Monroe County History Center

Where the past and present meet.

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Bloomington, Indiana 47408

monroehistory.org

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Permit No. 171

Monroe County Historical Society's

Monroe County Historian

Oct/Nov 2012

Vol. 2012 Issue 5

Society established 1905
Museum established 1980

For subscription information contact the Monroe County History Center at 812-332-2517, or monroehistory.org

If you are interested in helping the History Center preserve our resources and would like to receive an electronic, early version of the Historian please contact the office at (812) 332-2517, extension 2

Bloomington Then and Now

WTIU Documentary

John Winninger, WTIU Documentary Producer, is inviting community members to take part in a discussion about Bloomington's past. The goal is to collect stories about Bloomington that may be included in this documentary, scheduled to come out later next year. You're invited to share your stories about going to old theaters, visiting past stores, and other events that you saw or were a part of. You will also get a chance to view some of the other documentaries John has created. Please join us on Wednesday, October 10, at 7:00pm for this Town Hall Meeting that will be an enchanting walk down memory lane of Monroe County as it once was. Refreshments will be available.

Cover painting by Dorothy Bain, courtesy of the Arthur Clark Estate, from the MCHC Collection

Membership Form

Annual Membership Levels

□ Student/Teacher	$20
□ Basic	$35
□ Family	$60
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Oct/Nov, 2012
Vol. 2012 Issue 5

Monroe County History Center

Museum
Genealogy Library
Museum Gift Store
Educational Facility

History Center
202 East Sixth Street
Bloomington, IN 47408
812-332-2517
www.monroehistory.org

Hours
Tuesday — Saturday
10am — 4pm

Museum Admission
Adult — $2
Child (6-17 yrs.) — $1
5 yrs. & Under — Free
Members — Free

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Monroe County Historian

Preserving the Past for Future Generations

Newsletter of the Monroe County Historical Society, Inc.

Notice of Membership Meeting

Thursday, November 8 at 5:30pm there will be a reception, short business meeting and an opportunity to explore Phase I of the new interactive exhibits project, which will officially open at the Canopy of Lights Open House. Amendments to the Association's Bylaws will be presented for consideration. You will find a copy of the proposed changes inside this newsletter. We hope to see you there!

Annual Canopy of Lights Open House

Join us on Friday, November 23, from 5:00pm to 9:00pm for our annual Canopy of Lights Open House. We will have homemade apple cider, pastries and cookies accompanied by holiday music. Admission is free and you will be given the first look at our new interactive exhibit areas, the Henry and Cecilia Wahl Gateway Gallery and the 1800's School Room which was created with help from the Daughters of the American Revolution. These exhibits are the first of 32 interactive exhibits expected to be installed in the next 18 months. While you are here, don't forget to look at the new Community Voices Gallery exhibit, Hoosier Hills Food Bank. The American Girl doll raffle tickets will be for sale all evening. We hope you will join us in carrying on this tradition.

Volunteer Spotlight: Helmut Hentschel

Even though Helmut Hentschel has only been in Bloomington a little over a year, he has already made a big impact with the Monroe County History Center! Helmut keeps busy working as a greeter, entering abstracts for the Crouch letter collection, and writing descriptions for photographs in our Past Perfect catalog.

Helmut was raised in the South, a first generation American. Helmut is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and he received his Business degree at Averett University. Helmut spent 24 years with the army and is retired Special Forces Officer. It was in the South that a 10th grade history teacher inspired Helmut's passion for history. That passion expresses itself in Helmut's interest in the Civil War, and Helmut is a proud member of the Monroe County Civil War Round Table.

Besides history, Helmut also has a passion for the Grateful Dead. When Helmut eventually stops working, he will be grateful to call Bloomington his place of retirement.

Calendar of Events

All events held at the History Center unless otherwise stated.

October

- 2nd through Dec 7th: American Girl Raffle
- Saturday 6, 9am-3pm: Assoc. of Gravestone Studies Workshop
- Tuesday 9, 7pm: Civil War Roundtable
- Wednesday 10, 7pm: Town Hall Meeting, Bloomington Then and Now WTIU Documentary
- Thursday 11, 4:30pm: Board Meeting
- Thursday 18, 7pm, Third Thursday
- Friday 19, 5:30pm: Girl Scout Exhibit Reception
- Saturday 20, 11am: WFHB Saturday's Child

November

- Thursday 10, 7pm: Genealogy Group
- Thursday 10, 4:30pm: Board Meeting
- Saturday 10, 11am: WFHB Saturday's Child
- Thursday 15, 7pm: Third Thursday
- Thursday 22: Closed for Holiday
- Friday 23: Open at 5pm for Canopy of Lights Open House Celebration

Current & Upcoming Exhibits

Also available at www.monroehistory.org

"Civil Rights in Monroe County"

Exhibit Opens November 23rd 2012 to April 27th 2013

The Civil Rights movements starting in the early 1900s to late 1980s are an important part of Monroe County history. Indiana University served as a stage for students to make change and voice their rights as African Americans, women and young adults making sense of the world around them. The exhibit follows individuals who had a direct impact in making change in the community and on campus, and the major demonstrations happening at the time.

"Monroe County Rocks the Historical Vote"

Exhibit Opens October 1, 2012 through March 23, 2013

With the November 2012 Presidential Elections around the corner, stop by the History Center to see different voting booths and styles Monroe County used to capture the vote.

"Small Voices, Big Impact: Children during the American Civil War"

Open: September 1 to January 26, 2013

The American Civil War had a profound impact on both Northern and Southern people, especially young children. *Small Voices Big Impact* examines the stories and experiences of real young adults in battle and at home.

"The Girl Scouts" A Community Voices Gallery Exhibit

Open: August 3 to November 3

Reception: October 19th, 5:30pm-8pm, Celebrate the Girls Scouts 100-Year Anniversary at the Monroe County History Center! Enjoy light refreshments.

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Collections' Corner

By Carey Beam

The 3rd floor of the history center is always busy, but now that Indiana University is back in session we are quite the bees' nest of activity. Our fall interns and volunteers are trickling in and many projects are under way! It is exciting to introduce them to the museum, the collection, and their individual projects.

Paige Kadish is a senior at I.U., majoring in political science with a minor in history. She has jumped right into some of the dirtier work of collections' care with a great spirit and a lot of elbow grease. The museum recently acquired a 19th century hardware chest (generously donated by Trudy McFall and Mike Miller) that measures seven feet long and has 91 drawers. Paige has been vacuuming and scrubbing non-stop since she's arrived and once it is (finally!) clean she will see it through the entire process of acquisition to ensure it is properly identified, documented, and exhibited.

We are pleased to welcome Paige and all of our new interns and volunteers; we couldn't do it without them!

To Bear the Responsibility of Voting

Help! Your History Center bear needs a name and your vote counts! As part of our exhibit on voting in Monroe County, to open October 9th and close March 1, 2013, you will be able to participate in a most important election. To help us give the famous Schmalz Kodiak bear a name, come to the Monroe County History Center and vote for your favorite moniker from a selection of names or submit a name you think is worth bearing! The bear's new name will be announced in the April, 2013 newsletter.

George Matlock and a Few of His Descendants

By Randi Richardson

The Matlock family was one of the earliest families to settle in Monroe County. In 1816, two years before the boundaries of Monroe County were established, George Matlock, a native of Tennessee, purchased property in what is now known as Van Buren Township. Some years later, he also bought property in Bloomington Township.

George married a woman named Anna. Together they had eight children, including Irvin F., born about 1835, and Paris C., born 21 October 1841.

Irvin married a woman named Sophia. They lived in various places, including Brown County, Indiana, and Logan County, Illinois. They had two children: Robert, who was born about 1870, and Ida, who was born about 1872. Irvin worked as a physician. Although he worked to save the lives of others, he was unable to save his own. He died in Johnson County, Indiana, on 18 February 1884, at the age of 47.

Paris was a lifelong resident of Monroe County. It was there that he took a bride, Margaret E. Paul, on 18 September 1877. Paris and Margaret had two children: Charles, who was born on 8 September 1878, and J. Harry, affectionately called "Dolly," who was born on 5 March 1884.

Paris worked as a farmer and owned lots of land on the north side of Bloomington Township. He died on 7 June 1917, at the age of 75. According to his obituary, at the time of his death he was a leading resident of the county and one of the wealthiest farmers. He was buried in the Bethel Cemetery on Bethel Lane. His wife, Margaret, would be buried there a few years later when she died on 19 August 1923.

Several cabinet photographs of Matlock family members were recently discovered at a Bloomington garage sale. The identities of the individuals were noted on the reverse side of the pictures.

Paris and Margaret Matlock with sons Charles and Dolly. Photograph courtesy of Randi Richardson.

HOLIDAY DONATIONS NEEDED NOW

Holiday Store will be open from November 1st until January 4th

By Gayle Cook

The History Center will again have its popular holiday sale featuring great donated bargains in holiday decorations, books, gift ware and jewelry. **Bring your like-new donations to the History Center any time**, so that we can get the shop open early.

Not only will we have special donated items in the holiday shop, but the Museum Store has new and unusual books, cards and gifts for you to see, too. Both stores are open during all normal History Center hours, Tuesday-Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm.

New books from the I.U. Press available in the Museum Store, that will make great gifts, include: David Baker, A Legacy in Music, by Monica Herzog; Showers Furniture Company, by Carroll Krause; and Herman B Wells, by James H. Capshew.

Every year our holiday sales bring in thousands of dollars to help with programs and events, thanks to all of you.

Mr. and Mrs. McHenry

Elizabeth Schlemmer, Library Manager

This summer the History Center received a visit from a couple of lifelong sweethearts who met in the old library. I had the pleasure of walking through the Cook Gallery with Mr. and Mrs. McHenry, he in his white newsboy cap and she in a matching white bonnet, as they retold their tale of meeting in the reference room, now the History Center's schoolhouse exhibit.

In 1956, Laura had every intention of becoming a nun. When her father died unexpectedly, she received a letter from the Mother Superior of the convent she was to enter insisting that she stay home and help her mother instead. So Laura figured God meant her to be married.

William remembers that "one day I got a real strong pull toward the library and I thought I better go in there." Laura also wandered in looking for a book and saw a "handsome man talking to a young lady and telling her something scientific—he's in science, you know." She sat down not paying him much attention, but William struck up a conversation and asked for her telephone number. Laura's reply: "'Nooo. . . you can't have my number!' You know. What an absurd idea. You could tell I had never dated."

Laura left the library to return to work at the Indiana Bell Telephone Company, and after relaying the story to her coworkers, she thought better of her snub. As she recalls, "Well, being a telephone operator I had access to the IU switchboards, so I thought, 'Man, those girls are right; I was crazy to not have told him my number.' I called the IU switchboard and said, 'What you got listed for William McHenry?' I got his phone number and after I got off work I called him. And the rest is history."

The McHenrys have now been married for 56 years and have ten children.

Message from the President

Dear Members,

Where does the time go? It is hard to believe that fall is upon us. After very successful summer programs the board and staff continue their hard work and are working well into 2013. The Board of Trustees approved changes to the by-laws at the September meeting and those changes will be brought before the general membership at a special meeting/reception in November. Be on the lookout for your invitation. We are happy to report membership numbers are strong, but we are always working to increase in this area. Please take a minute to make sure your membership is still current, we don't want you to miss out on all the wonderful benefits you receive by being a member.

I look forward to seeing you at one of the many upcoming events at the History Center.

Happy autumn!

Laura C. Newton

News from the Library

genealogy@monroehistory.org

Compiled by Penelope Mathiesen and Elizabeth Schlemmer

Program, Donation, and Volunteer Projects

The Third Thursday program on October 18 at 7 p.m. will feature volunteers and interns from the Genealogy Library. Come hear about our efforts to collect the stories of Monroe County communities through our new oral history program. We'll also look at the history of our county's communities and describe the creation of the communities map.

Folklorist Jan Rosenberg has recently donated audio recordings and written transcriptions to oral history interviews she conducted with a number of former students of various Bloomington elementary schools. Hear memories from alumni of Banneker, Elm Heights, Hunter, McCalla, and others who attended local schools from the 1940s through the 1970s.

Congratulations to Gary Wiggins, who has finished his project of indexing the Family History Files, and to Bob Dodd, who has completed his work on the Community Files. Both of these volunteers have dedicated years to these projects, and we're proud of their contributions!

New Items on the Shelves

* Binford Elementary School, 1985–86, 1986–87, 1988–89, 1989–90, 1998–99, 1999–2000, 2000–1, 2002–3, 2003–4, 2004–5, 2005–6, 2006–7, and 2007–8. Yearbooks.

* Bloomington Voice: Faces and Voices: Bloomington Women Reflect, edited by Bill Craig. 27 July 1995. Newspaper. Gift from Antonia Matthew.

* Bloomington Voice: Local Women Reflect, edited by Diane Aden Hayes. 26 July 1996. Newspaper. Gift from Antonia Matthew.

* Bloomington Voice: Women, edited by Bill Craig. 29 June 1994. Newspaper. Gift from Antonia Matthew.

* Herman Wells Stories. 1992. Gift from Pat and Byron Smith.

* Llamarada, 1957, 1958, and 1960. Ellettsville High School yearbooks.

* Marlin Elementary School, 1993 and 2007–8. Yearbooks.

* Monroe County Deed Book D, parts 1–3 (January 1832–August 1835). Digital copy on CD. 2011.

* A National Women's History Project Gazette, Living the Legacy: Women's Rights Movement, 1849–1998, edited by Bonnie Eisenberg. [1998.] Gift from Antonia Matthew.

* Rogers Elementary School, 1995–96. Yearbook.

* Twentieth Annual National Women's Music Festival. [June 1994.] Program booklet. Gift from Antonia Matthew.

* Twenty-first Annual National Women's Music Festival. [June 1995.] Program booklet. Gift from Antonia Matthew.

* University Elementary School, 2007–8. Yearbook.

* Weaver, Bill. The College of Beer: The Story of Nick's English Hut. 1990.

* Where We Live: Essays about Indiana, edited by David Hoppe. 1989. Gift from Pat and Byron Smith.

Monroe County in the 1880s

By Lee Ehman

Monroe County at the beginning of the 1880s was a far different place than today. There were no electric lights, televisions, or computers, things we now take for granted. There was no telephone service, only the telegraph. Horses and early railroads provided transportation, not automobiles and airplanes. Let's look at some specific details of life back then.1

The 1880 census showed that Monroe County had a population of 15,874. Bloomington had 2,756 residents, Ellettsville 586, Harrodsburg 262, and Smithville 112. The 1881 county school report showed a total of 3,766 students enrolled, with 602 children of school age not enrolled. The largest enrollment, 480, was in Clear Creek Township, with Indian Creek, Bean Blossom, Van Buren, and Polk townships following. The city of Bloomington, reporting separately, had 755 students. The Monroe County Library, located in the old courthouse, contained 2,200 volumes, and was open on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Patrons were charged $1/year for borrowing privileges.

In prior years independent fire-fighting companies were formed and subscriptions charged for protection. But by the 1880s the city of Bloomington had its own fire department with three fire engines, a hook and ladder wagon, and a system of 10 fire cisterns. In 1883 the City Council reminded citizens of their duty, upon hearing the fire alarm, to go to the fire station and help convey the fire engines to the fire. Outlying villages did not enjoy such protection. On 2 August 1886, half of Ellettsville's businesses were demolished by a fire. A telegraph message for assistance was sent to Bloomington, which dispatched its fire equipment on the train, arriving in time only to help control the fire from spreading.

Water was provided by wells and cisterns, but Bloomington had a history of shortages. In 1881 there was an attempt to drill an "artesian well" near the courthouse square, and subscriptions were collected to support it financially. By 1886 the well had attained a depth of 2,800 feet, and had passed through a six-foot bed of coal, but eventually the effort was given up as a failure.

There was a range of businesses in the county that reflected the different times. Of course, the limestone industry dominated the scene with several quarries and mills. There were two spoke and hub factories for manufacturing wooden parts for wagon wheels, including the Bollenbacher spoke factory in Smithville; the Showers Brothers furniture, chair, and bedstead factories, and McCalla's furniture and planing mill, all in Bloomington; a plow factory; grist mills; three stave factories; woolen factories in Harrodsburg and Bloomington; and a tannery. Businesses in Bloomington included several serving horses: three saddle shops, two livery stables, and six blacksmiths. There were wood and coal dealers to provide fuel for heating and cooking, since there was no electricity or gas. Most prices in 1881 were modest: lard, 11 cents/lb.; eggs, 25 cents/dozen; ham, 12.5 cents/lb.; butter, 20 cents/lb.; beeswax (for making candles), 20 cents/lb.; live chickens, $2.40/dozen; cord of wood, $3; hay, $10/ton.

Roads throughout the county were unpaved, and newspapers carried articles describing the depth of mud and difficulties in traveling. Main streets in Bloomington were just starting to be paved, or "McAdamized." There was one railroad at the beginning of the 1880s, the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago, but during that decade the Indianapolis, Evansville & New Orleans Straight Line was constructed. At mid-decade, there were five passenger and from four to six freight trains passing through Bloomington each day.

Diseases in those times included some very familiar today: stroke, heart disease, and cancer. But the major killers then, including smallpox, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, cholera, diphtheria, consumption (tuberculosis), spotted fever, and yellow fever, are nearly unknown today. Germ theory was not yet generally accepted, and there were few vaccines or cures. Bloomington had 13 physicians and three dentists. The rest of Monroe County had 18 doctors.

The 1880s saw the advent of electricity in Monroe County. In November 1881, the Republican Progress announced that an electric light would be placed on the court house steeple, the power being furnished by a steam engine at Seward's foundry. It was not until five years later that grander plans were realized. By May 1886, the Jenney Electric Light Company of Indianapolis organized a stock company for bringing lights to streets and businesses, and in June the City Council awarded them a three-year contract. The city agreed to pay for nine lights at a cost of $600/year. They would be operated until midnight (except when there was "good moonlight"). Three lights were placed on the courthouse tower, three on the schoolhouse, one at the corner of Seventh and Washington, one at Kirkwood and Lincoln, and one near the United Presbyterian Church. Demand for other lights led the light company to contract for a "dynamo" for 40 lights, which was located in Ryor's factory.

The lights were first turned on during the evening before the Fourth of July celebration, with people coming in from all around the county to witness the event. More lights were installed during the fall of 1886. In the summer of 1887, a separate building, near the railroad depot, was constructed to house the dynamo and "Atlas engine" (a steam engine manufactured in Indianapolis). By January of 1889, the company was running 42 lights, of which 16 were used by the city. Each light cost $60/year. In 1890 plans were announced to furnish 720 lights, with two larger dynamos required.

The coming of electricity to Monroe County had a dramatic impact and foreshadowed many of the changes that would transform citizens' lives. Although it would be many years before its general use, the nine lights turned on in 1886 signaled a crucial advance that helped usher in the modern world.

Note

1. Facts were obtained from Bloomington newspapers of the 1880s: Republican Progress, Saturday Courier, and Telephone.

Almost Forgotten Railroad Grade Northeast of Bloomington

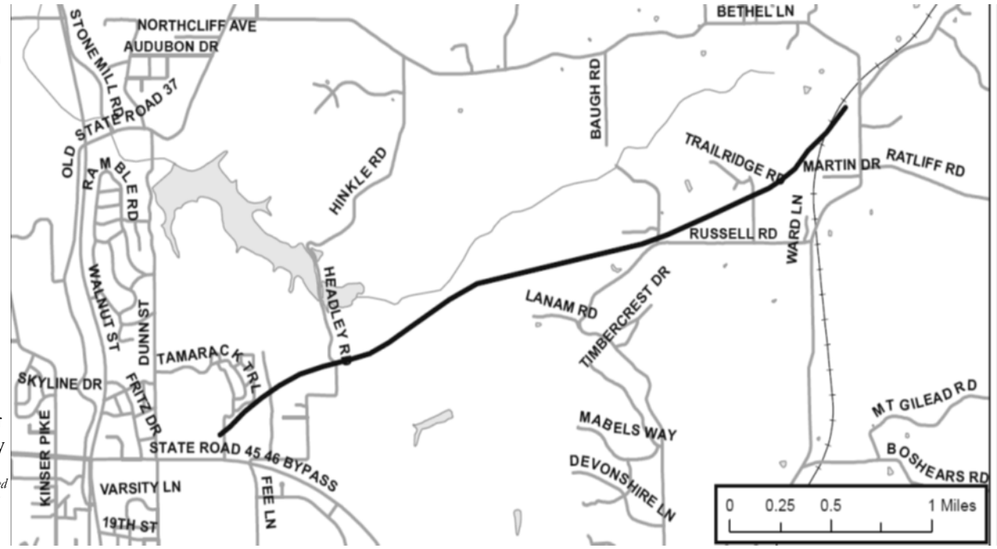
By Bob Dodd

Between New Unionville and the north edge of Bloomington are the eroded remains of what must have been a railroad grade. The grade passes through the Indiana University environmental research area south of Griffy Lake and on the edge of the woods just south of Meadowood Retirement Community. There is a gap in the roadbed where it would cross a deep valley southeast of Griffy Lake. A large trestle must have been planned here. Old maps of Bloomington do not show a railroad in this area. The Indiana Railroad (a branch of the former Illinois Central) passes a considerable distance to the east and south of this old grade. Was this mystery grade ever used? If not, why was it built?

B. F. Bowen's History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties, published in 1914, contains the answer. In 1899 a group of businessmen from Indianapolis, including David M. Parry, William E. Stevenson, Charles E. Barrett, John McGettigan, and others incorporated the Indianapolis Southern Railroad. In the original plan the main route would have bypassed Bloomington. But in 1902, when the promoters failed to secure funding for the original route, they revised their plans to build a shorter route that would pass through Bloomington. In special elections in Bloomington, Perry, and Benton townships, citizens voted to approve subsidies totaling $88,882 for the line. Van Buren Township voted against subsidies.

A breakthrough in construction of the railroad occurred in the summer of 1903 when a New York millionaire, Archibald White, decided to invest in the project. Complications in the route through downtown Bloomington threatened to derail the project, but they were eventually overcome. Work was in progress when the New York financiers decided to withdraw from the project.

The original organizers from Indianapolis used more of their own money to continue the project. In the summer of 1904 the president of the Illinois Central Railroad became interested in the new line and paid the original investors to take over construction. By this time much of the work between Indianapolis and Unionville was complete.



Map showing the abandoned railroad grade. Courtesy of the Indiana University Geological Survey.

Note: This history came from B. F. Bowen's History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties, pp. 449–53. Thomas Carter Perring may have written this section, but the authorship is not clear. See the Genealogy Library's vertical file on "Railroads" for maps and other information, including Sybil Eakins' article, "The Railroad Line That Moved South."