Living With History

Members of the Better Day Club in Bloomington unpacked a suitcase of 1960s history with our first Memory Box. Cindy, a normally quiet member of the Club, spoke longer than anyone has heard her speak as she recounted family stories. Joan, a former activist, sang with gusto as “We Shall Overcome” played from our audio box from the London-based company Museum in a Box.

We are truly excited to continue the Living with History project with more free programming each month and new themed Memory Boxes in the future. This project, in collaboration with Alzheimer’s Resource Service of IU Health, is supported by a Community Impact grant award from the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County Inc.

Our next Memory Lane Café will be August 22 and our next Memory Walk will be September 23. To find out more information as we continue this project, visit www.monroehistory.org/livingwithhistory/.

Garage Sale Update

The Annual Garage Sale was a success this year again! Thank you to everyone who supported us by donating, shopping, or both. And many thanks to our amazing volunteers! This year’s fundraising total was over $114,000 and will benefit the preservation of collections, programs, and exhibits at the History Center.

If you haven’t heard yet, we’re moving to a new warehouse! Donations for the 2020 Garage Sale will begin August 7 from 10am to 2pm at the new location.

4015 W Profile Parkway
Monroe County Historian
Aug/Sept 2019
Current Exhibits
Also available at www.monroehistory.org

Rechter Gallery: Michelangelos of Monroe
At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, stone carvers came to America from Europe to help forge new identities for themselves and buildings all over the country. They quickly became a part of the community and passed down their knowledge to future generations to create a lasting legacy and tradition in Monroe County. “Michelangelos of Monroe” tells the story of limestone carvers in Monroe County from their artistic process to the impact of their work being on display throughout the region and country.

Open through October 12th

Hill Gallery: Crest and Monroe County
In 1956, Crest unveiled their toothpaste to the world. For years prior to the release, scientists at Indiana University created the cavity-preventing prototype and used local residents as its test subjects. Through Crest advertisements, this exhibition tells the story of how IU and Monroe County were involved with a revolutionary invention.

Open through October 15th

Brown Gallery:
For the past 200 years, the import and export of raw materials, finished goods, and even people has been a challenge for those living in Monroe County. Exhibits in the Brown Gallery tell the story of how Monroe County continued to grow despite obstacles presented by hilly terrain and a region without a major water source. The ongoing theme of the exhibits in the Brown Gallery will be transportation in Monroe County with changing artifacts throughout the year.

Community Voices
Monroe County History Club
Starting with only six members in 2013, the Monroe County History Club is a group dedicated to local history. Free and open to the public, local and regional historians and speakers present programs on the last Tuesday of the month. Programs are recorded by CATS TV and uploaded to YouTube.

Open through September 30th

Calendar of Events

August
♦ 1st, 5:30pm, Book signing and talk by Jeremy Boshears, author of The Covered Bridges of Monroe County, at MCHC
♦ 10th, 11am, WFHB Saturday’s Child at MCHC
♦ 15th, 4:30pm, Board Meeting at MCHC
♦ 22nd, 10am, Memory Café at MCHC
♦ 24th, 10am, MCHC booth at Makevention at the Bloomington Convention Center
♦ 28th, 4pm, Teacher's Night Out at MCHC
♦ 31st, 1pm, HiStory Book Club at MCHC

September
♦ 6th, 5pm, Dementia Friendly Art Walk at MCHC
♦ 14th, 11am, WFHB Saturday’s Child at MCHC
♦ 19th, 4:30pm, Board Meeting at MCHC
♦ 23rd, 10am, Memory Walk at MCHC
♦ 25th, 5:30pm, Book signing and talk by Charles Nelms, author of From Cotton Fields to University Leadership
♦ 28th, 1pm, HiStory Book Club at MCHC
From the President

Things have been heating up in Monroe County and at the History Center this summer! From a hot new exhibit about Monroe County’s limestone carving history, to the sizzling success of this year’s garage sale—there have been many great things to warm our hearts and light up our minds these past few months.

The History Center’s newest exhibit, “Michelangelos of Monroe,” opened with great fanfare in conjunction with the Indiana Limestone Symposium. The opening celebration featured a limestone carving demonstration and panel discussion with limestone carvers and local experts. The exhibit features beautiful carvings and design sketches, as well as examples of carvers’ tools. It also seeks to share information about prominent limestone carvers and creations and to highlight the world-class artistic talent that we have attracted to, and cultivated within, Monroe County.

We are also happy to report that this year’s Garage Sale was a great success. Thanks in very large part to the hard work of dozens of volunteers, including many of whom who work all year to get ready for this important History Center fundraiser, this year’s sale helped to raise more than $114,000! We are also thankful for all our Garage Sale patrons. It is inspiring to hear how far shoppers have traveled to get to the sale or how many years they’ve been coming, and interesting to hear about the great plans they have for new-found treasures. In the short time since the sale, the dedicated team of volunteers who work year-round to make it such an amazing event have undertaken the monumental task of getting everything moved to the sale’s new site. They will begin accepting donations at the new site at 4015 W. Profile Parkway from 10am til 2pm on Wednesdays, starting on August 7th. And that brings me to the last, but certainly not least, garage sale related thank-you that is owed to everyone who donated items for this year’s sale. The Annual Garage Sale is not only an incredible fundraiser for the History Center, but it is also an event that celebrates history, and an event with its own impressive history—all of which are truly things worth celebrating!

The summer months are also a hot time for educational and outreach programming. We’ll be engaging with hundreds of area youth as part of summer camp programming at the History Center and at various locations throughout the community. We are also excited to be offering new Dementia Friendly programming at the History Center thanks to generous support from the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County, Inc. If you know someone who has dementia or is caring for someone with dementia, be sure to check out upcoming caregiver training events, Memory Cafés, Memory Walks, and the new loanable Memory Box designed to foster conversations between caregivers and individuals suffering from dementia.

Now that the hot weather is finally here, make it a point to stop in and visit your Monroe County History Center. It is a cool spot to take a break from the heat and connect with the past!

Best wishes,

Jennifer Borland, President
MCHC Board of Directors

Many people ask what it takes to keep this History Center running. We’ve created a wishlist to give you just a glimpse. By making a gifted purchase from this list, you can contribute to the care and keeping of our archives, the creation of our exhibits, and the care of our historic building.

Visit our wish list at the following link http://a.co/fmWxGxc
Collections Corner
by Hilary Fleck

As the Collection Manager, I am always looking for new opportunities to preserve local history and expand our collection at the History Center. That’s why I’m pleased to announce that I’ve received a May Wright Sewall Fellowship from Indiana Humanities to research Monroe County women involved in the Suffrage Movement and in politics after the ratification of the 19th Amendment. My goal is to research local women’s rights organizations and political candidates who strove and continue to strive, to make Monroe County a better place. My research will be shared through presentations and an exhibit in 2020. If you have any research suggestions or contacts I should know, please feel free to email me at collection@monroehistory.org. I’m excited to get to dive into Monroe County history and find some incredible women!

Collections Request

We are in search of some Autumn Leaf design dishes from Hall Pottery, produced between 1933 and 1976. If you are willing to donate some dishes, please contact Hilary Fleck at collection@monroehistory.org.

Education Desk
By Andrea Hadsell

We are starting off August with a presentation and book signing by Jeremy Boshears on the many covered bridges of Monroe County. Charlie Nelms will be speaking and signing books in September about his life experiences that led to his new book From Cotton Fields to University Leadership. Copies of both books will be available in the Dunn Museum Store for purchase before, after, and during the event.

Last but not least, we are offering our second Teachers’ Night Out! Educators from surrounding public, private, charter, and home schooling systems. Teachers can explore what the Monroe County History Center has to offer for students. We are truly excited to introduce these offerings for the first full school year that the Gayle Cook Junior Historian Scholarship Fund is available for use.

Cemetery Workshops

The MCHC Cemetery Committee is hosting a two-day Cemetery Preservation and Restoration talk and workshop in September, 2019, featuring nationally recognized cemetery restoration specialist, Jason Church, from Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Friday, September 13 (6:00pm to 8:00pm) evening presentation at the Monroe County History Center
  - Cemetery Surveys and documentation
  - Tips and techniques for photographing headstones
  - Appropriate headstone cleaning products

Saturday, September 14 (9:00 am to 6:00 pm) – Rose Hill Cemetery
  - Hands-on workshop – demonstrations of cemetery safety, proper cleaning techniques, resetting headstones, and preserving wrought iron fencing

Check out our website for more information and registration details.
Volunteer Spotlight

Linda Gupte serves as a Welcome Desk Greeter on the first Wednesday afternoon of the month. She was born in Germany and grew up on the east coast in New Haven, Connecticut, which was her home prior to coming to Bloomington 17 years ago. After moving to Bloomington, Linda made it her mission to explore local sites in and around Monroe County. She studied at Southern Connecticut State College in New Haven and is a life-long learner who enjoys taking classes for personal enrichment at Ivy Tech.

Brenda Lommel began her recent volunteer stint in the History Center Research Library in 2017. She previously volunteered in the Library from 2004 to 2007. She is currently transcribing the County Commissioners’ books to make the information easily accessible. Brenda received her Bachelor’s Degree in Family History/Genealogy from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. She enjoys spending time and traveling with her husband and their children.

Kerma Murray joined us as a Welcome Desk Greeter in late 2015, and other than taking some time off to care for her sister in Texas periodically, she has been with us ever since. In addition to welcoming people to the History Center, Kerma serves on our Personnel Committee and also assists with various other office projects. Kerma studied at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. In her spare time she enjoys dinners with her family and trips to Colorado where she lived for a number of years.

Remembering:

Ellen Rebecca (Drouillard) Boruff retired to Bloomington with her husband in the 1980s to enjoy the Boruff family farm. Ellen generously devoted much of her life to many community and social organizations including the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation because she was a collateral descendant of George Drouillard. Drouillard was the hunter and interpreter in the Corps of Discovery, a specially established unit of the U.S. Army which formed the nucleus of the Lewis and Clark Expedition from May 1804 to September 1806.

We are very sad to report the untimely death of Susan Stowe Shelden. Sue was a lovely person with a beautiful spirit who touched many lives during her all-too-short life. Sue was a History Center member for many years and during that time she was also a key member of our Garage Sale Committee where she used her expertise in fine artworks to raise large amounts of support monies for the Center. Sue was devoted to her family while also being an active member of the community in many capacities. A remembrance service is planned for August 10th at 10 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Bloomington. Online condolences may be left for the family at [www.DayDeborahFrye.com](http://www.DayDeborahFrye.com).
MCHC Contributors and New Members
August and September 2019

The History Center wishes to acknowledge and recognize those who provided financial gifts to support our operations in May and June 2019:

**Patron Memberships**
- Kem and Mary Hawkins
- Visit Bloomington

**Benefactor Memberships**
- Ron Pennington
- Charlotte Zietlow

**Supporter Memberships**
- Ted and Kathy Frick
- Catharine M. Hoff
- Susan and David Jones
- Kerma Murray

**Memorial Donation**
In memory of Linda Sieboldt: Mary Ellen Kerber

**Supporting Donations**
- Bloomington Garden Club: John and Karla Kamstra
- Bloomington Thrift Shop: Frank Lester and Diana Lambdin
- Pat Bookwalter: Penny and Tom Mathiesen
- Landry Culp: Lee Ehman and Barbara Wilcox

**Other Donations Including In-Kind**
- Dean McElhinney
- Scott Loman
- Autumn Hills Special Care Center

**Volunteer Receives 2019 Golden Hoosier Award**

The Golden Hoosier award is the highest honor bestowed upon a senior citizen by the State of Indiana. Liz Mitchell, MCHC volunteer and board member, was selected as a recipient for the 2019 award.

The Golden Hoosier Award is a collaboration between the office of the Lt. Governor, Suzanne Crouch, and the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration’s Division of Aging to acknowledge seniors for their lifetime of service. It is not just one act of community service, but rather a lifetime of service and commitment to serving others, that the states honors with this award.
Announcements

Remember that all History Center memberships include the **Time Travelers Reciprocal Benefit** created by the Missouri Historical Society. Each Time Travelers organization selects its specific level of benefit to provide so it is highly **recommended that you call ahead** of visiting to determine exactly what the institution will provide. Below is a partial list of Indiana Time Travelers Museums. We have a complete list of all Time Travelers organizations or you can go online to [https://timetravelers.mohistory.org/](https://timetravelers.mohistory.org/) and click on “View Participating Institutions” for the complete list.

- Brown County History Center, Nashville
  Discounted Admission & Gift Shop Discount
- Conner Prairie Interactive History Park, Fishers
  Discounted Admission plus Gift Shop and Restaurant Discounts
- Model T Museum, Richmond
  Discounted Admission & Gift Shop Discount
- Wabash County Historical Museum, Wabash
  Free Admission

**Volgistics:** Over the next couple of months, we will continue the process of transitioning to the Volgistics Volunteer Management Software Program which will allow volunteers to manage their own schedules and end the need for paper time sheets. The program will also make it easy to calculate total volunteer hours for our monthly staff report to the Board of Directors.

**Another Way to Give! Smile.Amazon.com Wish List:** We now have a permanent History Center Wish List available on Smile.Amazon.com for those times when you would like to provide some kind of support but you don’t want to write a check and send it in. With the Monroe County Historical Society’s Smile.Amazon.com Wish List, you can order an item from the list and it will be sent directly to the History Center. It is Another way to support our mission with just a “click.”

**We still have some open Saturday greeter times.** If you know of someone who would like to spend a few hours at the History Center on a Saturday, please let them know they can apply either by sending an email to volunteers@monroehistory.org or by calling 812-332-2517, ext. 7. Thank you.

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**News from the Museum Store**

**The Covered Bridges of Monroe County**

*By Jeremy Boshears*

The covered bridge have long been a symbol of Indiana’s past, evoking feelings of romance and nostalgia. These feats of engineering spanned the rivers and streams that crisscross the county. Jeremy Boshears’ photographs captured the beauty of the bridges that dotted the riverbanks of Monroe County. With 121 color photographs, *The Covered Bridges of Monroe County* will appeal to everyone who treasures these iconic structures.

Available at the Museum Store for $25.00
News from the Library

Library@monroehistory.org

Compiled by Megan MacDonald and Penelope Mathiesen

Oral History Collection

The Research Library’s collection of oral histories continues to expand, with topics including communities, individual recollections, schools, sports, and veterans’ histories. Our newest volunteer, Steven Alcorn, began transcribing oral histories for the library in July. Steve is a post-doctoral student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Indiana University and has previous experience with oral history projects.

New in the Library

The following items have been recently accessioned:

* Terre Haute City Directory and Business Mirror for 1858. Includes history of city and county. Gift from Julian and Mary Livingston.
Williams Jewelry: A Century on the Square

By Penelope Mathiesen

Williams Jewelry held the distinction of maintaining a presence in downtown Bloomington for over 100 years. In 1911,1 “Ed Williams Jewelry & Music Store” opened on the west side of the square at 115 North College Avenue in a space formerly occupied by Kitson’s Music Store and A. H. Pauley, Jeweler.2 Williams was born in Michigan and came to Monroe County from North Vernon in Jennings County, Indiana, where he had worked as a bookkeeper and a retail merchant.3

The “music” portion of Williams’s business consisted of Victrolas and Victrola records—a popular form of home entertainment in those days. In 1924, he relocated to 114 North Walnut Street on the east side of the square.4 The Bloomington Daily Telephone noted that Ed Williams was:

“moving his big jewelry and music stock to the room formerly occupied by the Hall Typewriter company and will combine his Victor phonograph agency with that of the Brunswick. … Although Mr. Williams has not yet begun the refinishing of the inside of the store, it is understood that it will compare favorably with the larger city stores. An entirely new front is to be added to the building giving ample display space in the large window. The new business room will give Mr. Williams much more floor space than he had in his former location and will allow much expansion to his already remarkable business.”5

In addition to jewelry, the Victor and Brunswick phonograph lines, and the latest silverware patterns, Williams also offered a high standard of service:

“All merchandise is sold with a guarantee that it will be represented. There is no perfection in anything manufactured. Once in a while, something goes wrong and my clerks have instruction to always take care of such cases and see that satisfaction is given as promptly as possible. Every effort is made to be courteous and accommodating and so my customers enjoy the freedom of the place and often treat the store as if it belonged to them. This good fellowship is one of the pleasures of doing business.”6

Ed Williams ran his store on the square for 33 years, continuing to offer fine jewelry, watches, and repair services. He passed away on 27 April 1944 and was buried at Hillcrest Cemetery in North Vernon.7 After his death, his widow, Jane Williams, maintained the business, with glassware and gifts now a part of the inventory.8

In 1953, Don Thoma bought the store from Jane Williams. Don’s son, Mark Thoma, began working part time for his father when he was a teenager. He later took over the store and worked there until he retired in 2013.9 The high standard of service established by Ed Williams had continued under the subsequent owners, and the closure of Williams Jewelry upon Mark Thoma’s retirement was lamented by loyal customers.

Notes

5. “Ed Williams to Move His Store.”
6. Ibid.
7. “Ed Williams Rites Today.”
Libraries are a central institution in our culture. The first lending library in the United States, the Library Company of Philadelphia, was established by Benjamin Franklin in 1731. Early libraries charged fees, and were not really “public.” In 1833, the New Hampshire Town Library in Peterborough became the first free public library supported by taxes and open to all.

The state of Indiana passed an 1816 act for the incorporation of public libraries, and in 1818 enacted the provision that 10 percent of sales of town lots should be allocated to maintain a library. The first sale of Bloomington lots yielded $386 for the library fund. Monroe County first established its lending library in 1820, which was housed in the original courthouse on the Bloomington town square. $60 was spent for the first books. Later, in 1825, it occupied a “small brick building of two rooms…east of the courthouse.” This must have been a modest setting, for: “In 1832, the [county] board heard a request from the librarian that the dirt and brick floor be replaced by a plank one.”

By 1830 its collection numbered 800 books. This early library charged a membership fee of from 25 cents to a dollar per year. For the first 30 years, only qualified voters, meaning men only, could use the library. But later it was opened, on Wednesday mornings, “for the accommodation of the ladies.” Minors were explicitly excluded.

In those early years:

“Orders for new books generally were sent to a jobber in Philadelphia with any Bloomingtonian traveling to that city. Books were then sent from Philadelphia down the Ohio River to Louisville, from where they were carried overland to Bloomington.”

In spite of its promising start, the early library gradually waned. Parts of its collection were absorbed by Indiana University and Bloomington High School. It was moved to the Central School building on South College in 1895.

In 1910, the local newspaper announced the first truly public library, to be opened by members of the women’s Nineteenth Century Club. The county commissioners made a courthouse room available—it was previously the city water works office. The article went on to describe the collection:

“The collection will largely consist of two classes of books, fiction and children’s books. The nucleus will be formed by the 450 children’s books placed about a year ago by State Sup’t Aley in the University Library. This has been supplemented by the books donated by various individuals. To further increase the usefulness of the collection, as well as to secure the success of the new enterprise, it is earnestly requested that every family in town possessing books of the above description should look them over and present to the new public library.”

The professional women’s Sorosis Club of Bloomington tried to get a Carnegie grant for a library building in 1897. However, it was not until 1915 that they succeeded. The lot at Sixth and Washington streets, now housing the Monroe County History Center, was purchased for $12,000, and the new building erected. Bloomington Public Library was dedicated in 1918. It had a collection of 6,300 volumes.

But even in the early 20th century it was not yet a county-wide library:

“But even in the early 20th century it was not yet a county-wide library:

“Only residents of Bloomington Township which had a library tax levy, or, at times, of Perry Township where the Trustee contributed a regular fee, were allowed to use the library for free. A great many county residents felt aggrieved at this, and in the late 1920’s a movement began to place the library on a tax base throughout the county and make its services available to all residents. The County Commissioners agreed and in 1929 created the Monroe County Public Library.”
To reach beyond the city, the library instituted the bookmobile in 1929, one of the first of its kind in Indiana. Lois Henze was prominent in people’s memories:

“My earliest memory of a reading treat was Miss Henze and her bookmobile. She stopped at school during the school year, but she came to Indian Creek Township during the summer months too and she stopped at my house. I remember sitting on the back porch and watching for her as she came down the Rockport Road. I was so short at five years old [that] she let me use her little stool to climb on to retrieve my favorite books. She never let you forget how precious those books were and always insisted that you treat them so.”

The Monroe County Public Library system merged with the Bloomington Library in 1965, and in 1971 opened its new building on Kirkwood Avenue. There were 105,000 books in the collection at that time. A 1997 addition nearly quadrupled the library’s size. To make the library more accessible to patrons outside Bloomington, the Ellettsville branch opened in 1990. Also, a new branch library is being planned for the rapidly growing area southwest of the city.

Fast-forward to recent times. In 2017 the American Library Association gave MCPL its “Excellence in Library Programming Award,” citing the library as a model in its field. The library’s 2016 annual report showed 72,000 persons holding library cards, of the total population of 145,000. 987,000 visits were recorded. The collection held 349,000 physical books, 40,000 electronic books, plus 122,000 other items. Circulation of physical items was 2,138,000, and electronic items 422,000.

With a budget of over $8 million, the library depends upon Monroe County for tax and bond money, plus grants for specific projects. The Friends of the Library sells used books, fundraises, and contributes about $115,000 a year to the library.

Nearly two centuries old, the library today is a place welcoming all.

Notes
6. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 2.
13. “City Library Got Start.”
16. Ibid., 1.
17. Ibid., 5.
19. Quote from Joan [Moore] McCammon, used in a Monroe County History Center exhibit, n.d.
Membership Form

Annual Membership Levels

- Student $10
- Teacher $20
- Individual $40
- Family/Grandparents $50
- Supporter $100
- Benefactor $250
- Patron $500
- Sponsor $1000
- Sustaining beginning at $10 a month

Check if you are interested in:
- Volunteer Information

Renew online or donate online at: http://monroehistory.org/join-and-give

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

Print Name

Address

Phone

E-mail

Method of Payment
- Visa
- MasterCard
- Discover
- Check

Credit Card #

Expiration Date CVC Number

Signature