control of Greece, Yugoslavia, and the Balkans. Even before uniting with Germany and Italy to form the Axis alliance in September 1940, Japan had been invading parts of southeast Asia for many years. This included Korea in 1910, Manchuria in 1931, and China in 1937. By 1941 Europe and Asia were in turmoil. Italy's invasion of North Africa drew Germany into the conflict. Germany started its invasion of the Soviet Union. To be able to provide arms to Great Britain and the Soviet Union while continuing to appear neutral, President Franklin D. Roosevelt urged Congress



COLLECTION OF INDIANAGIRL6260, ANCESTRY

Arthur Wentzel, age twenty-three, was reported missing on April 21, 1942, and was awarded the Purple Heart. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in September 1940 and flew a medium bomber in the Pacific Theater. Wentzel was a resident of Leiters Ford, Fulton County, Indiana. He is memorialized at the Manila American Cemetery in Taguig, Philippines, and also in Saint Anne Cemetery in Monterey, Pulaski County, Indiana, less than ten miles from Leiters Ford. (Arthur E. Wentzel, U.S., World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938–1946, National Archives, College Park, Maryland, Electronic Army Serial Number Merged File, 1938–1946; NAID: 1263923; Record Group Title: Records of the National Archives, 1789–ca. 2007; Record Group: 64; Box Number: 01762; Reel: 33, Ancestry; Arthur E. Wentzel, U.S., World War II and Korean Conflict Veterans Interred Overseas, Register, National Archives, Washington, DC, World War II and Korea Missing or Lost or Buried at Sea, Ancestry; "Arthur E. Wentzel," American Battle Monuments Commission, Manila American Cemetery; "1LT Arthur E. Wentzel," Saint Anne Cemetery, Pulaski County, Indiana, Find A Grave)



COLLECTION OF MIKE MARION, ANCESTRY

Oliver E. "Ozzie" Marion was killed in action in Germany on March 27, 1945, shortly before his twenty-fourth birthday. When he died, Marion had been overseas only a few weeks. He was awarded the Purple Heart. He was buried at the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Plombières, Belgium. A memorial marker was placed in Brown Cemetery in Jasper County, Indiana, where he was born. Marion was survived by his wife and three children. His father, who also survived him, lived in Medaryville, Pulaski County, Indiana. ("PVT Oliver Estle "Ozzie Marion," Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial, Plombières, Belgium; Cenotaph, Brown Cemetery, Jasper County, Indiana, Find A Grave; Oliver E Marion, U.S., World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938–1946, National Archives, College Park, Maryland, Electronic Army Serial Number Merged File, 1938–1946; NAID: 1263923; Record Group Title: Records of the National Archives, 1789–ca. 2007; Record Group: 64; Box Number: 10885; Reel: 150, Ancestry; "Pvt. Oliver Marion Is Killed in Action," Battle Creek Enquirer [Battle Creek, Michigan], May 3, 1945, [Newspapers.com](#), Ancestry)

to authorize the Lend-Lease Act, which it did in March. Meanwhile, Japan attacked Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia).¹⁸

Back home, the folks of Pulaski County, as well as the rest of the country, were preparing for war. Just before Christmas, the United States entered the war when Japan attacked its naval fleet while it was anchored in Pearl Harbor. Four of Our Boys died that year. Although he never lived to fulfill his potential during World War II, Richard S. "Dick" Freeman was an accomplished military airman. A graduate of West Point, he flew diplomatic and rescue missions to South America and a scientific mission to Alaska. Sadly, he died in a Nevada air crash in February 1941. Just three weeks after Dick's death, Raymond King died in a stateside air crash during training. King was from a prominent Winamac family, excelled at basketball, and graduated from Indiana University. Also a pilot in training, Dean Cooper, whose mother was from Winamac, was practicing take-offs and landings at an airfield in Missouri. He had just landed when another student came in to land and hit Dean's plane, killing him. The fourth to die was Galen Albright. A year after enlisting, he died on the USS Arizona during the Pearl Harbor attack.¹⁹

A week after the Pearl Harbor attack, fourteen of the twenty-seven Pulaski County "Boys" who volunteered passed the preinduction physical. Howard White was among those who passed the test, but David Jones failed. David was later able to join the navy, and he died in 1942. Howard, met the same fate in 1944.²⁰

1942: The First Year

The United States' first full year of fighting in Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific was 1942. While the United States controlled the Pacific high seas, Japan held most South Pacific islands, eastern China, and the smaller Asian countries. It



On March 7, 1944, Private First Class Nemo C. Hancock Jr., twenty-one years of age, was reported to have drowned while serving with the Marine Corps in the Pacific Theater. This may have happened on Russell Island near Guadalcanal. Hancock enlisted in December 1941 and served until his death. He had already been awarded the Purple Heart for a previous injury. He was known in Winamac based on visits to his aunt, Stella Reading. Hancock was buried overseas on February 20, 1944, and later reinterred in Fairview Cemetery in Tipton, Indiana, where his parents lived. ("Picture in Star," Tipton Daily Tribune, August 16, 1943; "Nemo Hancock is Drowned in Pacific Theatre," Tipton Daily Tribune, March 7, 1944, and "Captain Lauds Nemo Hancock," Tipton Daily Tribune, May 24, 1944, all in [Newspapers.com](#), Ancestry; "Marine Related Here Drowns in South Pacific," Pulaski County Democrat, March 9, 1944, Indiana State Library microfilm; "Nemo Conceil Hancock Jr.," Fairview Cemetery, Tipton, Indiana, Find A Grave)

continued to mount more attacks in Southeast Asia (Singapore, Java, and Burma), the South Pacific (Philippines, Solomon Islands, and New Guinea), and even the American-controlled Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska. As the Philippines fell to the Japanese in spring 1942, the American and Filipino armies were forced to surrender. The subsequent Bataan Death March commenced with at least two Pulaski County men among the captives. The United States finally reached a turning point in the Pacific fight against Japan in the Battle of Midway, near the Midway Atoll in June. Later that summer, the Allies landed on Guadalcanal, a strategic island among the Solomon Islands, east of New Guinea. They would fight the Japanese for the next six months to liberate these islands. Meanwhile, Germany suffered a setback in its campaign against the Soviet Union in the winter of 1942–1943.²¹

Back home, rationing began with tires, followed by sugar, coffee, gasoline, and fuel oil (for home heating). We lost twelve of Our Boys that first full year of war. Here are some of their stories. In 1942 at least two Pulaski County soldiers were doomed to the sixty plus-mile Bataan Death March with 10,000 Americans and 66,000 Filipinos. During that week-long forced march with no food and water, at least 500 Americans and well over 5,000 Filipinos died. John Shank died of exhaustion during the march, but his father did not learn of his fate until 1945. He was the first war casualty from Pulaski County. Clarence Kline survived the march, but in 1944, he was lost while onboard a sinking Japanese prisoner ship. Clarence was predeceased by his wife and daughter some years before in Montana, heightening the grief of surviving loved ones.²²

Writing of Arthur Wentzel's disappearance, a reporter stated, "I can still see their beaming faces," referring to Arthur and an air mate who had attended their high school alumni celebration, along with the reporter, in their hometown



just after receiving their aviation wings. Arthur was missing in action later the year of the reunion and was still on the list of missing seventeen months later.²³

The day of November 8, 1942, was particularly bad for Pulaski County with four deaths across North Africa and Europe. Father Clement M. Falter, connected to Pulaski County, died during a North African landing attempt with his unit. Also on that day David Jones died, after finally passing his post-Pearl Harbor physical, as did Jack Condo and James Hoffman/Huffman.²⁴

1943: All In

The Allies prevailed in North Africa over the Italians and Germans. This victory facilitated an Allied attack on southern Italy in July 1943. Although the Allies successfully occupied southern Italy, Germany still controlled the rest of the country. The Allies spent the rest of the war pushing them out of Italy. On the other side of Europe, like Napoleon before him, Hitler was unsuccessful in conquering the Soviet Union because of the harsh winters. During this year, United States forces fought island by island to gain control of the Pacific.²⁵

Back home, folks faced more shortages due to the war. Rationing continued for tires, coffee, sugar, gasoline, and fuel oil and began for processed foods, meat, and fats, including cheese and butter. With tire and gasoline rationing continuing, and no new cars, where was there to go? Shoe rationing further limited travel and activity. Fortunately, being mostly rural, Pulaski County had a wealth of garden space, field crops, and pastureland for livestock.²⁶

Eighteen of Our Boys died in 1943, a 50 percent increase from the previous year's fatalities. Some of their stories follow. With the sinking of the *USS Dorchester* in the North Atlantic, the United States lost four chaplains, who heroically gave up their life



the army Bronze Star, Pfc. Philip E. Gerace, of Winamac, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Gerace, being presented the star by Brig. General Leo T. McMann commander of the 106th Division.

INDIANA STATE LIBRARY MICROFILM

Philip E. Gerace received the Bronze Star for his courage in a risky ammunition delivery while in service during World War II. He died shortly following the war and is buried in his hometown, Winamac, Indiana.

jackets to others. The four prayed and sang hymns together as the ship sank. Pulaski County also lost Earl Adams. And could the legacy of his uncle, Raymond Pfost, the first in Pulaski County to die in World War I, have doomed Edward Osborn? A "tail gunner on a bomber based in England," he "lost his life in a raid over Bremen, Germany" in October 1943.²⁷

During the war years, there were more than one hundred occasions of Pulaski County service men meeting brothers, cousins, and friends. Almost half were coincidental meetings: onboard large troop ships headed into a war zone, in a port city, in the same or nearby military unit, or in a hospital, restaurant, or on a street corner. One such bittersweet event was a meeting between the Kocher brothers,



PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM PHILLIPS

The Pulaski County Honor Roll Memorial sits on the lawn of the Pulaski County Courthouse in Winamac, Indiana. Among the names of fallen veterans from other American wars are the names of seventy-six World War II veterans. The names can be found on the Historical Marker Database website at <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=42758>.

Arthur and Harry, in 1943. They met a second time in 1944, just three months before Harry was killed.²⁸

1944: In the Thick of It

On June 6, 1944, more than 160,000 Allied troops stormed the Normandy coast of German-controlled France. The intent was to place an overwhelming force on the ground to push the Germans out of France and end the war in Europe. Meanwhile, the Allies continued to push

the Germans northward out of Italy. Reeling from its defeat in the Soviet Union, German troops attempted to regain control of lost French territory at the Battle of the Bulge but failed in early 1945.²⁹

Island by island in 1944, American troops in the Pacific pushed closer to the Japanese mainland. The Allies and Japanese still battled in the Marshall Islands and New Guinea. Moving closer to Japan, the Allies secured the Marianas Islands beginning with Saipan and continuing with Guam and Tinian. In October, American forces landed in the



Philippines, which was finally liberated on July 5, 1945.³⁰

Back home, there were drives to collect cooking fat for explosives, milkweed pods for life vests, and scrap metal. Seventy-three of Our Boys died in 1944, about four times the number of the year before. Some of their stories are below.³¹

On a visit home, bombardier Butch Schraeder tried to raise the spirits of his Pulaski County uncle and aunt about recent reports of their son, Richard Roth, who was missing in action. Butch told them that he, too, had a plane shot out from under him, and he had parachuted to safety. Sadly, Richard was not as fortunate. Butch's luck ran out a year later.³² Francesville, just southwest of Winamac, lost three boys within three weeks early in 1944: Ralph Steffel, a local basketball player; Raymond Robinson, who married a few days before he reported for duty; and Edward Liebing, a P-47 fighter pilot.³³ Kent McKenney, a paratrooper who dropped into France the night before the D-Day invasion, died in December. Junior Foust lost his life on D-Day.³⁴

Surviving D-Day, but contracting tuberculosis in France, Heine Hockelberg was moved to a hospital in New Mexico, where he died.³⁵ Forrest Kelly's mother, Mary Esther, enlisted in the Women's Army Corps just four months before Forrest was seriously wounded and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Stateside, Mary Esther was a "cryptographic technician."³⁶ Meanwhile in France, Forrest was soon missing in action, reportedly captured by the Germans. A year later he was declared killed in action.³⁷ Harold Jolly was killed in France, leaving three brothers still in service.³⁸

A year before his death, C. Norbert Czuchalski was granted leave to sit for his bar exam. Foster Vogel's mother got a letter from him a week before his death. Her sister's son, Albert Ross, had died four months earlier. The two deaths left the two sisters Gold Star mothers.³⁹ Alvin Copeland left

eight sisters and a brother.⁴⁰ In February 1944 Robert L. "Bob" Fagner wrote to his brother, Richard, about his conversion just before hitting the Anzio beach the month before. He was later baptized in the Tyrrhenian Sea. Soon thereafter, Bob got to meet another brother, Ed, in Italy. Ed wrote of the visit to their folks: "Fifteen miles sounds close to you, but it isn't that way here, and one is not always sitting around his tent waiting for visitors from home. I may not get to see him again, but this meeting did us both a lot of good."⁴¹

Christmas holidays away from home were tough for Our Boys. But in 1944 Belgium, it was catastrophic for two. Robert Craigmire was killed on Christmas Eve. On Christmas Day, Jesse Vories drowned when the truck he was riding in overturned in a ditch.⁴²

1945: Mopping Up

In late April 1945, Adolf Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered soon afterward (VE Day). Japan fought on until the United States dropped two atomic bombs on the Japanese mainland in August. The Japanese officially surrendered on September 2, 1945 (VJ Day). The next month, the United Nations was established.⁴³

Back home, the munitions factory in nearby LaPorte County closed in August 1945. Shortages of some items, such as sugar, cheese, and butter, continued for a while after the war ended. Most important, though, Our Boys began to come home.⁴⁴

In that last year of the war, forty-nine more of Our Boys died. Here are some of their stories. Jake Elston, who likely died at the end of the Battle of the Bulge, had eleven siblings.⁴⁵ Jay Jordan was two years older than his brother Ora "Jack" Jordan, both of whom were born in or near Winamac. Jay, a marine, was killed in action in 1943. Jack had worked at Kocher's Meat Market in Winamac before he enlisted in May 1944. His boss, A. E. Kocher, closed his business that same month. Not only had he lost

Jack, his sons, Harry and Arthur Kocher, had also enlisted before Jack. A naval petty officer, Harry was killed in the European Theater in 1944. Jack died January 29, 1945, during the end of the Battle of the Bulge in Luxembourg.⁴⁶

In two separate cases, the unrecognizable remains of Pulaski County service men were laid to rest with fellow crewmates.

Butch Welsh was among the first to land and die on Iwo Jima.⁴⁷ Maurice McFadden's best friend, A. J. "Tex" Stanton, talked about his death. They were on a "mop up" campaign on Iwo Jima when a mortar struck, killing Maurice and blowing Tex's feet off.⁴⁸ Amanda Bartlett of Winamac lost two great-nephews from Paris, Illinois, in 1945. West Point graduate Allen Lawler had been missing for almost a year after participating in action in Burma. His older brother, Jack, was killed in Europe in 1945.⁴⁹ Orlando Bapst left behind fourteen brothers and sisters.⁵⁰

Both from Winamac and in the same unit, George Freeman and his buddy, Henry Helm, were killed four days apart on Corregidor Island in Manila Bay. Henry's mother had now lost sons in each world war.⁵¹ A month after George and Henry died, Jack Cavin became the third and last fatality in the group of six Pulaski County men in the 151st Infantry unit of the 38th Division.⁵² There would have been many more deaths, particularly if the Allies had invaded Japan as planned. But the war ended in the late summer and the death rate dropped precipitously.⁵³

1946–1950: Aftershocks

Beginning in November 1945, the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, Germany, tried

numerous German war criminals. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East tried Japanese war criminals from 1946 to 1948. Back home, the United States began to struggle with how the atomic bomb would be integrated as a military weapon and how atomic energy might be produced for civilian consumption.⁵⁴

Pulaski County residents, like people in much of the world, were adjusting to peacetime after years of war. Citizens were still encouraged to collect used fats for making explosives through November 1945. Rationing diminished significantly, but sugar continued to be rationed until the middle of 1947. After being away for three or more years, the adjustment was particularly hard on returning veterans as well as on Gold Star families.⁵⁵

Even with the war at an end, five of Our Boys died while still in service or later as civilians—from injuries incurred during their service. Some returning veterans met death by accident and in one case, by choice. After surviving the war and returning home, Donald Foerg and Dick Hathaway died in separate car wrecks.⁵⁶ Although caught in Missouri as a youth after stealing a new car in his hometown, Philip Gerace shone in service. He earned his Bronze Star delivering ammunition over shelled roads in pitch darkness. But back home after the war, he died during a shootout with police.⁵⁷ After World War II Richard Norton dedicated his new movie theater in Redkey, Jay County, Indiana, to his twin brother, Robert C. "Red" Norton. The boys had grown up in Winamac and then Portland, Indiana. Red Norton died in Germany in 1944. Richard installed a plaque in his theater lobby to his brother's memory.⁵⁸

Beginning in 1947, identified bodies of fallen soldiers overseas were shipped back to the United States and to their relatives for reinterment.⁵⁹ In 1947 John Pfledderer's body was the first to be returned to Pulaski County. In 1949 Merle Hunt's body was returned on the same ship as the bodies



of his buddies George Freeman and Henry Helm. The bodies of Cortlund Good and his brother, Richard, were returned in 1949. After memorial services were conducted for them, they were buried side by side.⁶⁰

In two separate cases, the unrecognizable remains of Pulaski County service men were laid to rest with fellow crewmates. In 1949, Albert Ross Jr., a B-17 pilot, was reburied stateside with his crewmembers in a national cemetery in Louisville, Kentucky, equidistant from the homes of him and his two crewmates, who were from Pennsylvania and Missouri.⁶¹ Similarly, Clifford Baker's remains were buried together with his two crewmates in Saint Louis, Missouri.⁶²

Not all service men and women returned from World War II. It wasn't until sixty years after the war ended that one American mystery was solved. Buck Ginn was a B-24 engineer who was raised by his grandparents in Clinton County, Indiana. In January 1944 his plane went missing during a flight from China to India. He and his crewmates were declared dead after two years. In 2006, sixty-two years after his disappearance, his crash site was discovered in the backcountry of India. He is memorialized in an American cemetery in Manila, Philippines.⁶³

Young men and women were not the only ones to go to war from Pulaski County. During the war the dog Shep was volunteered but returned as gun-shy. Jerry, too, was returned as nervous.⁶⁴ Sadly, Brownie was killed in action. In a letter to his owner, Tippie's handler wrote glowingly about his performance.⁶⁵ Tippie, Teddy, and Fuzzy were discharged.⁶⁶ The fates of Lad, Sport, Dick, and Bus are unknown.⁶⁷

I developed a deep appreciation of the bravery and sacrifice of not only World War II service men and women, but also of their elders and peers back home while conducting this research project. I realized the unknown duration of the war must have been stressful for those who served, as well as for their loved ones. None of these folks knew how long the war would continue, nor the impact of its end on the individual or the world. We can take heart that, should another world war arise, there will be young men and women who can defend our values as we, back home, can endure the sacrifices such times require.

For further reading, there are three excellent anthologies of World War II experiences. In *The Good War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), journalist Studs Terkel collected stories from more



ILAINÉ CHURCH, ANCESTRY

Roy Thomas Hyatte was a farm hand before he was called into service. On September 18, 1944, he was killed in action in Italy when he was twenty-one years old. He enlisted for service in March 1943 and served in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations until his death. He was awarded the Purple Heart. From Francesville, Indiana, Hyatte was buried in the Florence American Cemetery in Italy. ("PFC Roy Thomas Hyatt," Florence American Cemetery and Memorial, Florence, Italy, Find A Grave; Roy T. Hyatte, U.S., World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938–1946, National Archives, College Park, Maryland, Electronic Army Serial Number Merged File, 1938–1946; NAID: 1263923; Record Group Title: Records of the National Archives, 1789–ca. 2007; Record Group: 64; Box Number: 09003; Reel: 322, Ancestry; Roy T. Hyatte, World War II and Korean Conflict Veterans Interred Overseas, National Archives, Ancestry; "Four More Servicemen Dead in War, South Bend Tribune, October 5, 1944, [Newspapers.com](#), Ancestry)

than one hundred interviews with people around the country. Tom Brokaw, a television journalist, interviewed nearly fifty individuals for his book, *The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 1998). Focused on a single community, *The Things Our Fathers Saw: The Untold Stories*

of the World War II Generation from Hometown, USA (Granville NY: Woodchuck Hollow Studios, 2015–2023), was self-published by Matthew Rozell. A high school history teacher from upstate New York, Rozell wrote a series of books based on the experiences of World War II veterans from his area, drawn from interviews and written records collected by him and his students.

Lost In Pacific



Lt. Bernard Freeman

Lt. Bernard Freeman, missing a year in the Pacific, was reported officially dead this week by the War Department.

Notes

1. Richard Overy, ed., *New York Times Complete World War II* (New York: Black Dog and Leventhal, 2013). This book contains thousands of selected articles from the *New York Times* about World War II, ranging from origins to aftershocks. Collectively, the articles provide an historic backdrop for the lives of “Our Boys.”

Bernard G. “Bernie” Freeman, enlisted in the army in February 1941. He was a copilot of a B-24 Liberator bomber and flew missions from and to numerous islands in the Pacific Theater. On January 4, 1945, at twenty-four years old, Freeman was reported missing in action. Just a week before he had sent a letter to his parents. One year later he was declared dead. A native of Winamac, Freeman is memorialized in the Manila American Cemetery in Taguig, Philippines, and also in the Winamac Cemetery. (Photo from: “Lost Year, Say Flier Now Dead,” Winamac Republican, January 17, 1946, Indiana State Library microfilm; Information from: “Lieut Bernard G. Freeman,” Winamac Cemetery, Pulaski County, Indiana, Find A Grave; Bernard G. Freeman, U.S., World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938–1946, National Archives, College Park, Maryland, Electronic Army Serial Number Merged File, 1938–1946; NAID: 1263923; Record Group Title: Records of the National Archives, 1789–ca. 2007; Record Group: 64; Box Number: 02082; Reel: 65, Ancestry; “Bernard G. Freeman,” Honor States.org, <https://www.honorstates.org/profiles/42591/>)



2. "America's Wars," Department of Veterans Affairs, https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf, accessed March 18, 2024; *Tell Me About My Boy*, Army Quartermaster Foundation, <https://www.quartermasterfoundation.org/tell-me-about-my-boy/>, accessed January 26, 2024; *Tell Me About My Boy*, Libraries, University of Wisconsin–Madison, <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/A2TQQRDXN4RPET8U/pages/A4TDUQ5Z5WBDMP83>, accessed March 18, 2024; "The Gold Star Story: What Is a Gold Star Family?" America's Gold Star Families, <https://americasgoldstarfamilies.org/about/gold-star-history>, accessed March 18, 2024; Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 2001).
3. "Other Men in Service," *Pulaski County Democrat* (Winamac, Indiana), April 15, 1943, microfilm, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis (hereafter "ISL microfilm"); "Services to Be Sunday for Returned Marine and Soldier," *Pulaski County Democrat*, February 3, 1949; "Mother of War Victim Receives Officer's Letter," *Pulaski County Democrat*, February 8, 1945; "Home Folks in the War," *Pulaski County Democrat*, August 16, 1945; and "Picture of Son's Grave," *Pulaski County Democrat*, March 28, 1946, all on ISL microfilm.
4. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1940 Census of Population for Pulaski County, Indiana, Volume 1, 345, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1940/population-volume-1/33973538v1ch04.pdf>, accessed March 19, 2024; "U.S. Census of Agriculture: 1945," vol. 1, part 4 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1946), 60, 76, 147, 164, <https://agcensus.library.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/1945-Indiana-1945-01-full.pdf>, accessed March 19, 2024.
5. Using newspaper articles, genealogy databases, such as Ancestry, and various World War II-related websites, the author has compiled a spreadsheet (hereafter called Phillips, Pulaski County, Indiana, World War II Veteran Database), documenting names and dates of birth, death, and connection to Pulaski County. If available, the following data is also recorded: dates of enlistment and discharge, military branch, area of service, rank, medal(s) awarded, burial location; and family names. A selection of the newspaper articles and profiles of service men and women can be found on the author's Facebook group page, "World War II—Tell Me About My Boy," <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tell.me.about.my.boy>, accessed April 23, 2024; Historical Marker Database," <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=42758>, accessed February 14, 2024. The memorial plaque on the Pulaski County courthouse lawn lists seventy-six names of the county's fallen soldiers from World War II. While many of these men were born in the area, there are those who have far-reaching connections to the county. For example, John E. Lewis, William M. Petrey, and Dennis W. Dorsett were not original residents of Pulaski County, Indiana. Lewis was born in Leslie County, Kentucky; Petrey was from Pulaski County, Kentucky; and Dorsett came from Putnam County, Indiana. According to their records, all three lived and worked in Pulaski County, Indiana, at the time of their enlistment; Lewis and Dorsett enlisted at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis. John E. Lewis, World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938–1946, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; Electronic Army Serial Number Merged File, 1938–1946; NAID: 1263923; Record Group Title: Records of the

National Archives, 1789–ca. 2007; Record Group: 64; Box: 01992; Reel: 56, Ancestry; John E. Lewis, Death Certificate, Texas Death Certificates, 1903–1982, Texas Department of State Health Services, Austin, TX/Ancestry; William M. Petrey, World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938–1946, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; Electronic Army Serial Number Merged File, 1938–1946; NAID: 1263923; Record Group Title: Records of the National Archives, 1789–ca. 2007; Record Group: 64; Box: 03503; Reel: 72, Ancestry; William Marshel Petrey, Death Certificate, Kentucky Death Records, 1852–1965, Kentucky Birth, Marriage, and Death Records, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Kentucky, Microfilm roll: 994027-994058, Ancestry; Dennis W. Dorsett, World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1838–1946, National Archives, College Park, Maryland, Electronic Army Serial Number Merged File, 1938–1946; NAID: 1263923; Record Group Title: Records of the National Archives, 1789–ca. 2007; Record Group Number: 64; Box: 02002; Reel: 57, Ancestry; Dennis W. Dorsett, Death Certificate, New Hampshire Death and Disinterment Records, 1754–1947, New England Historical Genealogical Society, New Hampshire Bureau of Vital Records, Concord, New Hampshire, Ancestry.

6. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1940 Census of Population, Volume 2, Part 2, Chapter 8, 719, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1940/population-volume-2/33973538v2p2ch8.pdf>, accessed March 19, 2024; “If Brothers Can Take it, He Can too, Says Fifteen-Year-Old Lad,” *Pulaski County Democrat*, June 24, 1943; “Former Resident, Now 74, Re-Enters Merchant Marines,” *Pulaski County Democrat*, March 1, 1945; and “Sergeant in Army 26 Years Re-Enlists at 63,” *Pulaski County Democrat*, October 25, 1945, all on ISL microfilm.

7. “Fourteen Cousins in Nation’s Armed Forces,” *Pulaski County Democrat*, March 25, 1943; and “Other News of County Men and Women in Military Service,” *Winamac Republican* (Winamac, Indiana), March 30, 1944, both on ISL microfilm.

8. “Six Ex-Service Sons Home,” *Pulaski County Democrat*, April 10, 1947; and “News of Men and Women in Uniform,” *Pulaski County Democrat*, February 7, 1946, both on ISL microfilm; Phillips, Pulaski County, Indiana, World War II Veteran Database. The author compiled family trees of the Lebo, Ash, Hall, Markley, Riggs, and Dommer families on Ancestry using newspaper articles, genealogy databases, and World War II-related websites.

9. Phillips, Pulaski County, Indiana, World War II Veteran Database; “Prisoner of War Medal,” United States Air Force, <https://www.af.mil/News/Art/igphoto/2000450171/#:~:text=The%20Prisoner%20of%20War%20Medal,States%20entered%20World%20War%20One>, accessed January 26, 2024; “Medal, Distinguished Service Cross,” National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian, https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/medal-distinguished-service-cross/nasm_A19711067000, accessed February 9, 2024; “Distinguished Flying Cross,” Air Force Personnel Center, <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/421931/distinguished-flying-cross/>, accessed May 2, 2024.

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Tri-County Banner (Knightstown, Indiana), June 16, 1944, [Newspapers.com](#), Ancestry.

11. "Cpl. John Sheppard Stationed 'Somewhere Overseas' Writes Home Telling of His Many Adventures," *Winamac Republican*, October 7, 1943; and "West Side Man Lost Over Italy," *Winamac Republican*, June 22, 1944, both on ISL microfilm.

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13. "Pvt. Wm. Wason, Delphi, Is Killed," *Journal and Courier* (Lafayette, Indiana), March 30, 1944, [Newspapers.com](#), Ancestry; "Casualty Message Tells of Death of Howard Jordan," *Pulaski County Democrat*, September 28, 1944; "Kewanna Captain Dies of Wounds in New Guinea," *Pulaski County Democrat*, October 26, 1944; "Harry Kocher Meets Death Overseas," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune* (Logansport, Indiana), November 13, 1944; "Lt. Chester Freel Dies of Wounds Suffered in Italy," *Pulaski County Democrat*, March 22, 1945, all on ISL microfilm.

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19. "Death of Flier Shatters Plans to Meet Father," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, February 7, 1941; "Winamac Awaits Flier's Body," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, March 1, 1941; and "Pilot Related Here Killed in Plane Wreck," *Pulaski County Democrat*, May 15, 1941, all on ISL microfilm; "Galen Albright Declared Dead," *Brook Reporter* (Brook, Indiana), January 22, 1942, [Newspapers.com](#), Ancestry.

20. "Winamac," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, December 15, 1941; "Thornhope Boy Dies of

Wounds," *Winamac Republican*, May 6, 1943; and "Pilot Missing a Year Now Declared Dead," *Pulaski County Democrat*, July 26, 1945, all on ISL microfilm.

21. "World War II Dates and Timeline"; "The Solomon Island Campaign: Guadalcanal," The National World War II Museum, New Orleans, Louisiana, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/solomon-islands-campaign-guadalcanal#:~:text=Japan's%20goal%20was%20to%20create,Asia%20and%20the%20southwest%20Pacific>, accessed January 26, 2024; "Pacific War," Britannica.

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32. "Airman Reported 'Missing' Visits Relatives Here," *Pulaski County Democrat*, March 16, 1944, ISL microfilm; "Lt. Richard Roth, Missing a Year, Assumed Dead"; and "Nephew Killed," *Pulaski County Democrat*, July 5, 1945, ISL microfilm.

33. "Soldier from Here Loses Life in Italy," *Pulaski County Democrat*, March 23, 1944; "Soldier Dies on War Front," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, March 31, 1944; "Robinson-Holl," *Pulaski County Democrat*, July 17, 1941; and "Pulaski Pilot Dies in Crash," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 14, 1944, all on ISL microfilm.

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39. "Our Town," *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, Illinois), July 11, 1943, [Newspapers.com](#), Ancestry; "Relative Killed in France," *Pulaski County Democrat*, October 19, 1944; and "PFC Foster Vogel of Monterey Killed in France August 30," *Pulaski County Democrat*, September 28, 1944, both on ISL microfilm.

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The author is a lifelong resident of the states along the Ohio River. Since 2013 he has been a University of Kentucky Donovan Scholar. Previously, he taught and worked at Purdue University, the University of Kentucky, and in the Kentucky Community and Technical College system.

Check It Out!

IHS Blog

Author Andy Olson and Erin Greb Cartography have partnered on numerous new maps for two of Olson's article series in *Connections* magazine. Some show where different Indigenous Peoples lived in the Old Northwest around 1800. Others give amazing detail about the movements of settlers to the broader Ohio River Valley during different eras. Their maps are discussed and three of them appear in a new piece by M. Teresa Baer in the IHS Blog, "[Maps: Tools to Enhance Understanding and Bring Research Alive.](#)"

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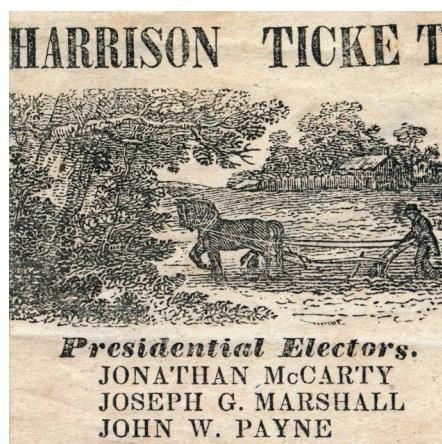
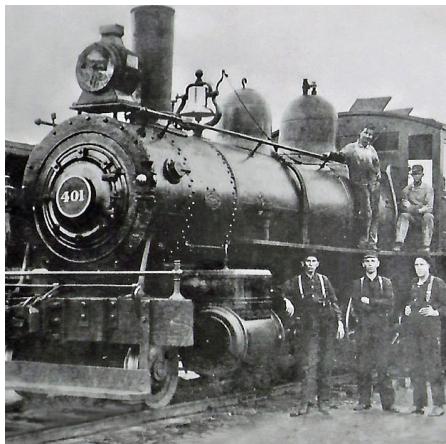
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a podcast that retells classic Indiana stories and those that might become classics. IHS staff pull materials from *Traces* and *Connections* magazines, IHS blogs, and exhibits to build upon one another and share a more complete and connected Indiana history. One recent podcast that may be of particular interest to *Connections* readers is "Hard Work and Perseverance: Indiana Immigrants." Host Casey Terry sits down with educator Beth Brandon to talk about different immigrant experiences. One of these immigrants is Moy Key, a Chinese immigrant whose work in Indianapolis around the turn of the twentieth century garnered the attention of Chinese royalty (as told in this issue of *Connections*). Then they dig into a fairly well-known Indianapolis community staple, Shapiro's Delicatessen, to discuss how this family business got its start and how it has prospered through the years.

Coming up!

The Hoosier Genealogist: Connections

Fall/Winter 2024 Issue



INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In the Fall/Winter 2024 issue of *Connections*, retired railroad professional Chris Palmer shares the tragic story of the collapse of Blue Hole train trestle near Maysville, Indiana, on March 27, 1913. He gives a chilling day-by-day report with stark images from the Daviess County Museum.

Northern Indiana counties were the last in the state to open for settlement. Establishing communities included setting up voting processes. Find out who voted and what they were voting about in the 1830s in Caroline Emenaker's article in the Spring/Summer 2024 issue.

Erin Wright discusses the Roberts Settlement, a free Black community in Hamilton County, in the next issue of *Connections*. While there were many such antebellum settlements in the northern states, few records are available. Wright also describes the wealth of material in IHS's digital collection.



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