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Footprints

Howard County Legends



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From the executive director

Ordinary people are no less important in telling our history

In questions of human behavior, the obvious answers are often not the best. They are the “low-hanging fruit” and it’s far too easy to grab that first ripe apple and stop looking for anything else. With that apple in hand, you might not see the peach tree a few feet away. Or you might miss the worm in the apple and be seriously disturbed to find half of a worm dangling out after your first bite.

Setting aside any further fruit analogies, history is all about human behavior, and focusing on the obvious big names can lead us to overlook truly significant stories of the shoulders that those big names stood on. It’s often called the “dead white guys” syndrome. History is full of those guys and they get a lot of attention. Why? They were part of the socio-economic group that controlled the strings of power and money. They were the winners who got to tell the history.

Here in Howard County, the recognition of our history immediately and automatically turns to Elwood Haynes, or the Apperson Brothers, or Monroe Seiberling, to name a few. Their accomplishments are remarkable and their impact is still felt, but to focus entirely on them is to ignore the stories of day-to-day life that created the conditions for their accomplishments. To give them all the credit ignores the contributions of the people who worked for them. To exclusively glorify their stories de-means the accomplishments of people who weren’t born to opportunity, wealth or power. Consider Bill Swern, a working man whose

invention revolutionized the manufacture of auto tires and made others wealthy, but who wasn’t able to personally benefit from his innovation and ended up operating a farm in Parke County. Quite happily, I am glad to add.

We face a dilemma in telling the stories of Howard County history. Our resources aren’t unlimited and we have to use what we have to best effect, which often means telling the big stories and naming the big names while giving short shrift to the more ordinary, but no less important, people. We’re working on minimizing that inherent bias. Two examples: We make a conscious effort during the Hall of Legends selection process to include a diverse range of candidates, regardless of race or sex, and our oral history program has collected a remarkable set of stories related to Continental Steel that include some told by men from the factory floor and women from the secretarial pool.

There’s more work to be done in this regard for all of us. We need to teach this more diverse history to our younger generations and help them understand the “Great Man” theory of history doesn’t necessarily offer good explanations of the world we live in, that understanding the world as it is today — and could be tomorrow — requires a less superficial knowledge of history.

Those lessons start at home.

Dave Broman
HCHS Executive Director

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'From the Dark Pages' Murder Mystery Tour set for Oct. 19 - 20

By Linda Ferries
HCHS Publications Committee Chair

For the second year, a special event from the Howard County Historical Society – *From the Dark Pages* – will combine history and macabre fantasy in the landmark setting of the Seiberling Mansion, just in time for Halloween.

Finding tricks and treats, the audience will move from room to room through the three-story 1890 house, tracking Jack the Ripper and meeting the authors of the creatures that have haunted us through books, plays and movies for at least 200 years.

The historical society is presenting the 2018 edition of the murder mystery tour on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 19 and 20. Five tours will be offered each evening, with start times on the hour from 5 to 9 p.m. Guests will track Jack the Ripper and meet characters from both life and Victorian Gothic literature while exploring the workings of the criminal mind.

Again, the talented cast of volunteer actors will be directed by Elizabeth McQuiston. Auditions will take place in August. The dates and times will be announced.

"Funny, mysterious, and downright terrifying characters come to life in this unusual theatrical experience," said event chair Dana Osburn, a member of the HCHS Board of Trustees. "Sherlock Holmes and his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, pursue Jack the Ripper every year, but the plot and other characters change."

This year, guests will begin at the Elliott House, where snacks and a cash bar will be available. At the appropriate hour, author H.G. Wells will greet each group, transporting them back in time as they move from the Elliott House to the Seiberling Mansion. There, Conan Doyle and Holmes will take over as guides through the mansion where they will gather

clues to a famous murder from such personages as Queen Victoria and her physician, Dr. Gull, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Mary Shelley and friends, including her most famous creation – Frankenstein's monster – will make an appearance, even more special in the 200th anniversary year of the publication of that famous novel.

While those younger than 21 are welcome, guests should consider there will be mature content. Tickets will be available after Sept. 1 at \$20 for members of the Howard County Historical Society and \$25 for non-members. For more information, contact the HCHS office at 765-452-4314. Memberships may be purchased at any time, including at the door. All proceeds of the event benefit the historical society.



Mrs. Monroe Seiberling (Marcia Nelson) has a close encounter with Dracula (David Summers) in 2017.

The Bank: Part Two

By Gil Porter
HCHS Publications Committee Member

Author's acknowledgements: The intent of this two-part excerpt (Part One was published in the May 2018 issue of Footprints) from an upcoming book entitled "The Bank" is to not only share a largely forgotten story about Kokomo's first bank, but also to re-present for readers and researchers alike documented details about the beginning of Kokomo and the subsequent development of the land south of the Wildcat Creek. My sources included more than 30 articles from the newspaper archives, about a dozen other reference and historical publications, several Howard County property abstracts and material from the Indiana State Archives. I am indebted to numerous individuals locally for their tremendous contributions to this project. I would especially like to recognize the diligent team in the Genealogy Department at the Kokomo Howard County Public Library and the incredibly patient – and always responsive – folks in the Auditor's and Recorder's offices of Howard County for their help. — Gil Porter

Part Two

He had humble beginnings. Carpenter, shop-keeper, an unpretentious yet uncommon businessman who turned a mud hole into a town. His family's name is forever a part of U.S. history.

In February 1836, the 27-year-old Virginia-native David and 21-year-old New York-native Elizabeth Foster arrived in Carroll County by way of southern Indiana, where they had married, and sold dry goods and groceries to the Miami Indians living in the area. In March 1840, the Fosters moved to the extreme eastern edge of the settler-friendly Seven Mile Strip (land acquired from the Miami as part of 1834 Forks of the Wabash treaty). They set up shop in a small cabin and trading post about a half-mile north of the Wildcat Creek, right on today's boundary line between Ervin and Clay townships. In 1842, the family ventured six more miles to the east and stopped at a clearing on the north side of the landmark Rapids of

the Wildcat.

At that time, as Amanda Foster Welsh would tell the *Kokomo Tribune* in 1927, there was an "Indian village located on the high ground" about a quarter-mile south of the creek, "near where Main St. now runs." Mrs. Welsh was David and Elizabeth's second-to-last child and the last surviving member of the immediate family (she died in 1946). If she had her distance estimated correctly, the village was where West Harrison Street meets South Main Street. According to Amanda, the traditional story that the present city was named for the head man of the village is "authentic" and "correct," since she heard the story directly from her parents. Her father called him "Ma-ko-ko-ma."

Shrewd trader, prosperous land owner, consummate civic booster, David Foster was a family man, "kindly of heart" and a devoted friend of the Indians. Manually and materially, Foster was involved in his town and always willing to help a fellow citizen. Though no doubt eccentric, "Uncle Dave" was generous, well-remembered, and there "wasn't anything he wouldn't do for a friend."

Surely he knew every single depositor of the Indian Reserve Bank very well. They were his neighbors, his customers, his business associates, and his friends. He donated the land for the county seat, and the county government was one of his top depositors. When their money went missing from his bank, he immediately set to work to pay them back.

■ ■ ■

When the Indian Reserve Bank was robbed on the night of Sunday, April 28, 1861, the principal officers of the privately run bank – notable pioneers Harles Ashley, John Bohan and town founder David Foster – were completely liable for the loss; the FDIC did not exist to insure

deposits in the 1860s. The robbery – and whatever happened to the \$14,700 that was stolen – remains unsolved to this day.

Of the three men, Ashley was the “active participant in banking activities,” a modest brick mason and contractor by trade and although he had for years been a partner in John Bohan’s general store, he had “comparatively meagre holdings.” (Ashley was killed in the Civil War in 1864.) Bohan was the more successful merchant; he owned property and thus was “in good circumstances.” David Foster, on the other hand, at the time was unquestionably the wealthiest individual in Howard County.

Regarding the robbery itself, a vigorous investigation was conducted immediately by county authorities. The *Howard Tribune* in its initial account of the robbery (April 30, 1861, two days after the event because the weekly paper published on Tuesdays then) reported that “Persons are out in all directions this morning” and yet “no clue to the thief” was known. The subsequent investigation turned up nothing, although it was generally understood that the thief was “well-posted about all the arrangements of house and the business.” (The day of the robbery, Ashley’s home was burglarized and the bank’s safe key and \$200 stolen from his trouser pocket.) Furthermore, it was always suspected the thief knew the county’s tax funds had been deposited in the bank, and that “robbery of the safe would yield several thousand dollars.”

Most of the money stolen – \$11,842.31, the equivalent of about \$3 million today – represented county deposits. The morning after the robbery, the county was nearly insolvent (the majority of the stolen money was the county’s spring collection of taxes). County taxes did in fact go up the following year; the grading of the streets around the Courthouse Square, the relief fund for Civil War “volunteers’ families,” and the “*robbery of the county money*” (emphasis added) altogether made “additional tax necessary,” the *Howard Tribune* reported in June 1862.

In May 1862, treasurer Hiram Jones, as plain-

tiff representing Howard County, brought suit against the bank owners. The defendants — Charles Ashley, John Bohan and David Foster — were represented by David C. Metsker, an eminent attorney considered prominent in the early history of Kokomo, at the time also serving a four-year term as county clerk, and appeared before Judge Joseph S. Buckles of Muncie, only the sixth circuit court judge to serve young Howard County. Interestingly, the three bank officers immediately chose to “waive the issuing and service of process herein and confess judgment in favor of said plaintiff.” Furthermore, in their affidavits, the defendants acknowledged the “debt is just and owed” and the intent of this confession was “not made for the purpose of defrauding” their creditors. Finally, the defendants further waived “all right and benefit” of appeal.

On May 30, 1862, Judge Buckles ruled in favor of the plaintiff (the treasurer of Howard County). A writ of execution on the judgment was issued by the court clerk to the sheriff of Howard County, commanding him to “recover of the defendants the said sum of \$11,832.41 and all costs laid out and expended.” The sheriff was to recover the money and return it to the clerk’s office within 180 days.

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Early on Friday, Oct. 17, 1862, Sheriff Napoleon “Ned” Brown made his way across the courthouse square on a fine fall day in Howard County. The original two-story log courthouse was gone, and work would not begin on a new building for another six years. County business was conducted in two temporary one-story brick buildings on the north end of the lot. (Town officials were over on Main Street between Mulberry and Taylor.) The auditor and treasurer offices were in the west building. The east building housed the county clerk, sheriff and recorder.

Sheriff Brown affixed to the east building’s door that day a paper publicly announcing that between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. a

“sale at public auction” would be held for “said real estate.” “Sheriff’s Sale” notifications are also printed in local newspapers, then and now, and the appearance of this one in the *Howard Tribune* on Sept, 25, 1862, provides an interesting side note to history. On a preceding page in that issue, an article appeared datelined Washington D.C., Sept. 22. The headline at the top of the column: “A Most Important Proclamation from the President.” It was the first public reading of the Emancipation Proclamation, which would take effect Jan. 1 the following year.

Back at the courthouse square, “no bids” were received during the allotted time at the makeshift court house that afternoon, so the sheriff then “offered the fee simple of the following real estate for sale.” In anticipation of the sheriff’s sale, the “levied on” property had previously been “surveyed and laid off” in 18 separate lots. The survey was completed Oct. 16, 1862, by county surveyor John Newlin and duly recorded in the recorder’s office Oct. 18. In all, 401.8 acres from David Foster’s original 640-acre “float” were now for sale to satisfy the county debt.

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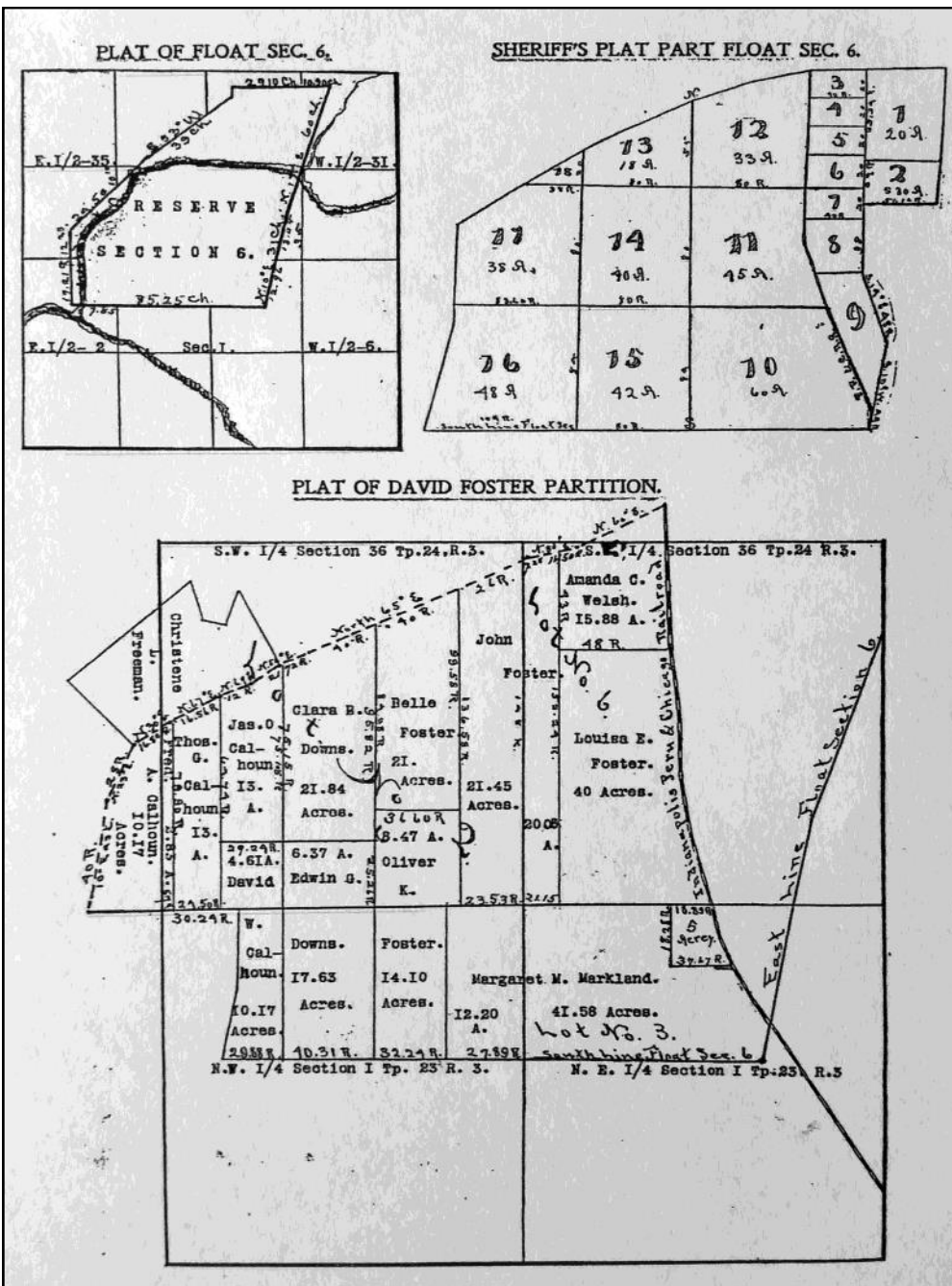
In May 1862, Foster’s property is “levied upon” in the court judgment for the county to be made whole for the robbery. In October 1862, after no bids are received during the sheriff’s sale of Foster’s property, all 401.8 acres of the newly surveyed “Plat of Foster’s Float Section South of the Wildcat Creek” is sold “in fee simple” to the highest bidder (Bohan also sold several of his properties as part of this sale to satisfy the court judgment). All 18 lots were sold to only five individuals: Nelson Cooper (22.5 acres), William Garr (76.3 acres), N.R. Lindsay (5 acres), John Walters (10 acres), and Collin A. Jones, a “pioneer” farmer in Monroe Township (and likely a friend of the Fosters) who paid \$6,682.50 for 288 acres “more or less” at the sheriff’s sale.

In hindsight, Foster apparently used “straw-man deed” agreements (a regular and legal method of conveyance whereby an “owner of

land may desire to borrow money using land as security”) and the Indiana “sinking fund” to raise more than sufficient funds to pay back the depositors of the Indian Reserve Bank for their loss. (Sinking funds are like a “loan loss reserve” fund. Institutions or individuals could use property to raise money to cover future loan or other unanticipated losses, rather like insurance.) That the money was paid back is a matter of record as well. The original judgment against the three bank officers in May 1862 stipulated “said Sheriff was commanded to levy said sums of money of the property of the Defendants” and to “have the money at the Clerk’s Office to Satisfy said Judgment Interest + costs.” The sheriff was to “return said writ” within “one hundred eighty days.” The return of which was so noted Nov. 4, 1862, 158 days after the judgment and 555 days after the money was stolen.

Not only was the debt satisfied, but Foster was able to regain most of the land as well. Two “quit claim” deeds (including the 288 acres Collin Jones bought) over the next 10 years transferred more than a third of the south side properties back to the family.

But why did Foster go to such lengths to pay back the debt? One (probable) “straw-man deed” transfer in November 1861 raised more than enough to cover the \$14,700 stolen from the Indian Reserve Bank. It may be Foster and fellow bank officers Bohan and Ashley wanted to get a judgment and subsequent levy against their property on record, which may have accomplished a couple of things. Remember that the three officers were the immediate subject of “malicious stories” when the robbery occurred. Once in court, recall too they immediately waived all right of appeal. So the court judgment basically prevented any further action against them (by an individual depositor, for example). Even more forward-thinking, the judgment, sheriff’s sale and all future transactions is now a matter of public record and is and will be recorded in every property abstract for every single lot in the 401.8-acre area *in perpetuity*. While the stolen money has never been recovered, that the amount lost was paid back by the bank officers is indisputable.



Many abstracts for properties in South Kokomo include map outlines like these that show the original 640-acre Lafontaine Reserve No. 6 (which Foster purchased in 1844), the survey for the 1862 Sheriff's Sale after the Indian Reserve Bank robbery and the Foster family partition after David Foster's death, intestate, in 1877.

• • •

The transaction that triggered the development of South Kokomo happened on April 6, 1875, when a “warranty deed” for \$9,500 was filed in the Howard County Recorder’s Office. The purchasers were Edward C. Scoven, Addison F. Armstrong, Harrison H. Stewart, Isaac C. Johnson and Theodore A. Davis. The seller: David Foster. The deeded property contained “47 1/2 acres” that originally were Lots No. 3-9 in the 18 lots surveyed for the 1862 sheriff’s sale following the judgment against Foster’s property in the aftermath of the bank robbery. The resulting “Plat and Field Notes of South Kokomo” – entered at the recorder’s office on June 2, 1875 — describe how “Main Street is laid off Parallel to Union Street and both are 60 feet wide.” The cross streets were “laid off at right angles” and originally were ordinal numbers, starting with Second, Third, Fourth down to Ninth (the names have since been changed or the thoroughfares altered; only South 17th Street retains that nomenclature).

The sale of those 40-odd acres and the resulting “Plat of South Kokomo” in 1875 would be followed by a rapid series of property deals that fueled the further development of Kokomo. Within 10 years, the discovery of natural gas in the county would lead to even more explosive growth, bringing industry and opportunity for entrepreneurs and working families alike. Indeed, by the late 1880s, the south side as we know it today was beginning to take shape.

History does not help us know what Foster may have originally had in mind for the south side before he began to sell it. The story goes that he wouldn’t give it to the locating commissioners in 1844 for the county seat. Maybe he envisioned family farmland, community green-space or a traditional hunting and fishing haven like the Indians used. It is documented that from the very beginning he supported various “improvements” relating to the burgeoning roadways and eventually for the railroads. The county record book shows in December 1846

Foster “solemnly and without any reservation grants and gives to the public forever a sufficient width of ground” for “any bridge that may be erected across said Wild Cat River” (the county commissioners then almost immediately approved the site for a bridge “at the foot of Buckeye Street”). Beyond that, we may never know.

We do know it forever affected the fortunes of the Foster family. Some of the 401.8 acres from the 1862 sheriff’s sale had already been sold, and the 314.52 acres the Foster family retained from David’s original 640-acre float were divided among his surviving heirs as “tenants in common” after his death, intestate, in 1877. (It took a full year for the courts to sort out the heirs’ property partition request and five years to settle the estate.) Absent a definitive collective plan, the 13 heirs – five living children and eight grandchildren (Elizabeth had died in 1871) – during their lifetimes presumably enjoyed their respective portions and over time each parcel was eventually sold out of the family for personal profit. Foster’s daughter Margaret, who married into the Markland family, received about 60 acres. Her “generous disposition” and “cheering and helpful presence” (though born in Burlington, when she died in 1904 at age 67 she was considered the oldest resident of Kokomo in terms of continuous years) no doubt led to her married family’s namesake: Kokomo’s most prominent south-side east-west thoroughfare (Markland Avenue).

Have a look at the 1877 Combination Atlas and that unmistakable extension of Main and Union streets south of the Wildcat Creek is vivid testimony to all that went before. Expansion was bound to happen, but the consequential robbery of the Indian Reserve Bank – and David Foster dying without a will – certainly expedited the inevitable. After buying the first 47½ acres of land from Foster, over the next few years Armstrong, Harrison et al. surveyed, plated and sold lots that quickly seeded new subdivisions. Kokomo’s south side land rush was about to begin.

KOKOMO DOWNTOWN FARMERS' MARKET

FARM to FORK



at the
*Seiberling
Mansion*

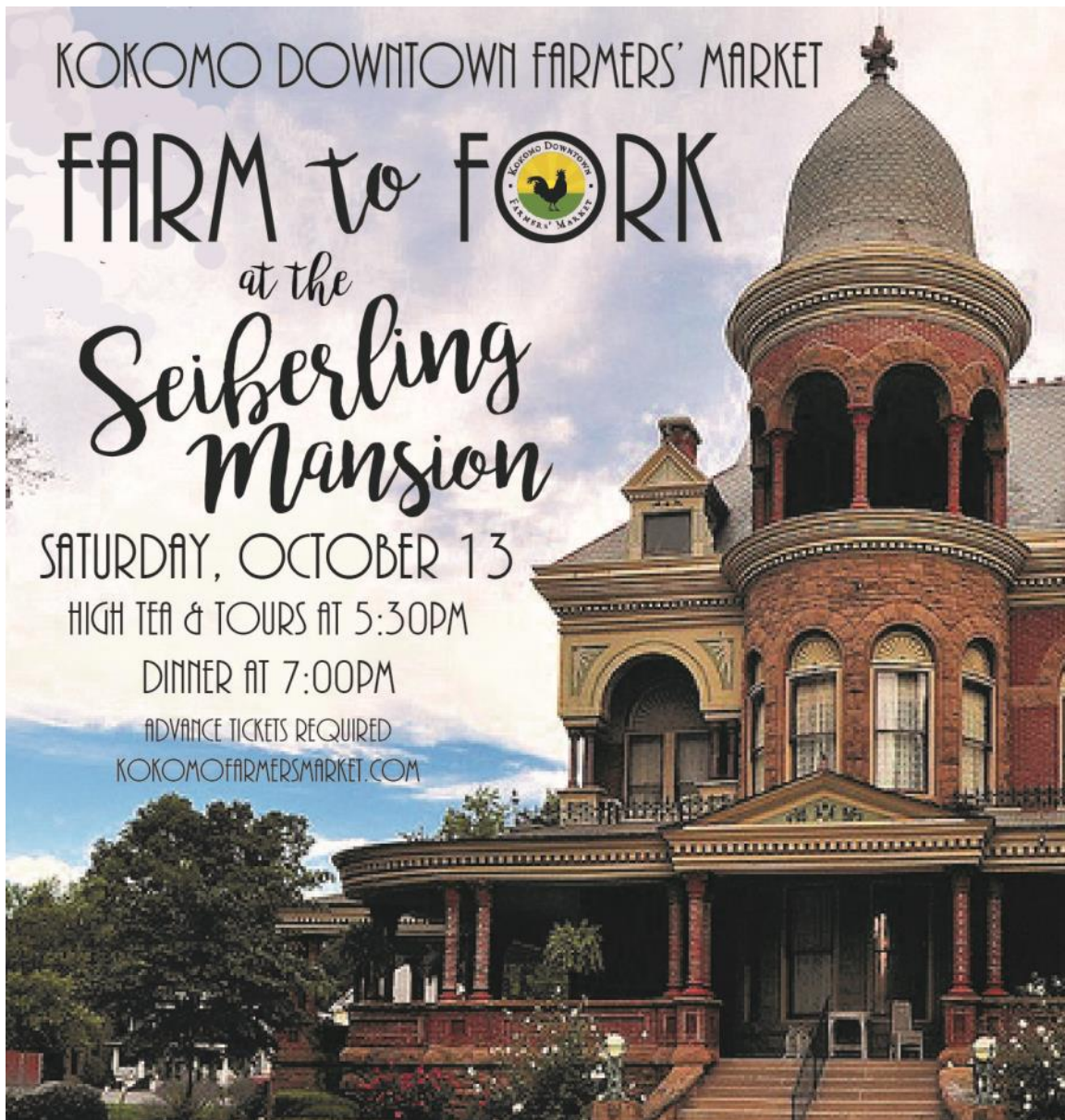
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

HIGH TEA & TOURS AT 5:30PM

DINNER AT 7:00PM

ADVANCE TICKETS REQUIRED

KOKOMOFARMERSMARKET.COM



Hall of Legends will welcome six inductees on Aug. 24

6 p.m. at Bel Air Event Center

The Howard County Hall of Legends will honor six new members at its annual recognition banquet on Aug. 24. All are outstanding representatives of our county and models of accomplishment and leadership for Hoosiers young and not-so-young.

The inductees have made their mark in government, education, business, entertainment, the military, and service to those in need. They include **Steve Daily**, **Brian Harlow**, **Reba Harris**, **Opha May Jacob Johnson**, **Don Smith Sr.** and the **Kokomo Park Band**, the second organization chosen for inclusion in the Hall of Legends.

With these new additions, the Hall of Legends will grow to 55 members. At its inception in 2010, author Norman Bridwell, inventor Elwood Haynes, television newsman Steve Kroft,

and artist Misch Kohn were among those who were the first to receive this annual recognition. In the years since, actor Strother Martin, inventor George Kingston, Lt. Gen. William Kepner, automobile pioneer J.D. Maxwell, AIDS activist Ryan White and singer Sylvia Hutton are among the others who have been added. A full list is available at howardcountymuseum.org, along with the stories of their accomplishments.

The induction banquet will begin at 6 p.m. at the Bel Air Event Center in Kokomo. Tickets may be purchased on-line through the historical society's website, howardcountymuseum.org, or through Eventbrite.com. You may also purchase them at the society's office at 1218 W. Sycamore St. (behind Elliott House) or by calling 765-452-4314.

Stephen J. Daily

Stephen J. Daily is recognized as a visionary leader who has devoted his adult life to the betterment of Kokomo, Howard County and the surrounding areas. He has been recognized with numerous honors for his decades of exemplary civic service, including his record as mayor of Kokomo and chancellor of Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo Region.

Steve was born in Howard County in 1947, the first of seven children of Bob and Doris Daily, and grew up on the family farm. After high school, Steve served in the United States Army from 1966 to 1968 with a tour in Vietnam. Returning from military service, he enrolled at In-

diana University Kokomo, earning a bachelor's degree in education and continued to a master's degree in secondary education in 1975. From 1971 to 1979, he taught English and served as a wrestling coach at Kokomo's Haworth High School.

Following a long family tradition of government service, Steve successfully ran for a seat



on the Kokomo Common Council in 1975 and in 1979, at age 32, was elected the youngest mayor in Kokomo's history. Under his leadership, despite being deep in an economic recession, the city built a new city hall, a senior citizen center and public high-rise housing. Many initiatives from his administration continue to benefit the community today, including Leadership Kokomo, a publicly funded Community Arts Council, and the development of a strategic planning process, an economic development department, and a personnel department within city government.

Leaving City Hall, Steve moved back into education, serving with distinction as vice chancellor for external relations at Indiana University Kokomo from 1988 to 1995. While at IUK, he led fundraising campaigns that resulted in more than \$4 million to construct the campus' new library and Kelley Student Center and support land acquisition and scholarships. He helped launch the award-winning Destination Education Program that created new educational opportunities for disadvantaged students.

Steve moved to Ivy Tech Community College in 1996. From 2000 until his retirement in 2015, Steve served as chancellor for the College's Kokomo Region, which included Kokomo, Logansport, Peru, Tipton, Rochester and Wabash. During his 20 years at Ivy Tech, his efforts to make higher education accessible to the residents of the region's six counties led to an expansion from three facilities to eight facilities, the addition of nearly 20 new academic and technical programs, and a tripling of enrollment. His partnerships with civic leaders in Kokomo, Logansport and Peru changed the face of higher education in these communities. In Kokomo, property acquired through bargain sale transactions and donations is part of the \$43 million transformation project now under way to create a new, unified Ivy Tech campus to better serve student and community needs.

Steve's career of public service at the state, county, and city levels has benefited citizens from all walks of life. He served in leadership roles with the Labor Management Committee for the Grissom Air Force Base Realignment, the Region 5 WorkOne Consortium, and the Indiana Cities and Towns Foundation. Locally, he was president of the boards of St. Joseph (now St. Vincent Kokomo) Hospital and the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance and was campaign chair for the United Way of Howard County. He is a member of the national Save the Rainforest Inc. Board of Directors.

Among honors received for his civic service are the Sagamore of the Wabash, the highest civilian award presented by the governor of Indiana, and the Larry A. Conrad Civic Service Award from the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns for outstanding individual achievement and accomplishment in local government. In September 2013, the city hall constructed during his tenure as mayor was dedicated as the Stephen J. Daily Government Center in honor of his distinguished service.

With his retirement from Ivy Tech in 2015, Steve was able to return fulltime to his roots – farming. He and partner Michelle Martin are owners of Thistle Rock Farm, an organic agricultural effort devoted to bringing dozens of varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables and other products to local markets and restaurants. His volunteer time is spent working for the advancement of the Kokomo Downtown Farmers Market and the Kokomo Symphony Orchestra; he also serves on the statewide board of Ivy Tech Foundation. In 2016-18, he served as chair of the campaign that raised more than \$500,000 to replace the slate roof on Howard County's historic Seiberling Mansion.

Steve's daughter and son are both in administrative roles at Ivy Tech's Bloomington Campus. They and their spouses are the parents of his five grandchildren.

Brian Harlow

Times were bleak for the automotive industry in the depths of the Great Recession in 2008 and 2009, with woeful tales of bankruptcies, layoff and plant closures. The merger of Fiat and Chrysler in 2014 as Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA), which created the world's eighth largest automaker, became a notable story of survival and a successful corporate turnaround.

What was good for FCA was good for Kokomo, especially for the longtime transmission manufacturing operations that have been a staple of Howard and Tipton counties' economies for more than 80 years. A seasoned FCA leader, who just happened to have grown up on a farm here, helped ensure his company's continued commitment to northcentral Indiana. From Tri-Central High School, to Purdue University, and with advanced degrees from Indiana Wesleyan University, Brian Harlow has risen in the corporate ranks but never forgotten his local roots.

In 2009 in fact, Harlow's lobbying on behalf of his hometown's longtime industrial capabilities convinced Chrysler's leadership to retool four Kokomo facilities and add a new plant in Tipton. The decision led to an infusion of nearly \$2 billion in the local economy and created career opportunities for some 8,000 employees.

Harlow's own career began after earning his bachelor's degree in civil engineering at Purdue in 1978. That same year, he signed on as a plant engineer at then-Chrysler Corporation's Kokomo Transmission Plant.

For 20 years he held various manufacturing positions at Chrysler's transmission hub. By 1998, he had earned a master's degree in management (Indiana Wesleyan) and was promoted to manufacturing manager at the Kokomo Indiana Transmission Plant. In 2000, Harlow was named the director of staff manufacturing engineering. In 2001, he became direc-

tor of advanced manufacturing engineering for powertrain operations.

In 2005, Harlow was named general manager of transmission, casting and machining for the company, then known as DaimlerChrysler. He was promoted twice in 2009 –

first as head of powertrain operations and core team leader, and then to the role of vice president for powertrain operations.

As the global head of FCA's Powertrain Manufacturing Engineering and vice president and head of NAFTA Powertrain Operations, he was responsible for all of FCA's powertrain facilities in the United States and Canada, which included global responsibility for Powertrain Manufacturing Engineering at FCA U.S. and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles N.V.

His current assignment came in October 2014 – head of Manufacturing, FCA-North America. He is responsible for all assembly, stamping and powertrain manufacturing operations in the United States, Canada and Mexico, as well as implementation of FCA's "World Class Manufacturing system" at all FCA U.S. manufacturing facilities. In this role, the Tipton County native is responsible for every single vehicle FCA produces within Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Well-respected for his strong moral center and faith-based character, Harlow received the "Distinguished DeVoe School of Business Alumni Award" from Indiana Wesleyan, granted



See "Harlow" on page 17

Reba Harris

Reba Harris may be 78 years old; wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother; Delco retiree; college graduate; and former addict to both food and prescription drugs. She is all this – and much more: A woman inspired by her God to serve others with all her heart and soul.

Reba is the executive director of Kokomo's Gilead House, an organization she founded in 1998 to help women overcome addictions and reclaim their lives. During the last 20 years, she has done the fundraising, grant writing, volunteer recruiting, publicity generating, supplies begging, counseling and befriending that have changed the lives of hundreds of women who found themselves trapped in the well of addiction and crime.

The path she traveled in life brought her to this mission.

Reba grew up in Marion, Ind. Because of segregation, her first eight years of education were in a one-room schoolhouse where the teacher taught all eight grades and opportunities were scarce. After graduation from Marion High School in 1958, she married a Kokomo man, Oscar Harris, and moved to his hometown. Oscar worked at Chrysler, and Reba worked as an aide at Howard Community Hospital for a few years. She became the mother of a daughter and a son. And, at age 25, started working at Delco Radio Division of General Motors.

Along the way, life presented challenges. She struggled with a food addiction she eventually conquered through Overeaters Anonymous. After a series of surgeries, she found herself addicted to pain medication, an addiction that would last 23 years. Though she never had to resort to criminal activity, she understands personally what addiction means.

She gained more empathy at Delphi/Delco. For the last 10 of her 32 years there, she

served as an employee assistance representative, helping employees deal with addictions and family problems. As she approached retirement, she decided to go back to college to prepare for the rest of her life, and at the age of 57, walked the graduation line together with her daughter to receive diplomas from Indiana Wesleyan University in Indianapolis.

And about the same time, she heard God calling her to a new mission. "I want you to open a shelter for my daughters," she remembers. And so she set about establishing the first program in Howard County devoted to helping women, often mothers, who are addicted to alcohol or drugs and who have been jailed or imprisoned. After three years of fundraising, The Gilead House opened its doors, offering the scriptural "balm of Gilead" to women with few good options in life.

Gilead House became a place where women have an opportunity to break from the past and start over. Through a variety of public and private community support, as well as a commitment to ever-present prayer, The Gilead House has grown over the years. Now located at 406 E. Sycamore St. in Kokomo's former YWCA building, the organization provides 24/7 residential care for up to 20 women at a time, along with weekly counseling sessions there and at the Howard County Jail for dozens of other women. A male



See "Harris" on page 17

Opha May Johnson

Known to her Indiana friends and relatives as Opha May Jacob, born in Kokomo on May 4, 1878, she would wait almost 40 years to make her permanent mark in history.

Little is known of her childhood, but her desire to serve was evident, since she started a career in civil service at the Interstate Commerce Commission shortly after graduating from the shorthand and typewriting department of Wood's Commercial College in 1895.

Moving to Washington D.C., she met and married the musical director of the Lafayette Square Opera House, Victor Hugo Johnson, on Dec. 20, 1898. They would spend many decades together but children would not be a part of their lives. On Aug. 13, 1918, Opha May Johnson made a fateful decision. World War I had been underway more than four years and although originally reluctant, the United States was now fully involved. Early in the morning, Opha was first in line at the Washington D.C. Marine Reserve recruiting station and, by fate or providence, was the first woman to join the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve. Before the end of the day, 304 other women would also join the ranks, but, of course, only Opha was first. Opha May Johnson and hundreds of others like her paved the way for women in the military. Today the Marine Corps is proud to have more than 12,000 enlisted women and 1,300 female officers in their ranks.

Perhaps as no surprise, Opha's first duty was to manage the records of the women recruits. Not quite 90 days after her enlistment, on Nov. 11, 1918, The Great War came to an end. Like the other services, the Marine Corps started the steady disenrollment of women from the service to include Sergeant Opha May Johnson. Although short lived, her contributions to the history of the Marine Corps were significant. On Feb. 28, 1919, Opha returned to civil service as a clerk in the War Department.

Today the Marine Corps has an authorized end strength of 202,100 active duty and 39,600 reserve Marines, and is the smallest of the United States armed forces in the Department of Defense. Since Opha left the service, several other milestones have been achieved

by her sisters in arms. These include Captain Anne Lentz, first female commissioned officer in 1943; Master Gunnery Sergeant Geraldine M. Moran, first female Marine promoted to the top enlisted rank in 1960; Brigadier General Margaret A Brewer, first female Marine general in 1978; and Lieutenant General Carol Mutter, not only the first woman to obtain the three-star rank in the Marine Corps, but also the first woman to hold a three-star rank in the U.S. Armed Forces, achieving that rank in 1996. She retired in 1999, having served since 1967.

Opha May Johnson died on Aug. 11, 1955, at the Mount Alto Veterans Hospital in Washington, D.C. Her services at the Warner E. Pumphrey Funeral Home were deliberately delayed two days until Aug. 13, 1955, which was 37 years to the day from when she stood first in line of women answering the call to become a U.S. Marine. Amazingly, her grave near her husband and parents in Rock Creek Cemetery was unmarked. In 2017, the Women Marine Association began raising funds to place a marker at her burial site.



Kokomo Park Band

Like almost every town in America, music has always been a part of Kokomo. It is almost impossible not to find pictures of crowds of people surrounding gazebos in town squares throughout our nation. In almost every one of those gazebos was a band. Town bands were used for many things over the years: a recruiting tool during the Civil War, the pleasant sound drawing people for political rallies, as well as the hook for almost every local advertising campaign imagined.

The Kokomo Park Band, known by many names, certainly has its roots steeped in this American tradition. Its first band leader, Byron Reed, conducted the band during the Civil War era. During the Depression, the band's activities included playing for Kokomo "Red Sox" baseball games, giving benefit concerts for charities and hospitals in nearby towns and participating in the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race activities aside from its regular schedule of Sunday afternoon and Wednesday evening concerts in Kokomo parks and on the courthouse square. The park band takes pride in

having entertained the people of Kokomo for more than a century, making it one of our most enduring organizations.

Various venues in Kokomo were tried as performance locations throughout the years, but by 1962, the traditional evening for the park concert had become Wednesday in Highland Park as it remains to this day. The size of the band has grown from an average of 25 in the 1930s to 45 today. Since its reorganization as a not-for-profit corporation in 1988, the band has been known as "The Kokomo Park Band" in recognition of its function in the community.

The Kokomo Park Band is dedicated to enriching the cultural life of the community by providing performances of broad appeal and high artistic quality, creating musical opportunities for local youth, engaging the talents of area musicians, and preserving the great heritage of American band music in North Central Indiana. The band is comprised of more than 130 musicians who live within a 90-mile radius of Kokomo, with 45 performing in each concert.

The band currently provides a series of free



See "Band" on page 17



Donald B. Smith, Sr.

Donald B. Smith Sr. was a post-war banking pioneer in Howard County, founding banks in both Kokomo and Russiaville in the post World War II era and played a large role in the rebuilding of Russiaville following its worst disaster — the 1965 Palm Sunday tornado.

Though he was the only son of a Mishawaka banker, at first Smith rebelled against the idea of becoming a banker himself; later, both his son and grandson would follow him into the business. Smith went to Purdue University where he played football (at 5'10 and 150 pounds) and studied engineering. There he met and married his wife, Elizabeth. He enlisted in the military in 1918, then returned to Mishawaka and began his banking career.

Smith began as a teller, working his way up to the position of cashier, which was considered an executive position at the time. He became executive vice president at First National

Bank of Mishawaka.

Smith found himself in Kokomo from time to time as he traveled slowly down the dusty ruts of then-U.S. 31 between north-eastern Indiana and Indianapolis. He made a habit of stopping in Kokomo for a break during the arduous trip and soon became famil-

iar with the city.

All seven of Kokomo's banks had failed during the Great Depression. In 1946, Kokomo had just one bank when Smith and a group of local business leaders founded First National Bank. Smith brought years of banking experience to Kokomo when he moved from Mishawaka in 1946. He became the bank's first president and served in that capacity until his retirement in 1967. He continued to serve as chairman of the board of directors until the bank leadership changed in a hostile takeover in the early 1970s.

In 1947, Smith helped found Russiaville State Bank, serving as its first president and board chairman. The Russiaville bank later became Central Bank and more recently was purchased by First Farmers Bank and Trust. After the Palm Sunday tornado destroyed much of Russiaville and areas of Kokomo in 1965, Smith organized efforts and resources to rebuild Kokomo and Russiaville and made sure businesses and residents had access to their finances.

In addition to leading local banks, Smith served as treasurer of the Kokomo Community Chest, which became the United Way of Howard County. He actively served the chamber of commerce, YMCA, YWCA and multiple other local and state organizations. He held offices several times in the Indiana State Banking Association and in 1934 was the FHA liaison officer for Indiana banks. He contributed numerous articles to banking magazines regarding investments and banking operations.

Smith's nomination for the Hall of Legends called him "a true community leader and organizer who helped Kokomo and Howard County grow. A man who took pride in assisting rural communities (like Russiaville) to maintain its identity and support its local residents."

Smith passed away in 1972 and is buried at St. Joseph Cemetery in South Bend.



‘Harlow’, continued from page 12

to an alumnus who “exhibits excellence in their profession, community, church or alma mater in the spirit of Jesus Christ.” Harlow was active at Rock Prairie Church in Tipton for decades, serving as a deacon, moderator, church pianist and worship team leader. His community outreach has included serving on the Kokomo Rescue Mission board, as a youth sports coach, and as a moderator for the Northern Indiana Association of Separate Baptists.

An advocate of higher education, Harlow was instrumental in creating an FCA-sponsored internship program at Indiana University Kokomo to introduce students to the manufacturing industry. In 2014, he was honored with the Indiana University Kokomo Chancellor’s Medalion presented to those who have provided exemplary service to the university and who have “given freely of their talents to promote human welfare and community well being.”

‘Harris’, continued from page 13

counselor now works with men at the jail and a goal is to establish a residential center for men as well.

Financial and regulatory challenges continue, but Reba’s faith and her commitment is undiminished. There is an answer to every problem, she says; we just have to find it.

Reba and Gilead House have been recognized in many ways for their community service. In July 2007, Reba was honored with a Governor’s Award for Achievement in Business and Entrepreneurship presented by Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels and Lt. Gov. Becky Skill-

man at Indiana Black Expo’s 37th Summer Celebration Governor’s Reception. She also was honored for her Christian service with an award at the 2007 Spirit of Sisterhood Award Gala sponsored by Wayman Chapel AME Church’s Women of Wayman (WOW).

Reba attends Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, where she has served as a Sunday School teacher, and is president of the board of the F.D. Reese Christian Academy there. Along with their daughter and son, Reba and Oscar have four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

‘Band’, continued from page 15

concerts to the public during the summer months and performs an additional concert in February. Selections range from symphonic masterpieces to traditional jazz.

The Kokomo Park Band is governed by two active administrative units, the executive committee and the board of directors. The executive committee consists of musicians of the Kokomo Park Band who carry out planning and implementation of concerts and other activities. The executive committee is managed by Keith Whitford, the committee secretary is Joel Mat-

thews and treasurer is William Rowe. The board of directors oversees the business aspects of the organization. The president is Marshall McKay and secretary is J. Conrad Maugans.

Serving as a cultural icon for our community for more than a century, the Kokomo Park Band charges no admission and is committed to providing performances that entertain the public and arouse the curiosity and entice our young children to become involved in music.

If walls could talk

Work continues on what's possibly Kokomo's oldest house

By Jonathan Russell
Howard County Historian

Tracing the history of your home? If only walls could talk, they could tell us all the intimate history of their survival: Who lived inside, how they lived, what life was like. They can't talk, not in reality at least, but they can give us so much information if we only learn how to reveal the secrets they hide.

Presently, I am working on a tiny house on

what is known today as North Buckeye Street. Today it is a part of the Nickel Plate Trail that winds its way through the downtown area. In the past, it became an extension of "Railroad Street" because it ran adjacent to the tracks of the Peru & Indianapolis Railroad, later the Nickel Plate Railroad, giving us the name for the trail.

It's an old house, really old by Howard County standards, since the county itself only goes



Work is underway at this tiny house on North Buckeye Street that is possibly the oldest house in Kokomo.

back to 1844, when it was organized as Richardville County, slightly earlier if you include the “Seven Mile Strip” then under the administration of Carroll County. How old exactly we are not yet sure. But Deed Book L, page 203, records a real estate transaction between “Sandol B. Munger et ux (and wife) and Isaac C. Price, February 25, 1860.” For the sum of \$500, Price acquired an acre of land which he promptly sub-divided into eight lots, as recorded on page 204 of Book L.

Price, an early resident (1838) who came to the “Strip” from Peru, as did Munger, was involved in the organization of the county and is believed to have fathered the first white child, Mary Katharine, born in what would become Howard County in 1839. He would then sell the house to Franklin S. Price in October 1861, also an early founder of the county.

So, we probably have an old house that was sold in 1860, built before that if you consider that it wasn’t then a practice to build houses in the depths of winter. And by looking at the structure of the earliest section of the house, and the \$500 cost to buy “just” the acre, it was likely it was on the property in 1860. Now, how is this historically interesting?

Deed books are only a small part of the history of an old house. They record who owned the property, when they owned it and often the cost to buy. Sometimes the size is described and whether it had a mortgage (which can also give more data). On occasion, the house and other original buildings are listed. Still, rarely, the contents of the house will be listed and when additions were made.

Unfortunately, all deeds to properties may not be in the “usual place.” They may be found at



Flat stones laid on top of each other make up the foundation of the old house without mortar to fill the cracks. Logs were then placed on top of the stones.

the state archives, due to their fragile age and condition, or in the Bureau of Land Management, if it is part of a land grant from the federal government. Deeds may even be found in local historical repositories.

Doing a bit more research, local historian and author Gil Porter found a copy of a Sanborn Map from 1876 that shows the house in its present layout with the addition on the back. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are an invaluable tool in tracing documented changes to a building. But, how did we know that it had an addition?

During the process of exploring the exterior of the building, I observed a noticeable change in the roof line, an indication that there may have been an alteration to the original structure. Going inside, we checked above the very low ceilings of the presumed addition and found a section of exterior siding on the wall that separated the front rooms from the back rooms. This was our answer.

The front part of this house measured 16 feet by 20 feet. In its earliest configuration, this was the house. When added, the addition gave the

house another area measuring 12 by 27 feet. It was common practice to add on to houses as you had time and money to build and a need for more space.

As a side note: When the addition was added, a new chimney was built to accommodate two stoves, one to heat the rooms and another for cooking. The two-room addition, therefore, may have been used as a kitchen and another small bedroom. The bathroom was probably 50 paces out back. To add interest, much of the original brick chimney still sat on rafters above the front room, adding an element of danger for occupants of the failing old structure. (Unfortunately, we had to remove this in order to straighten the house frame, which leaned toward the north some four inches.) It was made of hand-made brick, some with fingerprints still visible. The new chimney may have been “Kokomo Brick,” printed with incised lettering, rather than the raised lettered, embedded stamp more commonly seen. Several of these were found in the crawl space.

“Walls talk” in many ways that we can use to trace the history of a house. Remember, your house is an organic structure and has probably undergone many changes in its history.

In addition to the common reasons of sun and wind, rain and decay, or “bouncing baby Bubba,” there are those changes made that were influenced by technological advances.

For instance, a fireplace may have been walled over, replaced by a cast iron stove using a pipe that may have been inserted through a round hole cut into the old fireplace flue. This might later be replaced by a furnace and chimney. Sometimes the holes were left and covered by a decorative flue plate. When a flue was completely abandoned, they weren’t always removed, as we found above the ceiling of the little house.

It was discovered when the ceiling paper, which had covered the opening, failed and fell to the floor. Inside we found men’s clothing



If this floor could talk, it might say it was rather unsafe after 158 years.

dating back to the turn of the 20th century, stuffed inside to prevent drafts and old soot from falling to the floor of the house.

Changes could also be due to safety and comfort. Replacement of flooring occurred when newer, narrow plank floors were installed over the old, rotting or once termite-infested wide boards as a safety measure.

Then there are “esthetics” and “inheritances.” We just get tired of “the look” and want it gone. So, did our ancestors. Simple woodwork found in early structures, often pre-Civil War homes, was nailed in place before lath and plaster was installed, no plaster is found under the wood trim. Square-cut nails also date a house, as the commonly found rounded “wire nails” did not become available until the 1890s.

As technology advanced, making some things cheaper and easier to produce, we find variations in interior and exterior trim becoming more elaborate and common. We go from the simple to the elaborate, and eventually back to the simple in our architectural embellishment, all revolving around time and taste.

In the next *Footprints*, we will continue to explore ways in which we can trace the house’s genealogy.

Public enjoys strolling the Seiberling gardens

The Seiberling Mansion served as welcome center for 2018 Garden Stroll in June.

The stroll, sponsored by the Howard County Master Gardeners, is in its 18th year.

HCHS board members and volunteers, below, served boxed lunches to visitors at Elliott House and vendors sold plants and other garden items on the museum grounds.



Proceeds from the box lunch sales benefit the Howard County Historical Society. HCHS volunteers included, first row, Sonnie Neal, Mary Ellen Harnish, Judy Brown, Marsha Santen and Carrie Giannakos; second row, Peggy Hobson and Dana Osburn.

Seiberling roof project earns Outstanding Restoration Award

The community-wide effort to restore the slate roof of Kokomo's Seiberling Mansion has been honored with the "2018 Outstanding Restoration Award" presented by Indiana Landmarks, the nonprofit organization dedicated to saving and preserving historic places throughout the Hoosier state.

The award was presented to the Howard County Historical Society and Howard County Government. Linda Ferries, HCHS board secretary, accepted the award on behalf of the historical society during a ceremony on May 31 honoring central Indiana preservation projects at Indiana Landmarks' Indianapolis headquarters.

Mark Dollase, Indiana Landmarks vice president of Preservation Services, announced the award by recognizing the Howard County Historical Society for leading the campaign to restore the roof of the mansion, built in 1891 during the natural gas boom in east central Indiana.

"The mansion still had its original roof until leaks caused interior plaster damage and threatened the collections of the museum, which has occupied the house since the early 1970s," Dollase said.

"The Howard County Historical Society garnered \$560,000 in pledges from private citizens, the Howard County Council, and the Howard County Commission, which has owned the property for many years," he continued. "Hinshaw Roofing and Sheet Metal Co. of Frankfort installed the new roof, which perfectly matches the original slate shingles, including the challenging curved cap on the central tower."

The historical society received one of four awards presented at the event. The others recognized outstanding effort in "old house rehabilitation" (Megan and Kyle Robinson for their

renovation of a historic home in Indianapolis' Old

Northside), continued use of a historic building (the Hamilton County Commission for restoration and maintenance of the Hamilton County Courthouse) and adaptive use of a historic building (Flaherty & Collins Properties and Well-Spring Center for the repurposing of three historic buildings as affordable senior housing in Martinsville).

Dave Broman, HCHS executive director, acknowledged the significance of replacing the roof originally installed during the mansion's construction 127 years ago. "The impact of the roof project isn't highly visible," he said in an interview with the *Kokomo Tribune*. "It isn't a shiny new building or a direct improvement in what we offer our visitors and the community, and there isn't a big change in the mansion's historic value today."

"I've said several times that it wasn't a 'sexy' project," he continued. "But there is an impact – one that will be felt more by the next three or four generations than by us today."



Linda Ferries, HCHS board secretary, accepted the award on behalf of the historical society at the ceremony in May.

Membership

Thanks to all who joined or renewed their memberships from May through July

Jim Aikman
Kent and Marcia
Blacklidge
Glen R. Boise
Bill and Sharon Carter
Dr. Matt Dillman
Rick and Beth Emry
Beryl Etherington
Garrett and Vivian Floyd
Kenn Freeland
Diana Goodnight
Joan Hardesty
Mary Ellen Harnish
Thomas and Jeanne Harrell
Robert and Joan Hoch
Jay and Marjorie Katzenmeyer

Stephen A. Kiley
Anita Kimmel
Stan and Joy Kryder
Shirley Lee
Chuck and Doris
Lingelbaugh
Mark and Jennifer Lyons
Edward and Vickie Martin
Sondra Neal
David and Lisa Olmsted
Mary Ann Peabody
Virginia Rea
Ruth Reichard
Irene Rolland
Blake and Jennifer Rollins
Randy and Mary Rusch

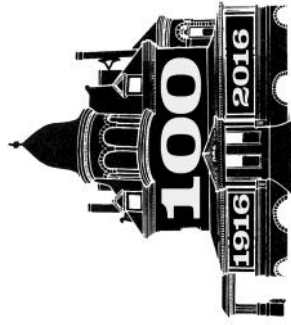
Dr. Allen Safianow
Jerry and Marsha Santen
Anne Shaw
Ronald and Jean Simpson
Lynn Smith
Goldie E. Snavelly
Patricia Sottong
Linda Stout
Marjorie Herr Swing
Dianne Waggaman
John and Emily West
Clara Emily Wilson
Donald and Marilyn
Wooldridge
James Wren
Jon Zeck



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