**Our Volunteer: Marilyn Skirvin**

By Laura Newton

History is a huge part of Marilyn Skirvin’s background. Living on her family’s 5th generation farm, in a 4th generation farmhouse in Monroe County, it is no wonder that she has an interest in helping make the History Center and events associated with the organization great successes. I have had the pleasure of working with Marilyn on several committees over the years and she always approaches every program or activity with enthusiasm and provides great input which makes for successful outcomes. Since 2005 Marilyn has been Chair and/or co-Chair of the personnel committee, and, being mindful of the limitations a small organization confronts, she has kept a level head and keen eye on what needs to be accomplished.

If you ask Marilyn what her favorite things are about the History Center, she will say they are too numerous to list, but when asked to pick a few she says, “I enjoy the special events, volunteering at the auction, seeing a child’s face light up when they realize they can choose numerous toppings for ice cream at Sundaes on Saturday and seeing them dance in place to the music of the volunteer musicians.” Marilyn also enjoys the relationships that are developed with fellow volunteers and the passion the volunteers exhibit for the organization and History Center.

There have been major changes at the History Center during her six year tenure on the board and she is especially proud to be a part of the organization’s transition to update technology, the staff accepting additional responsibilities, plus the ability to add additional staff and to work with a very engaged board.

Marilyn has two children, Jacob and Brandy, and the apple of her eye is her grandson Eli.

Whether in the public eye or behinds the scenes there is no doubt that you can see the impact Marilyn has had on the History Center.
**Mission Statement**
The mission of the Monroe County Historical Society is to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Monroe County’s history, culture, and natural environment by all.

**Staff**
Managing Director: Diane Ballard
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Jamee Wissink: Exhibits Designer
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jpoling@homefinder.org

**History Center**

**Events Schedule**

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

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

**Civil War Roundtable Meetings**
2nd Tuesday of each month from Sep.-Jun. from 7-8:30pm.

**3rd Thursday Series**
3rd Thursday of the month from Jan.-Nov. a free program is held, usually at 7pm.

**Genealogy Group**
Every 1st Wednesday of odd months.

**April**
THR 8 Annual Meeting & Potluck Dinner, 5:15pm, desserts and drinks provided, bring a dish to share
SUN 11 2nd Annual Craftacular, Hands-on Demonstrations, 12-5pm, Free
TUE 13 Civil War Roundtable: “Battle of Perryville Kentucky,” w/ out-of-town battlefield expert and guest speaker, Michael Willever, 7pm
THR 15 3rd Thursday: “First Ladies of IU,” w/ Laurie Burns McRobbie, 7pm

**May**
WED 5 Genealogy Group: “Monroe County Geographic Information System (GIS),” w/ Christine Friesel, 2pm
TUE 11 Civil War Roundtable: “Civil War Tales,” w/ Deborah Cronin, 7pm
THR 20 3rd Thursday: “Indiana Underground Railroad,” w/ Jeannie Regan-Dinius, 7pm

**June**
TUE 8 Civil War Roundtable: “Legacy Profile Series: Maj Gen Walter Q Gresham and reflections of having both Union and Confederate ancestors,” w/ Bob Willey and Randy Stevenson, 7pm
FRI-SAT 11-12 Annual Benefit Garage Sale, Cook Pharmica
THUR 17 3rd Thursday (Special Limestone Month Programming): “Indiana Bedrock Project,” 7pm
SAT-SUN 19-20 Annual Garden Walk Open House

**Exhibit Schedule**

**Brown Gallery**

“Size Does Matter: The Art of Miniatures from Dollhouses to Coraline”
Closes: May 22
This exhibit celebrates handmade miniatures on loan from local collectors and artisans, including Althea Crome who contributed the featured micro-knit sweater for the movie Coraline.

“Bloomington in Bloom Photos”
By Bloomington Photo Club
Opens: June 15  Closes: Oct. 23
The Bloomington Photography Club members have documented local sites participating in the American in Bloom competition (where cities across the United States compete to win environmental distinctions), held on June 18-19.

**Rechter Gallery**

“The 9 Lives of Quilts”
Closes: July 10
Examine the stages in the “life” of a quilt, from its origins to suggestions for its adaptive reuse and learn how to care for and to preserve your heirloom quilts.

**Community Voices Gallery**

“County Extension Office”
Closes: May 8
This exhibit showcases some of this group’s many programs and activities including: 4-H, Extension Homemakers, Consumer & Family Science Program, and Citizen’s Academy. On the first floor, don’t miss the Extension Homemaker Clubs exhibit.

“Master Gardeners”
Opens: May 22  Closes: Aug 7
The Master Gardener Program is "helping others grow" by providing intensive education in horticultural principles. The exhibit explores the history and the variety of garden projects the group works on throughout the Bloomington community.
Jill Lesh has Stepped Down
Jill Lesh decided to step down from her leadership spot in the History Center, in mid-February. Jill had been Managing Director since March, 2006. During her four-year term she was instrumental in strengthening the organization and its operations. The community’s awareness of and participation in the Center’s activities grew substantially under her guidance. Volunteers, attendance, and programs increased in quality and quantity. Her steady hand earned confidence by all in personnel and budget matters. Jill’s cheerful, patient, and friendly style were a hallmark throughout her time with us. We will all miss her greatly, and wish her well in her new endeavors.

See this newsletter’s insert for the announcement of the new Managing Director.

Handicap Accessible Doors Coming
The Center received a $6,600 grant from the REMC Round Up program to install handicapped door openers for the front entrance and two restrooms.

History Center Welcomes New Associate Genealogy Librarian
Laura Pinhey has joined the staff as Associate Genealogy Librarian. Laura received her MLS degree from IU in 1995, and has worked at Indiana University and the Willard Library in Evansville, and volunteered at the Monroe County Public Library. She is busy in the Library with accessioning, cataloging, research, and other tasks. Stop in and say hello to Laura!

Gala Report
By Rachael Peden McCarty

Donations, table sponsorships, ticket sales and silent auction winning bids from the third annual Monroe County Historical Society Gala, held on Friday evening, February 12, at Cook World Headquarters, helped us raise $10,700, a new gala record.

Historian Dr. James H. Madison treated those attending the event to a wonderful presentation of some of his favorite “Hoosier Heroes.” He also encouraged us to find our own Indiana heroes.

The gala benefits the Founders' Endowment. Interest from the Founders' Endowment is an important part of the MCHS operating budget income.

Two years ago the Founders' Endowment Committee set a goal of raising an additional $50,000 for the endowment in three years. And through our galas, pledges and other donations we have been able to raise $40,000 of that goal. Please consider helping us reach our goal with a tax deductible gift to the Founder's Endowment today.

Auction Report
By Gayle Cook

Thanks to all who helped, the February 22 auction provided good fun, fellowship, food and a gross profit of $3,700.

A special thank-you goes to professional auctioneers Brett Haley and Tod Wesemann, whose generous participation is the key to the annual event's success. We also appreciate those who contributed merchandise, time, food, and vigorous bidding.

Some interesting items sold included a German coverlet, Baccarat crystal, Dansk dish set, two love seats, antique chest, baker's rack, two antique clocks, Longaberger baskets, a pearl necklace, and a framed and signed Bob Knight print. Report from the kitchen: Liz Knapp's peanut butter pie was extraordinary and disappeared much too soon.

If you missed sending donation items to the auction, we'll take those treasures anytime and save them for Bloomington's largest garage sale – the History Center's big event on June 11 and 12.
Not To Be Missed

**Craftacular**  
2nd Annual Spectacular Craft Event at the Monroe County History Center  
**Sunday, April 11**  
12-5pm  
**FREE OPEN HOUSE**

Craft•ac•u•lar\kraf-’ta-kyə-lar\  
1: An event where people come together to delight in all things craft.  
2: When something is both crafty and spectacular.

This spectacular craft event will feature hands-on learning opportunities and craft demonstrations, make-n-take craft creation labs, free museum admission, information tables, and will serve as a place for the community to come together while crafting.

Are you interested in hosting a free booth or leading a workshop at Craftacular? If so, visit the website at [http://www.monroehistory.org/events/events.htm](http://www.monroehistory.org/events/events.htm) and click on the event for more information and an exhibit application. If you have any questions, contact Lisa at 812-332-2517, education@monroehistory.org.

**“Underground Railroad in Indiana”**  
Thursday, May 20  
7pm  
with Jeannie R. Regan-Dinius

Jeannie, the Director of Special Initiatives at the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, will discuss the Underground Railroad Initiative, a program that fosters research, identification, and protection efforts for the Indiana’s Underground Railroad resources. The goal of this program is to identify the sites, people, and events associated with Underground Railroad activity in Indiana. Come explore the web of potential paths that the Underground Railroad might have taken through Monroe County.

**Genealogy Group**  
Geographic Information System (GIS)  
**Wednesday, May 5**  
2pm

Christine Friesel, Indiana Room Coordinator at the Monroe County Public Library will speak with us about the Monroe County GIS (Geographic Information System). This shows us how to research the history of our property, previous owners, aerial maps, linear maps, and other very interesting information.

This presentation is free and open to the public.

_The Genealogy Group is interested in genealogy and local history and focuses on topics that help genealogists become better family detectives. For more information about this program or about Genealogy Group, please contact the History Center._

**“A Legacy of Leadership: The First Ladies of Indiana University”**  
Thursday, April 15  
7pm  
with Laurie Burns McRobbie

Laurie Burns McRobbie, the current first lady of Indiana University, will discuss some of IU's remarkable first ladies, the roles they played in the life of the university, and what she has learned from them. Laurie received her bachelor’s degree in history from the University of Michigan and has been involved in the use of information technology in higher education for over 25 years, including serving as executive director of Internet2.

She is now an adjunct faculty member in the School of Informatics. As first lady of IU, Laurie is working to foster active relationships between Indiana University and the community.

This free program is part of the History Center’s 3rd Thursday program series.
Sarah Showers: The Oldest Sister

By Randi Richardson

In 1856, Charles C. Showers arrived in Bloomington with his wife, Elizabeth, and seven children. His three sons, James D., William N., and Charles Hull, would later achieve prominence as owners of what would become, at least for a time, the largest furniture factory in the world. With the historic preservation of one of the Showers factory buildings, it is assured that the Showers name will not soon be forgotten. In contrast, the daughters born to Charles and Elizabeth have nearly vanished into obscurity. There were four in all. The oldest was Sarah.

Sarah E. Showers was born to Charles and Elizabeth in Pennsylvania in February 1837. She was not only the oldest daughter but also the firstborn. In the spring of 1838, her parents left Pennsylvania in a one-horse wagon. This was the beginning of a long, circuitous journey that would take them many places for relatively brief periods until they eventually settled near Orleans in Orange County, Indiana, sometime in the 1850s.

While living in Orange County, Sarah married John Sears. It was 1855, and Sarah was only 18; John was about seven years her senior. Soon afterwards, Sarah and John moved to Monroe County, Indiana, along with other members of the Showers family. They would remain in Monroe County for most of the rest of their lives.

Although their roots went deep in Monroe County, Sarah and John moved frequently, and there is no evidence to suggest that they ever realized the financial success achieved by Sarah’s brothers. In 1860, they were living in Harrodsburg. John owned personal property valued at $100 but no real estate. He worked as a plasterer. Sarah’s parents and siblings lived in Bloomington where her father and two oldest brothers worked as cabinetmakers.

Sometime between 1862 and 1870, John and Sarah briefly returned to live in Orange County. In 1870, they were living near Leipsic. John was still working as a plasterer, and Sarah had given birth to six children—Mary, Martha (affectionately called Mattie), John L., Charles A., Lula Margaret, and James D. Apparently the family was prospering. It was reported that John owned real estate valued at $1,300 in addition to his personal property.

Perhaps family ties tugged at Sarah’s heart, for it wasn’t long before the Sears family returned to Monroe County. In 1876, newspaper accounts indicate that John was working in Bloomington as a night watchman. Late one night while making rounds, John was accosted by two masked men. Both were armed. They stripped him of his gun and escorted him into the jail. As he passed through the jail yard, he noticed many other masked men. Like his captors, they were all armed. More masked men were inside the jail. Nearly everyone in town knew that the jail held two prisoners, Bloomington natives Cornelius “Crook” Mershon and his brother, Charles, more commonly known as “Hoosier.” Both Crook and Hoosier had been found guilty of murder a few years earlier. Their case had recently been appealed, and they were back in Bloomington awaiting a new trial.

John heard the prisoners cry out. Then several shots. And the cries became fainter until they were no longer heard. As suddenly as the ordeal began, it ended. The masked men quietly disappeared into the night. John was released unharmed. So were the sheriff and Hoosier. But Crook was dead. The court questioned John and others who witnessed the crime. Their reports appeared in the newspaper a few days later.

Maybe this act of vigilante justice ended John’s career as a night watchman. Or maybe this was only a part-time job to

Photo: Charles A. Sears, the son of John and Sarah E. (Showers) Sears, was employed for many years by the Showers Bros. Furniture Company. At the height of his career, he was the factory superintendent. (Courtesy of Randi Richardson)
Every long-time Bloomington resident has heard of the Showers Brothers furniture company. Its massive two-block-long former factory on Madison is now home to Bloomington City Hall, CFC, and Indiana University. It was once one of the largest furniture factories in the nation, but eventually closed in the 1950s after 90-plus years of business.

I am researching the Showers family and their company for an upcoming book for Indiana University Press and discovered that much of what we think we know about them is wrong.

1) There were two Showers brothers, James and William. Wrong! Between 1879 and 1886 three brothers were partners in the business. Young Charles Hull (known as “Hullie”) died tragically at the age of only 26, leaving a bereft young widow and three small children.

2) The Showers company was generous to African-American employees. Only partially. African-Americans were indeed employed by Showers at a time when many white-owned companies declined to hire blacks, but they did not earn as much as whites during most of the 90-plus years of the company’s existence. The Showers brothers were not enlightened equal-opportunity employers, but simply reflected the age in which they lived.

3) The Showers factory was always located downtown along the railroad tracks. Wrong! Their first factory was actually located at Eighth and Grant, which was the far northeast edge of town back in the late 1860s. Finished goods had to be hauled to the railroad on the west side on massive wagons.

4) Originally the family was quite poor. Not necessarily! Although the brothers attained success through thrift and hard work, their parents apparently had far more money than is commonly believed; they bought and sold real estate on a regular basis, buying and reselling parcels of land worth from one to five thousand dollars during an era where a working man was well-off if he earned $500 per year.

5) The Rev. C. C. Showers operated a coffin factory during the Civil War. There’s no evidence of this, but he was indeed partner in an undertaking business at the same time that he operated a furniture shop downtown on the square, and evidently supplied the undertakers with coffins. The word “factory” was used loosely in the 1800s and simply meant “manufactory,” a place where things were made.

The story of the Showers family is fascinating. Over the course of 18 years, between 1837 and 1856, the Rev. C. C. Showers and his family lived in at least 15 different places in seven different states before they moved to Bloomington. To do this they traveled more than 3,000 miles at a time when rail service barely existed and most roads were unpaved trackways. A Methodist minister and cabinetmaker, C. C.
taught his sons to work with wood and to practice thrift.

As boys, James and William Showers watched with awe as a massive new locomotive was unloaded at Memphis. Because there was only rail service for a few miles around Memphis, the locomotive had been shipped by steamboat down the river. The brothers understood the importance of technology and equipped their factory with the most modern machinery.

Leading civic figures, James and William helped modernize the city with electricity, paved roads, and waterworks. William’s daughter Nellie married Sanford Teter at a time when William was president of Bloomington’s electric company. Electric service did not normally operate during daylight hours, since people needed lighting only at night. For his daughter’s afternoon wedding inside his home, William ordered the company to furnish electricity at the proper hour. With curtains pulled against the daylight, electric lights illuminated the house and Nellie became the first Bloomington woman to wed by electric light.

The elegant mansion of W. Edward Showers on North Washington Street, built in 1903 before city water service existed, had its own water plant. Downspouts fed water into the cistern, where it was heated and pumped to holding tanks in the attic, then fed by gravity into toilets, sinks, and bathtubs.

Showers women were progressive figures in their own right. Hull Showers’ widow, Maud, traveled to Washington to attend a suffrage convention and became friends with Susan B. Anthony. Other Showers women helped found Bloomington Hospital, and Nellie Teter served as IU’s first female trustee.

The Showers company became a leading manufacturer of furniture in the late 1800s and early 1900s because of innovative technology and attention to efficiency. Ironically, according to Eryn Brennan’s research, the sawtooth building that their successors constructed beside the railroad tracks was their downfall. It partly surrounded already-existing earlier buildings and utilized timber frame construction instead of the reinforced cement used by factories elsewhere. Similar to the way in which timber frame barns became obsolete because modern farm equipment could not squeeze inside them, the Showers factory had no spans inside that were wide enough to accommodate updated assembly line machinery. Instead of lumber coming in at one end and emerging as finished furniture at the far end, the manufacturing process moved up and down and side to side within the immense but cramped building. When the Crash of 1929 occurred, the factory’s machinery was nearly two decades old. During the Depression the company lacked the funds to invest in new machinery or a more efficient structure. It limped on during the 1940s and early ’50s using its aging machinery, increasingly unable to compete with newer furniture mills in the South. Disaffected workers went on strike and unionized. The family sold the company in 1956, and it was shut down permanently by its new owners a few years thereafter.

The Showers family is hosting a reunion at the Showers Inn on May 21–23, which will coincide with the 195th birthday of the Rev. C. C. Showers. There will be sharing of family history, walking tours, picnics, and more. All descendants are encouraged to attend. Please call Jim Holland (812-824-3963) or Nancy Teter Smith (812-335-1768) if you have questions.

Opposite Page Top: The three Showers Brothers in the 1880s. Left to right: James, Hull, and William. (Courtesy of Nancy Smith, granddaughter of Nellie Showers Teter)

Opposite Page Bottom: Portrait from the 1860s, believed to be the Rev. C. C. Showers, the Methodist minister and cabinetmaker who taught his sons how to work with wood. (Courtesy of Nancy Smith)

Above: Portrait from the 1860s, believed to be Elizabeth, wife of the Rev. C. C. Showers. (Courtesy of Nancy Smith)
News from Other Places

Historic Landmarks Foundation Turns 50
In 2010, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. Planning for the organization began in late 1959, and official incorporation was completed on 30 September 1960. Over the years, Historic Landmarks has been responsible for saving and revitalizing many old buildings of architectural interest throughout the state of Indiana by means of grants, loans, and other help. A year of celebratory events is planned. Some of these include: Derby Day on May 1 at Veraestau, an estate on the Ohio River near Aurora; a wine tasting and dinner on May 18 at Charley Creek Inn, a 1920 hotel in Wabash; and on June 5, a tour of five outstanding modernist homes in Indianapolis. Other events will take place during the summer and fall in Valparaiso, Vincennes, New Castle, Beverly Shores, and Evansville, concluding with the anniversary gala on October 2 at the West Baden Springs Hotel. Contact info: info@historiclandmarks.org, 317-639-4534, www.historiclandmarks.org (From Indiana Preservationist, January/February 2010.)

Lincoln Exhibitions at Indiana State Museum
Two exhibitions devoted to Abraham Lincoln are now on display at the Indiana State Museum. The first, “With Malice Toward None: The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Exhibition,” is a traveling exhibition from the Library of Congress on view through 11 April 2010. The second, “With Charity for All: The Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection,” will be available through 25 July 2010. It highlights artifacts from the life of an ordinary man who became one of the greatest leaders in American history. The museum will offer special events, lectures, and programs during the run of both exhibitions. The Indiana State Museum is located at 650 West Washington Street in Indianapolis. For information on tickets and exhibition hours, visit www.indianamuseum.org, or call 317-232-1637, or (From the web site.)

Sister Sarah — Continued from Page 5

supplement his income. At any rate, in 1880, John was still working as a plasterer. The family lived on East Eighth Street with four of their six children—John, Charles, Lula, and James. Both John and Charles worked at a factory, most likely the Showers factory where both would later play a prominent role. Mary and Mattie were married and living with their husbands.

The next few years were rather uneventful for John and Sarah. They did, however, buy property on West Fourth Street in Bloomington and move there in 1893. By that time, John was in his sixties. Although they continued to own the property on Fourth Street, they moved again prior to 1900. In that year they were living at 308 N. Lincoln Street with their daughter, Martha, and her husband, Walter Robertson. John was no longer employed. In 1907, they were at 322 S. Buckner.

Three years later, in 1910, they were at 309 N. Lincoln. John was 80 and no longer employed. Charles Sears, John and Sarah’s son, lived at 315 N. Lincoln. He worked as superintendent of the Showers factory. Sarah Showers, the seventy-eight-year-old stepmother of Sarah (Showers) Sears, lived a block away at 320 N. Washington.

Within just a few months, seventy-four-year-old Sarah Sears would be dead. She died on 24 September 1910, after suffering for some time with multiple health problems. In addition to her husband, she was survived by all six of her children—Mrs. M. E. (Mary) Dunn, Mrs. Walter (Martha) Robertson, Mrs. John (Lula) Howe, Charles, John, and James. John was living in New York at the time; James was in Bedford. The funeral was held in Martha’s home at 214 E. Seventh Street. Afterward, Sarah was buried in Rose Hill Cemetery where her parents had been buried many years earlier. Her husband was laid beside her following his death on 2 August 1912.

The home they owned on Fourth Street was sold following the death of John.

To read more about Sarah (Showers) Sears and her parents, siblings, and children, visit the INMONROE Rootsweb mailing list archives and search for the Showers and Sears surnames. Additionally, check out the Showers materials available at the Monroe County History Center’s Genealogy Library.
Membership

New & Renewed Members — Jan. 15 to Mar. 14

Gallery Benefactor
X Printwear & Promotions

Basic
William & Cynthia Benson
Jennifer Flessner-Kates*
Stella Jane Franklin
Mary (Kate) Kroll
Laura J. Mills
Chuck & Jennifer Osterholt*
Angela Parker*
Mary Jane Reilly
Marion J. Sinclair
Mark T. Sipes
Linda Snow

Sustaining
K. Edwin & Betty Applegate
Allen & Susan Dunn
Miles F. & Marjorie Kanne
Jerry & Phyllis McCullough

Family
Bill & Helen Axsom

Student/Teacher
Michael Baise & Lynne Boyle-Baise
Donna Bernens-Kinkead*
Marcia Cannon*
Katherine Cashman*
Jennifer Fox*
Diane Lukasik*
Mary Wiggins*

* Denotes New Members

Corporate Members

Monroe County History Maker
($1,000)
CFC, Inc.
Cook Group Incorporated
M & I Wealth Management
Smithville

History Patron ($500)
Ivy Tech Community College
Monroe County Farm Bureau, Inc.

Gallery Benefactor ($250)
Monroe Bank
Regions Bank
United Commerce Bank
X-Printwear & Promotions, Inc.

Exhibit Supporter ($100)
Bloomington Central Lions Club
John Bethell Title Co., Inc.
Bloomington Convention & Visitors Bureau
John Byers Associates
Commercial Service of Bloomington
Curry Automotive Center

David L. Ferguson, Attorney at Law
D & S Maintenance, Inc.
Gilbert S. Mordoh & Co., Inc.
Hylant Group
ISU/The May Agency, Inc.
Jeanne Walters Real Estate
Malibu Grill
Meadowood Retirement Community
Morrow Realtors
Oliver Winery
Shean Law Offices
Sullivan’s Inc - Fashions for Men

History Center Wishlist

Want to support the History Center? Do you have any of the following items? If so, bring them by the Center anytime Tues-Sat, 10am-4pm and drop them off. The History center is a non-profit and donations are tax deductible.

Special Items
- Carts, Handtrucks, or Dollies
- Matboard
- Pre-1890s US Flag (or remake)
- Indiana Fossils
- Folding Tables
- Cast Iron Bell (to go over the entrance to our 1880s school room exhibit)
- 500-1000lb Tri-pod Lift
- Pruners or Yard Trimmers
- Rakes or Other Gardening Items
- Concrete

Special Volunteer Skills
- Sign Maker (to create temporary signage for cemeteries that have been cleaned up/re-documented)
- Videographer/Podcaster (to edit a cemetery workshop video into a concise and entertaining vodcast)
- PowerPoint Lover (to gather the photos of our many cemetery restoration days and to compile them into a PowerPoint presentation—this helps to take strain off of the busy staff)

Around the Office
- Pencils
- Crayons
- Coloring Pencils
- Rulers
- Fabric Measuring Tape
- Sharpie Markers
- Cardstock of Any Color
- Pushpins, Strait pins, or T-pins
- Clipboards
- Children’s Safety Scissors
- Notepads
- White-out Correction Tape
News from the Library

Microfilms: A Valuable Research Tool
The Genealogy Library has several drawers of microfilms available for use. These include Monroe County, Indiana, Tax Duplicates (57 reels, covering 1842–1922); the United States Census of Agriculture (4 reels, covering the 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses); the United States Census (covering the 1830, 1850, 1870, 1880, and 1910 censuses for selected Indiana counties); and The First Census of the United States, 1790 (3 reels). Additional reels contain various Monroe County records as well as census and military records for other states.

The Monroe County Tax Duplicates are an especially valuable resource. For example, they can function as a census substitute (particularly in the case of the missing 1890 census). Furthermore, they help fill in the years between censuses, perhaps revealing an ancestor who was in Monroe County just briefly in the middle of a decade. Census records on microfilm are also useful. Since they reproduce the original documents, they often contain information that was not included in more abbreviated print or electronic census indexes and provide the opportunity to double-check the spelling of names or other data that might have been mistranscribed from the handwritten records.

The library maintains a list of its microfilm holdings. Visitors may use its microfilm reader’s scanning and printing capabilities to obtain copies of records pertinent to their research. Although microfilmed records take a bit of time to peruse, they can yield intriguing information not obtainable in other mediums.

—Submitted by Penelope Mathiesen

Request for City Directories
If anyone has the following Bloomington city directories to spare, the Genealogy Library would be glad to take them off your hands:

- 1990
- 2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008

Birthday Celebration for Charles C. Showers
To Reunite Descendants

By Randi Richardson

In May, descendants of the three Showers brothers, founders of the Showers Bros. Furniture Factory, will meet in Bloomington to celebrate the 195th birthday of their common ancestor, Charles C. Showers. Many special activities have been planned in association with the celebration.

Participants will stay in the Showers Inn, the former home of Ed Showers. Jim Holland and Nancy Teter Smith, both residents of Bloomington, are coordinating the celebration. They hope that this will be the first of many such celebrations and that subsequent celebrations will also include the descendants of the four daughters who were born to Charles Showers.
Recent Events

Jill Lesh Retirement Party — February 19
1: Genealogy Library Director, Liz Knapp, was one of many who expressed her appreciation for Jill Lesh. Although Jill has finished her work at the History Center, she will remain active with her position on the County Council and looks forward to traveling.

3rd Annual Gala — February 12
2: Carol Seaman and Sue Shelden peruse the Silent Auction table while at the 3rd Annual Gala. The second year at Cook Medical, the event was successful thanks to our wonderful speaker, Dr. James H. Madison and our dedicated volunteers.
3: Attendees at table #1 (Rob DeCleene, Erin Erdmann, Danise Alano, Mat Martin, Laura Newton, Julie Warren, Jeremy Warren, Marilyn Skirvin) were proud of their numerical distinction.

Annual Benefit Auction — February 22
4: The ever-talented auctioneers, Brett Haley and Tod Wesemann worked to auction off many amazing items while dedicated volunteers (aka “Vannas”) worked to show off the items, including “Vanna” Sue Bowman showing off some Wedgewood pieces.

Monroe County Extension Exhibit Opening — February 27
5: Attendees were delighted with new exhibits, great food, live bunnies, and the amazing voice of Maria Sarah. Special thanks to all of those who worked on the exhibit and to Maria Sarah for performing for the evening. To find out more about Maria Sarah visit www.MariaSarah.com.
Annual Membership Levels
- Student/Teacher $20
- Basic $35
- Family $60
- Sustaining $100
- Sustaining $100
- Patron $500

Corporate - Service Organizations
- Exhibit Supporter $100
- Gallery Benefactor $250
- History Patron $500
- Monroe County History Maker $1000

Check if you are interested in:
- Volunteering
- Genealogy
- Civil War History
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