

September 2014

Monroe County History Center

Where the past and present meet.



News from the Library Online Edition

Dear Hillary,

Welcome to the September 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 a new oral history project intern, secured a conservator for the restoration of one of its most valuable resources -- Monroe County Commissioners Book A, completed its Church History Database project, and begun many more exciting endeavors. Be sure to check out the "Upcoming Events" section of this newsletter; the next few months are full of programs that are not to be missed!

Comments to the newsletter are welcome and may be emailed to 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

-- Genealogy Group Meeting: The Three Initials We All Share: DNA

September 3, 7 p.m.
Monroe County History Center

Presenter: Nan Harvey

Nan Harvey is a computer programmer and a current database analyst at Indiana University.

Her exposure to DNA testing began in 2006 with the National Geographic Genographic project in which she participated. She also has

Church Records Project Completion!

The Church Records Project has completed its 34,000 item database of member names from 19th century Monroe County churches. It can be used to research family histories, and will help

fill in gaps in other records. Two examples: 1) prior to 1850 the U.S. Census did not enumerate all members of households, using only the head of household. Our index names women and children not otherwise available for that time period; 2) because the 1890 census was lost, the church index can serve as a partial substitute for those missing data.

The database can be accessed
at http://monroehistory.org/sg_userfiles/Database_Web_Version.pdf

In order to make the index complete, if you can help us obtain registers or histories from the following list, we would greatly appreciate it. Contact Nicole Bieganski, the Library Manager, or Lee Ehman, the church project manager, at 812.332.2517 ext. 4, or genealogy@monroehistory.org.

Bethel AME Church in Bloomington
Crossroads Methodist Church in Richland Twp
Fairview Methodist in Bloomington
First Methodist Church in Harrodsburg
Harrodsburg Church of Christ
Hindustan Christian Church in Washington Twp
Maple Grove Church of Christ in Bloomington Twp
Second Baptist Church of Bloomington
Smithville Christian Church
South Union Church of Christ in Van Buren Twp

35 years of experience in genealogy and promises an engaging discussion of the current DNA testing craze in genealogical research.

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

-- Civil War Roundtable

October 8, 7 p.m.
Monroe County History Center

Presenter: Gerry Prokopowicz

Prokopowicz focuses on the intersection between public history and Civil War history.

-- Rebel Weavers Program

October 11
Monroe County History Center

More information to come

-- National Fossil Day Talk

October 14, 6:30 p.m.
Monroe County History Center

Presenter: Walter Gray

-- Cemetery Calendar Reception

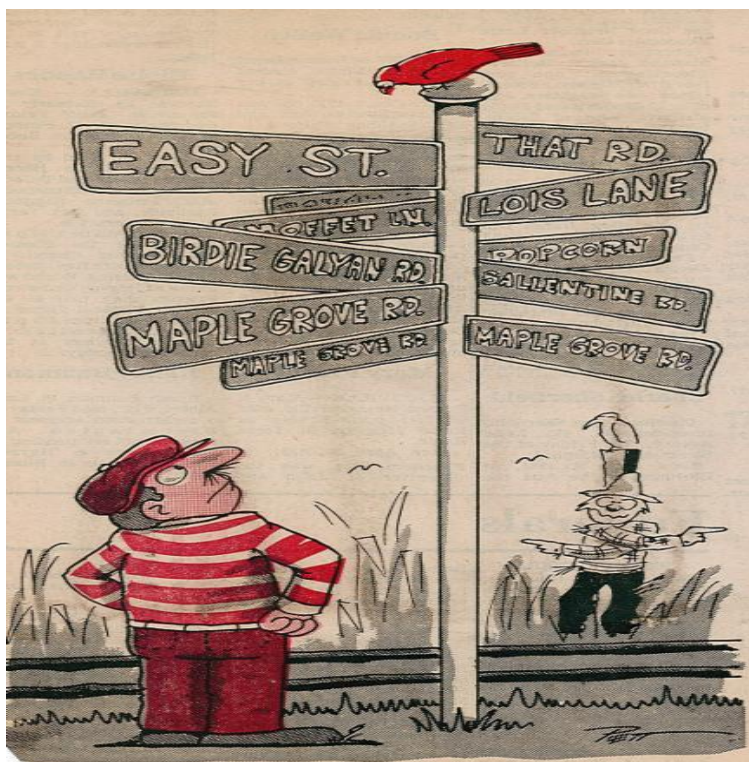
October 17, 5:30 p.m.
Monroe County History Center

-- Indiana Memory Historic Newspaper Program

October 25, 1 p.m.
Monroe County History Center

There is no "Main Street" in Bloomington, but once there were four...

David Lemon



Newly-appointed county commissioners first laid out the town of Bloomington in 1818, and the first lot sales occurred around the present-day courthouse square. The commissioners also named the streets in the square area at this time. West of the square were Spring, Cherry (named for a family), and Poplar Streets; these streets ran north and southwest. On the east side of the square, running in the same directions, were East, Walnut, Blue, and Back Streets. The streets on the north side of the square, running east and west, were named North and Washington Streets, while the streets south of the square were called South and Water Streets.[1]

The first incorporation of the town of Bloomington took place on 17 September 1828, but, for some reason, the municipal government was allowed to expire sometime before 1845. On 13 January 1845, the Indiana State General Assembly enacted the second incorporation. The charter adopted with this second incorporation contained information about the boundaries of the town, government responsibilities, and a drawing of the square area. The charter is available on the City of Bloomington's website.[2]

The first elected mayor of Bloomington under the new incorporation was John Lawrence, selected in March 1847. One of Lawrence's first ordinances (which was later repealed) concerned dogs in the town. Any citizen possessing a dog within town limits was required to pay a fine of \$0.50 per dog per year. Essentially, the ordinance was a "dog tax." Another interesting ordinance required all able-bodied males to perform two days of labor on town streets and highways.

Other early developments in 19th century Bloomington were more significant and enduring than the dog tax. The 1853 arrival of the New Albany and Salem Railroad, for example, brought an economic boost along with unwanted effects. Rerouting streets was expensive and disruptive, and these changes caused a shift in the townspeople's perspective on their local leaders. In fact, Bloomington residents' opinions became so negative that the municipal government was disbanded in January 1858. This dissolution did not last, however. The following year, 1859, the town reincorporated and has run uninterrupted ever since.

This same constancy did not extend to Bloomington's street names. By 1845, North, South, East, and West Streets had added "Main" to their descriptions. September 1866 was an even more significant period for change. It is probably no coincidence that "Lincoln" and "Grant" were added as street names the year after the Civil War ended.[3] Other street name changes included Poplar to Rogers (named for the Aquilla Rogers family), Cherry to Madison (presumably named for President James Madison), Spring to Railroad, West Main to College Avenue, East Main to Walnut, Walnut to Washington, Blue to Lincoln (and Back to Grant). Some streets also lost their original descriptors and were numbered instead: Water Street became 4th Street; South Main became 5th Street; North Main changed to 6th Street; Washington became 7th Street. Still other changes followed when Railroad Street became Morton in 1888 (named after Indiana's Civil War governor, Oliver P. Morton), and when 5th Street (in the downtown area) changed its name to Kirkwood Avenue in 1884 (named for an Indiana University professor of math and astronomy).

Perhaps the most entertaining street name change occurred on what is now Indiana Avenue. The original name of the street was Gamble Street, named for a family that lived at the intersection of Gamble and 5th. After the Gamble family moved out of town, the council voted to change the street's name to "Indiana Avenue" because the name "Gamble" suggested an "immoral" activity, and proper young women would not live on the street.[4]

Presenter: Chandler Lighty, Indiana State Library

Join us as a representative from the Indiana State Library guides us through use of the expansive [Indiana Memory](#), especially its collection of [digitized historic newspapers](#).

-- Indiana Auto History and Culture

November 1, time TBD
Monroe County History Center

Presenter: Dennis Horvath

Dennis Horvath will present a talk about the state's auto history and culture to support the History Center's current "Auto Indiana" exhibit.

-- "Helen's Harvest of Hats"

November 6, 1:30 p.m.
Monroe County History Center

You are cordially invited to an afternoon tea and vintage hat auction to benefit the Monroe County History Center. The unique and large collection of designer hats has been donated graciously by Helen DeSawal.

Tickets:
History Center Members -- \$20
Non members -- \$25

Seating is limited and reservations are required. Please call 812-332-2517 ext. 2 for more information.

In July 1876 the Bloomington town council was petitioned to have the town incorporated as a city. The vote of the townspeople ended with 184 "yes" and 169 "no."^[5] Many changes have occurred in the almost 200 year history of Bloomington, especially in terms of its street and road names.

[1] Monroe County Commissioners, *Monroe County Commissioners Records* (Monroe County Commissioners Office, 1818), 34.

[2] Navigate to bloomington.in.gov, and click on "City Clerk" on the left sidebar. Scroll to "Spotlight Webpages in City Clerk" and select "City of Bloomington Original Documents."

[3] Though no original records offering this date could be located, many researchers, including Robert Leffler, agree on the September 1866 period as one of many street name changes.

[4] Linda Thomas, "Which Road is That Road?," *Herald Times*, 6 Apr. 1987, A1. Accessed in Monroe County History Center Research Library Vertical Files.

[5] Charles Blanchard, ed., *Counties of Morgan, Monroe, and Brown, Indiana. Historical and Biographical* (1884; reprint, Mt. Vernon, Ind.: Windmill Publications, Inc., 1993), 467.

-- "A Celebration of Hoagy Carmichael's Birthday"

November 21, time TBD
Monroe County History Center

A multi-media evening featuring musician Mark Weidenmayer and artist/sculptor Michael McAuley (the sculptor of the Hoagy statue on IU's campus).

This event is ticketed. Details forthcoming.

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