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Footprints

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175 Years of Worship:

*Elizabeth Foster, Louvisa Harrison
and the birth of Grace Church*

Plus: Revisiting the Black Women in the Midwest Project

The value of yesterday's lessons in today's world

Speaking to the Kiwanis Club in January of 1929, C.V. Haworth, a member of the Howard County Hall of Legends, is quoted as saying of the county's early residents, "These pioneers, alive and dead, have left to us younger men a heritage that is sacred. If we can but instill in our action something of that spirit which was built into the foundation of the city, our community will go on and on, and on." Setting aside the likelihood that he was addressing a group of white businessmen and didn't include the roles of women, nor was he likely to be including non-white persons, his contention that history offers lessons for today is noteworthy.

The national History Relevance Campaign began in 2013 as a way to help organizations like ours share more than just the names, dates, and worn remnants of the past – to help people understand the ways that our history informs our lives today and can improve our lives and those of our descendants. To quote just one part of the campaign's manifesto, "History inspires leaders. History provides today's leaders with role models as they navigate through the complexities of modern life. The stories of persons from the past can offer direction to contemporary leaders and help

clarify their values and ideals." (You can read the full History Relevance Statement at hchistory.org.)

Relevance is at the core of the interpretation plan adopted by the Howard County Historical Society in 2015. It's also been a focal point of *Footprints* and many of my own columns in this space. If there is one thing I can leave you with as I prepare to end my time as director of the historical society, it is simply that our lives and those of our children and grandchildren are made immeasurably better by an understanding of our history, and the future would be bleak without it. If we don't learn from our failures, we're doomed to repeat them.

You can help us in this work by continuing to support the society with your membership, donations, and volunteer hours. You can help by encouraging others to join us in our mission, by teaching your children and grandchildren to value the lessons of history, by supporting history and civics education in the schools, and by encouraging our leaders to do the same. And you can help by sharing the stories and articles you find in *Footprints*.

Dave Broman

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The Year That Was

By Dean Despinoy
HCHS Past President

It seems hard to believe that another year, not to mention another decade, has passed. The past year was eventful for the historical society. I have enjoyed leading the Board of Trustees, but with the passage of time also comes the passage of responsibilities and duties. As of January 1, 2020, Sharon Reed has taken the reins as president and I am continuing on the board as past president. This changing of the guard gives me the opportunity to look back at some of the highlights of 2019.



The year started as most do for the HCHS, spending the month of January carefully removing and storing all the Christmas decorations that transformed the mansion into the holiday spectacle that is so cherished each year by the community. How many snowmen were there? Although the mansion was closed to the public during this time, it did not mean that things stopped for the staff. Problems with the carriage house roof, which caused leaks that threatened some of our museum pieces, were repaired and the chimney was removed.

The month of February started with Jill Snyder, in charge of volunteers and membership, hosting a docent open house at the Elliott House to kick off the reopening of the mansion for the season. In the weeks that followed, a long-needed project was completed. Many of our guests are unable to manage the stairs to the upper floors of the mansion. Filming of the upper floors and displays took place and the "Virtual Tour" was created to allow everyone to have a full appreciation of the mansion and museum.

The board researched and approved a new benefit for our docents and hosts in appreciation for their hard work and service. With 50 or more volunteer hours per year, they receive a free Foster Family

Membership for one year to include the HCHS quarterly publication *Footprints*, free admission for the household, two complimentary single-visit guest passes, and a 10 percent discount on most merchandise.

In April, the board had its first ever off-site meeting, over two days at Indiana University Kokomo, to review our goals and vision and to write the next five-year plan. The process was facilitated by Ethen Heicher, vice chancellor of Academic Affairs at Ivy Tech, and the fruits of this endeavor will be published soon in the new plan.

In the spring, the historical society took special notice of Howard County's 175th anniversary. Much research on the "true" history of the last Indiana county to be formed had been done by Gil Porter of the Kokomo Early History Learning Center, a frequent contributor to *Footprints*, and Howard County Historian Jon Russell. What better time than at the 175-year point to set the record straight. This resulted in the special color edition of *Footprints*, "Village on the Wildcat – A new story for Kokomo." We learned recently that the City of Kokomo is now using a version of "Village on the Wildcat" on their website.

We hoped that after replacing the slate roof of the mansion, we were done with roofs for a while, perhaps for about 150 years. Not so lucky. Although the mansion repair was extremely successful both in fund raising and in construction, now the Elliott House roof was leaking and needed repairs. Repair was accomplished with the realization that a new roof will most likely be needed sometime in 2020. Thankfully, the Elliott House does not need slate or have the same restrictions as the mansion did, meaning the cost will be closer to \$50,000 as opposed to \$500,000.

In May, the committee met to select the new class for the Hall of Legends. In August, we recognized the new inductees – Douglas Vaughn, Dolores Hahn-Rollins, Mike Murphy, Beth Brooke-Marciniak, Yvonne Ferguson Watkins and Ryan Kitchell – at a dinner at

Christmas 2019 - A Victorian Holiday Extravaganza!

By Linda Ferries
HCHS Publications Chair

With everything from traditional paper dolls to steampunk, Christmas at the Seiberling brought in people by the hundreds to enjoy a Victorian holiday.

The Victorian Christmas theme was perfect for the 1890s Seiberling Mansion and gave the dozens of decorators an opportunity to play off the building itself with decorations of feathers and bows, antique toys, and the gifts of nature in pinecones and strings of cranberries and popcorn (if recreated in modern materials to avoid attracting critters!).

"What a beautiful year at the Seiberling!" said Peggy Hobson, a long-time member of the Howard County Historical Society Board of directors and chair of the annual project. "All of our decorators – nearly two dozen individuals and organizations – did a fantastic job!"

Their efforts were well-received. Over the course of the eight evenings it was open, about 2,300 people strolled through the 25 areas decorated for the season. During regular hours, dozens more came through, from around the country and around the world, including the Indiana cities of Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Noblesville, Plymouth, Lafayette, Columbia City, Bloomington, Muncie, and Monticello, along with Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Colorado, California, Illinois, Kentucky, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Maryland.

Special thanks go to the sponsors of the evening events. The Wyman Group again sponsored the opening night lighting ceremony and Duke Energy sponsored an evening of candlelight tours to wrap it up. Thanks to six businesses and organizations, the event was open to the community without charge. These included Community First Bank, Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo, Indiana University Kokomo, Financial Builders Federal Credit Union, Duke Energy, and Security Federal Savings Bank.



This year's list of decorators included Darrell and Bruce Blasius, Barbara Bothast, Teresa Fields, Peggy Hobson, Jane Kincaid and Juanita Martin Davis, Rebecca Lepper, Beth Martin, Anna Naegeli, Dana Osburn, Janet Schick, and Lynn Smith. Organizations whose representatives decorated areas included Altrusa, Daughters of the American Revolution General James Cox Chapter, Great Faith Christian Center, Haynes International, Indiana University Alumni Association Kokomo Region, Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo, Leadership Kokomo, Master Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi, Star Financial Bank, and Symposium.

During their visit, guests were encouraged to vote for their favorite rooms with donations. Topping the list with the most in donations was the

Children's Room, where the members of Master Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority were on hand to distribute sets of dainty paper dolls to their eager and appreciative young guests.

The perennial best-in-show display presented by Darrell and Bruce Blasius brought faithful fans up to the third floor for one last visit. "Darrell and Bruce have been mainstays of Christmas at the Seiberling for years," Peggy said. "We are grateful for all they have done and wish them health and happiness as they retire from what has been a labor of love. Their beautiful display will be missed."



The "count the Christmas trees" game was again popular with the 5-to-12 set. Of the dozens of entries, four youngsters submitted the winning count – 212. After winning the drawing from the four names, Wyatt Shayne, 5-year-old son of Brittany Shayne, took home the prize, a basket of books, toys, and activity sets too big for him to carry.



With Christmas 2019 in the memory books, work has already begun on Christmas 2020, when Santa will provide the decorating theme. As soon as this season's decorations were packed away, decorators met Jan. 11 to begin planning their next gift to the community. Mark your calendars for the lighting ceremony Nov. 28!





In the beginning ... Howard County's 175 Years of Worship

Part One: The Kokomo Mission

By Gil Porter

HCHS Publications Committee

The General James Cox Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), which is still active locally, started the project around 1920. Five places in Howard County – “of historic interest” – were to be identified.

Countywide citizens’ committees were formed to help select the sites. Notable names from the era who served included everyone from John E. Frederick to Elwood Haynes to C.V. Haworth.

The goal was to place historic markers at a handful of locations so that “present and future generations” would know more “of the beginnings of life within our borders.” Our local DAR chapter had been planning the work for some time and by May 1923, the plans “were mature,” funds had been raised, and now the activity was ready to get underway.

One marker would be placed in the east side of the county and one in the west. According to reliable accounts, both sides had squatters before and coincident with David and Elizabeth Foster and their young family’s arrival at the rapids of Wildcat Creek as squatters themselves in 1842. (The Fosters later acquired a 640-acre reserve section and in 1844 deeded 40 acres for the county seat to be at Kokomo.) The county’s east side had unverifiable claims by white people on land that at the time was still part of the Big Miami Reserve. Out west, sections in the Seven Mile Strip, ceded by the Miami in 1834, would

be released by the state of Indiana for sale beginning in October 1842.

Though land claims in our county are unsubstantiated prior to 1842, most historical sources, including even Indiana General Assembly records, indicate white squatters were indeed establishing small population clusters among the Native Americans living here prior to the county’s organization in 1844, and certainly well before the Miamis’ forced removal in 1846. So the 1920 committees had to rely on longstanding lore and tradition to designate a place to mark where the white people lived outside of “Kokomotown.”

In town though, the spot chosen for the city’s historic marker was generally well-known. And for verification purposes, the Kokomo city committee in the early 1920s still had benefit of a priceless, albeit perishable, resource – actual living people from the white pioneer days.

One person in particular was more than willing to help identify Kokomo’s in-town historic marker. Louisa Linsday Harrison was a daughter of one notable pioneer and the wife of another. In August 1924, at the age of 87, she led the city’s committee to the exact location of Kokomo’s first church, which was also used as the first school during the week. At a spot at the southwest corner of Washington and Superior streets (the northeast corner of today’s Foster Park), Mrs. Harrison placed the point of her cane on the ground and “proclaimed it to be the center of the log building” that was that first church and school.

It was actually the second space used for worship services in Kokomo. The first was in Elizabeth Foster's home.

* * *

It's been said that the Miami Indians were "runners," and the "Indian trails and river systems" that connected multiple and scattered Miami settlements and villages seen on the early survey maps of Howard County are evidence of a mobile society.

This travel network may have greatly helped the Methodists.

Indiana grew from south to north, eventually swallowing an entire Native American culture and its environmental spiritualism, extinguishing Indian title to land, and replacing it with a largely white population of farmers who rarely had any formal worship let alone a Bible among them. Methodism came west to the frontier and created a uniquely American message that found a natural home as the white population grew and the boundaries expanded. Plain talk and simple services appealed to the ordinary people trying to carve new communities throughout the state.

Methodism's astute approach was to dispatch traveling clergy or "circuit-riders" on horseback into unorganized settlements, establish preaching points on a circuit, and basically let the church grow from within a community of like-minded worshipers who eventually could pay for a preacher. There were no church buildings yet. Pioneer cabins were used year-round, and in warmer weather "people worshipped out under the trees." Methodism spread by going into new areas. Whereas Baptists called (for clergy), the Methodists would send (to organize). This method worked. By 1850, 40 percent of all the churches in Indiana reportedly were Methodist.

What's more, the Methodists were, and are, meticulous record-keepers. Their annual Indiana conference reports dating to the early 19th century provide valuable details on church growth, offer a unique glimpse into society and the cultural issues of the day, and in our case, reveal an extraordinary historical fact.

An early "religious society," allegedly Methodist, dates to around 1841 about two-and-a-half-miles west of the present Howard County Courthouse.

Circumstantial evidence suggests an early gathering of Methodist worshipers met at Spice Run around 1841. A "Kokomo Mission" designation in Methodist records from October 1843 indicates an unorganized settlement along the Wildcat Creek with people ready to worship. The first services were held at David and Elizabeth Foster's cabin. The community's first school/church building was erected in 1844-45 in the northeast corner of Foster Park. This became today's Grace Methodist Episcopal Church.



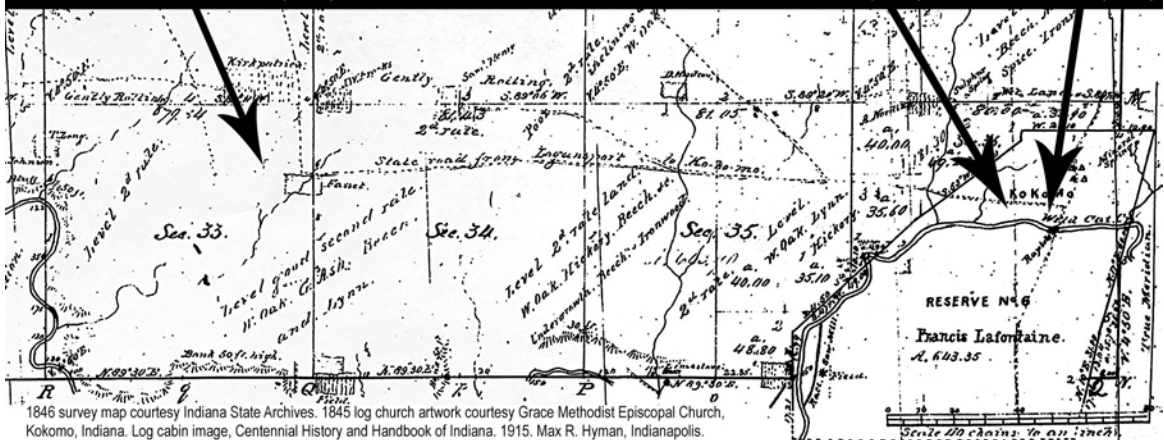
1845 Log Church



An early Log Cabin

SPICE RUN AREA (1841)

LOG CHURCH (1845) FOSTER CABIN (1843)



1846 survey map courtesy Indiana State Archives. 1845 log church artwork courtesy Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, Kokomo, Indiana. Log cabin image, Centennial History and Handbook of Indiana. 1915. Max R. Hyman, Indianapolis.

Secondary sources suggest with uniformity that a Rev. Franklin Taylor was the “preacher in charge of the circuit” that apparently included a “preaching-point” stop at a spot called Spice Run. (Up to the early 1900s, today’s Puckett Cemetery on Indiana State Road 22 just west of County Road 300 West was called Spice Run Cemetery.) The 1846 survey map shows five squatter farms precisely at that point, clustered around Capt. Thomas M. Kirkpatrick’s sizable property just north of there at 300 W. County Road 100 North.

Spice Run is not mentioned in early Methodist records, but Rev. Taylor is listed as the minister on the Camden circuit in the Lafayette district for 1843. His death details in the Kokomo Gazette Tribune (1889) expressly state he “did missionary work here for two years prior (to 1843).” This squares neatly with a reported date of 1841 for early Methodist religious activity for known squatters in the near-west side of the reserve.

A review of the timeline suggests there is circumstantial evidence that Methodism took root first at Spice Run, then flowered, per a primary source which we will see shortly, at Kokomo. In 1841, the Rev. Jacob Colclazer worked the Dayton circuit in the Lafayette district. Rev. Taylor is just to the east near Delphi at the time and thus even closer to the reserve. So both men are in position to start exploring the last unorganized territory in the state, an area attracting squatters even as land is just coming up for sale in the Seven Mile Strip.

And once David and Elizabeth unloaded the wagon and let loose the Foster children on the north side of the Wildcat Creek in 1842, their home quickly became the nucleus of the community. The Methodists were waiting for them.

* * *

When church leaders met in Crawfordsville in October 1843 at the “Twelfth Annual Session of the Indiana Conference,” geographically the map of the state of Indiana was nearly complete. The exception was the Miami reserve, which the tribe had relinquished at the 1840 treaty but hadn’t yet released through forced removal. There were white squatters in the “residue of the reserve,” which the Methodists would have known about thanks to the clergy tramping around on horseback.

The 1843 conference report lists the minister appointments in 16 statewide districts at the time. The Logansport district had eight established circuits ranging from Warsaw to Rochester to Peru to Winnemeck (sic). Slightly south of that line, and in the very heart of the reserve, Rev. Jacob Colclazer is the minister, i.e. the circuit rider, appointed to the “Kokomo Mission,” a designation used to identify an area lacking a church but with people ready to worship. A mission would share a traveling minister

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Were ‘Friends’ First?

Circumstantial evidence points to a society of Methodist worshippers among squatter farms northwest of Kokomo sometime around 1841, and “Society of Friends in Indiana” records show an early Quaker presence as well.

A Honey Creek meeting in 1842 is identified in a 1972 church publication. Secondary sources – though not church records – place it in the area as early as 1840. This meeting apparently evolved into the New London meeting, which dates to 1846 per the church records.

The 1850 census identifies 10 churches in Howard County (a count of physical buildings, not an enumeration of souls), of which seven are Methodist and three are Friends. Church records verify the count, showing 1846 meetings at Honey Creek/New London and Poplar Grove, and a Newberry meeting in 1848.

“Poplar Grove Preparative Meeting (Howard County) 1846-53” records are listed as part of the collection in the Indiana Historical Society archives, and an online Howard County cemetery resource includes details about a “Poplar Grove Friends Cemetery” with burials dating to 1845. Its source is a 1947 Logansport history organization report that talks about a “long vanished ‘Quaker’ or Friendly (sic) Meeting House in northwestern Ervin Township.” More research may yield new insight into this meeting.

Black Women in the Midwest Kokomo Project Re-visited

by Linda Ferries
HCHS Publications Chair

In the mid-1980s, funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Black Women in the Middle West (BWMW) Project collected manuscripts and photographic records of black women in Illinois and Indiana. Kokomo was among a number of communities where volunteers sought out women to share their memories to develop a collective history of their lives and their culture.

On March 15, 35 years after this initiative was under way, the Howard County Historical Society will honor this work with "Black Women in the Middle West Kokomo Project Revisited," a retrospective exhibit and reception to honor local participants.



L-R Front row: Ruth Temoney, Kokomo Project Coordinator; Dr. Darlene Clark Hine, Project Director and Professor of History Purdue University; Sharon Reed, Kokomo Project Public Relations; and Shirley Herd, Consulting Editor
Back row: Patrick Bidelman, General editor and Co-Director for Administration; and Donald West, Consulting Editor

The recognition effort is being planned by members of the HCHS Oral History Committee led by committee chair and HCHS president Sharon Reed.

"The BWMW Project was a significant effort, compiling historical essays, oral histories, biographical profiles, and document collections," Sharon said. "Many Kokomo women were recognized in the book that shared the project's results and we want to bring awareness to the project by collecting and sharing updated oral histories from some of the still-living participants."

The committee felt a March event would be appropriate as part of the annual observance of National Women's History Month. Documentation and photographs from the BWMW project will be on display in the Howard County Museum (Seiberling Mansion) from 2 to 4 p.m. on March 15 with a reception from 4 to 5 p.m. in the Elliott House.

An African American Artisan Fair, open without charge to the community, has also been scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. Feb. 27 in the Elliott House as part of the February observance of Black History Month. The purpose of the event is to highlight African American artisans and entrepreneurs, as well as the historical society, and to share information about the African American Bassett, Rush, and Freeman family cemeteries within Howard County. Artisans are invited to reserve tables for \$25 each to display their creations for sale. For more information, contact Sharon at sarc332@gmail.com or 765-419-4140 or Eventbrite. Proceeds will support the March 15 event.

"The work of Purdue University history professor Darlene Clark Hine, who wrote the planning grant and coordinated the project, and Kokomo educator Ruth Temoney, who chaired the project here, deserves to be recognized," Sharon said. "Our Oral History Committee is excited to be working with other local organizations, like the African American Cemeteries group and BlackKokomo: a Community Research Project, to share the important legacy of African Americans in Kokomo and Howard County."

In the beginning ... Howard County's 175 Years of Worship

Part Two: Grace Going Strong

By Gil Porter

HCHS Publications Committee

Her father brought the family from Madison County sometime in 1845. Louvisa Linsday had been born in January 1837, the eldest and last surviving child of the thrice-married Nathaniel Richmond Linsday, an experienced civic official, eminent Indiana jurist, and Kokomo's first resident lawyer. She knew Kokomo in its infancy, later married one of her teachers – Civil War General T. J. Harrison – and outlived just about everyone she ever knew. She died in 1931 at age 94.

Louvisa Harrison was also quite possibly the last human alive who remembered the original Foster family cabin (a two-story frame structure replaced it in 1852 in its original spot in the middle of South Main Street). A devout Methodist, Louvisa was devoted to the memory of Elizabeth Foster (who died in 1871). She may have been the strongest advocate for the decision to rename the tract of land west and south of Washington and Superior streets in the early 1920s, recommending that it be called "Betsy Foster Park". Mrs. Foster, Louvisa related with the authority of having known the woman, provided the lot for the first Methodist church, and gave \$100 "toward building and equipping the structure."



LOUVISA E. HARRISON.

The earliest entries for Elizabeth Foster and Levica (Louvisa Linsday) Harrison in "The Alphabetical List of Members," from the Grace M.E. Church record book, 1857, 1861-1867. The community's first church services were held in the Foster cabin along the Wildcat Creek in 1843. Louvisa Harrison came here in 1845 at age eight and likely attended a service or two in the cabin. That same year, the group moved to Kokomo's first school/church log cabin in the northeast corner of today's Foster Park. Elizabeth Foster died in 1871; Harrison died in 1931.

Caroline Moore
Addo Coghuff
Elizabeth Foster
Nathan A Linsday
Julia Linsday

Matilda Rayburn
Thomas J Harrison
Levica Harrison
Columbina Linsday
Anna Linsday



Elizabeth Foster

Within a year, Kokomo Mission was a Methodist church with an appointed minister – the Rev. James Burns. The Foster cabin was crowded, so congregants switched services temporarily to the second floor of the first courthouse and then moved to their own “rude log Methodist meeting house,” erected in 1844 in the northeast corner of what is now Foster Park. When she was young, Louvisa Linsday walked to the building almost daily, since it also served as the first regular schoolhouse in Kokomo. A fellow Sunday school and secular school classmate was one of David and Elizabeth’s daughters; the names of both Louvisa Linsday and Margaret Foster appear on schoolmaster Adam Clark’s first register of students.

The Methodists soon outgrew this space as well, and by 1851 had decided to move four blocks north to the east half of the lot where the present Grace United Methodist Church stands. A new church was built there in 1852, “very commodious and handsome for its day,” according to the Kokomo Dispatch. This frame structure facing Mulberry Street was witness to historic “patriotic scenes” at the start of the Civil War in 1861. When the “call to arms” was issued in

April after the fall of Fort Sumter, a meeting to gather enlistees to the Union cause was first arranged at the Richmond and Leeds’ Hall on the courthouse square, then later at the “Methodist Episcopal Church ... for the purpose of securing a fund for the support of the families of volunteers who were about to start in the service of their country.”

One day before Howard County’s first set of volunteers left for Indianapolis, a “first-rate sermon” was delivered at the church on the Sunday (April 21, 1861). As further support for the troops and to encourage more volunteers to sign up, a fife and drums corps played “soul-stirring music” on several occasions. Another time, a cannon was brought to the church and fired “to arouse enthusiasm.”

By the end of the Civil War, growth in church membership led to the need for a bigger and better building. A new brick structure that replaced the frame building was dedicated in 1865. Churchwide doctrinal disputes played out at the newly named Mulberry Street Methodist Church, which add fascinating details to church history as the congregation struggled with the controversy regarding instrumental music during services.

Indeed, a hallmark of Methodism was an entirely new “hymnal literature,” i.e. worship music not strictly based on the book of Psalms or that was to be sung a cappella. Yet how and in what manner this form of worship should take place often divided congregations around the 1870s.

Grace Methodist today makes natural claim to having the community’s very first church choir, which was apparently only grudgingly accepted at the time (many believed music was intended to be sung as an expression of individual faith, rather than by a group). But the installation of the first pipe organ – an “instrument of the devil!” – was something else altogether. On at least two occasions, attempts were made to shut down the sound. Once someone physically cut the organ’s wind-system bellows that provided air to the pipes. When that was repaired, a subsequent Sunday service, which seems to have been selected because the church was hosting a well-attended denominational conference, was interrupted when the choir and much of the congregants/attendees began sneezing thanks to a generous and obnoxious application of cayenne pepper directly in

PAST MEETS FUTURE: A Guide for Historic Preservation

By Jonathan Russell
Howard County Historian

“The American dream has always depended on the dialogue between the present and the past. In our architecture, as in all our other arts – indeed, as in our political and social culture as a whole – ours has been a struggle to formulate and sustain a usable past.” Robert A. M. Stern, Dean, Yale School of Architecture

As a movement designed to conserve old buildings and areas in an effort to tie history to population and culture, historic preservation began to dramatically expand when, in 1927, John D. Rockefeller began his massive restoration project in Colonial Williamsburg.

Today, it has become an essential component of “green” building technology as it reuses structures that are already standing as opposed to new construction. Additionally, historic preservation can help a city become more competitive because unique, historic buildings give an area more prominence when compared to the homogeneous new construction that dominates most urban centers.

So, what guides historic preservation efforts?

At the root of historic preservation is “history,” that multi-dimensional term that relates to past events, memory, discovery, collection and organization, presentation and interpretation. History gives us a sense of identity, an understanding of where we came from and who we are. It gives us a sense of context for our lives, the way things are, and the way that we might approach our future. Historic preservation is our way to “formulate and sustain a usable past.”

It began long before Rockefeller and Williamsburg, however. Efforts began as early as 1850, with the restoration of Washington’s Headquarters in Newburgh, New York, and the more notable 1858 restoration of Mount Vernon to the period 1799, the date

Washington died. Since then, more than one million properties have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), with 80,000 sites being listed individually and the rest contributing within historic districts. The Seiberling Mansion and the Old Silk-Stocking Neighborhood are local examples.

Old buildings and places are part of the artifacts that cultural anthropologists refer to as cultural resources. They are part of the tangible remains of past human activity that we can choose to either keep, or lose.

So, which of these “cultural resources” are worth keeping?

“What is historic, and worth saving, varies with the beholder, but some definition is urgent. Simply put, ‘historic’ means ‘old and worth the trouble.’ It applies to a building that’s part of a community’s tangible past. And though it may surprise cynics, old buildings can offer opportunities for a community’s future.”

This is what the National Trust for Historic Preservation has written in an article entitled: SIX PRACTICAL REASONS TO SAVE OLD BUILDINGS, November 2015, in which they outline six of the most commonly held beliefs for guiding preservation efforts. Here are those reasons, much of it quoted from the source:

1. Old buildings have intrinsic value.

Buildings of a certain era, namely pre-World War II, tend to be built with higher-quality materials such as rare woods (especially heart pine) and wood from old-growth forests that no longer exist.

Prewar buildings were also built by different standards. A century-old building might be a better long-term bet than its brand-new counterparts.

2. When you tear down an old building, you never know what’s being destroyed.

Old buildings contained materials and details that not only may no longer exist, but may also be of some other value. Modern “drop ceilings” that hide a beautiful ornamental-plastered entablature, or

worn carpeting covering Carrara marble floors, may be intrinsic. But, a pre-Civil War structure that once housed a notable family and relics that were left behind may add a cultural aspect, as well.

3. New businesses prefer old buildings.

In 1961, urban activist Jane Jacobs startled city planners with *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, in which she discussed economic advantages that certain types of businesses have when located in older buildings.

Jacobs asserted that new buildings make sense for major chain stores, but other businesses—such as bookstores, ethnic restaurants, antique stores, neighborhood pubs, and especially small start-ups—thrive in old buildings.

“As for really new ideas of any kind—no matter how ultimately profitable or otherwise successful some of them might prove to be—there is no leeway for such chancy trial, error, and experimentation in the high-overhead economy of new construction,” she wrote. “Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings.”

4. Old buildings attract people.

Is it the warmth of the materials, the heart pine, marble, or old brick—or the resonance of other people, other activities? Maybe older buildings are just more interesting.

The different levels, the vestiges of other uses, the awkward corners, the mixtures of styles, they're at

least something to talk about. America's downtown revivals suggest that people like old buildings. Whether the feeling is patriotic, homey, warm, or reassuring, older architecture tends to fit the bill.

Regardless of how they actually spend their lives, Americans prefer to picture themselves living around old buildings. Some eyes glaze over when preservationists talk about "historic building stock," but what they really mean is a community's inventory of old buildings ready to fulfill new uses.

5. Old buildings are reminders of a city's culture and complexity.

By seeing historic buildings—whether related to something famous or recognizably dramatic—tourists and longtime residents are able to witness the aesthetic and cultural history of an area. Just as banks prefer to build stately, old-fashioned facades, even when located in commercial malls, a city needs old buildings to maintain a sense of permanency and heritage.

6. Regret goes only one way.

The preservation of historic buildings is a one-way street. There is no chance to renovate or to save a historic site once it's gone. And we can never be certain what will be valued in the future. This reality brings to light the importance of locating and saving buildings of historic significance—because once a piece of history is destroyed, it is lost forever.

Next article: "Old Towne" or "Plasticville, USA?"



Lost in Kokomo:
The Bee Hive (Turner Dept. Store), Union Traction Station, The Alhambra Theatre

Sharon Carter Retires - "Stick a turkey in it!"

by Linda Ferries
HCHS Publications Chair

From the annual Christmas lighting ceremony to summer ice cream socials, from American Girl tea parties to basket-weaving classes, from answering countless phone calls to shepherding school-children at Koh-Koh-Mah, for 22 years Sharon Carter was as much a part of the Howard County Historical Society as the grand Seiberling home she jokingly, and lovingly, referred to as "her mansion."



But 22 years was enough, even for someone as dedicated as Sharon. Since last October, she and husband Bill have been thoroughly enjoying retirement.

Sharon's years of service were celebrated on Nov. 3 at the Elliott House, where family and friends filled the rooms for an afternoon of memories and congratulations. HCHS Curator Stew Lauterbach, well-known for his sense of humor and banjo skills, even provided an original song to commemorate his long-time co-worker.

Among the many memories Sharon leaves behind, the most vivid involve her penchant for costumes. Sharon was known as a living Christmas tree during the holiday season, a wild witch at Halloween, a four-leaf-clover for St. Patrick's Day, the Easter Bunny in the spring. A blue wig and glasses came out for important Indianapolis Colts games. And she made sure she wore her special duds on days when she knew her job would take her out of the office; the folks at the bank or the asses-



sor's office would reward her with the smiles she loves to inspire.

Stew remembers one Easter time when the late Komo Tribune writer Tom Carey snuck into the office and made a nest on Sharon's chair with green Easter grass filled with eggs and candy. Stew snapped a photo of Sharon with the creation and labeled the image "Favorite Playboy Bunny" and sent it to her as a joke. When he found it several years later on his work computer, he was briefly worried about inappropriate content. Nope, he was relieved to click on it and see Sharon's smiling face.



Sharon's sense of humor is broad and contagious. On one of Stew's first days on the job many years ago, he recalls seeing someone under Sharon's desk. "I asked her 'Who is that guy in your drawers?' She didn't miss a beat and came back with a quip about it

being some random guy. Turned out it was Bill."

Her daughter Elizabeth McQuiston remembers growing up with her mom at the mansion. She says the annual Christmas at the Seiberling, "when 'her mansion' is even more beautiful," was Sharon's favorite event. Sharon and Bill would make the wassail and Bill would keep the carriage rides on schedule.

Elizabeth says Sharon shared with her children so much of what she learned about Howard County from her years working with the historical society. "That rubbed off on me," Elizabeth said. "If I see and old picture, a map, or something, I'll stop and literally study it so I can continue to learn and appreciate how far we have come as a community."

Sharon was known for being willing to share everything she knew and for her love of helping others. She was honored by the Indiana Office of Tourism Development in 2005 with a Hoosier Hospitality award in recognition of her service as a

...continued from previous page

welcoming representative of our community. The same year, she received the FIRSTS Award (Fantastic Individual Recognized for Superior Tourism Service) from the Kokomo Visitors Bureau. Peggy Hobson, the director of the Visitors Bureau at the time, said that "Sharon is the first person to greet visitors in person or by phone. What a great impression she makes for our community, always giving such a friendly smile that, even on the phone with her, you can tell she's smiling."

In retirement, Sharon will have even more time

to add to the beautiful landscaping around her own historic Old Silk Stocking home just blocks from the Seiberling. She and Bill will have more time to spend with their children and grandchildren: Amy Henderson and husband Darrell and their two daughters, Emily, 17, and Molly, 15, in Kokomo; son Greg Carter and wife Courtney and their son, Benjamin, 1, in Sharpsville; and Elizabeth McQuiston and husband Alex, in Kokomo.

To steal just one of the funny catch phrases from Sharon's years with HCHS: "Stick a turkey in it. It's done." But she's one "turkey" who will be remembered for years to come.

Part One...continued from page 8

(Colclazer in this case) until it could become a viable church and support a permanent preacher.

This reference is significant. The October 1843 date makes this the first primary-source reference to Kokomo by name as an identifiable place, the year before the county is organized. It refutes the notion that the town of Kokomo was named by an individual (David Foster) when the unincorporated county seat was created in August 1844. Furthermore, it may be evidence that the squatter families near Kokomo's Village along the Wildcat were already using the Miami name.

At any rate, the Methodists clearly knew it existed and even assigned a preacher to this potential "preaching point." Said minister was transient and

maybe only on site every three weeks or so. While here, he would need a place to stay. While he was away, the people would need a place to pray, and someone in the minister's absence would have to be a "stabilizing force" necessary to hold it all together. All those requirements were met in a log cabin and trading post about a hundred yards north of the "rapids of Wildcat" that evidently was a central point for this community of squatters and the inhabitants of an Indian village whose head man at one time was known as Kokomo.

The trading post was her husband's business, but the cabin was Elizabeth Foster's home. And it was there that the first group of Methodist worshippers gathered while waiting for the circuit rider to return.

See Part Two beginning on page 10



celebrate in style
Elliott House
weddings - receptions
showers - anniversaries
birthdays - reunions

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Part Two...continued from page 11

the organ's pipes.

Once everything settled, the church again looked to expand. The 1865 brick building was remodeled in 1873, and in the early 1890s an annex, called "the tabernacle," was added to the structure to accommodate the "crowds" that "overflowed the church proper." Ultimately, the brick building was deemed inadequate; it was razed and excavations for a new edifice – the present structure – began Monday, Aug. 19, 1895. Kokomo's notable Armstrong Landon and Hunt Company got the contract work. Designed by architect Robert Young, who drew the plans for more than 100 Kokomo buildings including the YMCA and the Elwood Haynes home, the new modified Romanesque-style brick and stone building originally had two bell towers. Its exterior was noted for "simplicity of outline," with "broad" inviting openings and entrances, in all ways completely "lacking in useless details."

The building's dedication on Sunday, Dec. 6, 1896, also was marked by changing the name from Mulberry Street Methodist to Grace Methodist Episcopal Church.

For a wider historical context, at the start of the new century, Methodists were first among the top five religious denominations in Indiana arranged in the order of their membership numbers, according to 1906 census records. Twenty-five percent of the general population who reported a religious affiliation were Methodists, followed by the Roman Catholic church (18 percent), Disciples or Christian (12 percent), Baptists (nine percent) and Presbyterian

(six percent). This was the case in Kokomo as well; the 1910 city directory lists 26 churches in the city, with about one-quarter being Methodist or United Brethren.

Grace remains a symbol of stability amidst enormous societal and cultural change, its elegant façade and cherished stained glass weathering world wars, a depression and recessions, innovation and achievement, seemingly a permanent fixture on the corner of Washington and Mulberry streets. Changes to the physical property were marked by various building and expansion projects (one bell tower was sacrificed when the education wing was added), and the church successfully recovered from damage sustained during significant fires in 1944 and 1983. Pride in the facility runs deep, and preservation of the 125-year-old Romanesque style structure, which is a designated Local Historic Landmark, is paramount.

Drawing on decades of tradition, members today continue to support outreach and ministry efforts, both locally and worldwide. Missions funding supports activities ranging from the Appalachia region in the United States to India to Japan. Generous donations are always made for disaster relief wherever and whenever the call is made.

Having now existed across three separate centuries, members look to the next generation to carry on the tradition and faith. "It's not the building, but the people inside," church member and historian Ann Winger told the Kokomo Tribune in November 2019. "We've taken care of this building so that it can live on," she said. "We have that history here that needs to be preserved."



A CURATOR'S CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

**OPEN NOW IN THE JAMES LONG GALLERY
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Bel Air Event Center. Everyone did a wonderful job in putting together this annual event.

Next up was KohKohMah. I am very pleased with the number of volunteers and board members who gave their time over the three-day weekend to dress in period costumes and help to cook and serve corn, paint rocks, and dip candles. Although rain was predicted, the weather was perfect except for some gusty winds that caused walnuts to sometimes shower down on pedestrians under the tall trees.

The mansion has meant many things to many people over the years. Indiana University Kokomo and the mansion certainly have shared some history. The Seiberling was the first real home of IUK and this fact did not go unnoticed during IUK's 75th anniversary celebration. In a beautiful September garden party ceremony, Chancellor Susan Sciamé-Giesecke, former chancellors, professors, and students who attended classes at the Seiberling gathered to unveil a plaque in front of the mansion commemorating that history.

Although sounding like something straight off the pages of a Harry Potter book, the Curator's Cabinet of Curiosities was the brainchild of HCHS Curator Stew Lauterbach. Over a several month period, with help from interns and volunteers, the new series of displays of the history of strange things emerged on the first and third floors of the mansion. Actual ties to Howard County exist for the singing mouse, the human skeleton, the iron lung, and much more. These displays have received great reactions from our visitors.

As we entered the last quarter of the year, it was time for the annual meeting. As usual, the meeting included dinner and a short business meeting. The Mary Ellen Harnish Distinguished Service Award was presented to longtime volunteer and Christmas at the Seiberling chair Peggy Hobson. Then Rozzi's Continental Ballroom was transformed into a courtroom for a mock trial before Howard County Superior Court II Judge William Menges to consider charges that, in the case of the "Orneriest Indian," the City of Kokomo was publishing bad history. Gil Porter served as prosecutor; one-time HCHS employee Tom Tolen, who now works in the city development

department, represented the defendant. It was a fun and informing process with the historical society audience acting as the jury. The result? The "jury" found 57 to 11 that the namesake of Kokomo was the victim of bad history and that history did not prove him to be David Foster's "orneriest Indian."

As Halloween approached, it was time for Dark Pages. In its third season, this vignette of short plays performed in different rooms of the mansion has become quite popular. An improvement this year was limiting the size of tour groups, allowing everyone to enter each room and have a better view of the action. The event was sold out with great reviews. Our volunteer actors are energized to continue performing next year, so I hope this truly becomes yet another traditional event at the mansion.

The end of the year also brought with it the retirement announcement of Sharon Carter, our longtime office manager. Her family quietly arranged a fitting tribute at the Elliott House so we could all gather to say our farewells. The good news is that this critical part-time position has been filled by another longtime volunteer, Heather Fouts, who started work January 7.

Coming full circle, November meant the time to close the mansion and start decorating for Christmas at the Seiberling 2019. This year, we had volunteers to decorate each room of the mansion and corporate sponsors for all eight open evenings. The mansion looked wonderful as usual and there was a steady flow of patrons each night.

There's an overview of "the year that was." I want to thank all our volunteers, docents and members of the Board of Trustees. I am very happy for the new additions to our board, including more people in their 30s and 40s willing to serve. They make a valuable contribution mixed with the "more mature" board members, such as me. This fact ensures that Howard County Historical Society will continue to grow and be relevant well into the future. I also want to thank the readers of this article for your membership and support. It is the contributions of your time, talents, and money that make all the difference.

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Save Our Seiberling

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*To collect, preserve, and share the diverse history
of all the peoples of Howard County.*

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