



# Mile 146

April—June 2013



Volume 6

Topeka Area Historical Society

Number 2

## Diley's Addition

William Bertram Diley is a name that has been virtually forgotten in the annals of Topeka's history. That is, unless you look at plat maps. When he settled in Hawpatch with his wife Isabelle, who signed her name Belle, is not clear. But William B. and his bride have left a lasting mark on the configuration of the town.

It was on November 26, 1879, that Isabelle Poyser (1861-1943) married William B. Diley (1857-1918) in Albion. They setup housekeeping somewhere in Noble County, and on December 5, 1895, they purchased land from Frank C. Latta on the west side of Hawpatch for \$975.00. Latta and Summer Dowell had purchased the land two years earlier from the Indiana Improvement Company for a mere \$100. Apparently Dowell and Latta were partners in a sawmill located approximately where J.W. Priest's Lumber Yard was located. Diley's deed was notarized by none other than J.N. Babcock who taught school and did so much to build Sycamore Hall. It's interesting that the deed wasn't actually recorded until January 9, 1896.

Frank Latta was the grandson of Robert Latta who was one of the first settlers of Eden Township. Frank's parents were Dr. Johnston and Martha Latta who came to the Hawpatch from Goshen to care for his grandfather.

Thanks to the generosity of Bob and Sharon Smith who formerly owned the home built on Lot 4 in Diley's Addition, we have many of the original warranty deeds dating back to December of 1892, along with the original 1914 signed blue-print of the addition. The earliest property owner of record was John J.

Yoder who sold it to Adrian Ritter for \$75.00 in December of 1892. Ritter is another Topeka resident about whom we know very little. We do know that by 1906 he notarized another warranty deed for Diley. He may have been involved with the Indiana Improvement Company who owned much of the land around Topeka.

When Diley platted his addition, Mill Street was called Lake. One would assume that the street names changed when the current Lake Street was constructed. The addition also laid out a street named Mill Court which was never constructed behind

**WARRANTY DEED.**

*Frank C. Latta*

TO

*Wm B Diley*

RECEIVED FOR RECORD,

This 9<sup>th</sup> day of January

A. D. 1896, at 9<sup>45</sup> o'clock A.M.,

and Recorded in Record 43

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*A E Yoder*  
Recorder of LaGrange County.

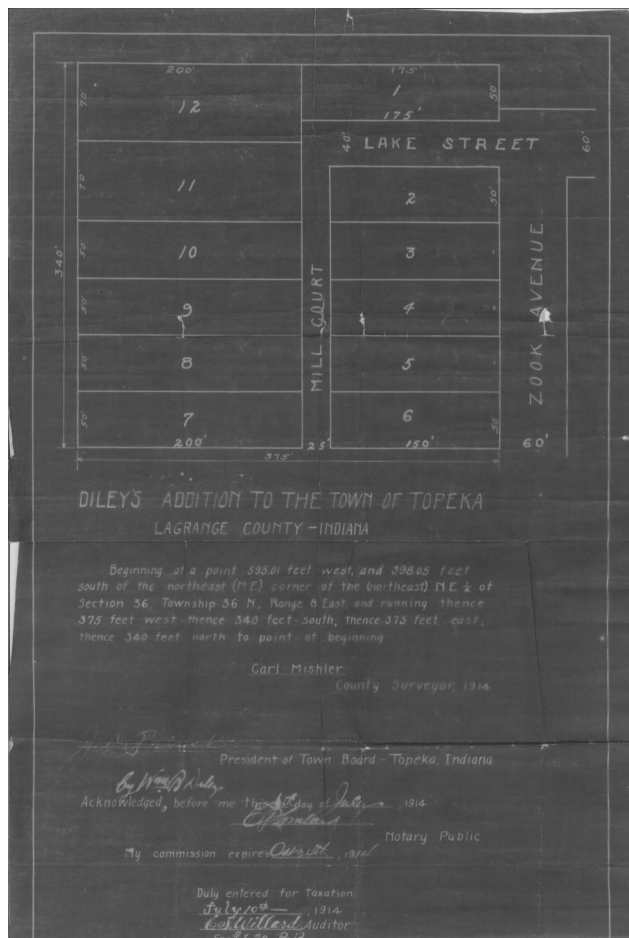
Recorder's Fee, \$1.00 paid

DULY ENTERED FOR TAXATION,

January - 9 - 1896

*J. Williams* Auditor.

Auditor's Fee, \$ 1.00



### In this Issue

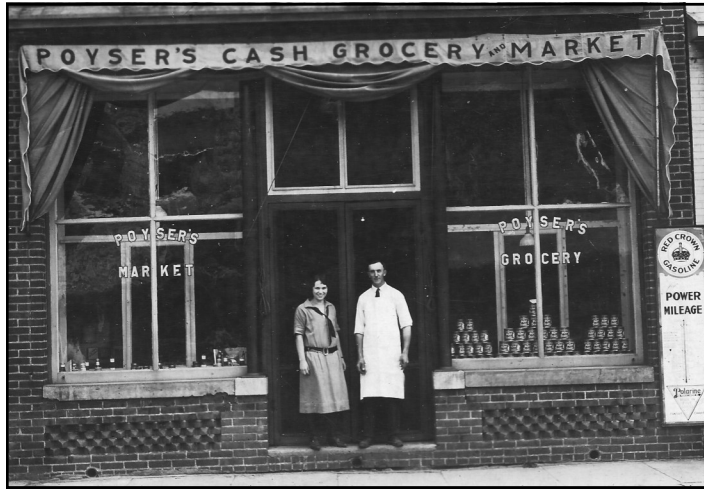
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the homes facing Zook Street. Today Lots 7-12, which were never developed, are a part of the West Lake Park.

No doubt it was Isabelle's family that influenced the Diley's to move to Topeka. Belle's parents were George Kimball Poyser and Emeline Wortinger Poyser. George was a brother to boot maker William Beals Poyser. One of the stained glass windows in the Topeka United Methodist Church bears his name. John Poyser was their father.

While we have the photo of Poyser's Cash Grocery & Market, we don't know who the couple is standing in front of the store, nor the date it was taken. The store appears to be the second building north of the square on the east side of the Main Street.



Based on the various warranty deeds from the Smiths, the Diley's, who were then living in South Bend, sold the property to their daughter Ethel and her husband Corlis Stoler for five dollars in May of 1918. The deed excluded Lot 2 which was given to Margaret E. Hull. This writer does not know who she was or her connection to the Diley's.

The deed reads,

This Indentured Witnesseth, that William B. Diley and Isabelle Diley his wife of St. Joseph County in the State of Indiana, Convey and Warrant to Ethel G. Stoler, of St. Joseph County, in the State of Indiana, for the sum of Five Dollars and love and affection by grantors for grantee, their daughter.."

William Diley died on June 22, 1918, and was buried in the Salem Cemetery on State Road 5 in Noble County. Isabelle died on November 12, 1943.

Within a year of her father's death Ethel sold the entire Diley Addition to James (1864-1946) and Olive Gay for \$450.00. James' first wife Ruth Ann Simonds Gay had died in 1903. The Gays owned and operated a grocery and drug store on the northwest corner of the town square. James

also served as one of the original city councilmen when the town of Topeka incorporated in 1913.

In April 1919, the Gays sold Lot 5 to Walter L. Greenawalt. In October they sold Lot 4 to Walter's brother Arthur. The brothers owned and operated Greenawalt Bros. on North Main in Topeka. They sold furniture and operated an undertaking business in what is now Ace Hardware owned by Lyn and Lisa Stutzman.

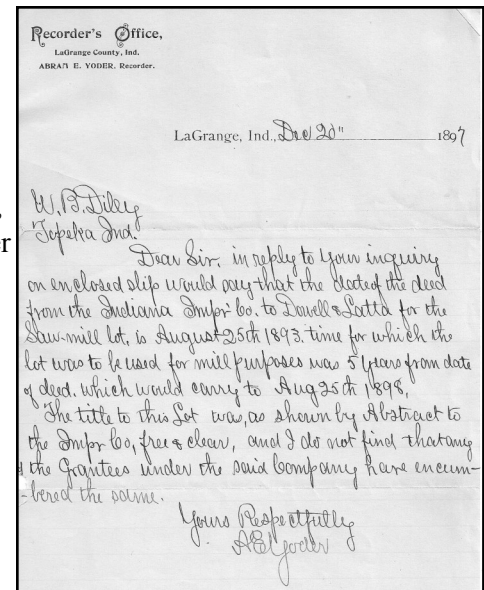
Well known teacher and Honeyville School principle LeRoy Yoder and his wife Florence purchased Lot 4 from Arthur and Joyce Greenawalt on January 19th of 1945 for \$1.00. The interesting thing is that the Yoders immediately sold it back to the Greenawalts. Both warranty deeds were recorded on the same day in consecutive

transactions. The Recorder's fee was one dollar and the Auditor's fee a mere ten cents.

The addition was not without controversy. In a handwritten letter dated December 20, 1897, Abram E. Yoder (Recorder) wrote to W.B. Diley, in reference to Lot 1, the location of the Dowell & Latta sawmill.

In December 1944, Beulah Gay sent a letter to Arthur Greenawalt enclosing a deed for Lots 7-8-9-10-11 and 12. She wrote that, "Dad is very much upset about Lot #1 and doesn't think he ever sold it to Clarence Yoder only rented it to him. However, I have never paid any taxes on it am inclined to think that he must have sold it to Clarence. You might ask him if it seems all right to you whether or not he does own that lot. He must think he does as he has been renting it to Mr. Blough."

Lots 7-12 were never developed nor was Mill Court. We assume that the Lake Street on the Diley's Addition blueprint was later changed to Mill Street when the present Lake Street was constructed. Several years ago the Topeka Town Board deeded the stripe of land that was to be Mill Court to the property owners. The remaining lots became a part of what is now the beautiful West Lake Park. HG



## TAHS Quiz

1. Who was the LaGrange County Recorder in 1897?
2. Who donated the original 1919 Diley's Addition blueprint and warranty deeds to the Topeka Area Historical Society?
3. What year did Maynard Yoder graduate from THS?
4. Who was the Class Sponsor for the Class of 63?
5. What was the original name of the Salem M.E. Church?



## Track Talk



### 1935 THS Baseball Uniform on Display

Visitors to the Depot Museum this year will enjoy the newly designed Topeka High School area that features the THS baseball uniform worn by Maynard Yoder. Maynard graduated from THS in 1935.

Our thanks to Maynard's granddaughters, Sabrina Penick and Wendy Griffith for donating his baseball uniform and fire department shirt to the historical society.

Also on display is a vintage umpire's chest protector (i.e. pillow) and bat.



### THS Class of 1963

Back Row: (L to R) Mike Smith, Eudora Hershberger, Deon Doerr, Larry Stout, Jim Tritipo, Class Sponsor Mrs. Ruth Johns. Front Row: Dave Miller, Sandra Zehr, Marlene Wiley, Shirley Sprunger, Rachel Yoder. Missing from the photo are Alan Frain and Terry Funk.



## Schedule of Events:

**May 21, 2013**

**"The Zehrs of Topeka"**

Topeka Branch Library (6:30 pm)

**June 8, 2013**

**Topeka High School Alumni Banquet**

Topeka Elementary School

Honoring the Classes of 1943, 1953, 1963

**July 16, 2013**

**"Show & Tell"**

Topeka Branch Library (6:30 pm)

Visit the Depot Museum on Saturdays 9am to 11am  
(Other times by appointment)



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### Topeka Area Historical Society

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[www.topekahistoricalsociety.com](http://www.topekahistoricalsociety.com)

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### Museum Curator

Susie Parker

Answers:

- 1) Abram E. Yoder
- 2) Bob and Sharon Smith
- 3) 1935
- 4) Mrs. Ruth Johns
- 5) Sugar Grove



## *Hawpatch History Detectives Investigative Report*

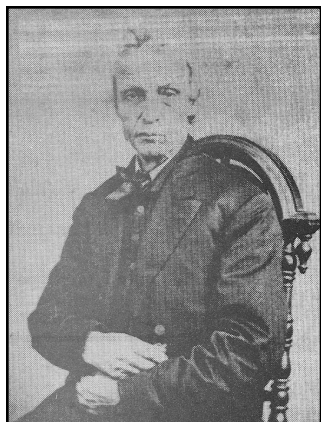
### **Salem Cemetery Being Restored**

The Salem Cemetery, located on the LaGrange-Elkhart County line, with only seven graves is back in the news and again generating controversy. The cemetery, which for many years was abandoned is being cleaned up and restored by Eden Township. That restoration has sparked a legal debate over who is the actual owner; the township or the owner of the adjacent property.

County records show that the Salem Methodist Episcopal Church was originally known as Sugar Grove.

When the name was changed is not clear. The land records are still being researched to determine when titles were transferred and who actually owns the property.

According to the 1882 History of LaGrange County, Indiana, the congregation was organized during the winter of 1842-43, in the home of John Poyser. Early members included Thomas Elliott, Andrew Elliott, John McKibben, Isaac Sparks and their families along with



**John Poyser  
1799-1877**

Susan and William H. Poyser. The group, comprised of both Methodists and Lutherans, met in the Eden Valley School until their 32 x 45 frame chapel was built in 1856.

Tensions began to build as the country faced Civil War, especially among those with Virginia roots who could not abide the Methodist Circuit Rider whose sermons were strongly pro-North. Ultimately 44 people left the church and started St. John's English Lutheran Church.

It appears that the two groups shared the same building for over a year. They just couldn't worship together. The Lutheran denomination told the St. John's group that they had to have their own building. And so in 1877, the group built a brick church on the Elkhart County side of the line about 1,000 feet to the north. The old meeting house was used by the Methodists until it burned some time after 1882.



Do you know anyone in this picture or have any idea when it might have been taken? LeRoy Yoder is the teacher in the back row.

*Visit Us Online: [www.topekahistoricalociety.com](http://www.topekahistoricalociety.com)*



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