



Monroe County Historical Society, Inc. presents

Monroe County Historian

See Stories... Touch Time... Make Memories...

April 1905–April 2005: The First 100 Years of the Monroe County Historical Society

By Penelope Mathiesen

This month, the Monroe County Historical Society marks the one-hundredth anniversary of its founding. There is no complete set of historical documents for the organization. Some were lost in a fire, while the whereabouts of others are unknown or have only recently been rediscovered. The society's periods of inactivity and changes of venue undoubtedly contributed to the lack of a coherent body of records. It is possible, however, to reconstruct some sense of our past from the materials that do exist.

Early Years

The Monroe County Historical Society was founded on 6 April 1905 (*Indiana Magazine of History*, 2d quarter, 1905). The minute book from the earliest days of the society begins with organizational sessions held in March 1905. The first official meeting, with election of officers and a program, took place on 6 April in the lecture room of the First Christian Church. The society's first officers were Amzi Atwater, president; W. B. Seward, vice president; James A. Woodburn, Indiana University emeritus history professor, secretary; and Dudley F. Smith, treasurer. Members of the advisory committee were S. B. Harding, Indiana University professor; Minnie Ellis, Bloomington high school history teacher; and Margaret McCalla.

According to a newspaper article by Fred C. Lockwood ("New Historical Society Names Officers, Directors," 10 December 1937), "Mr. Atwater was once professor of Latin at Indiana University. He is said to have had several peculiar characteristics and outstanding was his frugality. It is told he carried a ring as a pocket piece. Upon visiting his grocer to purchase eggs, out would come the ring. All eggs that were too large to go through the ring, he purchased; all others were rejected." At the society's first meeting, President Atwater spoke on "The University of Forty Years Ago." From 1905–1908, some twenty-five

additional papers were presented (or at least announced) on topics ranging from recollections of pioneer citizens to histories of local churches to the development of charities, industries, and schools. Lockwood states that many of these papers were printed in the *Indiana Magazine of History* (hereafter, *IMH*), but only four turn up in the indexes: "Indiana University Forty Years Ago" (Amzi Atwater, 1905), "Austin Seward" (H. C. Duncan, 1908), and "James Hughes" (H. C. Duncan, 1909). It was "the intention of the society to preserve typewritten copies of all the papers read before the society, to be bound in annual volumes" (*IMH*, March 1906). If these volumes were ever produced, their present whereabouts are unknown.

The society's earliest minute book records meetings on a regular basis in 1905 and for a few years following, then activity slowed. Lockwood later reported that after several years, "interest lagged and the organization becoming inactive went out of existence." Indeed, after the 10 January 1913 meeting, nothing is recorded in the minute book until 10 August 1948, and after that, nothing until a session on 8 October 1953 (the minutes note that it took place "after five years of no meetings"). Five papers "read...before the Monroe County Historical Society" in the 1950s are in the Lilly Library's manuscript collections:

"Reminiscences as Student and Teacher in Rural Schools of Monroe County, Indiana, in the 1880s" (December 1954), "The Blue Spring Community" (December 1954), "College Boarding Houses" (February 1955), and "Account of the Orchard Family and the Temperance Inn" (October 1955). The society continued to meet until December 1955, at which point the first minute book ends. The next book starts in 1973.

The Society Reorganizes

In the early 1970s, the society had been inac-

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Museum

Museum Store

Genealogy Library

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100th Anniversary
Monroe County Historical Society

25th Anniversary
Monroe County History Center

Mission Statement

Our community benefits from contact with objects that are important to Monroe County. The mission of the Monroe County Historical Society's Museum is to collect, preserve, interpret and display materials and artifacts which reflect the cultural and natural history of Monroe County and Indiana.

Exhibits

“Lullaby Baby” Baby quilts, christening gowns and infant items. Closes end of July.

“Guardians of the Soul, Indiana’s Remarkable Cemetery Sculptures” Photos by John Bower. Closes May 27, 2005

“Monroe County Medical Care: The Early Years.” Closes end of June.

June 10 and 11

Annual Garage Sale

It will be held again at the former RCA-Thomson warehouse.

Clean out those closets and garages! Give the office a call if you need more information or a pick up. Accepting items now.

Schedule of Events

All meetings and programs will be held at the History Center and are FREE, unless otherwise stated.

General Board Meeting
2nd Thursday of the month, 4 pm

May 17 Civil War Roundtable 6:30 pm
This month’s topics are the Battle of Antietam and the Emancipation Proclamation.

May 21 Ben McClelland Bluegrass Fiddle 7-9 pm Tickets \$7

May 23-28 Bloomington Early Music Festival. 10 am-4 pm mostly.

June 10-11 Annual Garage Sale

Monroe County History Center

Kari Price, Executive Director
202 East Sixth Street
Bloomington, IN 47408

Office/Museum 812-332-2517	Genealogy Library 812-355-5588
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E-mail: mchm@kiva.net
Web Address: www.kiva.net/~mchm

Museum/Store	Genealogy Library
Tue– Sat 10 am –4 pm Sunday 1-4 pm	Tues and Sat 10 am—4 pm Wed-Fri 1-4 pm

OFFICERS for 2004-2005

Rachel McCarty, President
Larry Stephens, VP Finance
Laura Newton, VP Operations
M. Phil Hathaway, Treasurer
Liz Knapp, Library Director

2005-2006 Officers and Board of Trustees

The Annual Membership Meeting was held on Thursday, April 14, 2005. There was an election of new board members and board officers.

Board of Trustees for 2005-2006

Newly Elected

Mary Jane Blustein
James Dawson
Lee Ehman
Clarence Gilliam
Merv Meister

2nd Term expires 2007
M.Phil Hathaway
Liz Knapp
Rachel McCarty

2nd Term expires 2008
Laura Newton

Advisory

Ron Baldwin
Claude Rice
David Foster
David Rowland
Dot Spore
Kitty Burkhart
Kay Beth Harrel
Jim Kryway
Allison Lendman
Kathy McFall
Joyce Poling
Maxine Rhorer
Carol Seaman
Richard Stuart
Bob Burton
Loretta Condra
Gayle Cook
Mary Lee Deckard
Glenda Murray
Judy McClary
Larry Stephens
Kitch Somers

Board members are elected to serve a three year term. No more than two terms can be served consecutively. At least one year must elapse before a candidate can be considered to serve on the Board again.

Officers

President	Rachel McCarty
VP of Operations	Janice Partenheimer
VP of Finances	M. Phil Hathaway
Secretary	Laura Newton
Treasurer	David Musgrave

Board again appointed Liz Knapp to be genealogy library director

Emeritus

Frank Bauer
Alice Binkley
Henry Wahl

Note: Penelope Mathiesen and Janet Stavropoulos have taken a leave of absence from the Board.

First Term expires 2007
Michael Maben
Marilyn McCoy
Marilyn Skirvin
Tosha Daugherty

First Term expires 2006

DeAnna Bassett
Julian Livingston
David L. Musgrave
Mary Oliver
Janice Partenheimer
Sherry Rouse

Annual Auction Report

Thanks to all who helped, the February 28th auction met its goal of over \$4000. A special thank you goes to professional auctioneers Brett Haley and Todd Wesemann, sponsor Pinnacle Properties and food supplier La Torre.

We also appreciate those who contributed merchandise, time, desserts and a vigorous bidding. Some interesting items sold included swords, Brown County art, a porcelain tea set, a china cabinet, an Amish quilt and a new pressure washer.

The profits will be applied to the History Center's operating expenses.

Garage Sale

Now it is time to think GARAGE SALE, our fundraiser that usually brings in \$10,000. It will be on June 10-11, and will again be at the former RCA-Thomson warehouse. Please start gathering up your donations—we can accept items now. Remember: no clothing, no console TVs, no outdated computers, no non-working appliances, no broken furniture (unless it can be easily repaired).

Clean out those closets and garages! Give the office a call if you need more information or a pick up.

News from the Library

Loyal Volunteer Passes Away

Thelma B. Whaley, one of the most loyal and caring volunteers in the cause of genealogy, died on 13 February 2005 at Bell Trace Health and Living Center in Bloomington, Indiana. Born on 10 January 1913 in rural Monroe County, she was the daughter of Lyman I. and Lulu M. (Felder) Dunlap. She was a retired elementary school teacher. She had taught in both Hancock and Monroe County schools. She last taught first and second grades at Arlington Elementary School in Bloomington. After retirement, she did some teaching at Honey Creek School. She was an alumna of Indiana University where she received a Master of Science degree in Education. She was a lifelong member of First United Methodist Church in Bloomington, a garden club, and the Monroe County Historical Society. She loved studying genealogy and traveling. A particular interest was doing research on the Burch family. Although she had not been active as a volunteer for several years, she is fondly remembered in the Genealogy Library by those who knew her. (From information contributed by Julian Livingston.)

New Books

Stop by and take a look at some of the new items available in the library:

Class of 1954, Bloomington High School, 50th Anniversary, October 8 and 9, 2004.

(Extra copies can be purchased for \$15.00 from Lois Bock Durnal, 2610 Dogwood Court, Columbus, IN 47203.)

City of Bloomington Interim Report: Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory (Bloomington: Housing and Urban Development, 2004). This survey contains 153 pp. and 23 districts and study areas, an increase over the 59 pp. and 18 districts in the 1986 edition.

Yearbook Inventory Available in the Genealogy Library and the Monroe County Public Library (2004). This inventory of items in the two collections lists yearbooks for area high schools, some junior high and middle schools, and the *Arbutus*.

Monroe County Death Records, 1921–2002. This index formerly stopped at 1971 but has been expanded to 2002; the material has been divided into several

volumes for ease of use.

Last Indian Battle

The Genealogy Library's vertical files contain a typescript of two articles from the 10 and 16 October 1900 issues of the Bloomington *Evening World*. They describe a battle that took place between white settlers and Indians on the banks of Clear Creek in 1811, on the site now occupied by the Cedar Bluffs Nature Preserve. Long-time Genealogy Library volunteer Elizabeth Yoder recently donated a letter that identifies the origins of the typescript. Julia Deckard, who had also been active in the Genealogy Library, maintained an interest in the history of Native Americans in Monroe County. It was she who originally found the newspaper articles and transcribed them. Elizabeth Yoder used the transcription made by Miss Deckard to prepare a new typescript, which was photocopied and given out to several local groups. We very much appreciate knowing the background of this item. Copies will be placed in the vertical files labeled "Clear Creek" and "Native Americans."



Calling All Cooks!

As a part of our 100th anniversary of the Society's founding, a cook book is being compiled.

Recipes Wanted

The History Center is looking for your favorite recipes. All types of recipes are needed

Submissions should be made on-line at www.typensave.com. The *Group Login* is "mccooks" and the *Password* is "842B2."

The next screen has the easy-to-follow instructions. Please limit your submissions to 6 recipes.

Deadline May 30, 2005

Monroe County History Center
202 East Sixth Street
Bloomington, IN 47408

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See Stories... Touch Time... Make Memories...

Your Membership is Key ...



Don't miss out on the opportunity to join the **Century Club**. It will only be available this year to celebrate the Society's 100th anniversary!

Not sure when your membership expires? Your expiration date is on the upper right corner of the mailing label.

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- Level 4 \$1000+

Method of Payment

- Check
- MasterCard
- Visa

Please Send to:

Monroe County Historical Society, Inc.
202 East Sixth Street
Bloomington, IN 47408

Or Fax to 812-355-5593

Check if you are interested in volunteering.

Check if you have a special interest in genealogy.

Gift Givers Name

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Phone

Credit Card #

Exp. date

Signature

MCHS History through the Pages of the Newsletter

By Penelope Mathiesen

After its reorganization in 1973, MCHS kept its members informed through the *Monroe County Historical Society Newsletter*. The first issues were typewritten on letter-size paper, which changed to legal-size and then back again by the late 1980s. It became the *Monroe County Historian* in July 1992. A look through past issues provides a sense of how several groups with separate but related interests evolved into our present organization.

In the 1970s, the Monroe County Genealogy Society's meetings were announced in the *MCHS Newsletter*, but it met at the LDS church and had its own newsletter. By June 1981, the Genealogy Chapter (now considered a section of MCHS) and its records had moved into the southwest upstairs corner of the renovated Old Library building. It began to hold meetings in the building, and information on its collections, programs, and volunteer activities was reported in the *MCHS Newsletter*. In the late 1980s, the Genealogy Chapter and MCHS

began to hold joint meetings. In May 1989, the Genealogy Room announced new Saturday hours for visitors. By July 1992, it had moved downstairs to the east end of the basement.

The Monroe County Historical Museum, which opened in 1980, had its own governing board and published *Museum disPatches*. The 1990s saw a move toward consolidation of the constituent organizations and development of the physical facilities. In April 1994, MCHS purchased the Old Library building. November 1995 marked the kickoff of the "Build History" campaign to fund an addition. Construction began in early 1997. The February 2000 newsletter announced a major reorganization of the governing structure, with a merged board to include members of the former MCHS and Museum boards. In 2003, the building was renamed the Monroe County History Center.

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tive for "about five years...after sustaining an active membership since the beginning of the century or thereabouts" (Chris Chapman, "Monroe Co. Historical Group Back," *Bloomington Courier-Tribune*, 10 January 1973). Chapman reports the comments of Norris Wentworth:

"It just died out.... The president left town and some of the officers quit...and we just never got together again...a dozen or so former members decided to reorganize the society...Instead of just talking about interesting events concerning the county, we intend to involve ourselves actively in projects. We ought to meet some of the challenges before us, such as supplying the Indiana History Room in the Monroe County Library with collections, or doing something to preserve the old library building. There are just so many organizations working on things in Monroe County—historic preservation groups, women saving old buildings and even the local Audubon Society is involved...we thought we ought to get started again and do our part."

The 1970s saw a period of rapid growth for the society and related groups interested in preserving Monroe County history. The Old Library, Inc.

(T.O.L.I.) began a campaign to save Bloomington's Carnegie Library building, which was in danger of being torn down for a parking lot after the new Monroe County Public Library was built across the street. The Museum Committee worked toward the establishment of a historical museum within the renovated building. The society's newsletter kept members informed of these efforts, and its back issues provide a record of the post-1973 period. (See item elsewhere in this issue.)

Meeting Places

The society met in various locations, beginning with the First Christian Church in 1905. In 1908, it acquired "a separate room in the new court-house, given for its use and furnished by order of the county commissioners" (*IMH*, March 1908). After the 1973 reorganization, it met at the Monroe County Public Library and the First Baptist Church through 1978. Office space in the Farmer House was used in 1978. T.O.L.I. purchased the Old Library

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New and Renewed Members

Basic

E.S. & C. L. Bartlett
Richard & Martha Becher
Holly Marie Bethune
Indiana Room, MCPL
Marion & Lucy Jacobs
Mayor Mark Kruzan
Carol May
Marilyn McCoy
Laura Mills
Steve Rolfe
James & Blanche Scherschel
Audrey Elizabeth Schmalz
Merle E. & Concepcion Simmons
James & Judith Van Osdol
Wayne Warden, Jr.

Friend

Bill & Helen Axsom
Harry and Jeanette Hollis
Tom & Susan McGlasson
Kimberly Schmalz
Ochsenschlager

Century Club

Barbara Henn
John & Joyce Poling

NEW

Web Site Address and
E-mail Address

The new domain name
for the Society's web
page is

www.monroehistory.org

The new e-mail address
is

[director@
monroehistory.org](mailto:director@monroehistory.org)



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building in 1977, and “after extensive renovation, the Historical Society leased the upper floor” (news release, 25 March 1980). The society met there from 1979 onward, except for special events at the Matthews Mansion and Endwright log cabin in Ellettsville, Lake Monroe, Mt. Ebal Church, Conner Prairie, the Hendricksville sawmill, and the Old Stone House on Maple Grove Road.

On 13 April 1980, the society marked its seventy-fifth anniversary with the opening of the Monroe County Historical Museum in the Old Library building at 202 East Sixth Street. Today, after a substantial addition and the merger of several entities, the structure, now known as the Monroe County History Center, houses the Monroe County Historical Society, the Monroe County Historical Museum, the Museum Store, and the Genealogy Library.

Happy Anniversary, MCHS!

Thanks to our Executive Director, Kari Price, for assistance in examining the society’s original minute books. Other sources include back issues of the MCHS newsletter, the vertical files in the Genealogy Library, the Indiana Magazine of History, and the Lilly Library at Indiana University. Materials related to the society’s history are still being rediscovered, and donations of relevant items are welcomed.

News from Other Places

Restricted Access to Birth Records

A federal bill to restrict access to birth records was passed by both the House and Senate and signed into law by President Bush on 17 December 2004. Contrary to the recommendations of the Federation of Genealogical Societies and the National Genealogical Society’s Records Preservation and Access Committee, the law does not include an exception for non-certified copies or records over one hundred years old. Within the next eighteen months, federal agencies must establish state standards for the issuing of drivers’ licenses and birth certificates. It is not clear how these standards will be implemented at the county level or if they will supersede local provisions for obtaining birth records. The Indiana Genealogical Society is continuing to monitor the situation. (From the *IGS Newsletter*, February 2005.)

Monroe County Civil War Veterans

Members of G.A.R. posts in Monroe County are listed in a recent publication, *Indiana Civil War Veterans: Transcription of the Death Rolls of the Department of Indiana, Grand Army of the Republic, 1882–1948*, by Dennis Northcott. Alphabetical entries contain the member’s name, rank, company, regiment, post to which he belonged, and date of death. To order, send \$29.99 plus \$3.00 shipping to: Dennis Northcott, P.O. Box 11801, St. Louis, MO 63105. For more information, go to: <http://www.ngpublications.com>

“Hoosher” Document

The Indiana Historical Society has acquired a letter written in the summer of 1835 by a Quaker woman who describes her life in Indiana. The three-page communication contains five uses of the word “Hoosher,” a phonetic spelling of “Hoosier.” The document constitutes the society’s oldest original reference to the term, which came into general usage in the 1830s. (From *The Bridge*, January/February 2005.)

Ernie Pyle’s Library Moved to Indy

The library of Ernie Pyle, which had been housed at the Indiana University School of Journalism in Bloomington since it was shipped there in the late 1940s by the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain (Pyle’s employer) from his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has been acquired by the

Indiana Historical Society. The acquisition includes the personal library of Pyle and his wife Geraldine “Jerry” Siebolds Pyle, travel guides used when they visited the places mentioned in his late 1930s columns, crossword puzzle books used by Jerry, a tuxedo, and a vase reportedly from their Albuquerque home. For information on the Pyle Library, contact Paul Brockman, Director of Manuscript and Visual Collections (317-234-0048; e-mail: pbrockman@indianahistory.org). (From *The Bridge*, November/December 2004.)

Web Sites

* Genealogy eBay Auction Course. To learn how to find good genealogy stuff on eBay, go to: <http://auction.genealogymethods.com>

* Passenger and Immigration Lists: Irish to America, 1846–1865. To request a free lookup for Irish immigrants to Boston and New York City, go to: <http://www.freegenealogylookups.com/cd357.htm>

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