Two newspaper clippings in the Genealogy Library’s vertical files offer information on black settlement in south-central Indiana. Free blacks migrated to Indiana as early as 1820 from the eastern seaboard states of Virginia and North Carolina in search of greater personal freedom. South-to-north migration took place after the Civil War, frequently from Kentucky. In Monroe County, black settlements reportedly existed west of Bloomington in Hensonburg and Woodyard. (“Blacks in Search of Their Local Roots,” Indiana Daily Student, 18 February 1977.)

An article in the Bloomington Telephone (4 April 1943) details the importing of a colony of free blacks from the South by several leading farmers of Owen County. In the 1870s, “a heavy crop was in prospect and there was a shortage of labor in southern Indiana.” To avoid “a loss of crops in the field from the lack of men to get them in,” the farmers sent a representative to the South, where “he recruited a number of families who had been slaves until the Civil war set them free.” The colony boarded a passenger coach and set out for Spencer, Indiana. News of their imminent arrival caused consternation in some quarters. “The morning they were to arrive a large and hostile crowd assembled at the Spencer station.” But trouble was averted when a wire was sent to Gosport and the coach with the Southern workers was switched from the train.

The interested farmers and others met that day and “made arrangements to protect the new comers. Another wire was sent to Gosport to send the coach on to Spencer by the afternoon train. Hundreds of people watched them detrain at Spencer but there was no trouble, as the farmers were well equipped with guns and clubs to protect their proteges [sic].” The new arrivals spent the night in Spencer, where they “were housed and fed in a down-town hall.” The next day, “they were scattered among several farms. Soon the good nature of the colored people and their willingness to work gained the good will of Owen county people generally.”

A few years later, two of these black families, headed by William Arnold and Mose Hafford, moved to Bloomington. The Hafford family settled in a cabin on north Madison Street, which had been erected by John Blair in 1820. Three generations of this family lived the Blair cabin until the last members moved out in

February is “Black History Month,” a time to commemorate African-Americans who have changed the world. Celebrating Black History began in 1926, when Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard Ph.D., initiated “Negro History Week.” Dr. Woodson, a historian, chose the second week in February because it included the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, the Bicentennial (200th birthday) of the U.S.A., the week-long observance was extended to the entire month of February in order to have enough time for celebratory programs and activities.

The City of Bloomington, along with the Monroe County History Center, will be presenting a number of special programs this month. The City of Bloomington web site (www.bloomington.in.gov) has a complete listing of February activities. The Black History Community Calendar can be accessed through “Related Links.”

Did You Know?
Dr. Charles Richard Drew (1904-1950) was an American medical doctor and surgeon who started the idea of a blood bank and a system for the long-term preservation of blood plasma. His ideas revolutionized the medical profession and have saved many, many lives.

To find out more about African-American inventors go to www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/aframer/
Exhibits

“Honey, Your Slip Is Showing”
Exhibit closes March 20, 2005.

It features numerous lovely examples of lingerie from the mid 1800s to the mid 1900s.

“On the Town”

There are many hidden treasures in the History Center’s collection. This is a rare opportunity to view the collection’s beautiful evening and formal dresses. The dresses are highlighted with detailed embroidery and sequins.

“This Far By Faith: Black Hoosier Heritage”
February 1-28, 2005

Black Hoosiers made distinctive and lasting contributions to Indiana culture. This traveling exhibit and photo collage contains over 50 photographs of events, people, and places of importance in Indiana history, ranging from 19th century portraits of black families to pictures of almost contemporary civil rights activities and sports and entertainment figures.

Upcoming Exhibits

“Lullaby Baby” Baby quilts, christening gowns and infant items.

“Guardians of the Soul, Indiana’s Remarkable Cemetery Sculptures” Photos by John Bower

“Clara Kinsey: Behind Every Great Man is a Greater Woman”

“Monroe County Medical

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

Winter Hours
The History Center is closed on days when Bloomington schools have cancelled classes due to weather.

• February 13 Center School’s Historical Marker Ceremony.
Prior to the History Center, this site was home to Center School or the “Colored School.” This ceremony will begin at 2 pm and will include special guest speakers and the unveiling of the sign. Refreshments will be served.

• February 17 Black History, Bloomington Style. This interesting program will be presented by Betty Bridgewater at 7 pm. It will cover the past, present and future of the African-American community in Monroe County.

• February 22 This Old Home 101, part 2
3 – 4 pm The Monroe County History Center is sponsoring a series of programs this winter that feature topics related to restoration and upkeep of a historic home. The second program in this series will include tips and tricks related to the installation of trim, as well as coping vs. mitering. There will also be a discussion on how to determine the architectural style of a house, along with the how tos in working with plaster and drywall. Participants are encouraged to bring questions and/or photographs. Speaker will be Lance Rogers, a professional in the architectural restoration field.

• February 26 Irish Music Concert. Please contact Mike Casey at 339-8658 for more information.

• February 28 Annual Fundraising Auction See insert for more details.

Get Aboard the Bus for Lyles Station
February 25, 2005
See insert for more details.

• March 10 Bloomington Hospital Centennial This program will highlight the development of the Bloomington Hospital over the past 100 years.

• March 29 This Old Home 101, part 3
This program begins at 3 pm and will complete the series of historic home maintenance programs. The main topics will be the use of lime cement and concrete, as well as working with tile and bricks. The speaker will be Lance Rogers, whose profession is architectural restoration. His specialty is the “trowel trades”, so bring your toughest questions.

Monroe County History Center
Kari Price, Executive Director
202 East Sixth Street
Bloomington, IN 47408

Office/Museum Genealogy Library
812-332-2517 812-355-5588

E-mail: mchm@kiva.net
Web Address: www.kiva.net/~mchm

Museum/Store Genealogy Library
Tue–Sat 10 am – 4 pm
Wed–Fri 1–4 pm

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Rachel McCarty, President
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Student Nursing Program of the Local Council of Women of Bloomington

By Julian Livingston

Having done some personal investigation into the early days of the “Local Council of Women of Bloomington” and their Student Nursing Program at Bloomington Hospital, I thought it might be of interest to share that story. My aunt, Murel Frances Campbell, was one of the four nurses of the 1931 class of the Bloomington Hospital School of Nursing. She attained her coveted diploma on 23 April 1931, with its gold seal of the “Local Council of Women of Bloomington” being the only authority needed to create her a nurse. It is probably difficult for twenty-first century people to understand the effort she must have put into that milestone. She had started grade school in the Owen County’s Hardscrabble school house no earlier than the age of eight and was said to have met great resistance from her father in trying to attend any high school. Farm families in those days believed a woman’s place was in the home, and formal education played little part in what a woman needed to know. But Murel’s dreams outstripped those of her father, siblings, and classmates. By mid-June of 1928, she had submitted the application, convinced the principal of Spencer High School to file a “Certificate of High School Study” form and had a personal interview, likely with the Superintendent of Nursing at Bloomington Hospital.

From later records, I know Murel’s high school courses were not complete by that September of 1928 for at least one year’s worth of courses, so it is difficult to imagine how persuasive and determined she must have appeared in that interview to gain admission to the program. Once through those hurdles, there remained a physical, a uniform fitting, a dental certificate, the application to the state board, a birth certificate, a costly student nurses’ workbook, and the obtaining of personal equipment. After graduating from the nursing program, she worked for Bloomington Hospital where family tradition and a Bloomington city directory for 1931 tell us she was already a supervisor of nurses.

Murel went on to have a short career in public health nursing in southern Indiana. She earned an education degree from Indiana University, but with the coming of WWII, she returned to nursing as a civilian nurse aboard military hospital ships. There she obtained her commission and commanded training companies of student nurses. Her emphasis on education permeated our family and positively influenced me and many of my cousins. For her day, she had an unusual vision of education and found a strong ally in the “Local Council of Women of Bloomington.”

The Echo, a senior class yearbook of that Bloomington Hospital Nursing Program, has a pretty good picture of Murel. There is a copy at the Monroe County Public Library and several at Indiana University’s Lilly Library. The program had twenty-six grads (named) between 1911 and 1927. Other documentation found at the Lilly Library describes the program in a way we would find semi-militaristic with severe punishments for even minor infractions. Minimal acceptable performance emphasized academics, unquestioned obedience to superiors, owning and proper wearing of the nurse’s uniform with cap and emblems, slavish attention to details of personal bathing, sleeping with open windows, reading of routines and orders, insistence on a negligible social life, and lights out at 10 p.m.

All in all, I would expect this program to be unattractive to today’s youth, but I have to say, it did attract exactly the tough, persevering sort of candidate that was needed in that day. I also see a certain “give” in the ability of that program to make an exception for Murel’s lack of preparation if they felt she could make the grade anyway.

Time is Running Out to get your 2005 Calendar

This is a must-have calendar that features photos of old schools of Monroe County. It is a perfect way to keep track of your appointments and to support MCHS.
News from the Library

Monroe County 2005 School Calendar Still Available!

The Monroe County Historical Society Centennial Celebration 2005 School Calendar is still available in the Museum Store. The calendars were produced as a fund-raiser for the Monroe County Historical Society and also serve to commemorate our society’s one-hundredth anniversary. Help support MCHS with your purchase of this keepsake item!

New History of St. Mark’s Donated

The Genealogy Library has gratefully received a copy of the “History of St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, 100 North 46 Bypass, Bloomington, Indiana, 1954–2004,” donated by Glenda Murray, who also helped prepare it. The 42-page booklet is a revised and updated version of an earlier history compiled in 1994 for the church’s fortieth anniversary. The new publication includes additional information and many photographs. It may be requested from the library’s vertical file on Methodist churches.

New Equipment

The library’s new photocopier produces much better copies than the old one! A donated scanner is also in operation and is especially useful for making legible copies of old newspaper clippings that have darkened with age. New storage boxes for the aerial maps of Monroe County provide protection for these frequently used items. Easier access to these maps, which were donated by the Farm Service Bureau, is due to Julian Livingston’s finding aid. Storage boxes for the Louden Title Company books have also been acquired.

Publications

Pam Wasmer, head of the Indiana Room at the Monroe County Public Library, has given our library an index of the 1930 Monroe County Census to publish. Liz Knapp, Genealogy Library Director, will pursue an exchange of publications with Lawrence County.

History Center Wish List

- Laptop Computers
- Digital Camera
- Laminator
- Paper Cutter
- Adobe Acrobat Writer software
- Adobe Photoshop software
- Fossils that could be found in area

Thank you Rudi Turner for the Mastodon Tooth!

Objects Needed for Upcoming Exhibits

The Monroe County History Center would like to temporarily borrow the following items from the community for upcoming exhibits. The “loan” is for 3-6 months. If you are willing to loan an object to us or have questions, please call 332-2517.

- Vintage Baby Quilts, along with christening gowns, baby furniture and other infant things
- Photographs of Clara Kinsey or her girl scout troops
- Vintage girl scout uniforms, badges, etc. 1930s-1950s
- Photographs of yourself at the old public library
News from Other Places

Indiana Genealogical Society Annual Meeting

The Indiana Genealogical Society will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, 2 April 2005, at the Holiday Inn in Anderson, Indiana. The featured speaker will be George Morgan. Mr. Morgan is a popular speaker on genealogy and writes a weekly column in Ancestry.com’s daily electronic newsletter. There will be local speakers as well, along with a variety of vendors. For a registration form, go to www.indgensoc.org or contact Michael Maben at mmaben@indiana.edu or 331-2128. —Michael Maben

BRI Acquires Hinkle-Garton Farmstead

The Hinkle-Garton Farmstead, located at 2920 East Tenth Street in Bloomington, was donated to Bloomington Restorations, Inc. on 1 December 2004. Daisy Garton, who died in February 2003, lived on the property for most of her life. She expressed the wish that the farm be given to a not-for-profit organization that would preserve the property and establish a museum. She provided an endowment that will act as “seed money” for getting the project underway. The site, listed on the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures, is unique because of its fine Queen Anne style farmhouse and intact group of farm buildings and has long been a landmark on East Tenth Street.

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.

- Entrees
- Desserts
- Salads
- Vegetables
- Appetizers
- Local Restaurants’ Favorites
- Wild and Wacky
- Grandma’s Favorite
- Special War Recipes
- Local Restaurants’ Favorites

Submissions should be made online 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.

Web Sites

* National Gravesite Locator. To search more than 3 million veterans’ cemetery records, courtesy of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, go to: http://www.cem.va.gov

* Ohio History. This site on the history of Delphos (Allen County), Ohio, has databases of cemetery records, war casualties, and death records. Go to: http://www.delphos-ohio.com/history/mainpage.htm

* 100 Most Common U.S. Surnames. Think your research suffers from common-surname syndrome? Go to: http://genealogy.about.com/library/weekly/aa_common_surnames.htm

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New and Renewed Members

Basic
Frank Barnhart
Don C. Bennett
Larry and Mary Lou Brown
Jo Burgess
Frankie A. Hammond
Warren Henegar
George & Nancy Hettenhouse
Linda Hunt
B.J.K. Irvine
Marion & Lucy Jacobs
Connie Young Kitchen
Gary Lane
Jane Laughlin
Carl A. Litten
Doran and MaryEllen May
Tom and Sheila McCune
Patrick and Cheryl Munson
Jean K. Nakhnikian
Harry & Barbara Ann Patton
David Price
James Ramsey
Earl and Lee G. Riggs
Sue Shelden
Marilyn Skirvin
Bill and Gayle Stuebe
Alvin & Bonita Trisler
James Walden
Jeanne Walters
David Walters
Gloria D. Westfall
Martin Witkiewicz
Jane Zebendon

Friend
Ralph Brown
Henry and Alice Gray
Nat & Patty Hill
Kay Hollingsworth
Quentin and Natalie Hope
Ed & Debbie Hudelson
Peter P. Jacobi
Nancy E. Jonas
David Jones
Tom & Jeana Kapczynski
James D. Lundy
David Nord
George M. Smerk
Terry Thompson

Century Club
Richard & Cathy Beard
Bernard Clayton, Jr.
Jeffrey L. Davidson
Tim and Cheri DeBruicker
Bob and Carolyn Doty
Jim and Nancy Kryway
Ward W. Moore
James and Janice Peterson
David Rogers

Contributor
Martin and DeAnna Bassett
M.Phil and Margaret Hathaway

Patron
Cary Curry
Jerry and Phyllis McCullough
A Short Sketch of the Showers Bros. Co.
By Randi Richardson

The Showers Bros. Company of Monroe County, Indiana, was once the largest furniture company in the world. It had its beginning about 1868 when two of the three Showers brothers, James and William, took over the business from their father, Charles, a cabinet maker. Charles Hull, the youngest of the brothers, joined the firm later.

In 1872, using real estate and the factory contents as collateral, the brothers expanded the factory and relocated it at Ninth and Grant. A few years later, in 1884, a devastating fire reduced the factory to ashes. (A newspaper account of the fire is included below.) With the help of the community, the factory was rebuilt at Eighth and Madison and reopened sixty days later.

For many years the company prospered, but as members of the Showers family died, and society in general fell on hard times, the factory downsized. The doors were finally closed for good in 1956.

An exhibit of Showers Bros. artifacts is a permanent part of the MCHS museum collection. Additionally, the Genealogy Library has a notebook outlining a Showers family history that includes copies of original documents and newspaper clippings of interest.

Although a large majority of the Showers Bros. factory buildings were razed through the years, a few buildings were kept for use as a storage facility. With extensive renovation in the 1990s, those buildings now house city offices in some of the most architecturally interesting structures in Bloomington.

Showers Furniture Factory Destroyed in Fire
By Randi Richardson

From the Bloomington (Indiana) Republican Progress, 13 August 1884, p. 2. (NOTE: Portions of this news item were omitted herein as indicated by the ellipses.)

STILL OUT OF LUCK
Disastrous Daylight Fire
A Loss of $60,000 with $20,000 Insurance

It was just 4:15 PM Saturday, and in Showers Bros. Bedstead Factory the whirr of machinery and the escape of steam from the heavy boilers could alone be heard. In the office, William and (Charles) Hull Showers and James Hendrix were beginning the work of paying employees. Money was piled up in rows on the table, and as each man was handed the amount due him, it carried with it visions of contentment and plenty at each laborer’s home. Suddenly the cry of fire was heard, and the money was hastily swept into convenient baskets, the books were taken from the safe, and the men who were in the office rushed to the west side or ell of the building only to find that long tongues of flame were reaching out in every portion of the upper story.

The main building is of brick with an iron roof, but a two-story ell stands on the west side and joins the brick. The fire was first discovered in the attic of this building directly over the heads of men then at work, and it spread so rapidly and burned so fiercely that those men had no time to gather up their tools. It could only have caught by sparks falling to the shingle roof below.

An alarm brought the fire department and an immense crowd of people to the factory when everything possible, under the circumstances, was done to save the building, but it seemed to be filled with flame, and in less time than is required to tell it, the entire structure was consumed with all of its valuable and costly machinery. The engines, aided by citizens who worked like heroes, saved the surrounding houses which several times caught fire. The brick walls fell in on the boilers, and for a while quite a panic was created by the suggestion that an explosion was possible, but the safety valves were opened by the falling brick, and a disaster of this nature was thus averted.

Several years ago the Showers Bros. established their principal lumber yard a square away from the factory so that but a

Continued on page 7
Showers Furniture Factory Destroyed in Fire
Continued from page 6

small amount, comparatively, of the lumber was destroyed. The total insurance carried by the firm was $30,600 divided as follows...Of this it will be seen that there is just $20,000 placed on the building and contents. The agency of Rogers & Woolley carried policies as follows...

Showers Bros. have built up their business within the past ten years, beginning on nothing. Last January an invoice showed that the factory building, machinery, lumber and manufactured goods were worth $90,000, upon which they did not owe one cent. Each member of the firm—William, James and Hull Showers—own good residences, and no three men in southern Indiana could be more prosperous than the Showers Brothers. There has been a lull in business during the month of July, but within the past ten days favorable contracts had been made and some very heavy orders had been secured.

The capacity of the factory was from 800 to 1,000 beds per week. Some 2,500 finished bedsteads were in the factory, ready for shipment, when the fire occurred and, of course, were burned. James Showers had been confined to his house during the week with a carbuncle on one of his knees but was brought down in a buggy on Saturday evening to see the ruins of the factory he had had so much to do with building up. The Showers Bros. could take possession of the McCalla Factory and go on manufacturing bedsteads without interruption. It is on the railroad, too, and would save the expense or hauling, which must be very great.

James Jackson, the painter, is a daring fireman. He climbed on tottering walls and clung to points where few men would care to risk their lives. Charley Batterton and one of the Beatty boys were not far behind Jackson in daring. Bert McGee had left his left hand and arm, and his neck, terribly roasted and will be unfit for duty for some time.

After the regular detail business of the Blaine & Logan Club had been disposed of last Saturday night at the courthouse, Joseph G. McPheeters, Jr., offered a resolution of sympathy for Showers Bros. The resolution was adopted, and William F. Browning then asked the privilege of speaking on the resolution giving it a strong, hearty endorsement and suggesting that a meeting be held on Monday night in the court room to discuss and determine the best means of encouraging Showers Bros. to rebuild. John E. Borland said he would express his sympathy by donating $10. Dr. McPheeters then spoke in favor of taking some steps to induce the Showers Bros. to rebuild at once, and the meeting, on motion, adjourned till Monday night to consider the best mode of procedure.

The payroll included over 100 names. The members of the firm are hard working, energetic men, and the sympathies of the entire community are with them.

The meeting Monday night determined to make an effort to have the “round house” ground donated to Showers Bros. for a factory as the railroad company has not complied with its agreed contract.
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.

Individual – Family
☐ Basic $35
☐ Friend $60
☐ Century Club $100
☐ 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 have a special interest in genealogy.

☐ Check if you are interested in volunteering.

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