

# REAGAN'S ROOTS IN 'DUTCH' SOIL

The second meeting of the "Reagan's Roots in Fulton" discussion/planning group is this Saturday, March 7 at 10:00 a.m. in the Fulton (Martin House) Museum.

Attendees at the last meeting have been working on their individual projects. The primary goal is enhance the designated REAGAN ROOM in the Museum and create one wall specific to the family in Fulton through photos and narrative.

Plans include: 1) Acquiring a copy of John E. (Jack) and Nellie Clyde Wilson Reagan's marriage license (Ronald's parents) and a certified copy of the marriage certificate from the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. Both of these have been completed.

2) A photo of the Rectory where the marriage ceremony occurred as it looked when Jack and Nellie married there on November 8, 1904. A photo has been located. (See related article "Aha Moments").

3) Fulton Historical Society members also wanted a photo of their first home on 12th Avenue as it appeared originally. The home was moved at least once and has been remodeled several times. That search continues and anyone with information on that house is asked to call us at 815 589-3809.

A trip to the Courthouse resulted in finding John E. (Jack) Reagan's birth certificate. He was born on the corner of 7th Avenue and 6th Street in 1883, but which of the four houses remains an unknown. There is no birth certificate recorded for Nellie Clyde Wilson. There is a birth certificate for a Nellie Wilson born around the same time, but it is not the President's mother. Any information on identifying the specific house on that corner where Jack was born would be appreciated.

Another photo/narrative for the Fulton/Reagan Wall that is being pursued is the Jabez W. Broadhead Store located on the southwest corner of 4th Street and 10th Avenue (usually referred to as Bud's IGA). We have several exterior photos but are looking for an interior view that shows the mezzanine where Jack sold shoes. An artist conception will be used if a photo isn't available. One source of information states that Nellie also clerked in this store and is where she met Jack. Does anyone have an interior photo?

An interesting coincidence: Mrs. J.W. Broadhead (Alice) lived in the Martin House. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bradstreet Robinson, owned for the home for over 20 years and when Alice and Jabez were married they built the home across the street at 704 10th Avenue in 1899. We would like to find a photo of her (them), also.

Another area, the cemetery, is yet to be studied. Anyone who is interested in helping in the Wilson-Reagan family research is encouraged to join us. Our next meeting will be Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. at the Fulton (Martin House) Museum. Everyone is welcome.



Immaculate Conception Church Rectory in Fulton in 1900. Ronald Reagan's parents, John Reagan and Nellie Clyde Wilson, were married here on November 8, 1904.

## A HA MOMENTS

By Barbara Mask.

For those of us who enjoy research often the 'thrill of the hunt' is enough satisfaction. However, there are special moments when discoveries are unsuspecting and richly rewarding. Researching the Wilson-Reagan family roots in Fulton has spawned a couple of those "A Ha" events.

First of all Fulton Historical Society members have been searching for a photograph of the Immaculate Conception Church Rectory about the time when the wedding of John E. Reagan and Nellie Clyde Wilson occurred on November 8, 2009. A sketch book by Josiah Rice, a well-known architect in Clinton,

Iowa, on file in the Resource Room at the Fulton (Martin House) Museum includes a photo of the Rectory in 1900. Mr. Rice designed the home, the Clinton County Courthouse, the Clinton High School (now the Administration Office), many homes in Clinton, and several others in Fulton. A HA we had found the photo dated circa what we hoped to find right in the Museum. But another A HA was also revealed. The sketch book, owned by Wayne Bastian, and donated to the Museum was purchased by Clarence Vander Bleek, Sr. (my father) in 1979. He found it in an antique shop in Wisconsin while on a fishing trip. When he returned home he gave it to Wayne Bastian; obviously the right gesture. I was surprised and pleased to learn of the coincidence.

Another exciting moment was to learn that Jack Reagan (the President's father) was born in the First Ward of Fulton, IL just a few blocks from the Museum. The focus on the Wilson-Reagan family by the Fulton Historical Society has come about in preparation for the April program on "Reagan." The May program is: "The Early Roots of Modern Woodmen of America in Fulton. Dr. Henry M. Kennedy, Head Clerk for the MWA, was the attending physician at the birth of Jack Reagan and signed his birth certificate. Who would have thought that there would be any connection to these two programs; these two well-known events in Fulton's history; or the close proximity to where they both lived (2 blocks)? A HA moments, in addition to adding to the satisfaction of the hunt, provide a catalyst to do more research.

| STATE OF ILLINOIS, }<br>WHITESIDE COUNTY. }   |                           | The physician, accoucheur or person in attendance should immediately return this Certificate, accurately filled out, to the County Clerk. Penalty, \$10.00, if not so certified and returned within 30 days. |                                |
|---|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.  |                           |  |                                |
| 1. Full Name of Child (if any)*   | Reagan                    | 3469   |                                |
| 2. Sex  | male                      | No. of Child of this Mother,   | 3!                             |
| 3. Race or Color (if not of the white race),  |                           |  |                                |
| 4. Date of Birth,   | July 13 1883.             | Place of Birth,  | Waukegan, Cook Co., Ill.       |
| 5. Nationality, Place of Birth and Age of each Parent.  |                           |  |                                |
| Father--Nationality,  | Dish-American             | Place of Birth,  | Fair Haven Ill. Age, 27 years. |
| Mother--Nationality,  | American                  | Place of Birth,  | Dixon Ill. Age, 27 years       |
| 6. Full Name of Mother,   | Mrs. Jennie Reagan        |  |                                |
| Maiden Name of Mother,  | Cusic                     | Mother's Residence,  | Fulton                         |
| 7. Full Name of Father,   | John Reagan               |  |                                |
| 8. Father's Occupation,   | Saloon                    |  |                                |
| 9. Name of Medical or other Attendant and Address   | D. Kennedy, Fulton        |  |                                |
| Returned by   | same                      | H. M. Kennedy  | M. D.                          |
| Dated at  | Fulton, Ill. August 1883. | Residence,   | Fulton Ill.                    |
| *The given name of Child should be certified, if possible, when this Certificate is made, and should, in any case, be certified and registered within a year. †City, number, street and ward; same in towns that have them; township or precinct. |                           |  |                                |

Birth Certificate of John "Jack" Reagan, Ronald Reagan's Father. Dr. Kennedy, who was head clerk of Fulton's modern Woodman organization, signed it.