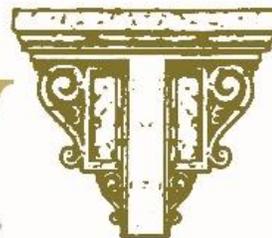


January 2014

# Monroe County History Center

Where the past and present meet.



## News from the Library Online Edition

Dear Hillary,

Welcome to the January 2014 edition of the Monroe County History Center's online version of News from the Library -- and Happy New Year!

I hope you will find helpful information in this issue. In the last two months of 2013, the Research Library was busy with the continuation of its normal projects as well as with involvement in different activities -- such as volunteer open houses, school tours, and programming.

Comments to the newsletter are always welcome and may be emailed to [mchclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:mchclibrary@gmail.com). Thank you all for your support of the Monroe County Historical Society.

Best Wishes,  
Nicole Bieganski  
Research Library Manager  
Monroe County History Center

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## News from the Library

### Funding Received!

In September, the Research Library Manager and Library Assistant Lee Ehman wrote and submitted a grant proposal to the Wahl Family Charitable Trust. The proposal sought funding for the conservation of County Commissioners' Book A (1818-1824), a county record held at the History Center. The book contains documentation of the government proceeding that bestowed the name "Bloomington" upon the city (April 11, 1818), and thus, the county offered its support of the Center's proposal.

In late December, the History Center received word that the Wahl Trust would provide the requisite funding, and the History Center

### Featured Resource: 1855 *Bloomington* Newsletter compilation

Found in  
Research Library Collection  
by Beth Lau, Documents  
Assistant

While conducting her inventory of the library's Archive Room closet, volunteer Beth Lau

and Research Library hope to work with a conservator to finish the conservation by the county's bicentennial celebration in 2018.

### **New Members of the Library Volunteer/Staff Team**

The library always is pleased to welcome new volunteers and interns. In the past couple of months, three new volunteers have joined the library's corps and are contributing in valuable ways.

**Randi Beem**, a first-year MLS student at Indiana University works in the library twice per week as an accessioning and patron assistant. Randi supervises the library on many Saturdays, and we are thankful to add her to our team!

**Beth Lau** has worked with the Center previously as a front desk greeter. Beth expressed interest in expanding her involvement with the Center and is now volunteering as a documents assistant in the library's archive room. Beth is working on an inventory of unprocessed county records, a large project that we are grateful Beth is engaging. (Beth also continues her work as a greeter at the Center.)

**Siobhain Rivera**, also a MLS student at Indiana, is working as an hourly employee on the library's grant-funded deed digitization project. Siobhain will be with the library through March. We are grateful for her help.

## **A Reflection on *Letters from Honeyhill: A Woman's View of Homesteading 1914-1931***

Nicole Bieganski

Several weeks ago, while filing a card for a new book in the catalog, I noticed "Shoshone Valley (Wyo.);" listed as a subject on a nearby card. The find piqued my interest immediately; I could not imagine how such a subject could be relevant to Monroe County, or even to Indiana. My own recent experiences in the Shoshone Valley, however, were the true motivators of my desire to find out more about this book. I moved to Wyoming for a few months after graduating from Indiana University, became enchanted with the valley area, and planned to stay as long as the museum that was employing me would allow me to remain. I returned to Bloomington quickly, however, after accepting my

unearthed an interesting and valuable resource: a compilation of original "Bloomington Newsletters" dating from March, 1855 to June, 1856.

An ephemeral newspaper in Bloomington (1854-1855), the *Newsletter* claimed to be, "A Weekly Democratic Newspaper -- Devoted to News, Politics, Literature, Agricultural and Mechanical Interests &c. &c."

Though this range of topics is large, upon perusal, Beth and I discovered that the *Newsletter* devoted itself to an even broader spectrum of advertisements and subjects -- some of which may seem comical to a current reader.

An recurring advertisement in the paper, for example, assures readers that "Liver Complaint, Dyspepsia, Jaundice, Chronic or Nervous Debility, Diseases of the Kidneys Arising from a Disordered Liver or Stomach: ... Can be effectually cured by DR. HOOFLAND'S CELEBRATED GERMAN BITTERS."

Featured articles recount the activities of the "Know Nothings," an anti-immigration and naturalization political group whose heyday was during the publication period of the *Newsletter* collection in question (mid-1850s). Sections about the Know Nothings' "hatred of Catholicity," for example, comprise large sections of the newspapers editions. (See: Vol. III, No. 23, August 4, 1855.)

Research Library volunteers already have begun to locate and transcribe useful

position at the History Center and recognizing a desire to remain near my family. I drove from Wyoming to Bloomington in just two days.

To return to my catalog discovery... I followed the card's information and located *Letters from Honeyhill: A Woman's View of Homesteading* (1986), edited by Cecilia Hendricks Wahl, on the library's shelves. I recognized the Wahl name, of course, and eagerly began to flip through the 704-page compendium of letters to discover how the Wahl family relates to the Shoshone Valley. Upon gleaning that the subject of the work, Cecilia Hennel Hendricks (Cecilia Hendricks Wahl's mother), had journeyed from Bloomington to Powell, Wyoming--the same journey I made after graduating--I knew that I would find the book a "page-turner," despite its length.

As Hendricks Wahl describes in her introduction to *Letters*, Cecilia Hennel was an Indiana native (Evansville), a graduate of Indiana University (holding an undergraduate degree and a master's degree in English, 1907, 1908), an Indiana University professor, and an avid correspondent with her family--even when she was separated from them by as little as 10 miles. Her decisions, then, to marry a homesteader from Wyoming (John Hendricks of West Franklin, IN), whom she had seen just three times before their wedding day, and to move to the Shoshone Irrigation Project in Powell, Wyoming shocked her family and friends. As Wahl states, "Her friends were critical, telling her she was wasting a perfectly good education and a fine career to be a farmer's wife."<sup>[1]</sup> Cecilia stated in reply to this criticism, "They were wrong. I needed that education and I used it every day of my life."<sup>[2]</sup> (Throughout the work, Hendricks' gratitude for her Indiana University experience surfaces, including during her campaign for superintendent of schools, a position for which her teaching career at Indiana qualified her.)

genealogical information from this newly-discovered resource. Their findings will be added to existing resources, such as the [MCPL Obituary Index](#) and the [RootsWeb INMONROE electronic archive](#).

## ***Upcoming Events***

**Cemetery Workshop:  
January 11, 2014, 12  
p.m. - 4 p.m.**

In lieu of a traditional cemetery work day, the Cemetery Committee will hold a workshop in the History Center's Education Room. Committee members will work on updating cemetery resources, maps, indexes, and files. Contact [mchclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:mchclibrary@gmail.com) for more information.

**Annual "The Week of  
Chocolate" (History Center  
participation)  
Week of January 20,  
2014**

The History Center will participate in the annual community-wide celebration "The Week of Chocolate." In its past years of participation, the Center has hosted a day of "Sundaes on Saturday." Stay tuned for more information about the Center's event this year.

## 'Adios Nuevo Mexico': The Santa Fe Journal of John Watts in 1859

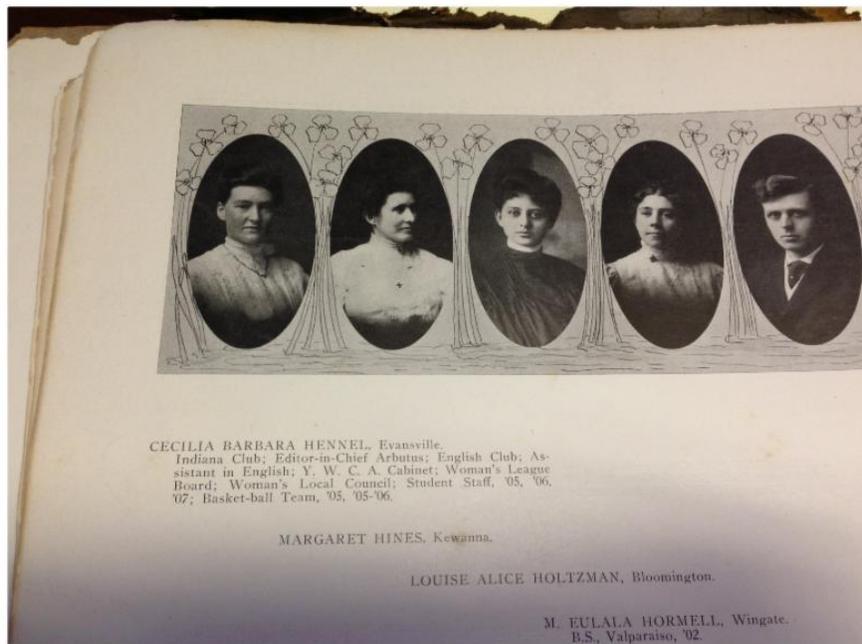
In the 1990s, David Remley, a researcher from the University of New Mexico came to Bloomington to study the records of a Judge John S. Watts, a justice of New Mexico courts who hailed from Bloomington originally.

While working through records at the Monroe County Court House and IU Archives, Remley met a genealogist who suggested that he visit the Monroe County History Center. The genealogist believed there was an original journal at the Center that belonged to a John Watts -- perhaps the same man Remley was researching.

Remley followed this advice and found the diary to be of a young John Watts (the son of the judge in question). The artifact had been brought from the Waldron Building to the History Center.

Fascinated by the insight that the diary offered into the Santa Fe area in the years leading up to the Civil War, Remley transcribed, edited, annotated, and published the journal with the permission of the History Center.

Now retired from academics, Remley has decided to have the book published once more (fall 2014), this time by the University of Texas Tech Press (Luhbeck) (*The*



Cecilia Hennel (far left) in the 1907 Arbutus (MCHC Research Library). Cecilia's extra curricular activities are listed below her portrait; she was on the basketball team and Editor in Chief of the Arbutus.

Though it would be impossible to convey the poignant emotions and logical reasoning that motivated Cecilia to move west with an almost-stranger in a sentence or two, her correspondence (as conveyed in *Letters from Honeyhill*) express not only how difficult she found the decision but also how the love of her husband, family, and her dedication to her education helped her thrive on an unfamiliar journey and in a new way of life. After each trip back home to Bloomington, Cecilia writes to her family to describe how the memories of her most recent visit strengthen her as she returns to her daily life in Wyoming. On the other hand, when Cecilia receives questions about how she manages life in a barren landscape with (at first) a largely-unknown companion, or why she does not consider returning home, Cecilia assures her correspondents that she made the right choice. "Even though I have listened to my heart as well as my head that does not mean that I have ceased to use my head. I would not argue that he is the greatest man in the world...But I do say that to me he is the best man in the world. We're here because we're here, because we're here."

[3]

Hendricks Wahl compiled the mass of Cecilia's letters so that they read as a narrative, describing this gradual decision to marry, the couple's relocation to Powell, and the life the two craft in the coming years. I found that I could relate to many parts of the story easily (with such ease, in fact, that I could not believe two young women separated by so much time could experience the Powell area so similarly) and yet read other parts of the narrative with incredulity. I could not, for example, imagine that I would make the decision to move away with a stranger, especially if I had been as emotionally close to my family as Cecilia was at a time when communication was far from easy or immediate.

(Though I should note that postal service in Powell has not improved since 1914 and perhaps has deteriorated; Cecilia writes that she received letters from Indiana in four days, and my mail from Indiana never arrived in Powell that quickly.)

[4]

As I mentioned, however, many of Cecilia's perspectives paralleled my own experiences in Wyoming so strongly that I felt a shock of recognition as I read about them. Cecilia discusses, for example, the drive from Powell to Cody, Wyoming, a trip that comprised my commute to and from work during my time in the valley. As of 2013, it is still a desolate (but beautiful) drive that feels much longer than its 25-mile duration. Cecilia mentions the seemingly lengthy nature of the journey saying, "It is the first time I have driven quite that far at one time."

[5]

Cecilia and her sisters (who visited her frequently) also held Yellowstone National Park in awe, a fascination that I experienced from the moment I crossed from Cody into the park, wishing that I could simply move into a cabin within park limits and remain there forever. "The girls [her sisters] are going to Yellowstone Park today (that is, if the train ever comes to take them)."[6] (Public transportation in the Cody/Powell area apparently was in no better condition in 1914 than its abysmal state in 2013.) And, several days later, "The girls are evidently having a better time than they expected, for they are not back yet."

[7]

And last, I especially identified with Cecilia's description of the artwork of [Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney](#) and the Buffalo Bill statue the sculptress created for Cody in the 1920s. The finished sculpture crowns the grounds of the museum campus where I worked in Cody (a museum center that includes the [Whitney Museum of Western Art](#)). No matter the opinion a viewer of the sculpture possesses of the contested figure of William F. Cody, it is impossible not to admit that the line the sculpture creates against the mountains is truly majestic. Cecilia describes Whitney's art simply but accurately as, "worth seeing."

[8]

In closing, as most recipients of this reflection will know, Cecilia and her children found their way back to Bloomington. Their family grew and thrived in the area, offering its success and wealth back to the community through their patronage of the historical society, local conservation organizations, and their involvement with Indiana University.[9] (A portion of the permanent gallery in the History Center is the "[Henry and Cecilia Wahl Gateway Gallery](#)." ) We in the Bloomington community certainly are glad they returned--but I am equally glad that they once embarked on an adventure to the valley that truly never ceases to be in the minds of those who have lived within it.

[Yucca Tree Press in Las Cruces originally published the work in 1999.](#)

In late December, I received an email from a colleague of Dr. Remley. She informed me of the publication plans, updated me about the conditions of the past publication, and assured me that the History Center would be credited.

Look for the book in 2014:

*'Adios Nuevo Mexico': The Santa Fe Journal of John Watts in 1859.* Transcribed, Edited and Annotated by David Remley.

If you would like to view Remley's 1999 version at the Research Library:  
F804  
.S253W3

The original journal is currently in storage and unavailable.

-- Nicole Bieganski

**Become a member today!**

**The Monroe County Historical Society supports itself through members like you! Some of the benefits of membership include:**

- free admission to the museum**
- 10% discount in the museum store**
- Monthly issues of *Monroe County Historian***
- Special members-only events**



Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's "The Scout" (1924) in Cody, WY



My home in Powell, WY, 2013

*"I am wild about the mountains."*  
-Cecilia Hennel Hendricks

The Cecilia Hennel Hendricks Papers are housed at the [IU Archives](#)

Find  
*Letters from Honeyhill* at the Monroe County History Center Research Library:  
F767  
.S58  
H46

**Levels:**  
**Student/Teacher \$20**  
**Basic \$35**  
**Family \$60**  
**Sustaining \$100**  
**Patron \$500**

**To become a member or receive more information on membership, please email Hillary Detty at [admin@monroehistory.org](mailto:admin@monroehistory.org)**

[1] Cecilia Hendricks Wahl, ed., *Letters from Honeyhill: A Woman's View of Homesteading 1914-1931* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company), 1986, 10.

[2] Ibid.

[3] *Letters*, 9.

[4] Ibid., 20.

[5] Ibid., 378.

[6] Ibid., 70.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 421.

[9] Monroe County Historical Society, *Monroe County, Indiana: Family Heritage* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company), 1987, 237.

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