

Volume 8, Issue 1  
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# *Footprints*

*A publication of the Howard County Historical Society*

## **Douglass School at 100: a legacy of troubled times**



FIRST LADY ELEANOR ROOSEVELT VISITED THE SEGREGATED SCHOOL IN 1940

## From the executive director

# Decisions and Consequences

I'm writing this in January, the time of year when we're supposed to look forward to new things and fresh starts, but also a time when it pays to review what's been accomplished over the past year.

We're a history organization and supposed to be looking back, but we also have to plan for the future of our organization and our preservation work. It's a quandary. Should I look forward or backward?

Let's talk about today instead, today as a consequence of yesterday and tomorrow as a consequence of today. What does Howard County have today that was given to us by yesterday and will be our gift to tomorrow?

You can make your own list, but you could include buildings, factories, institutions of various sorts, roads, bridges, parks, etc. My number one choice, that on which all others are based, is people — glorious people, with all their flaws and foibles, their energy, creativity, persistence, knowledge, experience, sacrifice, and generosity. Our forebears ushered us into their world, as we'll bring our children and grandchildren into our world. But how do we help them live in this world, understand it and pass it along in better condition?

My answer, as you might suspect, is to teach history. Not names and dates, although they're important, but the intended and unintended consequences of decisions and the use and abuse of power. History helps teach the critical thinking that illuminates the past and the future and exposes corruption and incompetence. It is as valuable to one's personal life as it is to social and cultural life. Please do your part by supporting the teaching of history at school and in the family and by supporting organizations that preserve and share our history and its lessons.

This month in *Footprints*, we're sharing the story of a young Howard County man who made the ultimate sacrifice, another about a pioneer's log cabin and yet another about a group of students who visited the museum to learn about our local history. There's a piece on a Howard County author whose book about religion on the frontier is being featured by the Indiana Historical Society, and we have a wrap-up of Christmas at the Seiberling.

**Dave Broman**  
**HCHS Executive Director**

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# Jule Rider receives the Harnish Distinguished Service Award

**L**ongtime volunteer Jule Rider was honored in December for her years of service to the Howard County Historical Society.

“For me, the highlight of the annual holiday pitch-in for HCHS volunteers was the opportunity to recognize the tremendous contributions of the many people who do the work of the historical society and the county museum,” said Dave Broman, HCHS executive director. “This year, the board of directors chose to make Jule Rider the third recipient of the Mary Ellen Harnish Distinguished Service Award.”

Harnish, the first recipient of her namesake award, was on hand for the presentation, as she was in 2015 when Alan Safianow became the second. The Distinguished Service Award was established in 2013.

Jule has volunteered at the museum in many capacities since the early 1990s. She’s served on committees and on the board of trustees, worked at special events and acted as host and docent in the mansion. However, she has spent most of her time and energy working behind the scenes on management of the collections. Her experience and knowledge of the collections have been invaluable assets to the museum and its curator, Stew Lauterbach.



Rider, during a recent Nooks & Crannies tour.



Dave Broman, left, HCHS executive director, presented a gift to volunteer Jule Rider on behalf of the board as part of the award presentation in December. Judy Brown (far right) holds the plaque that will bear Jule’s name and be displayed in the mansion.

## Tale of an old log home:

# The Joseph Alexander house

By Jon Russell  
Howard County Historian

**Y**ou know that old log house on Ind. 22 west of town? Most know which one — it's the only one! But, what *do* we know about it?

Its logs, of yellow poplar, are showing signs of severe deterioration with several needing to be replaced. It hasn't really been called "home" for nearly 40 years; its most recent renovation is now 30 years in the past. But there it stands: Now — and for more than 160 years — a relic of things that were when Howard County was young.

Known to those interested in our early history as the Joseph Alexander Log House, its likeness graced the cover of *Howard County, A Pictorial History*, a book by the late Ned Booher in 1994. It was also a featured story of the *Kokomo Tribune's* Family section: *Log Cabin Coming to Life*, July 23, 1989, when the cabin was being restored by the late Dan Miller. And, it had been mentioned in a 1950 KT article titled, *Log Cabins Fast Disappearing*.

It has a history, and a relatively long one at that, at least for this neck of the woods. The old house isn't sitting on its original site. It was moved to the present location many years ago. Originally located farther south, closer to the creek but on the same farmland, it was moved to its present location about 1904 by a Mr. Harry Jackson. It was believed to have been "about 120 years old" at the time of the 1950 article in the *Kokomo Tribune*, though the presumed age was a bit speculative.

In 1989, one of the last descendants of Joseph Alexander, his granddaughter Margaret Alexander Hawkins, stated that when her grandmother died in 1902, "the home passed into the hands of an aunt" on her mother's side

of the family. Hawkins believed that it was her grandfather, Joseph Alexander, who "built the cabin in about 1850." Though the abstract doesn't indicate the actual build date for the house, it was noted that the value of the property increased during the years 1850 through 1853, leading to the assumption that it was built during those years.

According to the 1950 KT article, her grandfather was helped by another man called "Uncle Benny Dern." Her aunt had it moved to "the better location on the "Jefferson St. Pike" (now Ind. 22). At the time of the 1950 article, the house and farm were owned by Gerald Martin.

Joseph was the father of Reuben Presley Alexander, known as "Press." Press, who was Margaret Hawkins' father, was born in the house about 1859, part of a large family of eight children (about the average in those days). According to Hawkins, her parents were married when her father was 47 and her mother was 32, and she was their only child.

The farmland surrounding the house had been issued a patent deed about 1845, during the Polk administration, at the time when the area called the "Seven Mile Strip" had been opened to white settlement. It was owned for short intervals by several individuals, who would "win and lose it," before Joseph bought the land in 1852. It was there that he moved his family from Maysville, Ky., by way of Rushville, and they remained there until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The log house, not a "cabin," that Joseph built measured about 25 by 30 feet and was a full two-stories tall. Two-story *log* houses in Howard County were rare, and this may be the only one left standing — in a recognizable form. As an additional bit of reference, Hawkins, during the 1989 restoration, asked Hol-



**The Joseph Alexander log house has stood for more than 160 years. Now located on Ind. 22 west of Kokomo, it was moved from a site closer to a creek and south of its present locations in approximately 1904.**

**Two-story log houses were rare in Howard County. This may be the only one left standing.**

lingsworth Lumber how tall a tree needed to be for a log to measure 30 feet long, with some as much as 29 inches wide by 8 inches thick. Their answer: 75 feet tall and probably from trees that were at least 200 years old at the time they were cut!

The Alexander house consisted of two rooms, one upstairs and one downstairs. At some time, possibly as recently as the 1904 move, a lean-to addition was built against the back of the house that contained what was being used as a kitchen and another small room, possibly a bedroom, but the "bathroom" would still have been some 50 paces from the living quarters. The addition was not made of logs, but built as a frame structure with siding that matched the weatherboards used on the log section.

A common practice at the time was to finish building the log house, then, within a few years, cover it with weatherboard siding if it was to continue service as a permanent home. This practice gave the logs protection from

weather, saved the owner from the yearly chore called "chinking," and added a more attractive, and above all, comfortable element to the structure. The interiors were either "whitewashed" directly over the logs, or lath and plaster finished the changes that gave it the appearance of a modern frame house.

Log homes and especially the smaller, more "rustic" cabins that were not treated this way usually ended up as barns or corn cribs and suffered the ravages of time. That's why most of them have disappeared. Many, if not most, of these small cabins served only as temporary shelters while a better wood frame or brick house could be built.

My great-great grandfather, John Hervey, was born in a three-sided cabin in Indiana Territory around 1811. I'm sure his family couldn't wait until a "real house" was built, even if it were only to have the additional "front side!"

Perhaps, the best thing about those "good ol' days" for us might be that they are over.

# Remembering 'Billy' Hobbs: Lost on the last day of the war

**W**right Cox Hobbs Jr., "Billy" to family and friends, had a reputation that followed him from the family farm on the southside of Kokomo to an aircraft carrier in the Pacific.

A World War II Navy pilot, his innate skill as an aviator and genuine Midwestern friendliness distinguished Billy as someone "well-liked by everyone" whose "flying ability" made him "one of the best pilots in the squadron." (Quotations from letter to Hobbs family from Ensign Leonard Komisarek, Oct. 16, 1945)

Hobbs was born Aug. 15, 1922, Wright and Hattie Hobbs' first child, the "classic oldest child" as his sister Nancy Exmeyer remembers him. The Hobbs' family farm was near the intersection of Park and Alto roads, now the eastern part of Sunset Memory Gardens Cemetery. "He was a perfectionist with common sense," Nancy says. Stern but devoted and loving, Nancy says he was the "ideal older brother."

The straight-A student was devoted to his parents too, and worked hard on the farm. He was especially good with machines. By the 1930s, "modern" farming was being mechanized (Wright Hobbs Sr. was of the generation that transitioned from horses to tractors for plowing), and understanding the intricacies of newfangled engines was as crucial as studying the weather.

Fascinated by mechanical movement, Billy's love of machines was evident early on. He had

the first bike in the family, which he kept in "tip-top condition." He could fix anything, solve any problem, settle any sibling dispute. Self-confident and intelligent, he "always said the right things at the right times," and was simply

"good at everything," Nancy said.

Billy Hobbs grew up amidst the swirl of progress, in fact, as industry and society was undergoing rapid change thanks to trains, automobiles — and planes.

In some of the earliest airplane flights in Howard County, Kokomo's Ralph Lockwood took several residents up for their first rides in 1918. Lockwood, an Army flyer in World War I, used a farmer's clover field half a mile south of town on U.S. 31 as his landing strip. In 1919 a group led by Wilbur Fagley, another military aviator, organized the first "sight-

seeing" passenger flights and established a field with several hangars on farmland near the Kokomo Country Club.

Interestingly, Continental Airlines began commercial service in 1931 at the Shockley airport (later renamed Ruzicka) south of the city (just a few miles east of the Hobbs farm). Continental's passenger, freight and mail service lasted just a few months, however. (The present municipal airport on Kokomo's northeast side began as an auxiliary airfield for the military in 1941.)

So Billy Hobbs came of age on a tractor, tilling the topsoil in Harrison Township, watching the planes going in and out of nearby Shockley



Ensign Wright Cox "Billy" Hobbs

# Kokomo's fascination with flight

**K**okomo's connection with airplanes and aerospace began in 1909 with a visit from a barn-storming pilot who came to amaze the local populace. It's fair to say he succeeded. In those early years, the simple fact of motorized flight was still new and risky – and watching the pilots defy death and seemingly disobey the laws of physics was awe inspiring.

In 1912, Howard County was visited by a superstar aviator named Lincoln Beachey, flying a biplane that some newspaper writers called a "beat-up orange crate." He landed in Kokomo's Chautauqua Park (now part of Highland Park). Beachey sold rides to the more daring residents and some stores closed down for the day so their employees could watch the spectacle.

Lt. Wilbur Fagley flew into the county in 1919 on a military recruiting mission and was so impressed with the reception that he decided to stay.

He convinced Elwood Haynes and a few others to invest in an airfield just south of Highland Park, to be called Fagley Field. He even-

See "Flight" on page 9

airfield. He loved the earth, but was now looking toward the heavens. After graduating from West Middleton High School (later part of the Western School Corporation consolidation) he rode his bike every day round-trip to a north-side Kokomo factory to earn money for flying lessons.

With war in Europe and the Pacific a prospect when he started high school and in progress after he graduated, Billy enlisted as an aviation cadet in the Navy reserves in 1942. Flight training took him to Florida, then Texas, and ultimately he was assigned to Hawaii. On Aug. 15, 1944, Billy Hobbs turned 22 and reported for duty with Air Group 88, which was formed that very day. The newly commissioned ensign, service number 355123, was off to war on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Yorktown CV 10, known gallantly as "The Fighting Lady." His pilot call-sign nickname was "Hybrid" in honor of the family seed-corn business (empty "Hobbs Hybrids" bags used to wrap the food and other goodies sent by mom Hattie must have been a common sight around the Air Group 88 ready room).

Within a year, Ensign "Hybrid" Hobbs had earned the World War II victory medal, the American Area Campaign medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign medal, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart medal, the Air medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Several of the honors were awarded posthumously, for Wright and Hattie's oldest child never came home. The circumstances of his loss are a tragic and ironic footnote to the exhilarating end of the war.

On Aug. 15, 1945, all on the same day, Air Group 88 marked its one-year anniversary as a squadron, Ensign Wright C. Hobbs Jr. turned 23 years old, and Japan surrendered to end the war that really would end all wars. After the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki five days earlier, victory and peace were at hand, but the U.S. Navy carrier task forces in the Pacific remained on alert. Needing one more successful mission to earn his Lieutenant's bars, "Hybrid" was piloting one of six Hellcat fighters that left the Yorktown at 0415 (4:15 a.m. local time) that day with the knowledge that hostilities were still ongoing. Before reaching their target (airfields and a manufacturing plant near Tokyo), a radio mes-

## Ens. W. C. Hobbs Reported Missing Since August 15

### Shot Down As War Ends Over Japan

Mr. and Mrs. Wright C. Hobbs, route 6 Kokomo, received a telegram Wednesday informing them that their son, Ensign Wright C. Hobbs, Jr., has been missing in action in the Japanese war zone since August 15. The message was sent by Vice Admiral Louis Denfield, Chief of Naval Personnel, and stated that the parents would be informed of any further news.

Ensign Hobbs' 23rd birthday occurred on the date on which he was reported missing.

From the Kokomo Tribune,  
Sept. 19, 1945



From the *Kokomo Tribune*, Sept. 19, 1945

sage at 6:45 a.m. local time informed them of the “cease-fire” declaration and to “cancel all offensive operations and return to base.” The war, incredibly, was over.

Turning back to return to the Yorktown, the squad – their planes heavy and un-maneuverable because of the undelivered ordnance – was ambushed by about 20 Japanese fighter planes. Only two of the six U.S. Hellcats made it back to the ship. Ensign Hobbs was not one of them. The official announcement from President Truman that Japan had surrendered was received at 8:12 a.m. local time.

A letter written by Lieutenant Junior Grade Maurice Proctor, one of the two pilots to return, was smuggled off the Yorktown (mail was still being censored) and successfully delivered about a month later to the “Buckeye Farm” in Howard County. This was in advance of the official War Department notification, which came later. Part of Lt. J.G. Proctor’s account of that day’s events follows:

“On the date of Aug. 15, our squadron embarked on a raid over Tokyo. Little did we know how bittersweet the day would be. We approached our target which was mostly fogged in and were making plans to attack when we received radio orders to cease hostilities. We started home and were just over Atsugi airfield when one of the boys radioed, ‘many rats high and diving.’ There looked to be 16 to 20 of

See “Hobbs” on page 9



Clyde Shockley set up an airfield in Kokomo in 1926, leasing 40 acres of farmland near what is now the north west corner of Southway Boulevard and South Lafountain Street.



## Flight, continued from page 7

tually convinced both Haynes and Elmer Apperson to take a joy-ride in his plane.

The field was taken over by Curtiss Indiana and moved to an area that is now part of the Kokomo Country Club golf course.

Fagley became Kokomo's first airplane fatality there in 1922 and the airfield faded away without his leadership.

In 1926, Clyde Shockley leased 40 acres of farmland and set up a new airfield in the area now occupied by Kokomo Autoworld and the former south Marsh store.

Mike Murphy bought the field from Shockley in 1931. He was a world-famous barnstormer and stunt pilot, once considered the best in the world, who played a key role in the D-Day invasion.

John Ruzicka, another pioneering aviator and barnstormer, purchased the field in 1941 and operated it as Ruzicka Airport until 1956, when it was subdivided for commercial and residential use.

The present-day Kokomo Municipal Airport was built in 1940 by the Army, and used by the Navy during WWII as an auxiliary to Bunker Hill (now Grissom AFB). After the war, it was turned over to the city for public use.

## Hobbs, continued from page 8

them falling from the sky. Our planes, burdened with rockets and belly tanks, which we had no chance to drop, fought bravely and at great disadvantage. When the unequal melee was over, nine Japs had been shot down, but only two of our six returned. I regret to report to you that your son Billy was not among us."

Although reports from the two surviving pilots indicated Ensign Hobbs was "last seen preparing to parachute from his damaged plane near Atsugi airfield," (Kokomo Tribune, Sept. 20, 1945) Billy's body was never recovered. Officially listed as "Missing-in-Action," the U.S. government formally notified the family that he was presumed to be dead a year later. In October 1946, the Hobbs family at last held a memorial service in Kokomo for their son, who was duly honored as the last known Howard County enlistee to be killed in World War II.

For the next 24 years until her death in 1971, Hattie Hobbs placed a memorial notice every Aug. 15 in the classifieds section of the Kokomo Tribune, recognizing the courage, dedication and ultimate sacrifice of Lieutenant Howard Harrison, Lieutenant Joe Sahloff, Ensign Wright C. Hobbs Jr. and Ensign Gene Mandeborg from Air Group 88, all lost in 1945 on the last day of the war with Japan.



**Be one of the amazing people who support and promote Howard County — volunteer at Kokomo's historic Seiberling Mansion.**

Learn more at [hchistory.org](http://hchistory.org).

# Douglass School stands as a mute reminder of past segregation

**By Dave Broman**  
**HCHS Executive Director**

**D**ouglass School in Kokomo is still standing, empty of students but full of traces and reminders of students and teachers in years gone by. The school also remains full in the memories of those of its students still living.

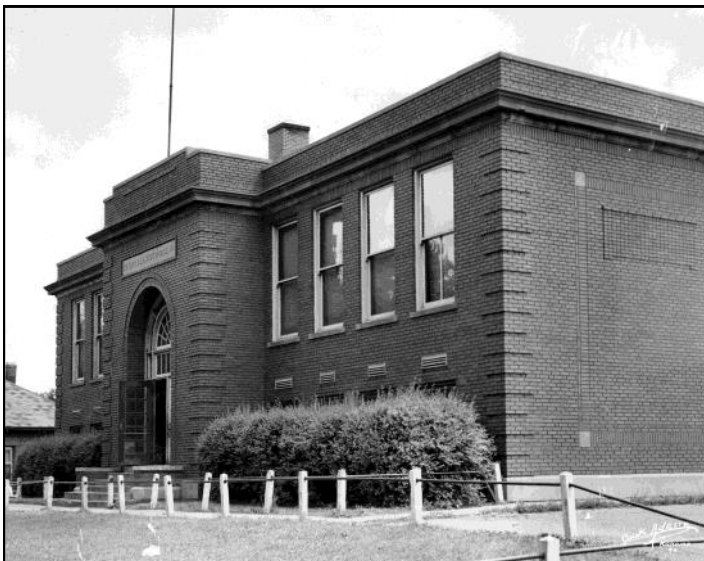
Douglass School, named after the great abolitionist, orator and writer Frederick Douglass, was the city's segregated school for African American students, during a time when segregation was mandated by law. It wasn't the first such school in Kokomo — the first was built in 1872 on North Lafountain Street near Havens Street — but it was the most successful.

The number of African-American residents of Kokomo grew rapidly after the turn of the 20th century. Following World War I, they petitioned the school board for a larger, better school building. Their advocacy led to the construction of Douglass School in 1919. The building included four classrooms, a community room, and a gymnasium.

Controversy came to the new school almost as soon as it was built. The district required that all African-American students attend that school, regardless of where they lived in the community. Students who lived near the waterworks area and the plate glass plant on the southeast side had to walk all the way up to the north end, even in freezing winter weather, to get to class. Many students had to walk by other schools, designated

for white students only, to get to Douglass. The superintendent, C.V. Haworth, was adamant in his insistence on maintaining the separation and it remained in effect until the state's anti-segregation law was passed in 1949.

Douglass School nevertheless played a key role in the lives of its students and their families. It had an active parent's organization, plenty of community support, and, beginning in 1926, it had Reverend H.A. Perry as its principal. Perry's leadership in the school and the community cannot be understated. He's a member of the Howard County Hall of Legends largely because of his role in the establishment of the Carver Center, but his real legacy may be found in the lives of the students at



**Douglass School, built in 1919, was the only school for African-American children in Kokomo for 30 years. The building still stands, a reminder of the lingering effects of segregation and racial prejudice in the city.**



First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, center, visited Douglass School on March 14, 1940. She is inside the school with the Rev. Henry Perry, who was school principal and is now a member of the Howard County Hall of Legends. The cover photo of this issue of *Footprints* also is from Mrs. Roosevelt's visit to the school in 1940.

PHOTOS FROM THE  
HCHS ARCHIVES

Douglass School.

Desegregation came slowly and in fits and starts after the 1949 law went into effect, continuing at least into the 1960s. Douglass

School was closed in the late 60's and sold by the school district. Most recently it was used by a church group. It remains today as a reminder of segregation and its lingering effects.

## BlackKokomo Community Research Project is moving forward

Join us for the first event of the year

### REMEMBERING: A Photo Day

Feb. 23, 1 p.m.

at Beyond Barcodes Bookstore  
108 N. Main St., Kokomo

Organizers of the BlackKokomo Project hope to shed light on the journey of African Americans into the area. They are beginning to collect images and oral histories related to African Americans in the community, to document the stories of African American migration to Howard County and to create an African American migration timeline. Their work will highlight the struggles of early African American settlers as well as their successes settling in the county and will provide written

record of that history for future generations.

Dust off the photo albums from your ancestors and share them with the community. Photo scanners will be available to digitize images.

In the words of the project's organizer, Deandra Beard, "There's a story to be told, let's tell it!"

More information is available on Facebook at BlackKokomo: a Community Research Project or email [BlackKokomo@gmail.com](mailto:BlackKokomo@gmail.com).

# ‘Seiberling Snowman Spectacular’ a smashing success

**By Linda Ferries**  
**HCHS Publication Committee Chair**

**F**rom Frosty to Olaf, the decorators for Christmas at the Seiberling 2018 pulled out all the stops to fill the mansion with a spectacular collection of snowmen. Indeed, guests were treated to a display of more than 1,000 of the winter wonders, covering Christ-

mas trees, adorning staircases, decorating gifts, and lining mantle tops in sizes ranging from six inches to six feet.

“The decorators really embraced the theme ‘Seiberling Snowman Spectacular,’” said event chair Peggy Hobson, who presided over the holiday decorating. “It’s always so heart-warming to see the looks on people’s faces and hear their happy comments as they enjoy our annual display. ‘Christmas at the Seiberling’ is a great community tradition – and the reactions make the hard work of all of our volunteers worthwhile.”

This year, decorators Darrell and Bruce Blasius again ran away with the People’s Choice Award as their third-floor Christmas

fantasy garnered the most votes.

Two areas – the first-floor butler’s pantry decorated by Barbara Bothast and the second-floor children’s room decorated by Kappa Master Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi – tied for second place with identical vote totals. Altrusa took third place in public voting for their decoration of the dining room.

And, indeed, for the dozens of youngsters (and parents and grandparents) who pursued this year’s children’s contest,



**Here a snowman, there a snowman, everywhere a snowman during the 2018 Christmas at the Seiberling.**



**Five-year-old Delilah Rhine was winner of a large package of games, toys and books after coming closest to guessing the number of snowmen in the mansion.**

the grand total of snowmen, as counted by the decorators of each room, was 1,057. Delilah Rhine, the 5-year-old daughter of Amber and Marshall Rhine of western Howard County, submitted the count closest to the decorator total and won the contest prize of a collection of games, books and toys collected by HCHS volunteer Dana Osburn.

From the opening night celebration on Nov. 24 through season's end on Dec. 30, an estimated total of more than 5,000 people wandered through the museum's holiday-themed halls. The Wyman Group once again sponsored the traditional lighting ceremony, Duke

Energy underwrote a special "candlelight" evening, and thanks to five local organizations – Community First Bank, Financial Builders Credit Union, Duke Energy (CEO Night), Haynes International and Ivy Tech Community College – community members were invited to tour the museum on five evenings without charge.

Holiday music filled the museum on some evenings, courtesy of to the Kokomo Men of Note, Harmony Magic from Tipton, the Kokomo Brass, Vivace Flute Trio, the IUK Flute Choir and the Choraleers.

HCHS Executive Director Dave Broman extended the historical society's appreciation for the work of all the decorators, including Tri Kappa, Gen. James Cox Chapter of DAR, Great Faith Church, Altrusa, Ivy Tech Community College, Master Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi, Symposium, the Kokomo Howard County Public Library, Leadership Kokomo, Haynes International, Peggy Hobson, Lynn Smith, Connie Hess, Teresa Fields, Barbara Bothast, Jane Kincaid, Juanita Martin Davis, Janet Schick, Dana Osburn, Rebecca Lepper and Darrell and Bruce Blasius.

"Their creativity brought smiles to many faces and we thank them for sharing their time and energy," Broman said.

He also thanked the Kokomo Visitors Bureau and Visit Indiana for their support, as well as local media who shared the news of all the events.

At the heart of it all, Broman recognized the contributions of the museum volunteers, "the army of generous-hearted men and women who bring everything together for the community to share the best of Howard County with people from around the globe."

"The volunteers are too numerous to mention by name," he said. "Simply saying 'thank you' seems inadequate, but I'll say it, and say it again. Thank you."

Hobson also extended her thanks to all the decorators and noted that finishing one season means kicking off plans for the next. Christmas at the Seiberling 2019 will feature a Victorian Christmas theme and will kick off with the annual lighting ceremony on Nov. 30.



# Elementary students ooh and ahh over decorated Seiberling Mansion

**By Linda Ferries**  
**HCHS Publication Committee Chair**

**T**he eyes were wide. The mouths were open. The oooohs and aaaaahs were audible.

Almost 100 third-graders from Northwestern Elementary School toured “Christmas at the Seiberling” Dec. 19 and reacted with appropriate wonder.

Ron Owings, principal of Northwestern Elementary, said he was excited to accompany the youngsters for what was his first trip to Komo’s historic Seiberling Mansion. Two tour sessions were scheduled with the 50 or so students in each session divided into three groups as they explored the three floors of the mansion open for guests.

On the first floor, volunteer guide Cinda Ruthford shared the story of the Seiberlings and the construction of their magnificent mansion, while on the second floor, volunteer decorator/guide Juanita Martin-Davis guided the youngsters through the very popular children’s room.

On the third floor, Howard County Historical Society Curatorial Assistant Randy Smith shared some basic history of the home and was peppered with questions: “How many people lived here?” “How long did it take to put up all the decorations?” “How long did it take to build this place?” “What does that door go to?” “Can I go out on the balcony?”

Back in the kitchen area, HCHS President Judy Brown and Curator Stew Lauterbach fielded questions about the Seiberlings’ ice box among others, including a awestruck “Why are



Northwestern students prepare to ascend the grand stairway, led by Juanita Martin-Davis, above. Curator Stew Lauterbach, opposite page, bottom, explains the ice box. Students peak inside, far right.

these doors SO GIGANTIC?"

The young visitors were definitely engaged.

And while the model train village and upside-down Christmas tree caught lots of attention, many of the third-graders also took an interest in the historical exhibits.

Gazing at a display case highlighting Howard County's service in World War I, 8-year-old Shelby Chase was thoughtful. "I like the old style. I like history," she said. "It's like a real living museum. I'm amazed by this." She followed with a 21<sup>st</sup> Century assessment: "My review is 5,000 stars!"

For teachers like Elizabeth Fulk hoping the visit would spark more interest in history, a student lament that "I want to read THIS INFORMATION!" was just what she wanted to hear. "You'll have to come back" was the guide's encouraging response.

With "I LOVE THIS PLACE" overheard as students left the building, the Seiberling once again lived up to its reputation as a community treasure.

(Footnote: In a conversation several weeks after the visit, Mrs. Fulk said, "I also thought it was fun to note that one of our students, Braylen Collins, also started working on building the Seiberling Mansion in his Minecraft world! Pretty awesome that he brought it right into the 21st century and showed its continued relevance." Pretty awesome indeed.)



# Kokomo author is source for IHS 'You Are There' exhibit

**By Gil Porter**  
**HCHS Publications Committee Member**

**I**n your next visit to the Indiana Historical Society in Indianapolis, be sure to check the starting times for "You Are There 1839: Religion and the Divided Frontier," one of the current presentations in the museum's historical exhibition series.

The "Religion and the Divided Frontier" exhibit is a snapshot of Hoosier life that takes place inside a small Danville inn during the time of religious and political transformation known as the Western Revival. Actors representing people from that period share their experiences and describe and discuss issues of freedom,

equality and faith. The interactive, three-dimensional setting engages observers directly in the stories and creates a unique experience in history.

Among the cast of characters is Eli P. Farmer, "a traveling preacher

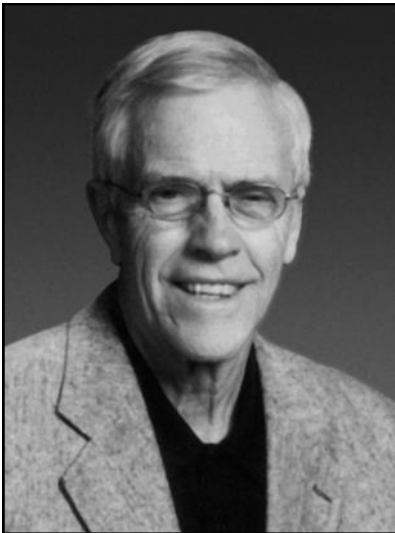
known for his joyous sermons as well as his propensity for brawling," as described on the IHS website. A native of Kentucky, Farmer served in the War of 1812 and came to Indiana in 1822. As a Methodist circuit rider, he was committed to his vision of religious purity and his fiery sermons inspired thousands to join the church. Farmer later worked as a businessman, newspaper editor and politician.

The source for Farmer, his background and story is "Faith and Fury: Eli Farmer on the Frontier, 1794-1881" by Kokomo's Riley B. Case, a retired Methodist minister, author and consultant on religion and history. Case is a native of LaGrange County who attended Taylor University, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminar and Northwestern University. He was a pastor for 42 years and has authored five books. His most recent active appointments were district superintendent, Marion (Indiana) District and lead pastor, St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Kokomo.

According to Case, the book "Faith and Fury" is sourced directly from Eli Farmer's autobiographical manuscript and covers his life through 80 years.

"Farmer did other things besides ride the circuit and hold camp meetings," Case said. "He got into brawls, he was a state senator and he held his own evangelistic crusade among the slaves before the Civil War. He was in the army during the War of 1812 and, in fact, tried to be in the army during the Civil War but was too old. So he became a volunteer chaplain. Later, he was editor of a rabble-rousing newspaper."

Case said he was inspired to write the story



**Kokomo author Riley B. Case**



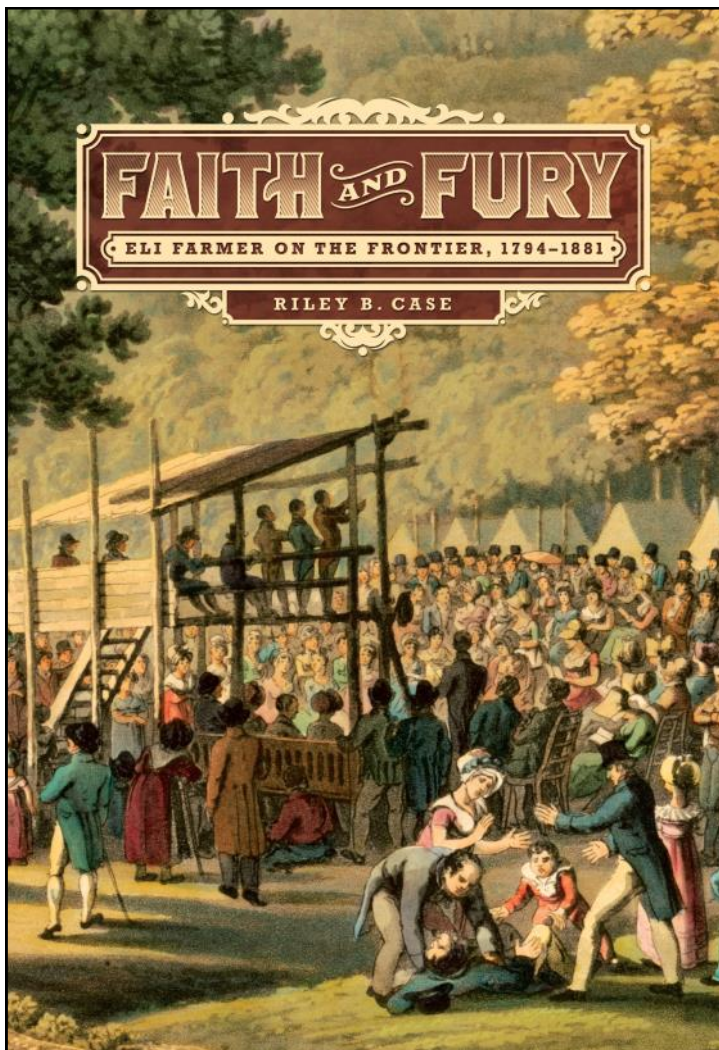
after reading Farmer's text. The book evolved from an article Case wrote for the Indiana Magazine of History (Indiana University). It was then selected to be published through the Indiana Historical Society.

Case said he was already working with IHS to publish the book when they became very interested in Farmer's story within the context of that time in Indiana while "Religion and the Divided Frontier" was in the planning stages. Case said the historical society brought in academic religious historians from Washington University in St. Louis, Oakland City University in southwestern Indiana, Butler University and IUPUI for further research.

The book was released Sept. 19 during a ceremony coinciding with the first showing of the You Are There exhibit.

Case said he is impressed by not just the production but also the overall process of how IHS distilled the research to present "a specific person and a specific point of history in Indiana and interpret that history through what was taking place at one time for one person."

The interactive exhibit runs through April 2020. (Visit [indianahistory.org](http://indianahistory.org) for more information.) Case said as a longtime Hoosier himself, he is so impressed by the quality and effort of the Indiana Historical Society. As for the current program that is largely sourced from one of his books, he was succinct: "I really like what they do with this."



**Riley Case's book "Faith and Fury" is about Hoosier Eli Farmer, a traveling preacher known for his joyous sermons as well as his propensity for brawling, who lived in Indiana. Farmer also became a state senator and, later, editor of a rabble-rousing newspaper. An Indiana Historical Society interactive exhibit using actors now features Farmer's story.**

# Meet one of HCHS's newest trustees: Anne Shaw Kingery

**By Linda Ferries**  
**HCHS Publication Committee Chair**

**A** bachelor's degree in archaeology. A master's in historic preservation. Ten years' professional experience as an architectural historian, archaeologist and educator. Board member and preservation consultant for a historic home and museum in Crawfordsville, that Hoosier city's Main Street projects and the Indiana State Library.

Meet Anne Shaw Kingery, one of the newest members of the Howard County Historical Society Board of Trustees.

Elected to the board last fall, Anne says, "I wanted to join the Howard County Historical Society board because I have a passion for local history. As a transplant to Kokomo, I have a lot to learn, but am looking forward to immersing myself in Howard County history.

"The historical society is such an important part of the community," she said. "It helps keep local history alive and relevant to new generations. It's so wonderful to share stories and knowledge about our past with the public."

Anne moved to Kokomo in July 2017 when she married Kokomo librarian Justin Kingery. She and Justin, and their merged family of four youngsters between the ages of 5 and 9, have settled into a home not far from the Seiberling Mansion.

"Since I'm an architectural historian, I have very strict rules on what kinds of houses I'll buy," she said. "We were ecstatic to find our American Foursquare in the Old Silk Stocking Historic District."

A principal investigator in architectural history and historical archaeology, Anne works from home doing environmental science compliance work for federal- and state-funded projects through NS Services, a Zionsville-based or-

ganization started in 2008 to provide high-quality technical expertise in the environmental and engineering fields.

Along with her degrees from the University of Indianapolis and the University of Kentucky, Anne has worked with several consulting firms in managing projects related to architectural history and archaeology, including researching and writing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. She has taught Historical Archaeology courses at the University of Indianapolis and worked in programming, event planning and membership activities as deputy director of the Crawfordsville/Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

Anne's volunteer experience includes serving on the board of trustees for the General Lew Wallace Study and Museum, the Indiana Archaeology Council board of directors, the INSPIRE Advisory Council of the Indiana State Library and a recent appointment to the State Historic Preservation Review Board by Gov. Eric Holcomb.

Welcome to Kokomo and HCHS!



**Anne Kingery brings her experience with architectural preservation and history to the HCHS Board of Trustees.**

# Now accepting nominations for Hall of Legends

**W**e're very proud of our Howard County heritage and our contributions, past and present, to the world. Haynes, Maxwell and Kingston come to mind, as do our roots in the auto industry. Pneumatic tires, push-button car radios and stainless steel are among the many innovations born here. We produced critical materials for World War II, art glass for stained glass windows around the world, high-tech alloys for the Apollo moon missions, and sophisticated electronics for automobiles.

The arts are better for the lives of Margaret Hillis, Misch Kohn and Strother Martin. Journalism is better because of Steve Kroft, David Ashenfelter, and Tavis Smiley. Our country is safer because of military leaders like William Kepner, Ed Trobaugh, and Don Moon. We've given the world doctors, inventors, engineers, business leaders, political leaders, labor leaders, philanthropists, authors and educators.

The Hall of Legends was established in 2010 to recognize people of Howard County who have had an impact on the world and to help establish a standard of achievement for coming generations of Hoosiers. You can learn more about past honorees at [howardcountymuseum.org](http://howardcountymuseum.org), where

you'll also find information about nominations.

The Howard County Hall of Legends is open to individuals who have achieved significant recognition for their accomplishments in the following areas:

**Public Service  
Commerce and Industry  
Science  
Technology  
Health Sciences**

**Art  
Literature/Journalism  
Humanities  
Performing Arts**

Eligible individuals must have been born in Howard County, lived in Howard County, worked in Howard County, or have made significant contributions to the good reputation of Howard County.

Now is the time to submit the names of individuals who deserve consideration by the Legends selection committee. Nominations should include your contact information, name of the nominee, rationale for your nomination and supporting information and documentation. Nominations may be delivered, mailed or emailed. Send them to Hall of Legends, Howard County Historical Society, 1200 W. Sycamore St., Kokomo, IN 46901 or [legends@howardcountymuseum.org](mailto:legends@howardcountymuseum.org).

## Membership

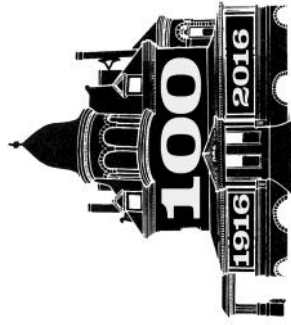
**Thanks to all who joined or renewed their memberships from November through January**

Andrew Barker  
Evan Barker  
Jerry & Connie Basham  
Harold Beal  
Bob & Janis Bergman  
Sam & Mary Pat Burrous  
Cory & Kimberly Carter  
Linda Clark  
Phillip & Victoria Conwell  
Dorothy Dague  
Del Demaree  
Melissa Domingues  
David & Barbara Engle  
Ken & Linda Ferries  
David Foster  
Heather Fouts

Nancy Frappier & Julia Hartman  
Ted & Paula Goff  
Judith Graham  
Janet Gunning  
Joan Hardesty  
Michael & Amanda Holsapple  
Mike & Kelly Karickhoff  
Wayne & Jane Kincaid  
Keith & Judy Lausch  
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**Howard County  
Historical Society  
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