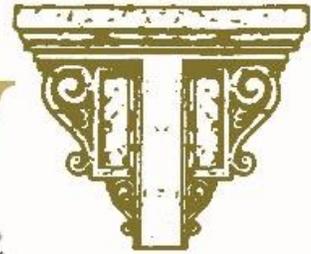


July 2014

# Monroe County History Center

Where the past and present meet.



## News from the Library Online Edition

Dear Hillary,

Welcome to the July 2014 edition of the Monroe County History Center's online version of News from the Library.

In the last two months the library has welcomed summer interns, established new collecting priorities, and worked with patrons from all over the country whose summer vacations have included genealogy research trips to Bloomington.

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

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

Technical note: If you are a Gmail user and have trouble viewing the images in this newsletter, try clicking the "Display images below" bar at the top of the email in which the newsletter arrived. You can also teach your email to move future newsletters from the "Promotions" box to the main inbox -- just drag the email from the "Promotions" box over to the "Primary" tab.

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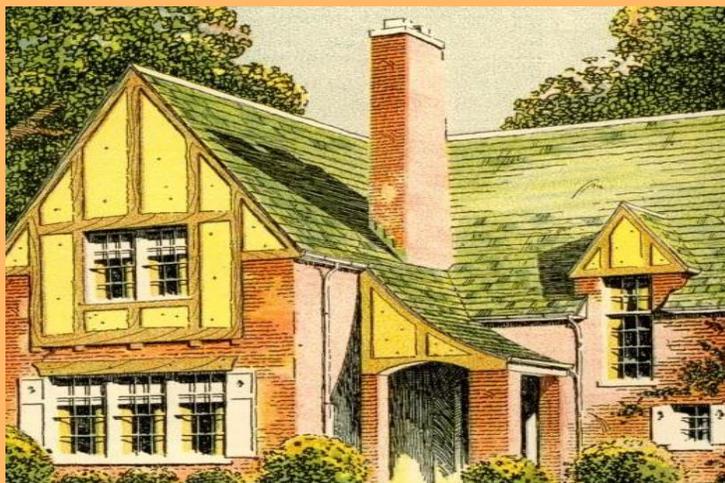
## Upcoming Events

-- **Midwestern  
Roots 2014**

August 1-2  
Indianapolis, IN  
(Marriott East and  
other locations)

The Research  
Library will be  
exhibiting at the  
Midwestern Roots  
Family History  
and Genealogy  
Conference this  
summer.

## House Hunters: Monroe County



While many regard the Research Library strictly as a local genealogy research center, the varied interests and dedicated efforts of our many volunteers have produced a collection that reaches far beyond genealogy and family history topics.

About 50% of the research requests the library receives relate to genealogy and family history. The other half relate to other local history topics, especially the history and ownership of local buildings.

Patrons often visit the Library to search for pictures of homes they've just purchased, hoping to glimpse their historic home's past appearance, determine when it was built, or learn about the house's past inhabitants.

Or, patrons find themselves drawn to a particular building in town, wondering why it bears a certain insignia, or who took ownership of it at a certain point in history.

While the Research Library is an appropriate place to bring these queries, patrons often find that they can't locate the information they desire. In some cases, patrons believe the Library holds more information than it does, or find that the resource they actually need to consult is at a county office, if it even exists.

We thought it would be useful to compile a general guide/FAQ list for researching homes and buildings in the county to address this common request. Perhaps you'll find it useful as you search for the secrets of your home's past.

(Please note that these suggestions relate solely to the Research Library's approach. Other organizations and resource centers throughout the county may vary in their approaches.)

### Researching a Home or Building in Monroe County

#### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: "I just bought a historic home in the county. Do you have photographs of it from decades past? Where can I find them?"**

**A:** Records for many of the photos in our collection are publicly accessible through an [online database](#). While there isn't a formulaic way to search for a particular home, you can try searching by street name, or by the name of the house, if you live in a historic home known by the name of its first occupants (for example: "Smith House"). If you find your home in the database, you can place a photo request by

Early registration ends TODAY, so [sign up](#) to attend as an individual. You won't want to miss the chance to hear from nationally-recognized historians and genealogists.

Be sure to stop by the Library's booth!

**-- Genealogy Group Meeting: Do You Know Why the Liberty Bell Cracked?**

July 10, 7 p.m.  
Monroe County History Center

Presenter: Helmut Hetschel

America declared her independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776.

...Right?

Join us for a lively discussion of the myths and facts surrounding one of the most significant events in the history of our nation and learn interesting facts about some of our founders. Weighty topics to be pondered include:

- Who rang the Liberty Bell to announce our newly declared independence, and why did the bell break?

- Thomas Jefferson's recollection of the event was so vivid that he

clicking the "Order Image" icon, by downloading/completing/returning a [photo request form](#), or by contacting our Collections Manager at [mhccollection@gmail.com](mailto:mhccollection@gmail.com) for more information.

**Important things to note when using the database:** Photographs may appear in black and white; dates may be unknown; photos may be under restrictions that prohibit reproduction. The minimum processing period for a photo request is two weeks.

In most cases, it's unlikely that you'll find an image of your home in our collection, but it's always worth trying.

**Q: "I'd like to know what year my house was constructed. Where can I find that information?"**

**A:** The answer to this question is complicated, and there are many approaches you can take to try to find an answer.

1. Try searching for your home on the [Monroe County Interim Report](#), a survey of historic properties in the county. Print copies are available in the Research Library, but you can also access a scan of the resource online. You can also [order a copy](#) from Bloomington Restorations, Inc.

2. Consider checking out the [Monroe County GIS](#) (Geographic Information System). While this tool may not contain the specific construction dates and other information you're seeking, it can offer insights into your property (such as a portion of its transfer of ownership). It's important to read the GIS carefully, however; sometimes the information it contains is default, rather than exact. For example, sometimes the date "1900" is used when a home is known to be of at least a certain age, but when its specific dates are unknown.

3. If you're interested in the *land* on which your home is built, rather than on the construction of the house itself, the deed records at the Research Library hold useful information for you. We hold deed records approximately 1811-1959, and these records are [fully indexed](#) through 1870 (scroll to "Land Records Index").

Another useful resource in the Research Library is the City Directory collection. If you know the address of your home, you can trace it back in time, discovering who lived in your home, approximately 1920-present, with scattered earlier editions. (The Monroe County Public Library also holds these resources.)

You can even try searching for your home on the Research Library's collection of Sanborn Maps (originally published for fire insurance purposes), or search the Indiana University [digital Sanborn maps](#) collection. Scroll to the bottom of the first sheet for a given year, and you'll find an index listing where you can find a particular address.

4. If you're unable to find the information you need with the methods listed above, and you've already checked the Monroe County Public Library [Indiana Room](#) for information, it may be time to visit the county offices in the courthouse, particularly the Auditor and the Assessor.

**Researching at the Assessor's Office:** If you have a parcel number for the property of interest (available on the Monroe County GIS or at the Auditor's Office), you can obtain a Valuation Record from the Assessor's Office. This record provides a chronological list of owners and the dates they owned the parcel (typically covers the past 50-60 years). If you want to search further into the past, you'll need to visit the Auditor's Office.

**Researching at the Auditor's Office:** Take your Valuation Record (see above) to the Auditor's Office and ask for assistance searching further into the past with the Transfer of Ownership Records. These resources date back to the 1800s, and you can begin searching them by referencing the earliest or most recent name on your Valuation Record. If you're lucky, you may even be able to find where the property is listed as "land." This finding could indicate which owners built the home/structure, and approximately when they did so. Beware that you may run into incomplete records since the emphasis we currently place on keeping precise and accurate records did not always prevail in the past.<sup>1</sup>

**Q: "What resources related to historic homes and structures do you have in the Research Library?"**

**A:** As noted in the question above, the Research Library holds deed records (1811-1959, indexed through ca. 1870) that can help you trace land ownership, a selection of Sanborn Maps with useful street indexes,

remembered flies circling above the heads of the delegates assembled to sign the Declaration of Independence. But did he remember the correct date?

· Why were Betsy Ross's bones dug up after 150 years?

*Please join us.  
Free and open to the public.  
Desserts provided.*

## "Like" the Library on Facebook!

The Monroe County History Center Research Library is on Facebook. ["Like" the page](#) and keep up with the latest news from the Library. View photos of programs, newly-discovered resources, and more.

Also "Like" the [History Center's main page](#).

## Featured Resource

Instead of featuring a specific resource in this newsletter, we're featuring a resource guide -- or rather, a guide to a guide.

The "[Indexes and Resources](#)"

City Directories, and copies of the county Interim Report. The Research Library also contains an extensive collection of [vertical files](#) for particular historic homes and structures in the county.

1. Diane Dallis and Garrett Montanez (for Bloomington Restorations, Inc.), "Tips for researching the History of a home in Bloomington/Monroe County."

page on the Center's website saves patrons' time, but it can be confusing. Here's a guide to the Library's most comprehensive guide!

**History Center Catalog:**

Leads you to a database of many of the items in the Center's collection (library, object, and photo).

**Archival Collection**

**Finding Aids:**

Links to finding aids for processed papers. Only a few finding aids are available at this time; the Library is just beginning to work them into its procedures.

**Monroe County African American Surname and Subject**

**Index:** This index lists local African American surnames and historical subjects noted in a collection of newspaper clippings (1855-1940) held in the Library.

**Church History Archives**

**Index:** An index of surnames found in the Monroe County church files (19th c.).

## May is Historic Preservation Month...

## June is Indiana Limestone Month...

## July is...

## Ice Cream Month?



In May 2014, the History Center and other local organizations celebrated Monroe County's rich historic preservation legacy and its citizens' dedicated preservation efforts. In June, Indiana Limestone Month, Monroe County had just as much to celebrate. As the site of some of the country's most famous limestone quarries, the county celebrated the resource's impact on county history and culture.

So what does the month of July honor? And how is that topic relevant to Monroe County? The answer to the first question is ... ice cream. A simple Google search can lead you to this answer, but an answer to the second question may seem less obvious.

However, research reveals that Monroe County does indeed have at least a semblance of ice cream history -- and the sweet treat's role in county history reflects larger historical trends.

Consider [The Chocolate Moose](#), an iconic but modest ice cream hut with a storied past. In 1933, a local man named Emsley May lost his job as a stone planer in the county. With the entrepreneurial spirit many associate with mid-century America, he turned misfortune into opportunity, opening May's Cafe on the site where The Chocolate Moose now stands.<sup>1</sup>

May's served foot-long hot dogs and featured a jukebox, an effective way of drawing young people into the cafe. The music was so popular that May set aside a whole room in the restaurant for dancing.

May brought another trend to the cafe, a trend that many suspected was a passing craze, unlikely to be as profitable or popular at the jukebox and dancing room -- ice cream.

Undaunted by skepticism about ice cream's endurance as a popular treat, Emsley's son Doran built on his father's foundation, helping transition May's Cafe into The Penguin in 1949. Rather than serving ice cream as an auxiliary, The Penguin held its cones high, featuring a penguin gripping an ice cream and the advertisement "FROZEN CUSTARD" on its sign. Still, Doran May mentioned that he remembered people chiding him that ice cream was "just a fad that'll never last."<sup>2</sup>

As Bloomingtonians and Indiana University alumni know, the Mays' critics were wrong; the Chocolate Moose (renamed in 1983 when Tim May, Doran's son, carried on the family business) persists as a local staple, an icon of Bloomington culture, and a symbol of the perseverance of small-town family business.

In fact, it was respect for these traditions and fond memories of The Moose's past that prompted the current owners to purchase the business in 2009. When The Moose fell upon financial difficulties and faced closure, the community decided it couldn't bear the loss of the beloved establishment. After much uncertainty, varied plans, and a "Save the Chocolate Moose" Facebook group, it was announced that the scion of sweets would remain.<sup>3</sup>

It's easy to understand why Bloomington loves The Moose: It's persisted through history, exhibiting entrepreneurship and adapting to local and national trends; it passed through three generations of a local family and is now operated by affectionate owners, one of whom worked for the Mays as a young man (and who now employs his own relatives); it reflects the power of local communities dedicated to maintaining cultural icons; and, of course, it continues to serve its homemade ice cream which certainly proved to be more than "just a passing fad."

Files created and administered by Lee Ehman.

**Community Files Index:** A listing of historic county communities for which the Library holds newspaper clippings (gossip news, etc.). Some community files also contain maps and/or short histories. Files created and administered by Bob Dodd.

**Court Records Index:** The Research Library holds the county's civil court records from 1818 until into the 20th century. This collection is still being processed, but the current published index covers 1818-1875.

**Emery Index of Family Bibles:** Compiled by the Daughters of the American Revolution from local Bibles and records, the Family Bible resource contains useful genealogical information. The index lists the pages of the Family Bible book on which certain local names can be found.

**Family Files Index:** Compiled by many volunteers and

## Celebrate National Ice Cream Month by visiting The Chocolate Moose:

401 South Walnut Street  
Bloomington, IN 47401



### Notes

1. Doran May, "History of May's Cafe." (Monroe County History Center Research Library, Vertical Files: "Chocolate Moose/Penguin.)
2. Michael Koryta, "Family History's Future," *Hoosier Times*, 17 April 2005.
3. Mercedes Rodriguez, "Chocolate Moose returning with new owners," *Herald Times*, 28 Jan. 2009.

donors, especially Gary Wiggins and Don Matson, these files are rich genealogical resources. The index, administered by Wiggins, lists all local names for which the Library holds files, references associated families for each file, and notes related family history books held in the Library.

### **Historian Newsletter Index:**

The *Historian* is the official print newsletter of the Monroe County Historical Society. Each issue contains news and local history articles, and this index lists the subjects covered in these newsletters through 2011.

### **Land Patent (Vincennes Sales) Index:**

This index, compiled by Randi Richardson, lists names pulled from *Indiana Land Entries 1807-1877*, Vol. 2, part 1, compiled by Margaret Waters. The numbers listed in the index refer to the Waters book. Reading Richardson's introduction to this resource is important, as the records and

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references can be complex.

### **Land Records Index\*:**

Recently updated by Lee Ehman and interns, this comprehensive index lists all Monroe County individuals mentioned in Monroe County land transactions and deed records 1811-1870 (including heirs, trustees, etc.). Some transactions were recorded prior to the establishment of the county! (The Library holds deeds 1811-1959.)

\*Scroll to "Land Records Index"

### **Newspaper Collection\*:**

While the general clippings files are not indexed, this guide displays the contents of the Library's flat-storage newspaper boxes (a variety of local subjects represented). Indexed by Sean Ettinger.

\*Scroll to "Newspaper Collection" to view boxes.

### **Probate Index:**

Volunteer Sandra Taylor pulls probates from the in-process civil court case collection and processes and indexes them

separately.  
Saundra is  
currently into  
the 1910s  
(published index  
stops in 1905).

**Vertical File  
Index:**

The vertical files,  
maintained by  
Penny  
Mathiesen, are  
the Library's  
richest collection  
of local history  
subject material.  
They contain  
everything from  
the  
correspondence  
of famous local  
figures to the  
menus from old  
county  
restaurants.  
Penny maintains  
this index to the  
files' thousands  
of items.

**Veterans' Oral  
History Index:**

The late Bud  
Lynch began the  
local arm of the  
national  
Veterans Oral  
History Project,  
and Ron  
Burkhart  
has maintained  
it. The histories  
and transcripts  
are held at the  
Library, and this  
index lists names  
and subjects for  
the 300+  
interviews.

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