Ride the Rails Out West with the Richardsons

The first names of "Father and Mother Richardson" are not given, but for sure they were descendants of Richburg's founder, Alvan Richardson. Found in William Richardson's scrapbook, this old newspaper clipping states the letter was from "One of Richburg's Old Inhabitants". It paints a vivid picture of the sites along the way and modes of travel used in the late 1800s.

– San Francisco, Cal., May 5, 1882 –

To all the Friends at Home: --This morning finds us in our room after breakfast. We will now go back for a short time. Last Monday night we left Ogden at 7 o'clock p.m. Towards the setting sun, on over through desert and plain, high mountains and deep gorges, and barren waste snow and sand, and on Tuesday night we arrived at Truckee. Here we saw some timber growing on the mountains covered with snow; stopped and slept in our cars over night, and here we commence in earnest, the ascent over the mountain. The road makes short curves, and as we climb up the mountain and around these curves, we pass through tunnels and snow sheds for over thirty miles, there being but very little open space, while the snow was from three to four feet deep, perceptibly decreasing as we go down towards Sacramento, and as we passed out from under these sheds it was a great relief to us to again see daylight. As we wound around the hills into the old gold diggings, and saw the ditches and flumes to carry the water around the mountains to wash the precious stuff, it was astonishing to behold what had been accomplished. It was raining when we arrived at Colfax, where we had dinner. As we passed on from mid winter to behold spring in all its liveliness of flowers and green fields, and fruit trees in full bloom, all in about three hours' ride, while before we reached Sacramento saw large fields of wheat in full head. Arriving at Sacramento we had supper, after which we took a carriage to view the city. We were driven around through the best part of the town. Going to the state capitol we entered, but did not have time to go all over it. It is a grand building and splendid grounds. Sacramento is a city of flowers and plants, some of the handsomest flower yards that I ever saw are here. We again slept in the cars over night, and after an early breakfast, about half of our party started for San Francisco, the others were going to start for the Yosemite Valley later in the day. As we put out from the city along the side of the American river, it was very high. It was like a sea on all sides of us, and as we passed we noticed some very fine farming country. Came to Oakland ferry or Army point. Here are government grounds, and soldiers, and heavy artillery guns mounted on the high grounds near the road. Soon we came to Oakland ferry boat, said to be the largest in the world. Sure it is a monster; three full trains of cars with all the multitude that were on board were moved across to the other shore. It was like a small island moving and then on we went near the bay shore, shooting through the short tunnels and deep cuts, until we came to the boat that takes us across to the San Francisco shore. There we took our coaches
We are yet undecided whether we shall go there or not. We do not want to undertake to do too much here, so we sha’n’t enjoy our trip home. We now expect to visit the geyser tomorrow. We shall be gone over night. We will write again soon after we get back. Love and good wishes to all.

From father and mother Richardson

* * * * *

Thank You for These
Recent Memorial Donations
In memory of Janet Herne, donated by John and Alice Dunbar, Jerry and Evelyn Wilson, and Nina Walsh

* * * * *

Thank You for These
Recent Museum Donations
• Duane C. Scott Memorial Highway Sign Replica and Duane C. Scott Memorial Highway Commemorative Bill Number 7429 and pen used to sign the bill, dated 10/11/16, donated by Patricia Scott
• Two Richburg Fire Dept. wooden nickels and one Bolivar Sesqui-Centennial wooden nickel (1825-1975), donated by Melanie Johnston
• The Scarlet Car/The Princess Aline, book by Richard Harding Davis, 1911, donated by Lee Johnston
• Sewing Cabinet, thread, crocheted items, various old postcards, photos, and commencement invitation from 1918, donated by Lloyd and Nancy Johnson
• Allegany County Directory of County, Town and Village Contacts 2012, donated by John and Alice Dunbar
• Various old photos, scrapbooks, records books, genealogy and assorted information on the Jordan family, donated by Gertrude Ostrander

Richburg-Wirt Historical Society
243 Main St., PO Box 181, Richburg, NY 14774
Phone 585-928-9478 (WIRT)
richburgwirt@yahoo.com
or Melanie Johnston at 585-610-6235

Museum Now Open:
Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
(or by appointment)
And from a scrapbook at the museum, circa 1880’s...

History of the Jordan Family
By David Starr Jordan, late President of Leland Stanford University, California. This history was recently donated to the RWHS museum by Gertrude Ostrander.

The Jordan family originated in the 11th century. A.D. Jordan is the name of a hamlet and farm in the parish of Widdecembe-in-the-meer in Dartmeer, England. It consists of three or four stone houses, long, low with small windows and high roof, some barns and an old stone mill on a trout brook. The hamlet was originally named Deanden. Sir William Deanden went to the Holy Land and in the Crusades in 1100 did some unusual feats on the banks of the Jordan River, killed a Saracen, was knocked down but rose again and continued in battle. (It was reported that Deanden was the first horseman to reach the Jordan river and his comrades dubbed him “Jordan”.)

When he returned to England, the King allowed him to change his name to Sir William de Jordan and the name of the hamlet was changed to Jordan. From Jordan, a branch of the family went to Teignmouth. From there Henry Jordan went to Brisbane, Australia. A branch of the family went to Virginia, another to Maine and another to Ireland. A Rufus Jordan went to America and is presumably the Ancestor of Rufus Jordan, the Grandfather of David Starr Jordan.

It is the tradition that the family with which we are concerned is descended from the branch which migrated to Ireland. At the time of some religious uprisings in Ireland, three brothers came to America and it is believed that one of these settled at or near Cherry Valley, NY. Isaiah Jordan and his father-in-law Elisha Dakin came to Allegany County and the Town of Wirt in 1823. The Allegany History says from Steuben County but I was always told that the family came to Wirt from Cherry Valley. Other members of the family settled in the vicinity including brothers Andrew and Jacob and sons Andrew, John G., Michael and William. Brothers James and John probably settled near Cuba, NY. The father John Jordan came to Wirt and spent his last days at the home of his youngest son Jacob. He was buried in the family cemetery on Jordan Hill. The cemetery was abandoned 36 years later when the body was removed to the lot of Jacob in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Friendship.

It is uncertain if John Jordan served in the war of the Revolution but he was always believed to have done so. It was claimed that his musket was in the possession of his grandson William H. H. Jordan until it was borrowed and never returned.

* * * * *

And from a scrapbook at the museum, circa 1880’s...

More Jordan Family History
A correspondent of the Elmira Advertiser furnishes the following in regard to a family in the town of Wirt.

The town of Wirt was formed from Bolivar and Friendship, April 12th, 1838. Its surface is a wild mountainous upland, divided into three general ridges extending north and south. About fifty-two or three years ago, Deacon Isaiah Jordan settled on a tract of land now in the town of Wirt, near Richburg Village. It was then a wilderness. Only now and then could a log cabin be seen. But in those days land was cheap and money scarce, and those having small capital invested to the best advantage. This was one of the reasons of Deacon Jordan’s settling in this section. He was born in Otsego county, NY, July 22, 1799; his wife Polly Dakin, was born in Dutchess Co., NY, March 1st, 1804. They were married Oct. 22, 1821, and moved in the now town of Wirt and have ever since resided on the track of land first settled by them. Here they have raised a large family, consisting of twelve children, and have seen grow out of a vast wilderness well cleared, productive farms, stately and well ordered farm houses, enterprising mills and factories, and thriving villages. Their children are: Andrew Jordan, born 1822; married Nov. 21st, 1844, resides near Richburg; Charity L. Jordan, born March 31, 1824, married Dec. 25, 1842, resides in Tyrone, Schuyler County, NY; Julia Jordan, born March 2, 1826, married Sept. 24, 1846, resides in Altay, Schuyler County, NY; John G. Jordan, born January 8, 1828, married October 8, 1854, lives in the town of Clarksville; Fannie A. Jordan, born 14th April, 1830, married June 25, 1851, lives near Wirt Centre, NY; Betsey J. Jordan, born 27th April, 1832, married June, 1853, lives at Cuba, NY; M.J. Jordan, born April 24, 1834, married July 14, 1860, resides in the town of Clarksville; Pheba M. Jordan, born 19 Nov., 1836, died Aug. 1851; Angel Jordan, born 20th Nov. 1838, unmarried; lives with old people; Wm. H. Jordan, born Nov. 9, 1840, unmarried, lives near Richburg; Mary A. Jordan, born Oct. 25, 1844, married in 1864, resides in the town of Tyrone, Schuyler County, NY.

Although so many years have elapsed since the old people began clearing a space for their rudy log cabin, yet they have been blest with health, and now, at their advanced age, are enjoying peace and plenty, with their children near them, all well supplied with the necessities of life.
Jordan Family Reunion - August 13, 1913

Gertrude Ostrander recently donated several items to the museum, all relating to the Jordan family, one of the Town of Wirt's first families. Below is one of the old photographs among the many that were donated. Some of the people in the photo are identified, using the key on the following page. Perhaps you'll find one of your ancestors!
Honor a Veteran
Philip H. Rogers

Philip H. Rogers was born June 2, 1910 in Smethport, Pa. He was the son of Lewis K. and Grace Baker Rogers. On Dec. 27, 1939, in Nile, he married the former Iona Graves, who died March 17, 1991.

Seaman 2/c Philip H. Rogers was a veteran of World War II, serving with the U.S. Navy in the South Pacific. He was awarded the World War II Victory Medal and the Asiatic Pacific Fleet Ribbon.

Phil had been employed in local oil fields for 40 years and later by the Allegany County Highway Department for 15 years, retiring in 1975.

Mr. Rogers was a member of Inavale Grange 1248, served as shop steward for the Allegany County Highway Department Union and was a former member of the Friendship American Legion Post.

Phil died in his home at 68 Plum St., Bolivar on December 4, 1991. He was 81 years of age.

He was survived by a daughter, Mrs. Robert (Betty) Morton of Bolivar, three grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; three step-great-grandchildren; a step-great-great-grandchild, a brother, Paul Rogers of Richburg, a sister, Mrs. Daisy Cartwright of Luck, Wisc.; and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by a son, George Rogers; a daughter, Carlyn Rogers; a brother, Milton Rogers; and a sister, Evelyn Rogers.

Burial was in the Richburg Cemetery.

An article in the August 17, 1985 Ridge Runner, explains the new hobby that Phil took up after his retirement.

"Last winter Phil Rogers, a 75 year old retired oil man, was worrying his wife! Mrs. Rogers told him he had better do something and get some exercise. She "got him quilting." She showed him how to sew colorful patches together to make beautiful quilts.

He sews the blocks on the sewing machine, then he either ties them or quilts them. Tying is a method of holding a quilt together without making lines of running stitches. To tie a quilt you take a single stitch, at regular intervals, through all layers leaving thread ends long enough to tie in a square know on the quilt top. Tying is faster than quilting with a running stitch, and more practical when the filler is thick or difficult to handle. Phil can tie a quilt in one day. It usually takes two weeks for him to quilt by hand. To quilt by hand you use an even running stitch that is short and closely spaced so as to give the illusion of an unbroken line.

So far, Mr. Rogers has finished eight quilts. One is displayed in the Oil Museum in Bolivar. One is being raffled off by the Inavale Grange. He is doing a neat job on them and they are truly beautiful."
We Welcome New Member

William Jordan

* * *

Reader’s Feedback

Having GREAT FUN reading the latest issue! I knew some of the people pictured on page 2 in 1911, though I knew them when they were older - in the 1950’s. Mabel Mason Millis is standing next to Mrs. W. Mason - her mother. Mabel married Henry Millis (our egg man when I was a kid. He delivered eggs to our house, and always sat at the kitchen table to chat with my mother. I don’t remember my mother ever telling me she was related to Henry, but now that I have delved into my genealogy, Henry was a 2nd cousin of my mothers.) Rev. Mason married my parents.

Nina Herne Walsh

Thanks for all the extra work you have done and do. I have really enjoyed the 4 copies I have had so far. Greetings for a new year,

Donna Moses

Tentative Plans Announced for Allegany County Local History Awareness Week

Dates: September 25-October 1, 2017

There is a consensus among a number of the County historians that perhaps an Allegany County Civil War theme would be appropriate. The feeling is that we should do something unique and different so the committee has considered various aspects of American history that led up to the Civil War as related to our County. Our founding fathers owned slaves (albeit they freed them before the Civil War). Then, Allegany County abolitionists were active in the antislavery movements of the Underground Railroad and publications and events in opposition of slavery. Finally, nearly every town in the County mustered up men to serve in the Union Army. Many of these men participated in battle after battle including Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Cold Harbor, Five Forks, etc.

We are searching through our museum to see what kind of artifacts, letters, uniforms, weapons, equipment, etc. that we could loan for this display at the David A. Howe Library during Allegany County Local History Awareness Week. If you have a Civil War related item that you would be willing to loan, please let us know.

What a great opportunity to share and learn more about our local history!

Membership Drive

The success of any organization depends on the continuous participation and growth of its membership. We are urging all members to invite a friend or two to join us! Also, please try to find some spare time to volunteer at the museum. Some areas where we need particular help are: people with computer skills, volunteers to be at the museum during open hours, people to help label and organize our inventory. Please, consider how you can help the RWHS. Thank you!

How to Become a Member

Would you like to help us preserve more of Richburg-Wirt history? You can by becoming a member of the Richburg-Wirt Historical Society.

Individual Dues:

Annual: $10.00  Life Membership: $100

Just fill out this slip, make a check out to Richburg-Wirt Historical Society, and mail to:

Richburg-Wirt Historical Society
PO Box 181
Richburg, NY 14774

Your Name ____________________________
Address ______________________________
Phone: ________________________________
E-mail: ________________________________

You will then receive a membership card and our quarterly newsletter.

Reminder...2017 Dues are now Due.
She was a graduate of Richburg Central School in the class of 1935 and had been taking a post graduate course at Richburg prior to her illness. She was also assistant librarian at the Colonial Library, a member of the Baptist Sunday school class, and an active social worker. Miss Rogers was survived by her mother, Mrs. Lilly, one sister Mrs. Daisy Cartwright of Richburg, and three brothers, Dudley, Philip, and Paul Rogers of Richburg. She was predeceased by her father. Burial was in the Richburg Cemetery.

Recent Happenings

The Allegany County Historical Society and Andover Historical Society share a new home. On Jan. 14, 2017, a Grand Opening was held at their new building and museum, 11 East Greenwood St., Andover, NY. They are open Wed. and Sat. 10am-3pm, and have special displays each month. The building was formerly the Baker Brothers' Hardware Store and a craft store. It was purchased by the Joyce family and renovated to become a historical center.

On Monday, March 6, RWHS held our first meeting of the year with fifteen in attendance. Steve Appleby, Director of the Eldred World War II Museum was our guest and he captivated us with his stories and enthusiasm! He brought several artifacts from the WWII Museum including weapons, tools, uniforms, flags, helmets and more. Some of the items were British, Japanese, German, and, of course, American. He shared with us how he has always been a World War II "nut", learning all he could about that era, from a young age until today. He gave us a brief history of World War II and told us interesting tales from veterans who have visited the museum. He stressed how the museum’s biggest mission is to teach young people about the sacrifices and heroes of WWII.

Barbara Evelyn Rogers, the author of the beautiful poem above, was born at Coleville, Pa., Sept. 2, 1916, the daughter of Lewis K. Rogers and Mrs. Mary G. Lilly. Miss Rogers died at age 19, at the Higgins Memorial Hospital, Olean on March 19, 1936, following an illness of only two weeks.

Nature’s Hidden Rendezvous

The time grows mellow for my quest,
And I would fain leave all the rest
To wander forth in spots unknown
To meet my maker all alone.
In inland hollows full of sound,
In sunny glades, on foreign ground.
And I would follow woodland lore
To spots I’ve never seen before.
Forgotten all my worldly care,
Wafted hence on balmy air.
I fill my lungs and wander forth
To turn my footsteps to the north.
And when I've searched beyond the pale,
I turn and follow south, the quail.
In thickets and dense underbrush,
I pause to listen to a thrush.
His magic notes all unabashed,
Ring forth from yonder giant ash,
Warbling to his heart’s delight,
My feathered friend slips out of sight.
And I entranced in priceless dreams
Hasten onward towards the streams,
Where watercress in green array
Will flourish forth from day to day.
And schools of trout the angler’s hook,
Can get no nearer than a book.
Parade in pools of sparkling blue
As though they own the world clear thru.
The rivulet unwinds its tale
Of secrets found in hill and vale,
And giant oaks in stately grace
Eons of lost time erase.
A chipmunk high in lofty curtain
Announces what he thinks is certain,
And gurgling a sea of azure blue,
A goshawk tells me what to do,
But I must follow old or new,
“Nature’s Hidden Rendezvous.”

By Barbara Evelyn Rogers
September 11, 1934

Barbara Evelyn Rogers, the author of the beautiful poem above, was born at Coleville, Pa., Sept. 2, 1916, the daughter of Lewis K. Rogers and Mrs. Mary G. Lilly. Miss Rogers died at age 19, at the Higgins Memorial Hospital, Olean on March 19, 1936, following an illness of only two weeks.