

Rickenbaugh News
December, 2006



Photo of Rickenbaugh House taken by Nancy Myers October, 2006

Hello Friends,

We thought it might be good to keep some of you who have been involved with us on the Rickenbaugh House informed and updated as to recent developments and events held at the House.

We intend to periodically send you news items. This first mailing includes two stories about recent events held at the Rickenbaugh House.

You are receiving this mailing because you are either a family member, have been directly involved, or shown an interest in the Rickenbaugh House's rehabilitation efforts and current use to the public. Enclosed is the mailing list that this update was sent to. If you know of anyone else who would be interested in receiving this or future updates, please email Nancy Myers at: nmyers@fs.fed.us or write to her at the address below, and that person will be added to the mailing list.

We hope you enjoy reading about the progress of the Rickenbaugh House and how it is being used for public events and educational purposes! Thank you for your continued interest and support of this worthwhile project.

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Everett and Marjory Traylor and Everett's sister Patricia Birnie have graciously donated a portion of a coverlet to the Rickenbaugh House. The coverlet was woven in the Rickenbaugh House. It was probably made in the 1870s or 1880s at the time when the Rickenbaugh daughters would have been growing up. Everett and Patricia are the son and daughter of Susie Van Winkle Traylor who is one of Jacob Rickenbaugh's granddaughters. Susie Van Winkle wrote a memoir about the Rickenbaugh House and family that has been very helpful to us in our research. Everett remembers going to the Rickenbaugh House with his parents when he was a boy. Ella Rickenbaugh was still living there at the time. Everett remembers the spring house located not too far from the main house. They were sometimes served sauerkraut that was stored along with milk in the springhouse to keep it cool. Elementary and high school students from the Rickenbaugh Club (see Hands on the Land Success Story) are going to make a frame to display the coverlet.

In other news, Donna Walker has made a photo genealogy. Donna gave the Forest a copy of the genealogy and it will be available at the Rickenbaugh House for anyone to see it.

Nancy Myers holding 36 x 48 coverlet woven by one of the Rickenbaugh women.



peek in the windows to see inside. Some of the children were thrilled to see inside the old house, one boy said, "this house rocks" and a girl kept saying, "this is so cool!"

The dream of the Friends of the Rickenbaugh House is coming true. Their goal when formed in 1995 was to save the house as a nature and interpretive center. The Hoosier National Forest and Perry Central Community School Corporation recently received a Hands on the Land grant to provide school programs at the house this school year. This will enable students to learn first-hand about their local history, culture, and environment. During the summer the house is open for tours and interpretive programs. The house is also used for meetings of the Lincoln Hills Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc., the Lincoln Hills Patoka Lake Recreation Region, and Historic Southern Indiana. The Rickenbaugh House will continue to be an attraction for Forest visitors to enjoy and learn their local heritage.

For more information contact Nancy Myers at 812-547-9241



SUCCESS STORIES

REPORTING EXAMPLES OF OUR PROGRESS IN CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE

Open House on Fall Tour attracts 90 visitors

An historic house on the Hoosier NF is open each year as part of a fall driving tour and regularly attracts visitors interested in history and local culture.



Carly and Nathan Current, descendants of Jacob Rickenbaugh, play in the leaves in front of the Rickenbaugh House.

Each year as part of the annual Perry County Hoosier Heritage Fall Festival, the Perry County CVB asks the Forest to open the Rickenbaugh House for the fall driving tour. This year, the House, always a popular attraction, was open on Saturday October, 7th. The Rickenbaugh House is located in a beautiful setting on the shores of Celina Lake within the Indian-Celina Lakes Recreation Area.

Jacob Rickenbaugh and his wife Elizabeth came to the Celina Lake area in 1850 from Tiflin, Ohio. Jacob was a tanner by trade and probably chose the site for the plentiful oak and chestnut trees (which contained tannin), and the natural springs. In 1874 Jacob had a large stone

house built by 3 Belgian stone masons using local materials such as sandstone, oak, poplar, and walnut. The house provided a sturdy home for Jacob, his wife Elizabeth, and their 10 children. The house was also used for worship services, funerals, and served as the Celina Post Office until 1951. Jacob's wife and daughter were two of the Postmistresses.

The Hoosier National Forest acquired the Rickenbaugh House in 1968. The house was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984, and in 1990 the Hoosier stabilized the house and began rehabilitation efforts with the help of local citizens (Friends of the Rickenbaugh House), business, and other government agencies.

Rehabilitation of the Rickenbaugh House has been a labor of love and hard work, and Saturday proved it is well worth it! Approximately 90 people, many of them campers and hikers, came to see the house, including some of the Rickenbaugh descendants. Forest visitors are so excited when the house is open and curious to see the inside. Several people commented that they have watched the progress on the house over the years while visiting Celina Lake to camp and fish. They usually



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Hoosier's "Hands on the Land" Program Up and Running!

Thanks to an \$8,000 grant from the Hands on the Land network, a group of Perry County Central students received excellent programming at the Hoosier's restored Rickenbaugh House.



Irv Reuger shows a group of students from the Rickenbaugh Club historical beehives and bee products.

In November, the Perry County after school program called the "Rickenbaugh Club" began meeting at the Rickenbaugh House on the Hoosier National Forest. One of the first educational programs was presented by Irv Reuger, a local resident interested in history, who told the students about beehives and making honey.

After the program, approximately 20 students enjoyed tasting food that might have been eaten during the time the Rickenbaugh's lived in the house.

The students listened attentively to the program and then tasted a delicious venison stew made by Reuger from all natural ingredients including Jerusalem artichokes, cattail roots and stems, wild mustard, and tomatoes. Reuger also brought home-made ginger-ale concocted from ginger and honey, and a persimmon cake. Some of the students brought different kinds of nuts, apple crisp, and elderberry jam.

The Rickenbaugh Club is made possible by an \$8,000 grant from the Hands on the Land network of field classrooms. Hands on the Land is an interagency network of partnerships designed to connect students, teachers, and parents to their public lands.

Nancy and Jackie Colucci, Family Outreach Coordinator; and Mary Roberson, Superintendent of the Perry Central Community School Corporation, worked with the Hoosier to apply for the grant and then entered into a Challenge Cost Share Agreement.

The agreement's purpose is to enhance the Rickenbaugh House's education

programs in conjunction with the Perry Central School's established curriculum objectives and standards of learning, and to fulfill requirements needed to become a Hands on the Land member.

Perry Central School benefits by having an opportunity to provide a hands-on learning experience for local history and Perry County culture, and to participate in environmental educational programs.

The Hoosier National Forest and partners including the Lincoln Hills RC&D, state and local governments, local citizens and businesses and the Rickenbaugh family all benefit by seeing their investment in the rehabilitation of the Rickenbaugh House realized for public use and educational purposes.

The Rickenbaugh Club after-school program consists of high school and elementary students focusing on different perspectives of the Rickenbaugh House. Themes may include history, biology, careers, recreation, and craftsmanship with sessions held at both the school and the Rickenbaugh House.

Activities include learning the history of the House, taking nature hikes to learn about the local environment, helping with House maintenance, and creating programs on the House for other students. The students come to the House on Wednesday afternoons for their programs and activities.

In addition to Reuger's bee program, local resident Albert Hagedorn wore period costume and presented a program on tanning, and Reuger took the students for a nature hike on the Rickenbaugh Interpretive Trail and talked about different plants the family might have used for medicinal purposes. The students will be making period toys and decorations for a Christmas tree they will cut by permit from the Forest and displayed at the House.

Other upcoming projects include making frames and display cases for the Rickenbaugh artifacts, creating nature games to be used for interpretation at the House, and planting flowers that might have bloomed during the time the family lived at the House.

District Ranger Jim Denoncour said he is pleased to see the Rickenbaugh House used to help educate local students.

"I can't help but think Jacob Rickenbaugh would have approved," Denoncour said. "Through the legacy he left in his carefully built home, and the artifacts his family used, we're able to bring back history in a way that captures student's imagination."

For more information contact Nancy Myers at 812-547-9241

The Rickenbaugh House is decorated for the first time in many years! Students from the Perry Central School Rickenbaugh Club cut the tree from the Indian-Celina Road and decorated it with authentic looking ornaments and bubble lights. The tree looks beautiful!

