Dating The Big Drive Photo
By Penelope Mathiesen

The Harris Grand theatre opened in 1907 at 226 North Walnut Street, one block north of Bloomington’s courthouse square. A large photograph of the entrance decorated for a showing of The Big Drive was on display for many years in Fountain Square Mall, with a label indicating a date of 1933. In this photograph, the movie title is visible on a sign hanging underneath the marquee and on a poster board outside a corner drugstore to the left of the theatre. The scene includes sandbags, artillery pieces, a French railway car, doughboys in uniform, American flags, and wartime photographs propped against the facade. The store to the right of the theatre has a striped awning with the words “Fresh Candies.” What was this film, and is 1933 the correct date?

There was indeed a film titled the Big Drive released in December 1932 and distributed in 1933, but an earlier version of the film with the same title had been released in 1927–28. The Big Drive poster seen in front of the drugstore in the photograph is one that has been commonly (but erroneously) associated with the 1932–33 version, which may explain the incorrect dating.
Dating *The Big Drive* Photo (Cont. from p. 1)

Resources from the collection of the Monroe County History Center help establish the correct date. Another photograph of the Harris Grand shows Dean’s Drug Store to the left of the theatre on the corner of Walnut and Seventh streets, as well as a playbill on the exterior wall of the theatre facing Seventh advertising *Melody Lane*, starring Eddie Leonard, a film released in 1929. In the 1929–30 Bloomington city directory, the businesses on either side of the theatre are Dean’s Drug Store (228 N. Walnut) and the Grand Candy Kitchen (224 N. Walnut), the very businesses that appear in the same locations in *The Big Drive* photo.

By the time of the new release of *The Big Drive* in 1932–33, however, the street scene had changed. In the 1931–32 Bloomington city directory, Dean’s Drug Store has been replaced by the Dixie Market, although the Grand Candy Kitchen remains. In the 1934–35 city directory, the former space occupied by the drugstore and market is vacant, while the former candy store is now Thos. Kanakis Lunch. In yet another photograph of the Harris Grand, playbills advertising *Wharf Angel* and *Girls in Cellophane*, both released in 1934, appear on the Seventh Street wall; the space formerly occupied by the drugstore and market is boarded up; the former candy store says “lunch” on the door and “Hamburgers 5¢” on the awning.

Thus, the photograph of the Harris Grand showing of *The Big Drive* can be conclusively dated to 1927 or 1928, not 1933. What was this film about, and can the date of this Bloomington event and the photograph itself be even more precisely determined?

Both versions of *The Big Drive* contained official World War I footage collected from participating nations by Albert L. Rule (1886–1943), who served as a private in the American Expeditionary Forces and was discharged in 1920. The 1927–28 version was a silent film. According to advertisements, Rule toured with the film and provided a live narration. Some showings also included music and sound effects. The 1933–34 version was a sound film with synchronized dialogue, probably narrated by Rule. Neither version is available today, but publicity releases describe what must have been a very impressive film. In 1928, a Cincinnati newspaper stated:

“The Big Drive’ will be shown at Keith’s Theater this week under the auspices of the Robert E. Bentley Post of the American Legion. … the principals [include] President Wilson, Gen. Pershing, Marshal Foch, Marshal Joffre, King George, the Czar of Russia, Marshal von Hindenburg, the Kaiser and numerous high dignitaries of church and state. The action takes place in the royal palaces, Cantigny, Château Thierry, St. Mihiel and the Argonne.”

In the days before television, this film would have provided viewers with graphic evidence of the ordeals of war. A Findlay, Ohio newspaper reported that the film included “submarine attacks on the oceans,” “great tank charges,” and “the actual shelling of cities as well as great battles, prisoners in prison camps, wounded on the highways, and in the hospitals, also the dead on the battlefields.” As noted by a Noblesville, Indiana newspaper, which stated that the film was presented under the auspices of Battery B:

“Up near Verdun, on the brow of the hill of horrors stands a monument dedicated to the memory of 100 French infantrymen who, while waiting orders to go over the top during the World war were buried where they stood when the trench in which they were standing caved in. A searching party trying to locate the missing soldiers found only their bayonets protruding from the ground. The monument [is] known as the Trench of Bayonets, and the Trench of Bayonets is only one of the many intensely interesting scenes pictured in ‘The Big Drive.’”
The Noblesville newspaper also noted that the film featured the funerals of Baron von Richthofen, “the Red Knight of Germany, who was brought down by a British aviator after his eightieth victory,” and Private Gresham of Evansville, Indiana, who was the first American killed in action, on 3 November 1917.\(^\text{16}\)

Bloomington residents saw the film on M, T, W (as shown on the sign under the marquee in The Big Drive photograph), 13–15 June 1927. The following advertisement from the Bloomington Telephone on 13 June 1927 pinpoints the date of the photograph and describes the event:

**HARRIS GRAND—June 13-14-15**

(Made from U. S. Army Signal Corps and Official Film From Eight Nations) / Accompanied by an Entertaining Talk by A. L. Rule of the 312th Field Artillery U. S. Army / “THE BIG DRIVE” / $5.00 Prize to First Patron to Recognize a Local Soldier in the Picture / Future generations will look at these same pictures and understand what it cost to protect Americans and wonder—WHY? WAR!!! / Auspices of the American Legion.

### Notes

2. Scanned image donated to the Monroe County History Center by the Mathers Museum with the following information: “Harris Grand. The movie showing is ‘The Big Drive’ which was released in 1933.”
4. For example, see poster dated 1933 advertised at: https://www.usmilitariaforum.com/forums/index.php?/topic/19709-movie-poster-the-big-drive-1933/
5. “Publix-Harris Grand Theater,” cat. # 2002.041.0033C. From the collection of the Monroe County History Center.
6. Unfortunately, no Bloomington city directory has been found for 1933.
7. “Print, Photographic [Harris Grand Theater],” cat. # 1986.077.0201a. From the collection of the Monroe County History Center.
12. Copies of 1928 and 1933 exhibitors’ licenses and script for the 1933 version obtained from the New York State Archives in Albany, NY on 10 May 2021.

### Volunteer Spotlight

**Vickie Fry** joined the Board of Trustees in 2016 and served as our Treasurer for the past six years. Vickie retired in the last year from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University after teaching courses in nonprofit accounting. She recently went above and beyond this year to assist with staffing transitions, making sure our financial records were maintained in a timely manner. In her free time, Vickie enjoys quilting and often travels to partake in quilt-a-thons. You can always tell when she returns from a quilting retreat; her smile is a mile wide!
Remembering Janice Clinch

Janice Clinch loved nature, hiking, and animals, especially her dog Sandy. She worked at the Wells Library at Indiana University and was a volunteer for Meals on Wheels, the Red Cross, and St. Mark’s United Methodist Church.

Chris Clothier

Chris Clothier was courageous in word and action, known to be transparent, truthful, and outspoken about things that mattered to her. She was deeply devoted to her family and eager to support those who were dear to her.

Jean Hammer

Jean Hammer was a nurse during WW II and a fierce bridge player who never had a mean thing to say about anyone, although there was some eye rolling. She was not very good at preparing deer but made an oyster dressing that none of her descendants have been able to replicate. She adopted her last companion from the Monroe County Humane Society, an eccentric, yet entertaining Calico named Sophie. Sophie is currently looking for new digs in a quiet indoor space with no pets. She is, after all, a Calico.

Allen Russell White

Allen Russell White loved his family, Indiana University, IU sports, music, boating on Lake Monroe, family vacations, living in the woods, his friends and colleagues, seeing all his former students succeed in music and the theater, and watching his grandchildren grow into caring and capable adults.

November 2021 Genealogy Conference

By Megan MacDonald

On Saturday, 20 November 2021, the MCHC Research Library and the Monroe County Public Library, with the help of an Indiana Genealogical Society grant, held an all-day “Shaking Your Family Tree” genealogy conference at the History Center. Those speaking were Dr. Curt Sylvester (Being a Genealogy Detective and Genealogy by Understanding our Ancestor’s Religious Heritage), Gloria Colom (Research Your Home), and Nan Harvey (DNA Testing: I Have My Results—Now What?). We had a great turnout with over 24 attendees; many familiar faces, some new ones, old friends, and newly found cousins! The Research Library was open all day as well and got a lot of traffic from conference attendees who wanted to immediately dive into our records. All in all, it was a great day. I think we all appreciated being able to gather safely in person and learn new things, share stories, and enjoy each other’s company. Look for similar programs with the Research Library in 2022!

If you’re interested in obtaining copies of the handouts from the conference or wish to learn more about the presentations, please email the Research Library at: library@monroehistory.org or call: (812) 332-2517 ext. 4.
A Note from the Director

By Daniel Schlegel, Jr.

Welcome to the New Year! We are grateful for so many thing at the History Center, and we are looking forward to so many new and exciting things coming in the New Year. In order for us to accomplish all that we do, we would like to acknowledge our generous annual appeal donors:


Collections Corner

Happy New Year from the Collections Department! It was a very productive year despite the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic threw our way. Hilary was able to have her first intern in nearly a year for the summer break - Jaqueline - who focused on the textile collection. She designed and constructed cotton muslin dust covers for our rolled storage containers to help keep dust that naturally circulates from getting in and settling on the artifacts. Her collections case display on accessories from the textile collection was wonderful and a fun way to highlight the collection. The fall semester brought on two more student interns, Rachel and Stella, who helped with numerous projects, namely the new acquisition of the Herald-Times Archive photograph collection. The H-T Archive consists of over a thousand photographs of our community, from the construction of Fountain Square Mall, to the County Fair Queens. It’s a wonderful addition to our collection and will be available online in the coming year. Hilary has another volunteer also working on the H-T Archive collection - Rod, a retired editor at the newspaper - who has been invaluable in understanding how the newspaper functioned and getting us in contact with former newspaper photographers. Volunteering in the Collections Department doesn’t mean you’re restricted to the storage area. Hilary has two wonderful volunteers that also work on projects at the Greeter’s Desk, Wayne and Beth. So if they greet you at the door, ask what they’re working on! And we can’t go without mentioning the tireless work of our volunteer, Susan, who has worked every week to correct our collection database records and match objects with their original donors. She has corrected hundreds, if not thousands of object records, making our database easier to search and up to date, and for that we all thank her! Hilary and all her Collections Department helpers are ready for 2022 and we hope you are too!

2021 Collections Donors: 53
2021 Collections Objects Accessioned: 408 (not including H-T Archive in progress)
2021 Collections Volunteers: 2 in collections, 2 at greeter's desk
2021 Collections Interns: 3

Some of the thousands of items from The Herald-Times archive being processed and unpacked.
Education Updates

Every January, we host our annual PuzzleFest with a jigsaw puzzle competition, local puzzle swap, and presentations from the Lilly Library and Press Puzzles. This year’s event was as exciting as ever! Thanks to Masterpieces, Inc., our competition puzzles were a smash hit. If you would like to try your hand at the puzzle, you can find the “Americana-The Bird’s Nest” on Masterpieces’ website or in local game stores.

We are also launching a brand new educational series on our YouTube channel! Based on Hilary Fleck’s 2021 exhibit, See Her Run, “What’s My Job?” interviews local elected officials about the details of their positions for an elementary school-aged audience. Sara Kress, our Education summer and fall intern, directed and produced the series.

For more information on upcoming programs, be sure to follow our website and social media.

News from the Library
library@monroehistory.org
Compiled by Megan MacDonald and Penelope Mathiesen

Recent Acquisitions

* Hutchinson’s 1870 Directory of Indianapolis, Indiana, reprinted by the Genealogical Society of Marion County. (N.d.) Gift from Joan McCammon.


* McCammon, Mobie, comp. Kirksville School 1936–1976, vol. 1. N.d. Contains information on the history of Indian Creek Township, early Indian Creek schools, and the Kirksville School (including photos, newspaper articles, the Kirksville School All-Stars, and a roster of students, teachers, janitors, and bus drivers). Gift from Joan McCammon.


* Monroe County Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2013. Includes Pat Cassidy, Jared Jeffries, Mike Kearney, Dave Reeve, Missy (Arthur) Ringler, Dan Sparks, Todd Yeagley, Bill Easton, Noble Bush, and Doc and Marge Counsilman. Gift from Lynn Houser.

* Monroe County Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2017. Includes Mark Litz, Jennings Polley, Jennifer (Warthen) Hester, Cory Martin, Jerry Yeagley, Ralph Sieboldt, Dr. Brad Bomba, John Adams, Stephanie Bassett-Orman, and Dobby Grossman. Gift from Lynn Houser.


* Record of Indiana Volunteers in the Spanish-American War, 1898–1899. 1900. Includes the 157th, 158th, 159th, 160th, and 161st regiments of infantry; 27th and 28th batteries of light artillery; Company D, 2d U.S. engineers; 14th Signal Corps company; and 1st and 2d separate companies, Indiana volunteers, colored.

* Sweet, Cynthia Rae Huffman. The Descendants of Peter Constable and Susannah Hileman. 2018. Gift from Cyndi Sweet.


Current and Upcoming Exhibits

COOK GALLERY: Upcoming Vi and George Taliaferro Permanent Exhibit

Few people have impacted Bloomington and Monroe County like Vi and George Taliaferro. Vi served as the first Black appointed judge in Monroe County and George, a member of the IU football team from 1945-1948, became the first Black player drafted into the NFL in 1949. The greatest impact may have been his role in the desegregation of Bloomington. Their stories will be on display in the Cook Gallery as a permanent exhibit.

RECHTER GALLERY: Preserving History: The Legacy of Gayle and Bill Cook

February 8 to July 1, 2022

How a building looks and functions can affect the life of everyone in and around it. As several properties around Bloomington went into disrepair, Gayle and Bill Cook, with Cook Inc., started to preserve the physical structures and set them up to impact the community for years to come. This exhibition explores the history of some of Gayle’s and Bill’s favorite projects and illustrates the transformation each underwent.

HILL GALLERY: Pioneer Quilts from Hoosier Country

A quilt’s patterns and stitches can reveal a lot about a family’s history, and throughout central Indiana they were passed down from one generation to the next. Handcrafted with patience and love, the History Center is fortunate to have these examples in our permanent collection. Some of the heirlooms on display in the Hill Gallery date back to the nineteenth century. Visit us and see some of the most cherished pieces from Monroe County history.

DECKARD EDUCATION ROOM: An Abridged Timeline of Monroe County Environmental History

On display until June 25, 2022

For better or for worse, the environment encompassing Monroe County has undergone many man-made and natural changes throughout its more than two hundred year history. Population growth, industrial manufacturing, weather emergencies, and a search for viable water sources have left their mark on Monroe County. This timeline aims to highlight some of the most significant events and raise the question of what kind of impact they had on the community and will have for future generations.

DECKARD EDUCATION ROOM: Highlights from the Herald-Times Archive Collection

February 1-March 31

Former Collections Intern Stella Winterman will be selecting some of their favorite photographs from the H-T Archive collection to share. Stop in during February and March to catch a glimpse of the many images showcasing our community, such as this one on the left of the Monroe County Beekeepers Association in 1984.
Monroe County Historical Society’s
Monroe County Historian
February/March 2022
Vol. 2022, Issue 1

Society established 1905
Museum established 1980

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

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### Monroe County History Center Membership Form

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Check if you are interested in:

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**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

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