The following clipping from the Genealogy Library's vertical files was missing both the date and the name of the newspaper. The library's resources, however, provided a means of identification through information within the article itself. Bloomington telephone directories list the Arlington School on the "Ellettsville Road" only until 1958; in 1959, it became the Arlington Heights Elementary School on Gourley Pike. Bloomington city directories show the greatest concentration of people living at the reported addresses in 1937–38. According to the Rose Hill Cemetery book, Charles D. Eller was born in 1858 and died in 1948, which would have made him 80 (the age mentioned in the article) in 1938. Using the Monroe County Public Library's newspapers on microfilm, I found the article in the Bloomington Daily Telephone, 1 November 1938. Thanks to Loretta Condra, William Knapp, and Randi Richardson for their help in solving this puzzle!

"Celebration Draws Big Crowd"

Guests of the City Recreation Department for the Hallowe'en party last evening at the City Park were more than 5,000 revelers, believed to be the largest group of people ever to attend the annual affair. Young and old, they milled around in the Third Street playground, throwing corn, playing pranks and watching the performances in the amphitheatre [sic] where amateur skits were presented, costumes judged, and a clever costume play, "Mother Goose's Nightmare," was given by the pupils of the Arlington school.

Dressed as a miniature I. U. football player, Sandra Kay Giroux, the three-months old son [sic?] of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Giroux, 336 South Washington Street, won the first prize for being the youngest person in costume to appear before the judges. The tiny baby girl wore a miniature football helmet, white sweater with red letters, brown football-like pants and white shoes and socks. The second prize was awarded to Dickie Joe Thornton, the one-year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Thornton, 213 North Jackson Street, who toddled around in a cute little dunce suit.

Distinguished looking C. D. Eller, 80 year old resident who lives at 327 University Street, won the oldest person award. He was dressed in an 120-year old white linen suit and duster, which he said had been worn by his mother's father, "way back when." He was the proud possessor of whiskers, never having been in a barber's shop except for a haircut, according to his boast. Mrs. W. N. Shaw, 532 North Morton Street, who gave her age as 71, was announced as the second oldest person in costume. Her raspberry colored wig, however, made her look years younger. Mrs. Sarah St. Clair, 69 years of age, who lives at 527 North Walnut, was the third oldest.

Pumpkin Carving Contest
Sunday, October 26 1-3 pm
Don't mess up your house with pumpkin guts; carve your pumpkins at the Monroe County Historical Society Museum. Learn how to carve jack-o-lanterns and the history behind them. Enter your pumpkin in one of our carving contests and win wonderful prizes. No entry fee required. Don't have a pumpkin? Pumpkins will be available to purchase at the Museum.
Exhibits

In Style
May 10-November 24
Retrospective of men’s and women’s clothing accessories from 1850-1950

185 Years of the Bloomington Square
June 23—November 24
Exhibit features photographs and artifacts that document one of the oldest downtown areas in the state.

Upcoming Exhibit
Lingering Spirit: A Tribute to Indiana’s Forgotten Places
December 2-31
This exhibit features the fascinating b/w photography of John Bower. His work illustrates the unique beauty found in the “forgotten” places of southern Indiana.

Schedule of Events

Regularly scheduled MCHS Museum meetings. All meetings and programs will be held at the History Center, unless otherwise stated.

General Board Meeting—2nd Thursday of the month, 4 pm
Executive Board Meeting—4th Wednesday of the month, 4 pm

October Programs

- **26 Pumpkin Carving Contest** 1-3 pm Don’t mess up your house with pumpkin guts; carve your pumpkins at the Monroe County Historical Society Museum. Learn how to carve jack-o-lanterns and the history behind them. Enter your pumpkin in one of our carving contests and win wonderful prizes. No entry fee required. Don’t have a pumpkin? Pumpkins will be available for purchase at the Museum.

November Programs

- **1–29 Festival of Wreaths** This silent auction, which features over 50 wreaths created by local craftspeople, will run through the month of November. The auction ends at 4 pm, November 29th. Phone-in bids accepted.
- **6 Indiana Nurses in World War I** Cancelled
- **28 2nd Annual Canopy of Lights Arts and Craft Show** This year’s show will be bigger than last year and the building will be decked out in new lights. The show will run noon-9 pm on Friday. The Festival of Wreaths’ silent auction will end at 4 pm on Saturday.

December Programs

- **4 Exhibit Reception for “Lingering Spirit: A Tribute to Indiana’s Forgotten Places”** 7-9 pm The reception will include a 30-minute presentation by John Bower. There will also be a viewing of the exhibit, as well as a book signing. Light refreshments will be served.
- **11 Volunteer Recognition Dinner** 6-8 pm All volunteers and members are invited to this special holiday dinner. Guests are welcome. Please let the office know if you are coming by December 4th.

The Monroe County History Center is proud to welcome a new member of the staff. Rachael Himsel will serve the Society as the Volunteer/Membership Coordinator. She will also be spending part of her time as an Educator.
Bloomington’s Stone Lamp Posts
Part II: 1913–1925
By Lee Ridge

Continued from the August 2003 issue

22 May 1913: There was plenty of excitement on north College avenue shortly after noon today when three horses ran away one of which knocked over one of the stone cluster light posts and the others caused a general scurrying to get out of the road. The trouble started when the horse of William O. Green, which was left hitched in front of the Showers factory, took a notion to go home. It came down College Avenue at a lively clip running into one of the stone posts in front of the Crescent Theatre and breaking it into a wagonload of pieces. This caused the horse of Edward Poole to run away. Poole’s horse frightened the horse of police chief Hensley and it ran to Fourth street where it was stopped by Edward Burns, who grabbed the reins and threw the animal down. The Hensley horse’s leg was hurt in the fall. The Poole horse was also stopped.

23 June 1914: The last stone light post, that was left to adorn the curbing on the north side of the Monon depot, was knocked over Sunday when Will Hays with his taxi backed up against the light post and gave it a push which sent it crashing to the sidewalk. This was the second post knocked over by Hays. Thomas Huff also knocked a post over a few weeks ago at the station.

23 April 1915: Another stone electric light post on the public square was relegated to the scrap heap this morning at 8:30 when a car driven by S. C. Freese, the stone man, crashed into it on the south side of the Penrod drug store. Mr. Freese was going north on College Avenue, started to turn west at the Penrod corner, and attempted to make the turn when the steering gear did not work and consequently struck the post. Fortunately, Mr. Freese was not injured and the only damage done to the car was the bending of the front axle and the smashing of one fender. James Jackson the real estate man was leaning against the post as the car struck and was hurled several feet by the compact. Outside of several bruises, Mr. Jackson did not suffer any serious injuries from the accident.

23 July 1915: The City Council last night adopted specifications for the new lighting system on north Washington and South College Avenues. On north Washington Street there are to be 12 lights of 250 candlepower and 13 of 100 candlepower. On South College Avenue 5 lights of 250 candlepower, and 14 of are 100 candlepower. The posts are of new gray iron. They are painted black and will be 10 feet and 6 inches in height. There will be one light on the top of each post in place of the arm and three lights as on the square. The posts weigh approximately 350 pounds.

29 October 1915: Another one of the cluster light posts about the business district was smashed into hundreds of pieces today when an auto driven by Mrs. Roger Lee accidentally backed into it. If the posts are not anchored they will all be gone before another year, it would seem.

11 August 1916: New iron cluster light posts have been bought by the city and are being placed on west Kirkwood Avenue, near the Monon depot to take the place of the stone posts that were bowled over and broken. The stone posts have never been anchored to hold.

12 December 1916: Some one bowled over another one of the stone light posts in front of the Campbell & Company store last night, smashing the post in many pieces as well as the electric light fixtures. There are not only two of the posts left on the west side of the square.

9 January 1917: Another one of the cluster electric light posts was bowled over Saturday evening on south College Avenue. There is now only one post left on the west side of south College Avenue between Kirkwood Avenue and Fourth street, four posts having been knocked down and broken in that block.

14 July 1922: As did the stone columns of the forum of ancient Rome, so the stone ornamental electric light columns around the square

High Tech Wish List

The Monroe County History Center relies on the kind donations of folks like you. Below is a list of items, we are currently seeking. Used items preferred.

- Lap Top Computer
- Personal Computers (Pentium II+)
- Digital Camera
- Digital Video Camera
- Scanner

Software:
- Adobe Paint Shop 6.0
- Adobe Illustrators 9.0

Continued on Page 6
A Note from the President

We’re about to take an exciting step for the History Center. This fall the History Center will launch its Founders Endowment Campaign to raise funds to secure a more stable base of funding for operations. You’ll remember that your memberships, donations, and fundraising projects such as the auction in February and Garage Sale in June are the major sources of funding for the History Center. Currently we also receive a small amount of funding each year from the interest from our Founders Endowment.

Our goal in this campaign is to increase the Founders Endowment, so that more interest will be available each year to help fund operating expenses. We operate on a very limited budget. Kari Price, our director, is our only full-time staff person at present, and she is assisted by three able part-time staff members. Our goal, like many nonprofit organizations, is to provide a more stable source of operational funds.

You’ll be hearing from us this fall, and we hope that you will join us in pledging or giving to the Founders Endowment Campaign.

Glenda Murray
President, Board of Trustees

Halloween 1938 continued from page 1

The contest for the best impersonation of a woman by a man was won by James Buskirk, age 14, of 31 West Park Street, who was dressed as a gum-chewing office girl. Oscar B. Taylor, 525 North Walnut Street, was awarded second place and Bobbie Stewart, age 9, of 915 North College Avenue, third place. Mrs. Sarah St. Clair copped another prize when she entered the contest for the best costume of a woman impersonating a man. The second and third place went to Ruby Jones, 1215 West Wylie Street, and Barbara Jean Meadows, 316 East Twelfth Street.

For the contest in which famous characters were represented by costumes, Vera Fagan, daughter of John Fagan, 706 South Rogers won first place with a perfectly arranged George Washington costume. Dorothy May McConville, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles McConville, took second place with an imitation of Peter Rabbit. Mary Lou Head, 702 West Wylie Street, was dressed as a charming “Snow White.”

Museum Store … What’s New

- Seasonal Items
- Nostalgic children’s toys, books & crafts
- Note Cards
- Monroe County Coverlet
- Clay City Pottery
- Local History and General Interest Books
- Genealogy Items
- Unique Gift Wrap
- Calendar Towels
- Armatale Metal Plate depicting Courthouse

REMEMBER all Society members receive a 10% discount

The Museum Store has 35+ old-fashioned recipe books. Most are priced below four dollars. They make great stocking stuffers or a great old-fashioned twist to your Thanksgiving meal.
"Genie" News from Other Places

New Historic Sites Survey
The latest survey of historic sites and buildings in Bloomington can now be accessed on-line. Go to: http://www.city.bloomington.in.us/hand/ and click on the Historic Preservation icon. The last survey, conducted in 1986, identified 680 sites and structures. The new survey, completed in 2001, lists more than 2,500 properties, reflecting the creation of many new historic districts and the expansion of old ones in recent years. If you click on “2001 Survey Results” and then “Old Library,” you will see an image of our building and a description of the Old Library district. There is also a map highlighting the various historic districts. (From BRI News, August 2003, and the web site.)

Federal Land Title Records
The Bureau of Land Management web site has over two million federal land title records from more than thirty states, including Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Go to: http://www.glorecords.blm.gov to search for an ancestor’s original land patent and request a copy of the document. The site provides a source of information on the initial transfer of land titles from the Federal Government to individuals. In addition to verifying title transfers, a researcher can associate individuals with specific locations. There are special resources for beginning genealogists. (From the Clay County Researcher, August 2003, and the web site.)

New Indiana State Librarian
Barbara R. Maxwell became the thirtieth director of the Indiana State Library on 21 April 2003. As the new State Librarian, she says, “I want to expand the reach of the State Library and to raise our level of visibility within the Indiana community so that as many people as possible know what great resources and staff we have to help them with their research and information needs.”

The Indiana State Library and Historical Building is nearing the end of a two-year renovation period. The reshaped building will allow easier access to the collections within the library, including the Indiana Division, Genealogy Division, and Reference and Government Services Division. A grand reopening is planned for later this year. (From ISL Connection, July 2003)

Web Sites
Some worthwhile web sites mentioned in recent issues of Family Tree News Service (http://www.familytreemagazine.com/newsletter.asp):

*Canadian Soldiers’ World War I Diaries. Follow a Canadian ancestor’s troop through World War I at: http://www.archives.ca/02/020152_e.html

*The Canadian Genealogy Centre Web site has launched a new immigration database that will help trace immigrant ancestors who became Canadian citizens in the early twentieth century. The database, created by the Jewish Genealogical Societies of Ottawa and Montreal, contains the names of approximately 200,000 Canadian immigrants who received naturalization certificates between 1915 and 1932. It is available at: http://www.genealogy.gc.ca/01/010203_e.html

*Irish Newspaper Announcements, 1817–1823. Find records of your ancestors in a searchable index of more than 15,000 birth, marriage, and death announcements. Available at: http://www.irishindex.ca

Photographs Needed
The Society is seeking photographs of the businesses and activities that have been on the Bloomington Square from 1960s-1990s. Also seeking general Monroe County photos from 1920’s to recent.

IGS 2004 Conference—Bloomington
By Michael Maben

On Saturday, 3 April 2004, the Indiana Genealogical Society will hold its annual conference at the Bloomington Convention Center. This will be the first time the IGS conference has been held in Monroe County. The main speaker for the conference will be Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak (yes, that is really her name). Megan lives in Williamsburg, Virginia and was the lead researcher for the Ancestors series on PBS. She is the author of In Search of Our Ancestors and Honoring Our Ancestors, along with numerous articles. Megan’s topics for the conference include DNA testing, reverse genealogy, Ellis Island research, and remembering our ancestors.

Other speakers for the conference include Randi Richardson, speaking on obituary research (“Dead Do Tell Tales”) and Monroe County records; Indian University history professor James Madison, speaking on pioneer migration into Indiana; and Julian Livingston, speaking on developing and maintaining a local genealogical web site.

The registration fee is $17 for IGS members and $21 for nonmembers if received by 20 March 2004. After March 20, the fee is $25 at the door. The registration form is available on the IGS web site at: http://www.IndGenSoc.org or by writing the IGS at P.O. Box 10507, Fort Wayne, IN 46852-0507. You may also request a form by writing to Michael Maben (South Central District Director, Indiana Genealogical Society, and also a proud member of the Monroe County Historical Society!) at 1212 South Barnes Drive, Bloomington, IN 47401-8666 or calling him at (812) 331-2128.
Bloomington's Stone Lamp Posts
Continued from page 3

are falling, one by one. Another on the south side of the square joined the ranks of the fallen this morning when knocked over by a taxi. The city's ornamental lighting system around the square was established in 1910, the same year the downtown streets were paved. Under the first administration of John G. Harris, the city was improved by new lights. R. L. Morgan, then city attorney, lead the movement and persuaded the stone companies to donate material for new light posts, nearly half of which have been destroyed. 120 light posts, with three globes surmounting a stone pillar on a heavy cubic base, were put up at 50 foot intervals on College Avenue and Walnut Street from 3rd to 7th Streets and on Kirkwood Avenue and 6th Street from Morton Street to Washington Street. That was 12 years ago. Now, out of the 120 original posts only 62 remain. The other 58 have been destroyed through accidents from time to time, similar to that which occurred today. A few of the remaining posts resemble the “leaning tower of Pisa” and many have been repaired by the city street department. Of the 58 posts that have been destroyed, eight have been replaced by metal ones, three on College Avenue, one on Walnut Street and four on Kirkwood Avenue. The remaining ones are marked, some with the bases and others by merely the dead wires coming up out of the sidewalk. On each of the four above named streets, there were originally 30 light posts. Now there 10 on College Avenue, 14 on Walnut Street, 17 on Kirkwood Avenue and 21 on 6th Street. At the rate the posts have been destroyed in the past 12 years it will be only about a decade more until there will be no lights whatever around the square.

24 July 1922: Sixty ornamental electric light post toppled over yesterday evening just east of Henry & Kerr’s Bakery. A large Premier touring car, belonging to A. L. Nelson, 628 Eastern Avenue, Indianapolis, was parked directly in front of the post on east Kirkwood Avenue. Another car, a Monroe “4”, according to witnesses, attempted to turn around and backed into the standing car. It hit quite hard, for the large machine was knocked up on the sidewalk, striking the post and it fell over. Luckily it fell sideways and not on the machine. The post was shattered into many pieces and is entirely useless. The offending machine went east on Kirkwood and turned south on Washington Street, disappearing. It is not known whose car it was. The Indianapolis car was not damaged with the exception of having a spoke in the spare wheel on the rear broken when the Monroe hit it. The ornamental posts, known as “Morgan’s Monuments” are going fast. Three have been destroyed in the last few days. The one which fell over on the car belonging to Paul Helmsburg, on west Kirkwood, was not broken at the time of the accident and was laid down beside the curb. Some car has run into it and broken it so that it cannot be used again.

19 February 1924: The first of the new electric lights on 10th street went down this morning when the one on the corner of 10th and College was struck by an auto and broken.

3 June 1925: Last night for $17,932, the city council contracted for installing the revised boulevard lighting system around the court house square with the Smith Electric Company of this city. The lamp posts for the system are to be furnished by the King Post Company... The whole system is being put in as a repair job in which the old system merely is being revised rather than being replaced by an entirely new one. The new system will use boulevard lamp posts similar to those now in use on East Tenth Street, of cast iron about 11 feet high, using a high candle power lamp in a refractor shade. The posts will weigh about 500 pounds and will be placed more than two feet from the curbing to prevent automobile fenders from knocking them over. There was much opposition to the proposed improvement because of the present financial condition and high tax rate of the city.

4 June 1925: Bloomington is to have a new lighting system in the business district. The Council let the contract last night to the Smith Electric Co., at a price of about $18,000. They will be of metal and will be set two feet back of the curb to save them from the destructive automobile. The beautiful stone lamp post

Continued on page 7
All-New Hands-On History Programs!

The History Center is excited to announce seven brand-new programs for students:

- **BUTTONS & BONNETS**: Simple Machines at Work
- **CABINS**: Building Strong Structures
- **COMMUNITIES THEN & NOW**: Learning from the Past, Forming the Future
- **THE FLORA & FAUNA OF MONROE COUNTY**: Relationships between Early Settlers & Nature
- **QUILTS & PATTERNS**: Covers that Tell Stories
- **TOYS, TOYS, TOYS!**: Play from Yesterday to Today
- **WHEELS & WAGONS**: Simple Machines at Work

These workshops are being advertised to local teachers for $1 per student, with a focus on 3rd through 5th grade students. All programs can be delivered in schools in a “Hands-On History” program, or at the History Center, along with a guided tour of the museum. These programs comply with the Indiana Academic Standards, and teachers who book a program will receive a Bibliography and Supplemental Activities. And, every student will receive a surprise, in addition to the projects they complete in each program!

Museum Educator & Volunteer Coordinator, Rachael Himsel, is in the midst of developing these workshops, and is excited to begin teaching them. Since they will be interactive, **VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED** to assist in these programs! Please call Rachael at 332.2517 if you have teaching experience, or simply enjoy working with children.

Also, if you or someone you know enjoys working with wood and building, please let us know! We are in need of a volunteer to work on exhibits and build specific pieces for programs.

**SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

Please call the History Center if you can donate any of these items:

- Wood scraps (boards or blocks)
- Corn husks (clean and dry)
- Fabric scraps (especially felt)
- Buttons
- Yarn, string, or thread
- Small stones or pebbles (limestone preferred)
- Construction paper
- Matte board or cardboard
- Potpourri or dried flowers
- Popsicle sticks
- Glue sticks

**Bloomington’s Stone Lamp Posts**

Continued from page 6

system which was put in a few years ago has been a failure because of the automobiles wrecking the lamp posts. The stone posts had no bracing and were simply set at the edge of the curb. Every time an automobile struck one it toppled over, breaking into a hundred pieces. The wonder is that no child has crippled or killed by one of the falling posts. There have been several narrow escapes. (This *Daily Telephone* newspaper carried a picture of the new posts.)

2 November 1925: During the festivities Saturday night one of the old stone electric posts that had been placed at the entrance of the courthouse park on the west side, was knocked from its base and with the lamp upon it was demolished. One by one, the stone posts go—and the sooner the better for they were always dangerously anchored. Several children came near being struck by the fall Saturday night.

*With a tip of the hat to Henry Wahl!*
Get Your Calendar Here!

A 2004 Monroe Historical Society calendar is in the planning stages. It will feature historic photographs of Monroe County Schools. Although some buildings have been lost over the years, many are still in use for various purposes. Stay tuned for more information!

Volunteer Training

All library volunteers were invited to attend a training session on 11 August 2003 conducted by Elizabeth Knapp, Genealogy Library Director, and Loretta Condra, Past Library Director. The session covered the goals of the library, a review of its procedures, and an introduction to the collections. The topics included library hours, parking options, the volunteer schedule, opening the library, greeting visitors, answering the phone, responding to queries, research rates, sale of publications from the Museum Store, photocopying costs and policies, accepting donated items, and procedures for handling fragile materials. Volunteers were reminded that the library contains a variety of resources, including the card catalog, computer files, printed books, census indexes, maps, newspaper clipping files, cemetery information, family histories, microfilms, community files, vertical files, city directories, yearbooks, deed records, probate records, mortgage records, and much, much more! The training session was well attended and provided an excellent overview of the library’s operations for both old and new volunteers. Future sessions and a volunteer guide are planned.

History Center Kiosk to Be Available

Good news for local history researchers! Anytime the museum doors are open, a computer will be available to the public near the entrance which lists our museum’s artifacts, Monroe County censuses, burials, marriages, and land records indexed by seller or buyer. The index of land will run from the startup of the county about 1817 until 1864. The land records are especially useful to genealogists for finding the members of families before the census of 1850. The 1850 census is the very first to list all family members instead of just the head. In the land records the family members are typically listed when the land is sold on the death of the head. This record is available whether there is a will or not. Expanded services will be added as more research and analysis is completed.

—Julian Livingston

New in the Library

How many weeks, months, or years has it been since you visited the Monroe County Historical Society’s Genealogy Library? We’ve been adding things to the collection on a regular basis. Plan to stop by soon, because we know you’ll find new information, be enlightened, or just enjoy browsing. Below are a few of the new items available on the shelves:


**Monroe County, Indiana, Will Book 1 (1818–1841)**, transcribed by Randi Richardson, indexed by Angel Gebhart (2002). Gift from Randi Richardson and Angel Gebhart.

**The Dusty Road Leads to Elkinsville**, by Robert Cross (2002); and **The Town That Was**, by Robert Cross and Oliver and Nancy Bruce Deckard. Gifts from Myrtle E. Pietsch.

**Scrapbook of Waterworks (School) PTA, 1945–46**. Gift from Esther Minnick.


Ask Genie

Dear Genie:

I recently bought a wonderful old Monroe County house, but I don’t know anything about its history. How can I find out the name of the architect, the date the house was built, its historical significance, and the name of the original owner?

Answer:

Depending upon the location of the house, you could begin by consulting either the City of Bloomington Interim Report (1986; on-line version 2001) or the Monroe County Interim Report (1989). These are organized by township and historic district, with maps to help determine the location of particular buildings. Each listing provides the building’s description (including the historic name, if known, which may indicate the original owner), address, style, approximate date of construction, architect/builder, and rating for architectural/historical significance.

Once you find out the name of the original owner, you can check to see if the family is mentioned in local histories, such as Monroe County, Indiana Family Heritage (1987). The MCHS Genealogy Library’s vertical files contain information on buildings of historical interest. Deed and mortgage records, plat maps, and city directories may also provide useful information.

If you have a question for ASK GENIE, you may send it to: Ask Genie, Attention: MCHS Genealogy Library, 202 E. Sixth Street, Bloomington, IN 47408, or monroehistsoc@hotmail.com. Please keep in mind that space does not permit a response to every question or lengthy research.

News from the Genealogy Library


Monroe County, Indiana, Index of Names of Persons and of Firms, compiled by Maurice Holmes and Tom Bloomfield (1979). Library acquisition.


The library extends its thanks to all those who have donated items. I’ll tell you about more additions in the next issue of the Monroe County Historian. Be sure to watch for them. See you at the Library!

—Loretta Condra
School Day Memories: 1934–1938
By Kitty Burkhart

From the fourth through the eighth grade, I attended the one-room South Union School in Van Buren Township, located at the intersection of May and Leonard Springs Roads. The school was at the end of a poorly graveled lane just a short distance west from the Rockport Road about seven miles south of Bloomington. It was a long, rectangular building, with six long windows on each side covered by heavy wire mesh to protect them from possible breakage during active ball games played in the schoolyard at recess. From a narrow porch on the south side of the building, the school was entered through a center door flanked by panels on each side with a two-pane transom above. A cloakroom just inside the door was lined with coat hooks for outer clothing and narrow shelves on each side for dinner buckets. The boys claimed the left side and the girls, the right. Near the door to the schoolroom stood a water bucket and a dipper. Students took turns filling it from a hand pump in the schoolyard. Students walked to school, as there were no buses and very few families had a car. There was no artificial lighting in the school, since electric power was not available in the county then.

Two large blackboards flanked the chimney behind the teacher’s desk situated in the center of the room. A large circular drum stove occupied quite a bit of space on the left side of the room near the front window. A favorite trick played on the teacher by the older boys was to place a terrapin (turtle) on top of the pipe leading from the stove to the chimney so that just about the time it got above the desk, the warmth from the stove caused it to topple on its unsuspecting victim below, much to the delight of the whole school. There were two long double desks on the left side of the room near the stove which were assigned to the “privileged” eighth graders. (There were two girls and one boy in that grade the year I graduated, so the lone male got one all to himself.) There were three outbuildings on the school grounds: a large shed painted brick red, where coal for the furnace was stored, and two outhouses, one for the girls and one for the boys. (It was the assignment of one of the boys, living next door to the school, to bank the fire, carry out the ashes, fill the coal bucket at the end of the day, and fire up the stove before students arrived for school the next day.)

The school day began when the teacher stood on the front porch ringing a hand bell to announce it was time for students to take their seats. (This same bell is now located in the schoolroom on the second floor of the Museum.) There was also a large school bell mounted on a post in the schoolyard which was often used to signal the beginning of the school day. As soon as everyone was seated at their desks, “Opening Exercises” were conducted by the teacher. Students recited the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the singing of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” The teacher then read selections from classic literature and well-known stories such as Treasure Island, Heidi, Moby Dick, Tom Sawyer, and others. This part of the day was always looked forward to by everyone.

At the conclusion of the “Opening Exercises,” each grade, beginning with the first grade, came to the front of the room to “recite” their assigned lesson for a specific subject while seated on a long, plain bench with no back, commonly called a “recitation” bench. The remainder of the students used this time to study until it was their turn to be called. Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, along with Geography, English, Grammar, History, Physiology, and Spelling were the subjects taught by one teacher to all eight grades. It wasn’t unusual for first-grade students to be competing successfully against the upper grades in spelling and ciphering matches by the end of the school year. Large maps of the world, the United States, and other countries hung behind the teacher’s desk. These maps, rolled up like window blinds, were pulled down during “recitation” time. The South Union School had a small reference library housed in a bookcase with glass doors at the back of the room.

Although the selection of titles was limited, the opportunity for students to “borrow” a book to read at their desk during their free time or to enjoy on bad days when it wasn’t possible to play outside during recess greatly nurtured their love of reading.

A special treat was the twice-a-month visit of the Monroe County Library Bookmobile. This well-equipped vehicle, driven by its intrepid driver, Lois Henze, had racks of books on each side with glass doors which could be raised so books could be examined and chosen by its eager patrons. Lois was not only a full-time librarian, she was the Bookmobile mechanic, who changed its flat tires, dealt with muddy and icy roads, and coped with many other unexpected emergencies. Because of the difficulty of visiting the library being able to actually have access to the bookmobile was a rare privilege.
Newsletter Sponsorships Now Available

The *Monroe County Historian* is now offering newsletter sponsorships to local businesses. MCHS is proud to announce the first six sponsors: Cookies by Design, Oliver Winery, RE/MAX, Sue Ann’s Scrapbook Shoppe, United Commerce Bank and Smithville Telephone.

Ads are approximately 2 1/4" high x 3 1/2" wide. Each ad runs $50 an issue. For more information or to arrange an ad, please call MCHS at 332-2517.

Support MCHS and Promote Your Own Business

This is just one of the great images that can be seen in the exhibit

185 Years of the Bloomington Square
June 23—Nov. 24

Now through November 24, 2003

“*In Style*” Exhibit
Men’s and women’s clothing accessories from 1850-1950.
Your Membership is Key …

Memberships Make Great Gifts, Too

As most of you know, your membership expiration date appears on this newsletter’s label.

Please check it now……...

Your membership dues are the keys to the Society’s success. All membership income goes toward operating expenses and is a vital part of our budgeted income.

Individual – Family

☐ Basic $25
☐ Friend $50
☐ Sustaining $100-249
☐ Contributor $250-499
☐ Patron $500+

Corporate - Service Organizations

☐ Level 1 $100-249
☐ Level 2 $250-499
☐ Level 3 $500-999
☐ Level 4 $1000+

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

Name
Address

Method of Payment

☐ Check
☐ MasterCard
☐ Visa

Credit Card # Exp. date

Signature