Library Resource Describes Bloomington’s Development, 1818–1950

By Penelope Mathiesen

A detailed study of Bloomington’s early development can be found in Robert O. Harvey’s Land Uses in Bloomington, Indiana, 1818–1950 (Bloomington: Indiana University School of Business, 1951), available in the Research Library. Some of the major factors are highlighted below. Page numbers from Harvey’s book are indicated in parentheses.

Bloomington initially developed as a town site due to its location “along the trail that became the Lafayette-Jeffersonville Turnpike,” its central position within Monroe County, and its selection as the county seat. (pp. 2–3) After the sale of town lots in 1818, a mixture of residences and commercial establishments grew up around the courthouse square. Manufacturing “was done largely in the homes” and “residences were intermingled with all other types of land uses. Typically, residences did not extend east of the square, south of Fourth Street, or north of Ninth Street.” (pp. 4–6)

In 1820, Bloomington was chosen as the location of the Indiana Seminary, forerunner of Indiana University. Speculators immediately rushed to the site south of the square. Soon after the seminary opened in 1825, “a high-grade residential area developed nearby on South College Avenue and East Second Street.” The “fine homes” were occupied by “higher ranking persons at the school,” wealthy townspeople, and professionals who had both houses and offices on South College. It was considered “the best residential area in town.” (p. 9) By 1840, “fine homes” had appeared “north of the square on College Avenue and the section southeast of the square on Fourth Street.” (p. 10) “Intermediate-grade residential areas were found west, northwest, and south of the square,” the latter “stimulated by the growth of the college.” (p. 11)

The coming of the New Albany, Salem and Chicago Railway (the Monon) in 1853 signaled major changes in business and residential patterns. The tracks created a dividing line between Bloomington’s east and west sides. Most homes built “west of the square were in the intermediate to low price category.” (p. 17) The northwest section of town
“became a low-grade residential district.” (p. 14) The area that had the town’s poorest social and economic conditions “stretched along the railroad tracks for approximately two blocks north of Sixth Street.” (p. 18) East of the square, “a new intermediate-grade residential section developed,” and “high-grade residential growth developed along North College Avenue.” (p. 14) By 1876, other “high-grade residences” sprang up near the mansion built by General Morton C. Hunter at Eleventh and Walnut streets. (pp. 16–17)

From 1853 to 1876, many “substantial medium-priced homes” had been built “east of the square within the rectangle formed by Walnut, Third, Grant, and Eighth Streets” by the owners and employees of small businesses and industrial enterprises. (p. 17) Bucktown, populated by the Black residents of Bloomington, occupied “the territory between Seventh and Tenth Streets and Lincoln and Dunn Streets.” It was a low-income area, but “many of the small homes were owned by their occupants,” most of whom were employees of the Showers furniture business at Ninth and Grant streets. (pp. 18–19) After the Showers plant, “the most important business in town,” burned in 1884, the company moved west to rebuild at “the junction of Eighth and Morton Streets along the Monon tracks.” (p. 26) The Black community moved from Bucktown to “the west side beyond the industrial area” (p. 29) as a result of “the shifting of the lumber business,” the loss of jobs, the need for “cheaper quarters,” and the desire to sell their homes and buy “cheaper land on the west side.” Another factor in the move was the rush of real estate agents “to acquire property on the East side” near the new Indiana University campus. (Harvey, p. 32, citing Raytha L. Yokely, “The Negro Community in Bloomington” [Master’s Thesis, Indiana University, 1941], p. 10)

According to Harvey, Indiana University’s move to Dunn Woods on the east side of Bloomington in 1885 “influenced the internal structure of the city more than any other single factor.” (p. 22) Soon “high-grade” development began “south of Third Street and east of Henderson.” (pp. 36–37) New residential areas sprang up along Indiana Avenue. (p. 30) University Courts on the north side of campus was platted in 1911–1913, and “important faculty members and well-to-do business and professional men bought land in the new subdivision.” (p. 36) From the 1920s onward, there was increased development south of campus. (p. 37)

Harvey makes use of public records and historic resources to discuss other factors that influenced Bloomington’s development, including the presence (or absence) of adequate transportation routes, sewer connections, and a reliable water supply. The book contains four maps and numerous tables that analyze local deed records, agricultural statistics, industrial data, commercial establishments, population, employment in the limestone industry, and Indiana University enrollment.

Women in Monroe County Local Offices, 1914 to 1990

By Lee Ehman

Women in Monroe County first voted in the November 1920 general election. Even before that, Maude Luzadder, wife of a physician, ran for Monroe County Coroner in 1914. Sarah Oldham vied for County Recorder in that same year, and Mabel Franklin ran for County Treasurer on the Prohibition ticket in 1916. They received few votes, but their candidacies marked a milestone in local politics, a beacon for many aspiring female politicians. In subsequent decades more and more women ran for leadership positions.

1920s through 1950s. During the first decade of this period, a few women ran for local offices, at the township and party organization level, and for city and county seats. In the elections of 1918 through 1924 there were no women office-seekers locally. In 1926 three women ran in the primary for Republican delegates to the state convention, and one for Democratic state convention delegate, while five ran for seats on Democratic precinct committees. 1928 saw Lela Smith running for County Sheriff as a Republican on a reform platform; she lost in the primary.
Beginning in 1930, many more women ran, often for township offices or as delegates to state conventions. Florence Downing ran for County Recorder in 1930, but lost. The 1934 election saw two Republican women, Alice Parmer and (Mary) Vanna Thrasher, run for Bloomington Mayor and Clerk-Treasurer, respectively. Vanna Thrasher became the first woman elected to local office. In that year she led the Republican ticket, winning by nearly 1,000 votes. She served in that position until 1947.

Other notable women elected to office during this period were Frances Presley, who became County Treasurer in the 1936 elections; Thelma Reeves Gilmore (R), County Treasurer, who was selected when her father died while in that office and served two-year terms in 1942 and 1944; and Mildred Wright (R), who was elected County Assessor in 1942. Mary Holmstedt (R) was elected in 1942 to the Bloomington City Council; in 1948 she lost her bid for State Senator. Agnes Woolery (D) was elected to the City Council in 1947. In the 1951 city elections, Esther Leavitt (R) won the Clerk-Treasurer spot and was re-elected in 1955. In 1948, Thelma Axsom (R) was elected County Auditor; she was re-elected in 1952, elected County Treasurer in 1956, and elected Auditor again in 1960. Ruth Poling (R) won election as County Recorder in 1958 and 1962. At the close of this period, Mary Alice Dunlap (D) ran and won the office of City Clerk-Treasurer in 1959.

1960s through 1980s. During this period many more women gained public offices. When Tom Lemon resigned as Bloomington Mayor in 1962, Mary Alice Dunlap (D), Bloomington’s first woman mayor, was selected to succeed him. She was narrowly defeated in the 1963 election. Other women office-holders elected during the 1960s were: Martha V. Rayborn, Perry Township Trustee in 1962; Louise Goodman (R), County Auditor in 1964; Marguerite Christophel, Ellettsville Clerk-Treasurer; Dorothy Robinson, Ellettsville Trustee for Ward 3; Ruth Poling Karsell (R), County Clerk in 1966; Marian Tardy (R), City Clerk-Treasurer in 1967; Louise Goodman (R), County Auditor in 1968; Elizabeth Bridgwaters and Delma Packard, members of the MCCSC School Board in 1968; and Mildred Coleman (R) and Catherine Crittenden (R), County Councilwomen in 1970.

In the 1970s, women were determined to become even more involved politically. Election records show a large increase in women running for city and county offices as well as party advisory boards, state party conventions, and township boards. Notably, Grace Johnson (D) replaced Marian Tardy as City Clerk in 1971, and that position was subsequently filled by Karel Dolnick, Nora Connors, Pat Williams, Regina Moore, and Nicole Bolden, all women Democrats. Charlotte Zietlow (D), was elected to the City Council in 1971 and served as its president. Subsequently, she was the first female County Commissioner, also serving as president of the Commissioners. She ran for Congress in 1978 but lost. Marilyn Schultz (D) was elected as Indiana State Senator in 1972 and served through 1984. Flo Davis (D), Patricia Kinser (D), and Tomi Allison (D) all served on the City Council during the 1970s. Marguerite Christophel was elected as Ellettsville Clerk-Treasurer in 1975; Dorothy Robinson was elected as Ellettsville Ward 3 Trustee; Elizabeth Fuller was elected to the Ellettsville Town Board in 1979.

In the 1980s women consolidated their place in Monroe County politics. Tomi Allison (D) would become the first elected woman mayor of Bloomington. She finished Frank McCloskey’s term in 1982, then won three elections as mayor, retiring in 1995. In 1980 three Stinesville women were elected to town offices: Margie Payton and Thelma Pat Carter to the Town Board, and Karen Welch as Clerk-Treasurer. Vi Simpson (D), became State Senator in 1984 and served through 2008. Phyllis Kenworthy served as Superior Court Judge from 1987 to 1990, and Elizabeth Mann served as Circuit Court Judge from 1989 to 2001. Marty Hawk (R) served on the County Council in 1989–1992 and 1999 to the present. Other long-serving women elected during this decade included Pam Service (D) and Kathy Dilcher (D), both City Councilwomen; Barbara Clark (R), County Treasurer and Auditor; Pat Haley (R), County Recorder and Clerk; and Joyce Poling (R), County Commissioner and County Council member.

1990s to Present. In recent times women reached virtual parity with men in seeking and holding local political positions. The 2021 Bloomington City Council consists of four women and five men, the County Council three women and four men, and all three County Commissioners are women. Monroe county women first voted 100 years ago. Their political office-seeking started slowly, but with Vanna Thrasher’s election in 1934, they began the process of joining men as political leaders.

Notes

1. Research for this article is based on the Monroe County Election Books. An online index is available at: https://monroehistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Elections-Chronological-Sort.pdf

2. See Lee Ehman, “Monroe County Women First Voted 100 Years Ago,” Monroe County Historian (February/March 2020), 1–3.

3. The election books did not contain political party information for 1914. (Notes cont. p. 3)
A Quick Note from the Director

Susan Dyar

Hello all and happy summer!

We’re all so excited about the upcoming garage sale on June 11 and 12 and we hope we see you there. Remember, as a member you have early access to the sale on Wednesday, June 9. Come early before all the good stuff is sold!

There’s a lot going on at the History Center these days as you’ll see in this issue. We have new exhibits being installed, new programming being scheduled, and even a new roof going onto the historic part of our building. As I’m writing this we’re in the middle of interviews for a new Director. We have so many amazing applicants from all over the country who are excited about being a part of the History Center. The Board is committed to finding the best fit to help us continue to grow, so I know it will be a tough decision. I hope you’ll come out to meet the new Director once they start. As we all start to leave our homes a bit more, the History Center is a great place to visit and we’re doing all we can to make sure you can visit safely. Come to one of the programs, check out the new exhibits, walk around town and eat some lunch outside at one of the wonderful restaurants. It’s a great time to be in Bloomington.

Volunteer Spotlight

Normally, during the month of April, we celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Month with a lunch to gather and thank our amazing volunteer corps. Thanks to Zoom technology, we gathered virtually to say “thank you” and connect. This year, we honored three volunteers for their outstanding service.

Penny Mathiesen received the Liz Knapp Genealogy Volunteer of the Year Award. She maintains our vertical files, has been a contributor to the Monroe County Historian newsletter for over 15 years, and in more recent years has been completely responsible for the section of articles from the Research Library.

Glenda Murray received the Gayle Cook Volunteer of the Year Award. She was appointed as the official Monroe County Historian by the Indiana Historical Society in 2018 and serves as a resource person for historical inquiries from within and without the county.

Lee Ehman received the Outstanding Service Award. Before the pandemic, Lee demonstrated an immense amount of patience while updating the museum with all new desktop computers, a new server, and new environmental sensors twice.

Education Updates

By Andrea Hadsell

This spring, we ventured outdoors to bring you new programming. Thanks to the talents of the Indiana Historical Costume Society, our program “Fashion Through the Ages” was a success! Attendees enjoyed the costume society’s creations while picnicking on the front lawn with treats provided by Cup & Kettle Tea Company.

June is Limestone Month in Monroe County and we are headed to Rose Hill Cemetery! Members of our hard-working Cemetery Committee will guide us through the headstones noting distinctive carvings and history from our limestone industry.

Coming this summer is “Black Authors Speak!” Join us on the front lawn to celebrate local authors as they showcase their work. Writers across all genres will perform readings for the public to enjoy. Be sure to stop by when you are downtown and check it out! Both programs will be recorded and available this fall on the History Center’s YouTube channel.

Notes (continued)

4. The election books do not have records for the 1920 election. Newspaper accounts show county candidates, but not township political party offices.
5. Ellettsville election records do not indicate political parties.
8. There were so many women elected in recent times that they cannot be named here. The current exhibit at the History Center, “See her Run: Monroe County Women in Politics,” is an excellent way to learn about them.
News from the Library

library@monroehistory.org

Compiled by Megan MacDonald and Penelope Mathiesen

**IGS 2021 Conference Report**

The Indiana Genealogical Society’s 2021 Annual Conference took place on April 9–10 via Zoom. On Friday, 513 people attended, and on Saturday, 532. The first day included speakers on church records, Indiana genealogy, finding unknown parents of ancestors, and digital collections of the Allen County Public Library. The second day featured four sessions presented by guest speaker Lisa Louise Cooke, who discussed research strategies and offered useful tips for Google searches and online records preservation. During the annual meeting held at midday on Saturday, three persons were inducted into the Society of Civil War Families of Indiana. They included Diane K. Schweitzer, St. John, Indiana, whose ancestor was John Scott, 52nd Indiana Volunteer Infantry, from Monroe County.

The next IGS annual conference is planned for 2 April 2022 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, possibly with both virtual and in-person attendance. The guest speaker will be David Lambert of the New England Historical Genealogical Society. For more information on IGS and its offerings, go to: www.indgensoc.org

**Recent Donation**

The MCHC Research Library has received a donation of scanned files of Smithville newspapers, *Name It and Take It* and *Smithville News*, dating from 1897. Once the donation has been processed, the files will be made available to patrons in the library.

**New in the Library**

* Echo. 1937 Unionville High School yearbook.


* Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910 with Supplement for Indiana*. 1913. Abstract of the 1910 census, including statistics for the state, counties, cities, and other divisions. Gift from Brian Yeley.


**Collection’s Corner**

By Hilary Fleck

Museums around the world have had to think creatively over the past tumultuous year to continue to provide content to the public. The History Center has 3D scanned exhibitions, and visitors are able to view them online. We have also developed new ways to share more of our collections artifacts that are currently in storage with the general public as well. On our social media and YouTube channel, there are several videos about artifacts, most recently about the political buttons we have in the museum collection. Hilary Fleck and collection volunteer Rod Spaw have developed an online highlight of postcards in the collection, including quarry postcards, Lake Monroe and Lake Lemon postcards, IU postcards, and some of the more interesting postcards we have. The link is accessible on our website and shared on our social media platforms. More online collection highlights will be coming soon, so we hope you enjoy this peek into our storage!

**News from the Museum Store**

Looking for the *perfect book* to share with that favorite child in your life? “Wake Up, Woods” is the choice. The 2020 National Book Festival selection from Indiana, “Wake Up, Woods” pairs detailed illustrations with clever verses to inform and delight the reader about plants native to Indiana. Written and illustrated by local Hoosiers, “Wake Up, Woods” is a perfect companion for a walk in the woods. The book came about through the diligent work of the Indiana Native Plant Society, whose dream it was to have a picture book celebrating Indiana’s native plants. $15.00.
Current Exhibits

RECHTER GALLERY: Monroe: a County of Cultures

June 25-January 8th, 2022

The Monroe County History Center is excited to display close to forty objects on loan from the Evansville Museum of Art, History, and Science. Representing centuries and communities from all over the globe, Monroe: a County of Cultures aims to show how organizations, institutions, and other groups practice and infuse varying ways of life into the fabric we all call home.

BROWN GALLERY: Transportation in Monroe County

For the past 200 years, the import and export of raw materials, finished goods, and 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. Come check out the newest exhibit on Ralph Rogers and the Rogers Group.

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 September 30, 2021.

DECKARD EDUCATION ROOM: See Her Run

Through research gathered from Monroe County Election Records, the exhibit, See Her Run: Monroe County Women in Politics, highlights the remarkable Monroe County women who have run for public office. The exhibit features artifacts, documents, and photographs from the museum collection that trace the difficult defeats and historic victories of women in local politics. Sponsored by the SCI REMC Operation Round Up program.

DECKARD EDUCATION ROOM: Collection Spotlight Case:

Currently on display at the Monroe County History Center is Rediscovering Hendricksville Pottery. We invite you and your family to come learn about one of southern Indiana’s earliest European-American pottery families and the stoneware they crafted from the 1820s to the early 1900s. Come find out why stone crocks hold a meaningful place in Hoosier history. Rediscovering Hendricksville Pottery will be on display in the Center’s Education Room until the end of May.
**MARCH, APRIL, and MAY MEMBERS**

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**REMEMBERING**

**Douglas “Randy” Bridges** had a notable legal career as a deputy prosecutor and as a Monroe County Superior Court Judge. He received the Distinguished Hoosier Award from the Governor for his achievements and contributions to the local community.

**Ronald K. Brown** grew up in Bloomington and was a small business owner who served civically in many capacities and staffed local election sites for many years. He enjoyed historical trivia, morel mushroom hunting, crossword puzzles, and sports.

**Iris Joanna Clawson** was an assembly line worker at RCA, where she retired after 42 years. She enjoyed collecting owls, working puzzles, gardening, and was an avid NBA basketball fan.

**Lois Heiser** was the head of the Geology Library at Indiana University and served as the first president of the IU Librarians Association, where she was instrumental in securing faculty status for librarians. In addition to being a lover of books, Lois was passionate about art and science and was a generous patron and volunteer to many local art and science organizations and institutions.

**Julian Livingston** was an opera composer, novelist, and engineer. After retiring from Bell Telephone, he became the director of the Genealogy Library and successfully integrated the Genealogy Society Library with the Historical Society Board and the Museum Board of Directors, establishing a legacy that exists to this day.

**Patricia Pizzo** was an active member of the local community for almost 70 years. She founded the Fine Arts Bookstore in 1968, and continued to be active in local cultural, environmental, and social service organizations such as the Lilly Library, Sycamore Land Trust, and IU Circle Theatre.

**Charles A. Zebendon** went from being a strawberry picker in his native state of Florida to being President of First National Bank in Bloomington. He was known as an effective community leader in Bloomington and was active in the local Boys and Girls Club, United Way, and the Regional Ivy Tech Board, among many other notable local institutions.

**Donations in Memory of Julian Livingston:** David S. Black, Susan & Irwin Dunsky, Lee Ehman, Diana Friedley, Debbie Glenn, Sonja Johnson, Tracy Kim, Joseph Marley, and Keith Solberg.
Monroe County Historical Society’s
Monroe County Historian
June/July
Vol. 2021, Issue 3

Society established 1905
Museum established 1980

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

Collection Spotlight

New donation to the collection: A
music stand from First Baptist
Church when it was located at 4th
and Washington Sts. prior to 1956.
Thank you Joe Boes and family!

Monroe County History Center Membership Form

Annual Membership Levels

☐ Student $10
☐ Teacher $20
☐ Individual $40
☐ Family/Grandparents $50
☐ Supporter $100
☐ Benefactor $250
☐ Patron $500
☐ Sponsor $1000
☐ Sustaining membership beginning
at $5 a month

Name (please print):

Address:

Phone: ______________________

Email: ______________________

Method of Payment

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Credit Card Number: ______________________

Expiration Date: ____________ CVC Number: _____________

Signature: ______________________

Check if you are interested in:

☐ Volunteer Information

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

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