The stone mill established by the Perry brothers was the second in Monroe County and the fifth in the Oolitic limestone belt. Matthews Bros. in Ellettsville was the first. The other three were in Stinesville, Bedford, and Salem, Indiana.1

Gilbert Kirtland Perry was born on 26 December 1831 in South Thomaston, Maine,2 the eldest of four children of Job and Martha Perry. As a young man, he was captivated by stories of the gold rush and departed for California in June 1850 with a group of 12 comrades.3 The 1850 U.S. census shows Gilbert Perry (age 18) living in Placerville, El Dorado County, with the occupation: “miner for gold.” The company’s lack of success led to it being disbanded with each member “allowed twenty square feet” of the claim. According to one source, Gilbert’s portion “was a rich one.” He returned to Maine in 1855.4

Gilbert’s younger brother, Henry Fales Perry, was born on 10 January 1834 in South Thomaston, Maine.5 In 1855, Henry “entered medical school at Ann Arbor, Michigan,”6 but by 1858, the brothers had reunited in Ellettsville and embarked upon the sawmill business. The mill was a primitive type with a limited output, and the logs were hauled by a team of oxen.7 The 1860 U.S. census shows G. K. Perry (age 27) and H. F. Perry (age 24) living in the Ellettsville household of J. S. Whitsell, presumably as boarders, with the occupation: “mill hand.”

During the Civil War, the brothers served in Company G, 38th Regiment Indiana Volunteers Infantry. Gilbert “assisted in recruiting the men of Company G” from Monroe County, and was mustered in on 18 September 1861 as First Lieutenant. In August 1862, he was stricken with typhoid fever. He later returned to active duty and attained the rank of Captain before resigning on 3 May 1863 due to the “state of his health.”8 Henry enlisted on 27 September 1862 and rose to the rank of Major. Towards the end of the war, he suffered a severe battlefield wound and was “left for dead,” but “the boys of the Thirty-eighth Indiana” found him and carried him to safety. He was discharged on 15 February 1865, and was unable to walk until the following month.9
In 1866, Major Henry F. Perry and Captain Gilbert K. Perry opened a quarry a mile north of Ellettsville, “where with limited means and no knowledge of the business they began work.”10 In the early years of the stone business, quarrying was difficult. “The tools and machinery were primitive in their construction, and slowly did the work of quarrying out a ledge.” 11 As time went on, “improved quarrying machinery was manufactured,” and Perry Bros. “was among the first to invest” in channeling machines. Although it was an expensive piece of equipment, “the channeler caused the long drill and powder keg to disappear from their works.” The old hand derrick was replaced first by horsepower and then by powerful steam derricks. The new process enabled the business “to do as much work in a day as they did before in a week.”11

A demand for better building material in the post-Civil War period “called for enlarged output of stone, under more economical methods of production.” Perry Bros. grasped the needs and demands of the moment and built a profitable business.12 Its success benefitted Monroe County and especially Ellettsville, providing “employment to many men, from whose earnings good homes [were] established and maintained.”13 In 1874 or 1875, the brothers built a second stone mill on property located about a half-mile south of the first mill, in Richland Township, Section 3, just east of Matthews Bros.14 (present-day Bybee Stone).

Henry F. Perry retired about 1896.15 He had lived in Bloomington for a number of years, but he moved to California around 1902.16 In 1914, when the occasion of his 80th birthday was celebrated “at his home in Palo Alto, California,” he was also remembered fondly in Bloomington.17 He died in Palo Alto on 11 November 1920.18

Following Henry’s retirement in 1896, Gilbert took over the business and ran it until he died unexpectedly at his Bloomington home on North College Avenue in 1898.19 After Gilbert’s death, the company was run by his son, Eugene H. R. Perry.20 Around 1940, it was sold to William Hoadley and then to William McNeely. The mill was torn down and nothing remains today.21

Notes
4. Ibid.
5. Perry, History, 258.
7. Ibid.
10. “Change of Firm”; “Perry Brothers.”
11. “Change of Firm.”
12. “Perry Brothers.”
15. “Perry Brothers.”
20. “Perry Brothers.”


NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY
library@monroehistory.org

Compiled by Megan MacDonald and Penelope Mathiesen

From the Library Manager

It seems that many people have picked up genealogy as a hobby during the quarantine, which has kept the library quite busy with distance research requests as well as in person (which will remain by appointment only until at least the end of the year). As people have been digging deep into their own family history, we are still getting inquiries and applications to our First Family Program, eligible to anyone who is a direct descendant of a Monroe County resident who settled here before 31 December 1849. Recently, researchers have also been very interested in our map and yearbook collections as well as business history around the Courthouse Square.

New in the Library

* Perry, Henry Fales. History of the Thirty-eighth Regiment Indiana Volunteers Infantry, One of the Three Hundred Fighting Regiments of the Union Army in the War of the Rebellion, 1861–1865. Reprint of 1906 publication. The 38th regiment was recruited in Monroe County by the author’s brother Gilbert; they later established Perry Bros. stone mill in Ellettsville. The volume contains a history of the regiment, personal sketches, and rosters of officers and men.
Part I: The Founding of the Edgeworthalean Society
By Lee Ehman

Note: Parts II and III will appear in subsequent issues.

One hundred and eighty years ago, local women met weekly to discuss questions of importance of the time. Their group, the Edgeworthalean Society, included 33 women who participated from January 1841 to June 1844. The Society was named in honor of a prolific English author of children’s and adult literature, Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849). This was Indiana’s second women’s literary and social club. The first, the “Female Social Society of New Harmony,” had been formed in 1825. In Bloomington, there were three similar men’s groups around this time, each associated with the Indiana Seminary.1 The Edgeworthalean Society, however, was apparently not affiliated with Monroe County’s Female Seminary (active ca. 1833–1866), although some members might have been enrolled there as well.2 A charter member of the Society, Mrs. M. L. Hinkson, was a graduate of the Female Seminary and served as its assistant principal in the early 1840s.3

The Edgeworthalean Society’s officers included a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, two Critics, a Librarian, and a Censoress. Its Constitution and By-Laws4 underscored the seriousness with which the Society members took their purpose of bettering their minds. The document’s provisions contain a great deal of structure and focus for the members to follow.5 For example, in Article 7, the Critics’ duties were “to inspect compositions, write criticisms on them pointing out the beauties and defects, and correcting the errors which shall be read before the society and delivered to the members on whose compositions they were written.” In Article 8, the Censoress’s duties were to “supervise the general moral character of the society, admonish all offenders, and see that the character of this institution be not injured by the disorderly conduct of any of its members.” Article 9 lays out the Society’s activities: “recitations, compositions, argumentations, reading, writing, dictation, analyzing sentences.”

The By-Laws provided for fines of 6 ¼ cents for absences or failure to discharge required duties. The meeting minutes contained some instances of fines being levied. Members were neither permitted to speak for more than 10 minutes nor more than twice on the same subject. The President decided on the question to be debated during each meeting, and judged the strength of pro and con arguments. She then called for a vote on the “merits of the question.” Some By-Laws were very restrictive. Members were not to leave their seats without Presidential permission. No spectators were allowed unless by the prior consent of the group. Four absences were sufficient for “disowning” a member.

Presidents were to be elected every eight months and begin their terms with a formal address.6 These speeches tell us about the nature of the Society as well as the thinking of the presidents about the place of women in society.

The first president, Mrs. M. Elizabeth Hughes, gave her address on 22 January 1841. She said that by forming their Society, they had become “innovators,” by filling a niche theretofore only taken by men. She then declared that “our object is the cultivation and improvement of the mind.” Hughes went on to provide an historical argument for this goal. She saw a progress of women’s place in society, first from “earlier ages of the world,” when dominance by physical superiority led to a hard and degraded state. This evolved into “the wild and romantic spirit of chivalry” when women were “elevated to the rank of an earthly divinity—a goddess.” Then Christianity “silently” worked out women’s destiny so that she was viewed as a rational being. She acknowledged that the first two “states” still held sway for many. Hughes rejected the idea that their Society’s activities were “too masculine to be proper for females and…calculated to dim the lustre of that modest reserve which is considered the sexes best ornament.” Instead, Hughes argued that women need to “strengthen and perfect the sex in the discharge of their duties, thereby rendering home the seat of happiness.”

Mrs. Mary W. Barnes gave her presidential address on 11 June 1841. She argued that the “cultivation of mind” leads to equality of the sexes, and that women need to become “fit companions” of men. Her conception of education embraced “the daily work of a lifetime.” She used a household analogy to illustrate the importance of self-improvement of intelligence: “many a bright shining talent may lie hid in a napkin for very want of activity to unfold it.” Barnes concluded by asserting that the members should feel “no mean gratification…to be…among the founders of the first female Literary Society of Bloomington.”

Mrs. M. L. Hinkson7 assumed leadership on 28 January 1842. She commented that the library had not yet been started and that few new women had joined. But she set an optimistic tone: “The star of woman is rising.” She exhorted her members to persevere, to be pioneers of woman’s future, and become “the reasoning counterpart of man.” Hinkson made a political argument about women:

“The stability and prosperity of our Government must materially depend upon the proper direction of the female mind. For a government to be truly republican woman must be free—not from the laws of social life—but from ignorance and superstition—from pride and vanity[,] the spontaneous productions of an uncultivated mind.”

Hinkson also argued that through inventions, women’s work had been reduced by nearly one-half, so lack of time should not excuse improvement of minds. She urged her members to follow the Society’s rules about punctuality, order, and attention, as well as preparation for Friday sessions. Doing this, she claimed, would promote good mental habits.

On 29 July 1842 Mrs. C. Morrison gave her presidential address. She added no new ideas, but like her predecessor, referred to the obstacles of small size and members’ leaving.

Miss Margaret Anderson Maxwell, the first unmarried president, took office on 11 November 1842. She lamented the lapse of meetings, and lack of punctuality, formality, and adherence to rules about speaking too long and out of order. If they wanted a sociable affair, she said, they should change the By-Laws, otherwise they should toe the line. She concluded by worrying that by not fulfilling the Society’s ideals, they were reinforcing stereotypes about females and becoming their own worst enemies.

The last president, also unmarried, was Miss Mary E. Lowe, who spoke on 1 September 1843. She emphasized the importance of women’s advancement and female education, so that “woman is no longer the slave of degraded man.”
The leaders of the Society were not feminists as the term is used today. But their statements might mark them as 1840 feminists, given their sense of women’s progress, their desire to use their intellects, and their wanting to be the equal of men.

The next two articles in this series will describe the content of the meetings and explore the women themselves.

Notes
2. Lee Ehman, “Monroe County Female Seminary,” Monroe County Historian (October/November 2017), 10–11.
3. Charles Blanchard, ed., Counties of Morgan, Monroe and Brown, Indiana: Historical and Biographical (Chicago: F. A. Battey & Co., 1884), 473. (See note 7.)
4. The Constitution and By-Laws are available in the MCHC Research Library’s Vertical Files: Clubs/Organizations—Women (Edgeworthalean).
5. Wheeler (p. 181) notes that parts of the Edgeworthalean constitution were modeled after the men’s societies.
6. Full transcriptions are included in the “Minutes.” (See Wheeler.)
7. Wheeler (p.180) gives the spelling as “Hinkson,” or Hinkston, or Hinson.”

Letter from the President

I always look forward to this time of year because it serves as a reminder to pause and reflect on all the things I am thankful for. The resulting list often includes cherished friends and family, as well as the many blessings that have come my way. This year, however, I am particularly thankful for the blessing of health and the resilience of our community amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I am also thankful that the History Center has continued to find ways to serve our community in a challenging time, and thankful to know that there is an organization collecting and preserving stories and artifacts about this unique moment in history, in addition to all those moments—special and ordinary—that have come before it, and which will come afterwards. I am thankful that we were able to hold the annual Garage Sale this year and I am infinitely grateful for everyone who came to shop, as well as being especially grateful for those who volunteered their time to help us have a safe and successful event.

Now that we have a sense of what’s to come in 2021, the History Center is seeking information on how best to continue serving our community. We know that some people will still be a little leery about coming to public places to see exhibits and participate in programs, so we are constantly striving to find new ways to share historical programs and exhibits with people in the comfort and safety of their own homes. We also know that some people are eager to get out of their homes after being cooped up for so long, and we’d love input on what types of on-site experiences would be most appealing and useful. With these questions in mind, we’ll be sending out a short member survey soon and we would truly appreciate your input. In the meantime, if you have ideas and suggestions, please feel free to email me at jennifer@rockman.com.

Lastly, I feel that I would be remiss if I didn’t take one more opportunity to wish the History Center a very happy 40th birthday before the year ended. The celebration of that great milestone has gotten somewhat lost in the shuffle of this strange year. Nonetheless, it is worth remembering and celebrating four decades of serving the historical preservation and educational needs of our community. Thank you to all the staff, volunteers, and members who have been a part of this 40-year journey!

With best wishes and warmest greetings for the holiday season,

Jennifer Borland, Monroe County History Center President

The Board of Trustees for the Monroe County Historical Society recently approved new policies for the History Center related to COVID-19. In addition to adhering to all state and local guidelines while the Coronavirus outbreak continues, the History Center will remain open if Monroe County is at the “Yellow” level (or better). If Monroe County is at the “Orange” level, the History Center will be open in a limited capacity, by appointment, if staff members and volunteers are willing and able to receive visitors. When Monroe County is at the "Red" level, we will temporarily close the History Center to public visitation. If you have questions or would like to schedule an appointment to visit the History Center, please call 812-332-2517.

We will continue to have many events and exhibits online, and members of the public are welcome to make research requests for the MCHC library. For information about upcoming events, please visit our website or Facebook page, or call the History Center at 812-332-2517. For research requests, please call the History Center or send an email to library@monroehistory.org.

The Garage Sale site will be closed for donations through January 1st. Please call the History Center before attempting to bring items to the History Center or the new Garage Sale site.

Even if the History Center is closed, items from the Museum Store and from our Holiday Sale are still available for purchase online or by phone and we are offering free local delivery. Please visit our website, Facebook page or call the History Center to see items available for purchase. Your purchases help support the History Center and are more important right now than ever before!
CURRENT EXHIBITS

Online Exhibit Spotlight: Monroe County’s Firsts: Breaking the Color Barrier celebrates the triumphs of Monroe County’s African American citizens and the vast accomplishments achieved throughout the county’s two hundred years. You can visit the digital version of this exhibition through the “online exhibits” tab on our website: monroehistory.org. This exhibit was made possible with funding from the Operation Round Up program of SCI REMC and the Wylie Foundation. We are always updating this digital exhibit as we gather more information and photographs. If you have details to add or someone you would like to recommend for the exhibit, please let us know.

BROWN GALLERY: Transportation in Monroe County

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.

HILL GALLERY: Extra! Extra! Bloomington Newspaper Advertisements

Before the internet, television, and radio, newspapers told Monroe County families what was happening around the world. It wasn’t just the stories, but the advertisements that captivated people’s attention. Car dealerships, retail stores, and everything in between relied on this method to spread word of their sales and events. The Monroe County History Center has on display larger than life copies of advertisements showcasing the Monroe County community from almost a century ago. (Image source: Bloomington Evening World, April 16, 1915.)

On display until March 5, 2021.

DECKARD EDUCATION ROOM:

VOTES FOR WOMEN: The Women’s Suffrage Movement in Monroe County

Highlighting the remarkable women of Monroe County who fought for more than 50 years for the right to vote, this exhibit introduces visitors to the political activities of the Equal Suffrage Club and the Bloomington Franchise League in the context of the State and National suffrage movement. The exhibit is free and open to the public in the Deckard Education Room and will be on display until December 30th, 2020.

COMMUNITY VOICES CASE:

Salvation Army

The Community Voices Case is highlighting the community work of the Salvation Army. Countless volunteers across the country and in Monroe County spend their time ringing bells for the Red Kettle donation program to help vulnerable members of our community and that work is on display in our Community Voices Case. Additionally, the Salvation Army's "Coats for Kids" program, which provides free winter coats and clothing to children in need in our community, is also highlighted in the case - and you can help! The History Center is a collection site for the "Coats for Kids" program and if you donate two children's coats of any size, you will receive a free, year-long family membership to the History Center! Please consider donating to children in need in our community and come in to see the new display open through December 31st, 2020.

Calendar of Events

Please visit our website at www.monroehistory.org for an up-to-date list of events.
Collections Corner
By Hilary Fleck

The History Center is working every day to represent our diverse community and create inclusive displays - and this also includes our museum collection. We need your help to ensure our collection represents all the members of our Monroe County community. If you have materials you would like to donate or loan to the museum, please contact Hilary Fleck, Collection Manager, at collection@monroehistory.org or 812-332-2517 ext. 6. The image to the right, from the MCHC collection, shows students outside the Banneker School, ca. 1940.

Education Updates

We had a spook-tacularly good time with our Dearly Departed Cemetery Tours of Rose Hill Cemetery! Our third year partnering with the City of Bloomington’s Parks & Recreation department was a success as we shared some of the lesser-known stories of those buried in the cemetery. We were also pleased to welcome Laura Merrifield Wilson as a presenter in November; her talk was absolutely fascinating! Many thanks to the Indiana Women’s Suffrage Centennial, the Lilly Endowment, Inc., and Hillenbrand Industries for supporting this portion of our programming for the suffrage centennial.

It is sad to share that our traditional open houses for the holidays will be cancelled. While it is unfortunate that we will not be able to gather for the Canopy of Lights and Log Cabin Christmas, we do want to ensure that everyone’s health and safety are our priority. PuzzleFest, however, will be returning in 2021 as an all-day virtual event via Zoom! In addition to our traditional team division for the jigsaw competition, we are also offering an all-ages family division and solo division. Our popular puzzle sale and swap will return to the History Center from January 20th to February 5th. As has been the case in past years, participants will also be able to bring gently used puzzles in to swap out for new puzzles! PuzzleFest is sponsored by the Book Corner. Stay tuned for more information on our website and Facebook page.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

2020 brought many changes to our organization, and the biggest change happened to the annual Garage Sale Fundraiser! Several volunteers worked remotely through the pandemic to acquire, clean or restore, and prepare items for the sale in October. When the rescheduled date was announced, these volunteers worked hundreds of hours to price and merchandise the donations with only a few weeks’ notice. Because of their tireless work and dedication, we raised $69,000 for the History Center. This fundraising total, and the Garage Sale itself, would not exist without our volunteers and their diligent work!

News from the Museum Store

Check out our online store for puzzles, book, and paper dolls.
Holiday Shopping made easy at www.monroehistory.org

Virtual Run To Make 2020 History

Join the Monroe County History Center in our virtual fundraisers to make 2020 history!

What is a virtual race? A Virtual Race is a race you can run or walk at any location, at your pace, outside or on a treadmill, alone or with a group of friends. Train and stay active, run or walk for a good cause, and get an awesome medal.

For more details check out our Facebook page and website or visit the following URL to learn more about the event: https://runsignup.com/Race/IN/Bloomington/RUNOMAKE2020HISTORY.

You can also contact Rose via email with any questions about the race at office@monroehistory.org.
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Individual Cont.
Steve Wyatt
Gerrie Zhang

Student
Layne Sodrel

Sustaining
Thomas Breyer &
Christine Peterson
Scott & Pam Faris
Dave & Francie Hurst

Welcome to our
New Members:
Dawn Bakken
Mark & Mary Belding
Kim Filiatrault
Jason & Jaqueline Harding
Dave & Francie Hurst
Doug Johnson
Nancy Krueger
Chris LaFollette
Joseph McKenna
Jeffrey Scofield
Jessica Smith
Layne Sodrel
Gerrie Zhang

REMEMBERING

William Carney was with Otis Elevator where he worked for 37 years as a Supervisor and Foreman. He was a longtime member of the Otis Bowling League and loved to work in his woodshop where he could make just about anything you would want.

Nikki Gastineau had a long successful career at CFC Properties and was an active member of the Bloomington community.

Earl Saxton was in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) after high school, then worked for Indiana University from 1938 - 1939. He was then in the Merchant Marines from 1940 - 1944. Earl later retired from the Chemistry Department at Indiana University where he worked as a Glassblower from 1947 until 1985.

Patty Sue Trotman worked at Ferguson Law in Bloomington, IN and was the curator for the Gosport History Museum. Her family owned and operated the Gosport Hardware & Lumber Co.

Frances Walden taught 1st (and sometimes 2nd) grade for 38 years. She was an avid volunteer, working countless hours for many organizations over the years, including Senior Games, Opportunity House, and the Monroe County Fair Art Department.

Frank Zeller, Ph.D, served 35 years in the Zoology Department at Indiana University. He was acting chairman (1976 - 77) and taught endocrinology in the IU Medical School after retiring.
Collection Spotlight

“Ice Follies” Ice Skates Pin, ca. 1950

The Ice Follies was a traveling ice show that featured skaters such as Roy Shipstad, Richard Dwyer, and Sonja Henie. It is unclear if Bloomington ever hosted the Ice Follies or if the pin was a souvenir from a show in Indianapolis. Donated by Barbara East.