Footprints

A publication of the
Howard County Historical Society

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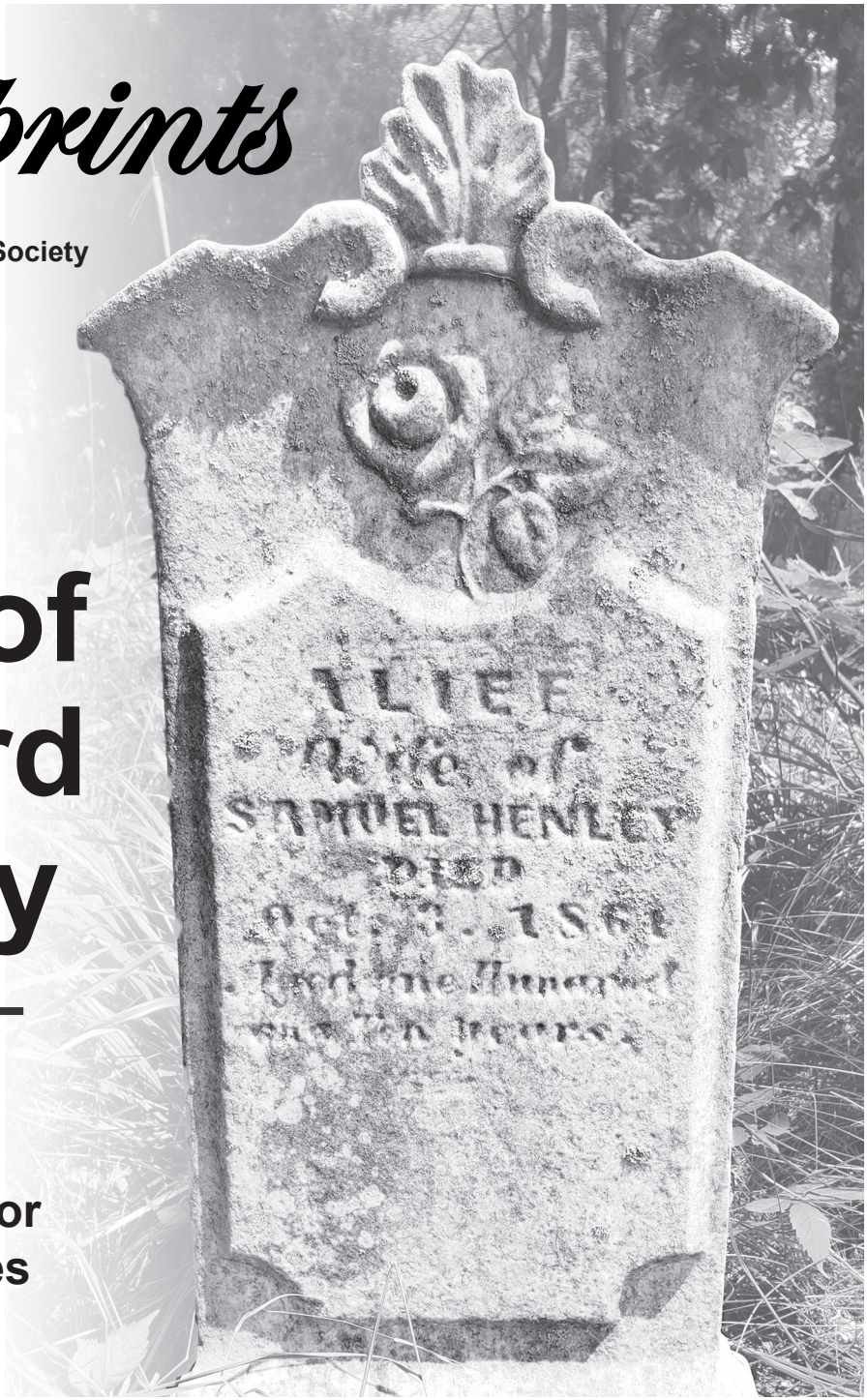
August 2020

The Rose of Howard County



Also inside:
Welcome to new Executive Director Catherine Hughes

From the Director

Survival in the time of COVID

I feel both privileged and challenged to have been hired as executive director this spring. The entire world is reeling from the effects of the coronavirus, including museums. Museum and historical society leaders are searching for the best path forward. Virtual discussions abound across the globe to help organizations navigate many issues, like health & safety protocols. Museums large and small must consider how they can get creative, change and adapt in order to survive without field trips and blockbuster exhibit openings, including this organization. How do we transform how we do business? It may be that some changes can in fact be good ones. Adapting and evolving are necessary for any healthy organization.

My personal challenge is to understand how things have been done in the past at HCHS, in order to know what we should try to keep, and what we can let go. This transitional moment, as a new leader in a pandemic, is an opportunity to imagine anew, examine what we do and who we are, while building on the Historical Society's relevance and value in the community. What has not changed is the need to be a viable, fiscally-sound organization that can raise funds.

Years ago, I developed a 4-point rubric for best practices for programming at the Atlanta History Center and it continues to guide my thinking more broadly. When considering what an historical society does, specifically the HCHS, I am guided by these questions: Does it invite participation? Does it touch visitors' emotions? Is it thought-provoking? Does it show history from multiple perspectives?

These questions are not merely esoteric or rhetorical. They get to the heart of the pursuit of historical knowledge and thinking. Contrasting and comparing our current day with those past, connecting to the achievements or struggles of historic figures, and seeing events from a new vantage point can be thought-provoking and emotional. Answering these questions concretely can help produce better outcomes, programs, events, and exhibits. If the community feels empowered to participate in the work of the HCHS, if they care enough to support what we do and they feel it is important and effective, and represents them, I believe we have a path forward for our survival.

I am excited about this issue of Footprints, my first! Its focus of African-American history is vital, even imperative. Gil Porter's research into African-American pioneers in Howard County has been thrilling to uncover. If I have not met you yet, please reach out and introduce yourself.

Sincerely,
Catherine

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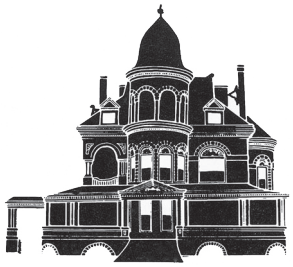


Statement of Community Support

On June 16, 2020, the Board of Trustees for the Howard County Historical Society (HCHS) voted to put forth the following statement.

As a member of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), Howard County Historical Society expresses solidarity with the words and guidance recently issued by this national organization to support our community and provide opportunities to overcome local and national division.

A statement from the American Association for State and Local History (June 2, 2020)

The past few days have provided crushing reminders of how the nation still struggles with violence and racism born in the past and harbored in the present. Even as we experience economic, social, and political upheaval due to a new foe, the COVID-19 virus, and are learning new ways to live and operate our institutions, we have not escaped legacies of inequality and violence. We must confront them, using our knowledge of the past to address the problems of today.

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) acknowledges the emotional and psychological impact that the recent killings and the daily experience of racism have on African Americans and others in our communities. AASLH endorses the words of historian and Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch in expressing "deepest sympathy to the families and communities of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and the far too many preceding them whose needless deaths were brought about by unjustified violence." Like the Secretary, AASLH believes that "History is a guide to a better future and demonstrates that we can become a better society—but only if we collectively demand it from each other and from the institutions responsible for administering justice."

AASLH calls on its members to redouble their efforts to preserve and interpret history that challenges assumptions, that uses evidence to trace continuities and mark changes, and that helps us to understand causation, especially in this core American story of racism and the struggle for justice. History organizations have a duty to address contemporary issues and can offer examples of historical resilience and creativity of people rising to meet challenges in the past. AASLH also calls on all history organizations, from museums to historic sites to historical societies, to embrace their roles as members of their local communities, and offer civic spaces, where people come together for conversations that can help overcome local and national division.

Re-opening is a sign of the times

by Dean J. Despinoy
HCHS Publications Committee Member

A masked Elwood Haynes is the first thing visitors now see as they enter the mansion.

Elwood's likeness is the perfect example of the change COVID-19 has brought to our little corner of history. Although COVID initially closed the mansion, our new executive director, Dr. Catherine Hughes, has worked closely with the entire staff to make sure that the Howard County Historical Society has complied with all State and Center for Disease Control mandates to open.

The primary goal is to keep our guests, volunteers and staff safe while still allowing guests to enjoy the displays as they tour the mansion. Once all the procedures were clarified, the next step was to ensure that our volunteer hosts understood and were comfortable with their modified role. Jill Snyder, who is in charge of volunteers and membership did an excellent job in orienting our volunteer hosts to their new duties. Unfortunately, circumstances no longer allow them to give personal tours of the mansion, so their new responsibilities include making sure our guests totally understand the procedures for self-touring the mansion.

These new procedures include the requirement that all host volunteers and guests wear a face covering. To help facilitate this requirement, masks can be purchased for $1 in the foyer of the mansion. Guests have their temperatures taken upon entering the foyer. As long as the reading is 100 degrees or lower, the person will be allowed access. Tickets can now be purchased online as well as at the door for $10. Guests must comply with social distancing and the maximum number of guests allowed in the mansion at one time is 30. This requires our hosts to keep close track of the people self-touring and restrict access of new ones if necessary. Extra cleaning of commonly touched surfaces also takes place throughout the time the mansion is open.

While a self-guided tour might pale in comparison to one of our host's guided tours, the addition of a virtual guided tour, now live, adds another layer of experience that will interest visitors. Guests with any style smart phone can activate this tour by scanning QR codes displayed in each room.

Utilizing the OnCell platform, staff can change the program to accommodate new displays or updates to historical facts. In addition, Heather Fouts recently completed a virtual Art Tour using QR codes. Both virtual tours are available to everyone as they tour the mansion.

We hope that these new procedures and systems will result in guests returning to the mansion and learning about Seiberling Mansion's rich history, as well as interesting facts and artifacts from Howard County history. Flexibility is going to be key in maximizing opportunity, today and in the near future. We all know that conditions could change quickly and Dr. Hughes and HCHS President Sharon Reed are well poised to ensure our success.

Guests at a July Open House included, from left, local history writer Gil Porter, County Historian Jon Russell, Kokomo Mayor Tyler Moore, Catherine Hughes, HCHS President Sharon Reed, and Debbi Springer, public relations coordinator for the Kokomo Rescue Mission. (Linda Ferries for the Howard County Historical Society)

Catherine Hughes: Eager to learn, eager to share experiences

By Linda Ferries
HCHS Publications Committee

Her resumé is impressive – 20 years of experience in education, interpretation, museum theater, and evaluation; author of a book as well as author and editor of numerous academic and professional publications and book chapters; university instructor and international conference speaker and panelist; international museum consultant; Ph.D.; successful grant-writer, actor and innovator. She's been interviewed for radio, newspapers, and podcasts and honored with scholarships, academic accolades, and awards from national history and museum organizations.

And, as of May 19, 2020, the title "executive director of the Howard County Historical Society" follows designations she has fulfilled at the Museum of Science in Boston, The Science Museum in London, the Atlanta History Center, and, most recently, the Conner Prairie history museum here in Indiana.

How Catherine Hughes came to this latest position in her impressive career is interesting; the why includes recognition of the value she sees in HCHS's organization and its mission.

When executive director, and long-time board member, Dave Broman announced his intention to retire in January, the search committee formed by the HCHS Board of Trustees threw a net far and wide, sharing the opening locally and through state and national museum and history organizations. A number of impressive applicants came forward; Catherine Hughes quickly rose to the top.

Sharon Reed, president of the HCHS Board of Trustees and a member of the search committee, expressed the enthusiasm shared when Catherine accepted the position.

"We are very pleased to welcome Dr. Hughes to Howard County and to our historical society," Sharon said. "She brings a depth of experience and a great network of resources built through her diverse assignments throughout the United States and beyond.

"Dr. Hughes' commitment in working to

enrich the museum experience for all audiences will be a great asset to our organization," Sharon continued. "We look forward to new ideas and new approaches to build on the society's growth in professionalism and quality over the last 30 years."

For Catherine, the job is an opportunity to learn as well as share her experiences with a new organization.

"I'm on a huge learning curve in terms of serving in this broadly focused position," she said. "I've served in many different positions in my career, and worked with all areas of a museum, but an executive director has to be a 'jack of all trades.' I'm excited about the new challenges here."

Why HCHS? "The values expressed in the HCHS mission statement and long-range plan really appealed to me, especially the society's commitment to reaching out to all parts of the community and broadly sharing its history."

She is spending her first few months getting to know the staff and volunteers. "I want to soak up everything and really understand what's happening now, what's happened in the past, and what we might do in the future," she said. "Of course, COVID-19 is providing the most challenging time in my career and we are busy finding new ways to reach the community and raise the money needed to keep the organization going. I am not daunted. I just wish I had more answers. We are part of the museum world that is being challenged to survive." (See Dr. Hughes' column for more on this.)

Why HCHS?

An important answer to the question of why she accepted the position was found as she researched the organization.

"The values expressed in the HCHS mission statement and long-range plan really appealed to me," Catherine said, "especially the society's commitment to reaching out to all parts of the community and broadly sharing its history." An example of this was in the research published in Footprints during the Howard County's 175th anniversary year delving into the experiences and influence of the Miami peoples who lived here before the founding of the county. Hughes also noted the renewed commitment to share the history of Howard County's African-American community.

Catherine is a native New Englander, born in Boston, who moved with her family to Rockville, Maryland, outside Washington, D.C., and then Lancaster, Ohio, where she attended high school. In the years following her graduation from Emerson College, she lived in the Boston area and began her career in museums at the Museum of Science. "There I was involved with science education, and one of the things we did with theatre was to show that science was more than white men in lab coats," she said. "Women are scientists; people of color are scientists. We were trying to change the face of science and open it up to everyone."

She moved back to Ohio with her toddler daughter to pursue a Ph.D. in Education at the Ohio State University. Their next big move was to Atlanta, Georgia, where Catherine says her education into African-American history began.

At the Atlanta History Center, Catherine

led the Meet the Past project, credited with transforming interpretation methods and programming to diversify audiences and increase attendance. Creating immersive, participatory experiences using theatrical techniques, she oversaw development of the school program Fight for Your Rights that was recognized with the 2012 American Association for State & Local History Leadership in History Award of Merit. She also produced a ground-breaking public program titled Four Days of Fury: Atlanta 1906 by the playwright Addae Moon. This performance piece explored a race riot that happened in 1906 Atlanta, an event that had been "successfully wiped from the city's memory."

"It didn't matter if you were a native Atlantan, Black or White, you generally hadn't heard of it," Dr. Hughes said. The story of the riot, in which White mobs killed dozens of Black residents, was uncovered through the persistence of a few historians. The play explored the causes of the riot and its aftermath.

"Audience members moved through eight scenes staged throughout a 6,000-square-foot exhibit space in the History Center, taking on roles, often across race ," she said. "This was followed by a half-hour facilitated discussion on race and the experience of the play. It was an exciting and gratifying project because people were really motivated to talk."

Catherine carried that experience into her work at Conner Prairie as director of interpretation. She led research and programming related to the Roberts Settlement in Hamilton County, one of Indiana's early Black pioneer communities. She created Conner Prairie's Giving Voice: African-American Presence in Indiana's History," a partnership with Asante Children's Theatre, which was recognized with the 2019 American Association for State & Local History's Leadership in History Award."

As part of the presentation of the play More Light: Douglass Returns by Celeste Williams, Catherine initiated Conner Prairie's participation in One Million Abolitionists, a program of the Frederick Douglass Family Initiative. She invited founder Kenneth B. Morris Jr., a great-great-great grandson of the famous abolitionist, to speak at Conner Prairie in 2018 and see the play about his ancestor. From this event, Morris was invited to be the 2019 keynote speaker in Kokomo for "Doing the Dream," an annual project of Ivy Tech Community College honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"I am inspired by museums as places for ah-ha moments, when suddenly someone comes to an idea for the first time, or from a new vantage point."

Judy Brown, a former HCHS board president who served as chair of the executive director search committee, said she was most impressed by Dr. Hughes' understanding of audiences and her commitment to engaging the community through museum programming and activities.

Catherine describes her philosophy this way: "I am inspired by museums as places for ah-ha moments, when suddenly someone comes to an idea for the first time, or from a new vantage point. It is this moment of recognition, or curiosity or disturbance, that is so exciting for any of us in museums. My work has allowed me to witness such moments, and to appreciate their significance. They reveal the potential we all have for change and growth."

A Comfortable Place in a Time of Discomfort

Image Courtesy Greater Kokomo Visitors Bureau

By Jonathan Russell
Howard County Historian

*"Old places speak to that need for belonging in a way that little else can because they give us the chance to feel a connection to the broad community of human experience, a community that exists across time." Thompson M. Mayes**

We all want to feel connected. It is a simple human truth. While the field of Historic Preservation has always understood the power of place, it has not always considered the impact of its work on all groups of people.

In fact, in this era of activism, "Historic Preservation" may not be the first idea that comes to mind. In another sense, however, it has been one of the longest-running and most successful activist movements: fighting to preserve against forces of progress, which have not necessarily been progressive. It began in 1850, with the restoration of Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh, New York.

Since those early days, thousands of structures and lands have been preserved by people willing to advocate on their behalf. With time, we have come to ask ourselves about who these activists were,

*Thompson M. Mayes: "WHY OLD PLACES MATTER, How Historic Places Affect Our Identity and Well-Being", Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2018.

and for whom they were preserving these structures and lands. While the choices they made have shaped and defined a wide swath of Americans, it has also obscured and concealed others.

It may be that preservationists, with their concern for old places, have not illustrated a desire to recognize the people who used them and will use them.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation made an attempt to combat this tendency with a white paper in 2017 entitled: Preservation for People: A Vision for the Future. In it, the Trust put forth three propositions that it believes will "ground its work in human needs and aspirations" and help the historic preservation movement become "a prevalent, powerful and practical force to sustain, improve and enrich people's lives:"

Preservation must shift from a "one-size-fits-all" approach, to a more nuanced understanding of how to work collaboratively with all members of the community ...

"History is our collective memory, a source of wisdom and strength we can draw on when we need it. And, we need it now more than ever, precisely because the challenges we face are so complicated and intractable," said Stephanie Meeks, the president of the National Trust. "We can't possibly navigate these challenges wisely without some sense of perspective, and some help from the past. With so many forces dividing us, preservation is one of the few things that brings us together – as a nation, as communities and as people."*

People are the key to any movement's success, and a broader coalition of people across race, ethnicity, class and generations is particularly needed to fulfil goals. These groups have asked for a voice in what is preserved and to what purpose.

All people enjoy visiting places that are both interesting and comfortable, where they feel welcome and safe. They want to feel as though they are "at home." To maximize the experience, preservation efforts should appeal to a variety of peoples' sense of purpose and community. People must matter as much as places for the movement to succeed and have the financial support it needs to continue.

As important as it is to save historic places, it is equally important to preserve the content of the community. One of the drawbacks of the preservation movement has been the "gentrification" of neighborhoods. Gentrification could be considered beneficial, and it is to those with the means to obtain properties and restore them. But it also has negative effects that drive out those of lesser means who have called the communities home, often for several generations.

Focus on the People

A key factor in an inclusive program of historic preservation is to not only focus on the preservation of places, but also consider what the impact will be on those that live in, and continue to live in, the communities. Preservation must shift from a "one-size-fits-all" approach, to a more nuanced understanding of how to work collaboratively with all members of the community to determine what needs "protection," and what needs to be "saved" for the benefit of the whole. An apt local example is the rehabilitation of the Douglass School in Kokomo, saving a building at the heart of the city's African American community.

* National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2017

In the National Trust for Historic Preservation report, "Preservation for People," mentioned earlier in this article, these three concepts emerged:

- A people-centered preservation movement hears, understands, and honors the full diversity of the ever-evolving American story.
- A people-centered preservation movement creates and nurtures more equitable, healthy, resilient, vibrant, and sustainable communities.
- A people-centered preservation movement collaborates with new and existing partners to address fundamental social issues and make the world better.

The goal of this concept is to make historic preservation more democratic, inclusive, and equitable. The key to the success of this movement is to create a more inclusive profession. Historically, the profession has been seen as an elitist practice. While this is beginning to fade, there are still significant barriers to entry.

It is critical that we prove to all groups of people that the preservation movement is relevant to their lives, and that they can feel connected to our mission.

Re-Thinking Preservation

In an effort to re-evaluate the ideals of historic preservation, the National Trust has developed a program called "Re -Urbanism." Fundamentally, this is the idea that building reuse encourages economic growth and stimulates vibrant communities. It was determined that mixed use neighborhoods are more sustainable than those with a single building stock.

Creating equity in community development and planning derives from a broader conversation about preservation planning in urban areas. Community engagement is a key part of Re-Urbanism. There is a developing understanding that preservationists need to shift from authority-based models to ones that work in cooperation with those that are most impacted by their efforts.

For the preservationist to be effective, we must understand that the efforts we make to save old buildings must take into consideration a complex array of other social needs ...

For the preservationist to be effective, we must understand that the efforts we make to save old buildings must take into consideration a complex array of other social needs, including affordable housing, economic and social equity, economic development, the environment, etc. When we insist on having an uncompromising approach, particularly if the building isn't of a singularly historic value, we cast all historic preservation to be out of touch with reason and need. That issue alone undermines the broader work to save our places and alienates those that could share a common cause with the movement.

So where do we go from here? As those of us who care about the built environment and the people in it, we must resolve to have a multi-disciplinary dialogue about the future of older buildings that span racial, cultural or generational divides. It must extend to those in finance, affordable housing, community development and sustainability as well as the traditional preservationists. Let's consider opportunities, confront the difficult misconceptions, and embrace the creative new tools for preservation.

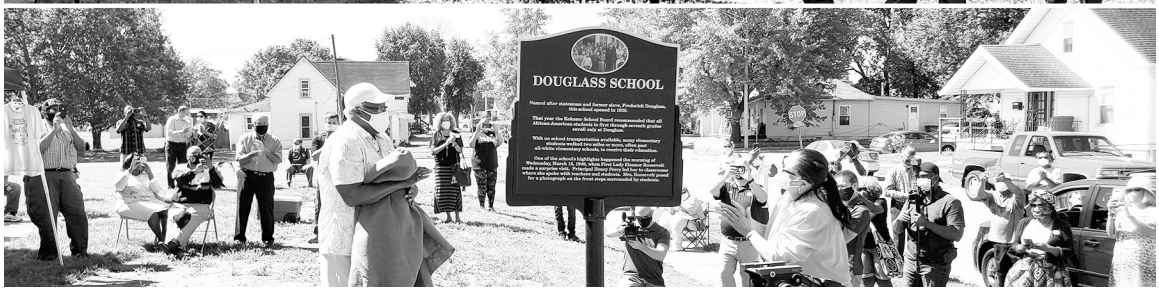
The future of historic preservation depends on it.

A Special Day for Douglass School

On a spectacular summer Saturday, residents gathered Aug. 8 for the unveiling of a historic marker commemorating the 100th anniversary of the opening of Douglass School in Kokomo. The ceremony included a proclamation from Kokomo Mayor Tyler Moore, and inspirational words from event organizer Pastor William Smith. A balloon release, right, honored the ancestors, and the oldest living Douglass student – 93-year-old Ralph Greer – was recognized (middle photo).

Photos by Gil Porter for the Howard County Historical Society

School Survey: Visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/DouglassSchool to share your ideas about future uses for Douglass School. The link is also available on the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library website.



President's Perspective

From the desk of Sharon A. Reed

Having arrived in Indiana 47 years ago through Grissom Air Force Base, I marvel how time has passed so quickly.

I was not a native of Kokomo, but it was instilled in me early by my father to be a part of the community where you live. He was a retired World War II Navy frogman and someone who served our community in Mansfield, Ohio, with 69,000 hours recorded at the local VFW. As an elder in our community, he collected family history in scrapbooks that he proudly showed anyone willing to listen. He planted the seed of my interest in community history.

My passion is for the broadest history of Howard County to be documented and shared within the archives and collection of Howard County Historical Society. Our mission statement was revised to be more inclusive and goals were developed to support the change.

Shortly after I arrived, I became involved in Howard County with Wayman A.M.E. Church. My community involvement also included the NAACP, A. Phillip Randolph, Community Women's Guild, Carver Center's Booster Club, Kokomo Art Association, Howard Community Mental Health, and Boy Scouts of America Explorer program.

In 1982, I was sponsored by Delco Electronics to attend Leadership Kokomo during the second class of the newly formed organization. This spawned more community involvement for me, leading up to my present assignment as president of the Howard County Historical Society.

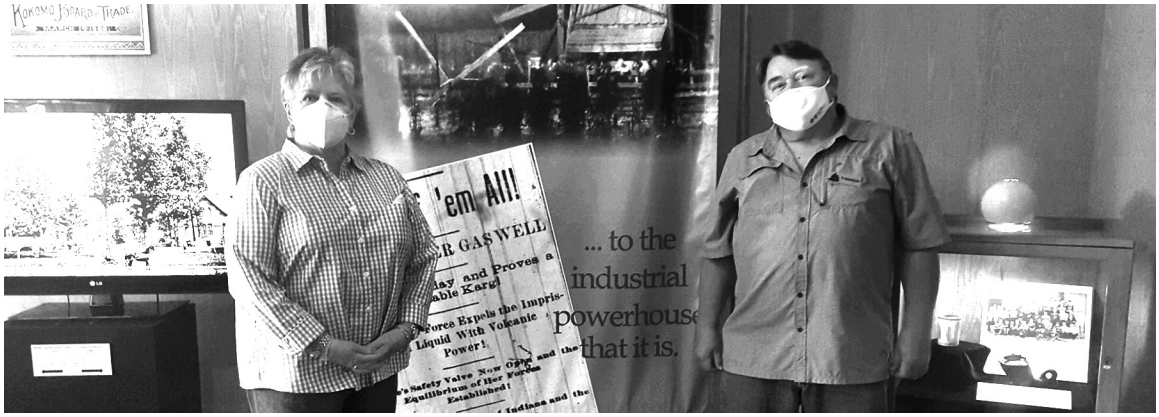
My passion is for the broadest history of Howard County to be documented and shared within the archives and collection of Howard County Historical Society. Our mission statement was revised to be more inclusive and goals were developed to support the change. Today it reads "The mission of the Howard County Historical Society is to collect, preserve and share the diverse history of all the peoples of Howard County."

This March the historical society highlighted the history of African-American women through a re-visit of the Kokomo "Black Women in the Midwest" project honoring several women who participated in this project in 1985.

In his historic research and writing, especially in this issue, I can see Gil Porter's desire to tell the story of Howard County's history from all of the peoples.

I am humbly proud to be in this position in this moment, to realize and shine a light on the beginnings of the African-American community here, where I call home. In one respect, it feels like a reward for investing in this community and in another respect, it is my "reasonable service," from the book of Romans, chapter 12, verse 1: It is our "reasonable service" to present our bodies as "living sacrifices" to the Lord, submitting fully to His will for us, for He deserves no less from us.

Visit with Volunteers



Courtesy Howard County Historical Society

Kathy Pfettscher and Rex Feltenberger at the museum.

By Jill Snyder
Membership and Volunteer Coordinator

Tours Thursdays at the Howard County Museum are hosted by volunteers **Rex Feltenberger** and **Kathy Pfettscher**.

While Kathy is a 20-year veteran at the Historical Society, Rex is a comparative newcomer with just over a year. But they both agree the job gives them great satisfaction and a sense of Kokomo pride.

Rex loves the history of the area and the diversity of people who choose to visit the historical home.They are interested to talk with people and learn what brought them here and find out their interests.

Kathy greets visitors at the door and her first questions are always: “Where are you from?” and “How did you hear about the Seiberling mansion?”

Reopening the mansion has brought changes in welcoming guests. Masks and temperature readings are required

On his first day back, Rex felt a little unsure if visitors would be able to hear him with his mask on, but everything went well and no one has complained about complying with COVID-19 rules.

In an effort to keep social distance, hosts now orient visitors, but no longer accompany them through the house.

Kathy greets visitors at the door and her first questions are always: “Where are you from?” and “How did you hear about the Seiberling mansion?”

Rex and Kathy have both volunteered for other events at the Historical Society beyond hosting. The staff and the general public appreciate the efforts made by all the volunteers, acting as great representatives of Howard County.

They are the HCHS’s essential workers!

The Rose of Howard County

By Gil Porter
HCHS Publications Committee Member

Fall foliage was just past peak in Piedmont North Carolina by early November. Warm days would be the rule for a few more weeks, albeit with increasingly crisp cool morning air.

In Randolph County in the heart of the Piedmont region, government business was conducted at a small wood structure built in 1793 in Asheboro, the county seat. It was the third courthouse to serve Randolph residents since the county had been formed from part of its neighbor to the north, Guilford County, in 1779. The earliest settlers in the area were English Quakers. As one source puts it, the influence of the Society of Friends was great in Randolph County.

On the first Monday in November 1801, a landowner named Edward Fentriss entered the small courthouse at Main and Salisbury streets with a petition of manumission in hand. Edward was actually representing his brother George, who didn't live in Randolph. We haven't yet found George's location, but we do know he owned two human beings. Their freedom from enslavement was the subject of the petition. Edward himself owned four enslaved people, as well as 50 acres "near Carriway waters" (present-day Caraway Lake), according to his 1798 land grant. Anti-slavery sentiment was strong there, however. When the Manumission Society of North Carolina was formed in 1816, three of the society's four branches were in Guilford County, and the fourth was in Randolph – at Caraway.

The two enslaved people in question – a woman originally from Virginia, and her child – may or may not have been with Edward Fentriss that day at the Randolph County courthouse in Asheboro. Irrespective of their presence, with the petition duly filed and recorded at the "worshipfull County Court of Randolph," Aliff Henley and her child Case were free from the shackles of slavery.

Mrs. Henley's story from that day on as a newly free person of color was destined to reach well beyond its Upper South origins in the southeastern United States. Indeed, the blessing of her life now touches hearts and minds here as the newest chapter in a local history story at a place far removed from where her life began.

That is because on another November morning 43 years and 500 miles from bondage, Mrs. Henley was first in line at a land office in Delphi, Indiana, where she paid $280 cash money "in full" for 80 acres in Monroe (later Ervin) Township. She was issued certificate number 1416, a point-of-sale designation in the Canal Lands sales register that helps us date when land was actually purchased, and not when the patent for property was issued, which came later. Thus, on Nov. 11, 1844, with someone helping her enter her name in the Miami Reserve tract book for Canal Lands, Mrs. Aliff Henley, a woman from North Carolina who endured slavery and could not read or write, became the first known African American to buy land in Howard County, Indiana.

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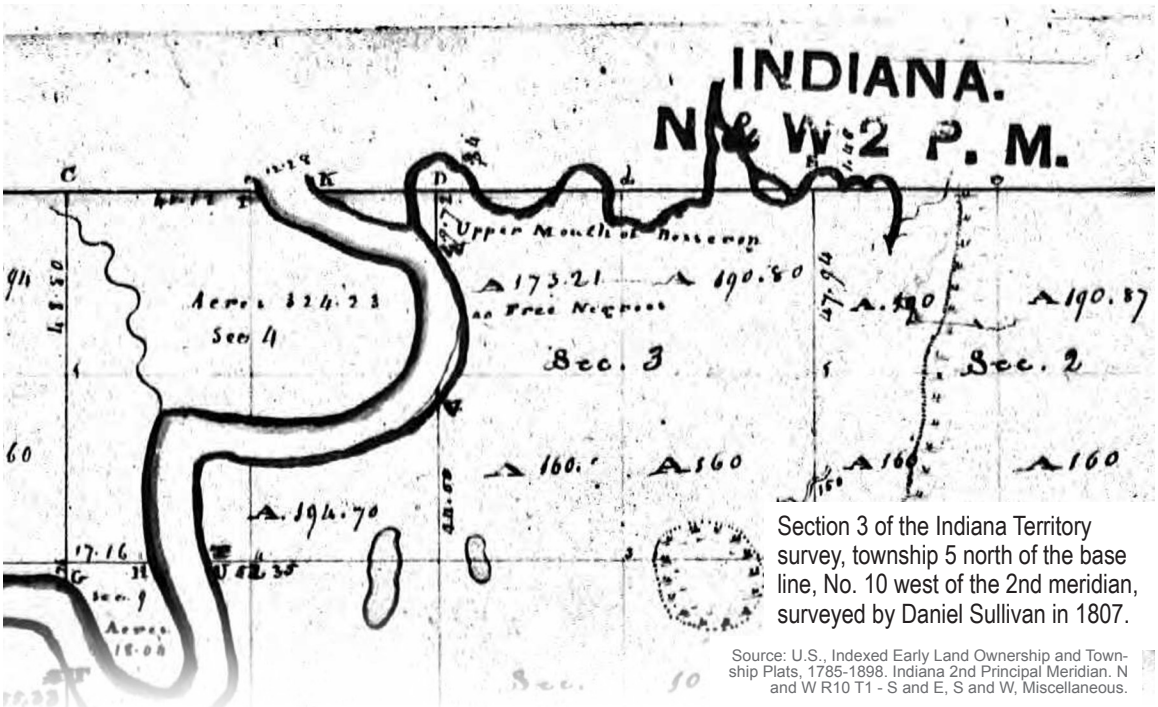

Section 3 of the Indiana Territory survey, township 5 north of the base line, No. 10 west of the 2nd meridian, surveyed by Daniel Sullivan in 1807.

Source: U.S., Indexed Early Land Ownership and Township Plats, 1785-1898. Indiana 2nd Principal Meridian. N and W R10 T1 - S and E, S and W, Miscellaneous.

From its earliest days as part of the Northwest Territory, the eventual state of Indiana had records of Black pioneers buying land. Surveyor Daniel Sullivan noted a settlement of "Free Negroes" in the Wabash River valley on his 1807 Indiana Territory plat. Scholarship on the subject of migration describes three groups of Black immigrants feeding into the territory since at least the 1700s: longtime free people, manumitted slaves, and fugitive slaves.

Many came from North Carolina, which in the early 19th century had more free Blacks than any of the Southern slaveholding states. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 forbade slavery and offered equal voting rights for men only. "The Northwest (territory) was the largest piece of land set aside as free from slavery in the New World," said Anna-Lisa Cox, whose 2018 book "The Bone and Sinew of the Land: America's Forgotten Black Pioneers & The Struggle for Equality" offers new insights into free Black migration into the region.

Building on a study of Black migration published by Stephen Vincent in his 1999 book "Southern Seed, Northern Soil: African-American Farm Communities in the Midwest, 1765-1900," in her book Cox identifies more than 300 settlements (92 in Indiana). Their remarkable research reveals a whole new story about African-American lives in the Northwest Territory, especially in the years between 1830 and 1850. Further reporting shows that by 1860 nearly one-eighth of the nation's free Black population had come here.

Mrs. Henley and her growing family would eventually join this journey west. U.S. federal census schedules for 1830 show her still in Randolph County, North Carolina. But it was the peak migration time and by mid-decade Mrs. Henley had reached Indiana. Her daughter Lucinda married David Rush, another North Caro-

lina native, on June 29, 1837, in Ripley Township, Rush County.

Their path into central Indiana fits the known migration pattern. The National Road runs right along the northern boundary of Rush County, and Carthage village in Ripley Township was a Quaker settlement with a large community of African Americans nearby. Ninety-one Blacks are enumerated in the 1830 census there and by 1835 another source shows 400 Black residents have arrived. Fourteen Black settlements are identified in Ripley Township per the 1830 census. Among them was Beech Settlement, prominent enough that the formal founding ceremony for the African Methodist Episcopal Church's Indiana Conference was held there.

Statewide, these Black settlements helped forge a sense of community for newly arrived African Americans, and over time led to autonomous institutions (some still exist) like churches, schools, fraternal associations, and other familial networks.

Land purchases provided cultural cohesion for the communities. Vincent, in "Southern Seed, Northern Soil," notes the Black migration from the east was of free men and women often of mixed ancestry (including Native Americans). They chose areas with inexpensive land, usually close to other free Blacks, Quakers or friendly people. Land ownership allowed "power and control," as Vincent puts it, and depending on the geography could create a "buffer zone" between Black farmers and hostile neighbors.

Furthermore, owning land was vital in an effort to establish and maintain a delicate balance of equality among cultures at the time. Plus, it also provided Black men with the right to vote.

Whereas the original Northwest Territory's charter had mandated that ideal, statehood for Indiana unfortunately eventually resulted in a coarsening course correction. The 1851 revised state constitution severely limited the status of resident Blacks, and closed the door completely to anyone of color seeking to come here. Proposals for Black exclusion and voluntary colonization to Africa were incorporated as Article XIII, and voted on and ratified separately in August 1851. Voters in four counties cast ballots against the proposals, including Randolph County, which incidentally had been formed by immigrants from its North Carolina namesake. (These egregious exclusion efforts were gradually repealed and repudiated by 1881.)

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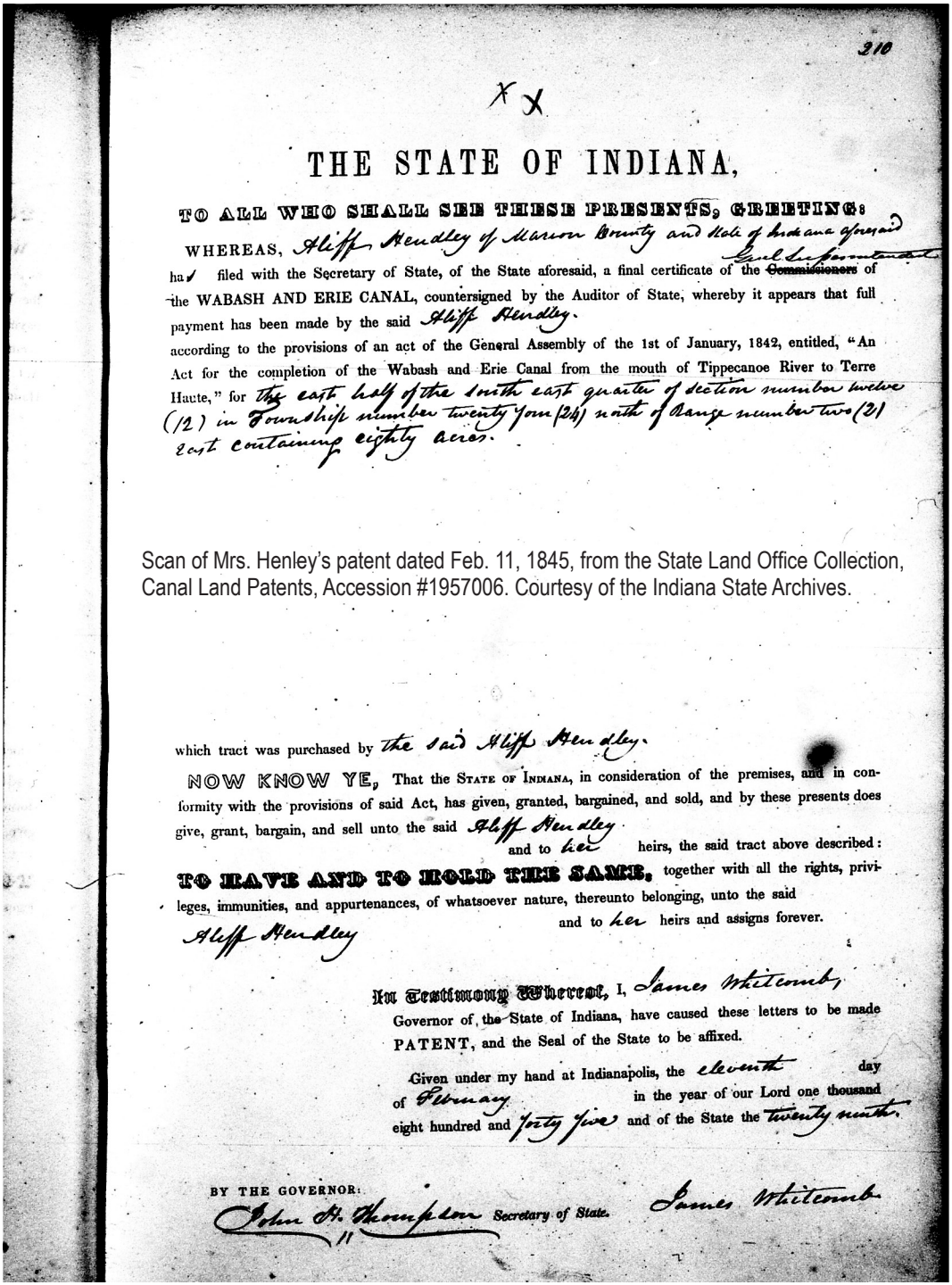
Indeed, rural isolation was no barrier to racism. A history of the Roberts Settlement in Hamilton County relates that a Black resident in the area was kidnapped in 1841 and sold into slavery. Famed abolitionist Frederick Douglass was attacked by an angry mob after a speaking engagement at Pendleton, Indiana, in 1843. And, of course, the national debate over slavery at the time raised tensions, roiled resentments and later led to war.

Through it all, Indiana's numerous rural Black settlements struggled, survived, and even prospered. Many individuals and families chose the more urban landscape of Indianapolis. Almost 200 Blacks are counted on the 1840 census schedules for



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X X

THE STATE OF INDIANA,

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

WHEREAS, Aliff Hendley of Marion County and State of Indiana aforesaid has filed with the Secretary of State, of the State aforesaid, a final certificate of the ~~Commissioners~~ Canal Superintendent of the WABASH AND ERIE CANAL, countersigned by the Auditor of State, whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said Aliff Hendley. according to the provisions of an act of the General Assembly of the 1st of January, 1842, entitled, "An Act for the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal from the mouth of Tippecanoe River to Terre Haute," for the east half of the south east quarter of section number twelve (12) in Township number twenty four (24) north of Range number two (2) east containing eighty acres.

Scan of Mrs. Henley's patent dated Feb. 11, 1845, from the State Land Office Collection, Canal Land Patents, Accession #1957006. Courtesy of the Indiana State Archives.

which tract was purchased by the said Aliff Hendley.

NOW KNOW YE, That the STATE OF INDIANA, in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the provisions of said Act, has given, granted, bargained, and sold, and by these presents does give, grant, bargain, and sell unto the said Aliff Hendley and to her heirs, the said tract above described:

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD THE SAME, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances, of whatsoever nature, thereunto belonging, unto the said Aliff Hendley and to her heirs and assigns forever.

In Testimony Whereof, I, James Whitcomb, Governor of the State of Indiana, have caused these letters to be made PATENT, and the Seal of the State to be affixed.

Given under my hand at Indianapolis, the eleventh day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty five and of the State the twenty ninth.

BY THE GOVERNOR:

John S. Thompson Secretary of State. James Whitcomb

Indianapolis and the adjacent, mostly rural Center Township.

Mrs. Henley and her son-in-law and families left Rush County heading in that direction, because the 1840 census has them living in Wayne Township on Indy's west side. Their destination apparently was the Bridgepoint Black settlement, later known as Sunnyside or West Parkview. Two other Black men who eventually will make a home in Howard County are listed in Wayne Township at the time: John Hardiman from Virginia and North Carolina's Lewis Clark, whose name on the line below Mrs. Henley's in the census records implies they were neighbors.

Indiana just at that moment was about to become geographically complete as the Miami Indians were relinquishing the remainder of their collective lands north of Indianapolis in the Big Miami Reserve. The residue of the reserve was slated to become the state's last-named county and squatters were making claims and improvements on its valuable and fertile farmland.

Part of the reserve had already been surveyed, and in the fall of 1842 the state began auctioning acres at Canal Land sales offices in Peru, Indiana, and later at Delphi. Statewide newspapers published details about the available land tracts, but since none of the four Wayne Township migrants could read or write, they must have learned about the sale by word of mouth. They had access to convenient travel – the Michigan Road was close by, which would take them almost directly to their destination. They were pioneers in the true spirit of the word, among those seeking a new life and land of their own. So sometime in 1843 or early '44, they decided to move once again, gathered their belongings, and headed north to the Miami reserve.

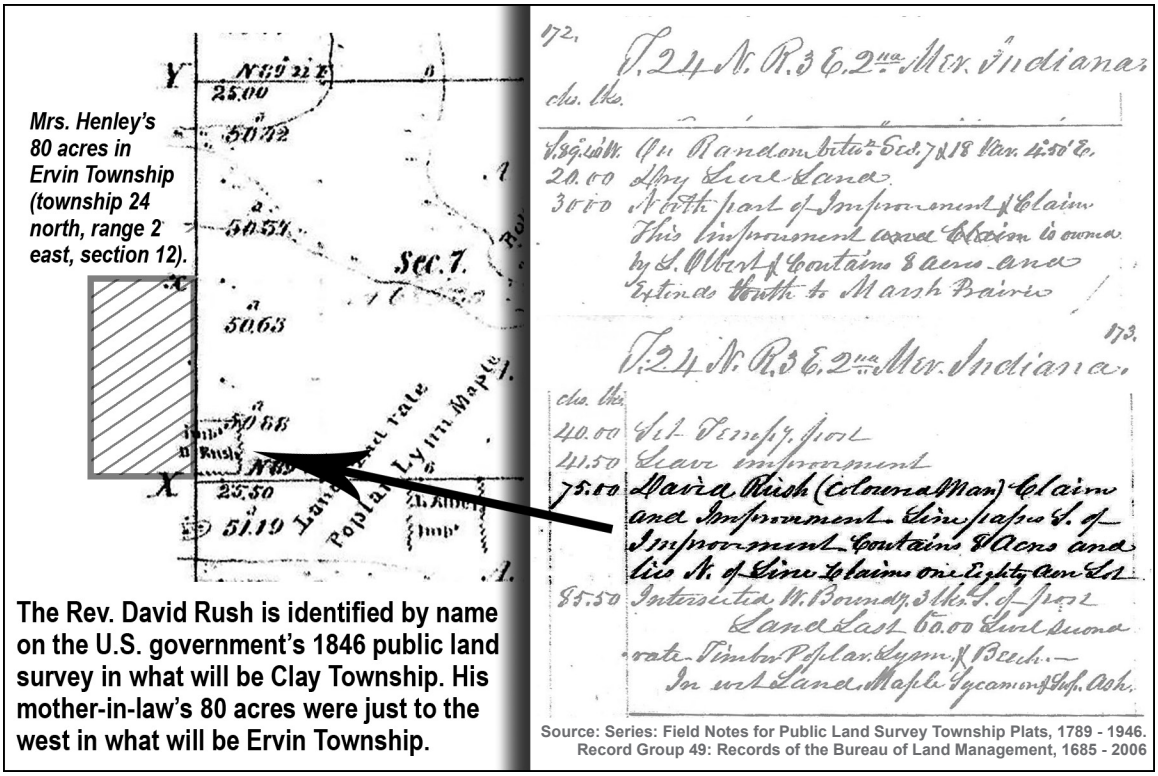
Richardville County was created in January 1844 (it was renamed Howard in 1846). The western third – including Honey Creek, Monroe, and Ervin townships – had been part of the Seven Mile Strip, land ceded by the Miami to help subsidize the Wabash & Erie Canal. This land was sold by the state of Indiana from 1842-47. Tracts in the remaining two-thirds of Howard County were sold by the U.S. government from 1847-1860.

Census counting of county citizens didn't start federally until 1850, but the *state* census published in 1845 lists "444" white males over the age of 21 in Richardville County in its first year. African Americans were not yet enumerated, but research reveals at least four individuals with spouses or other family were here that year or shortly thereafter – Mrs. Henley, David Rush, John Hardiman, and Lewis Clark. At least two (and probably all four) likely came up the Michigan Road from Marion County.

Evidence suggests three African American settlements developed in the west side of the county. By 1844 the Friends church had at least three meetings here, one in the east and two in the southwest and northwest portions, respectively. Recent research relating to a settlement near New London in Monroe Township will be explored in a future Footprints article.

The other two settlements were in northwestern Howard County, a location possibly chosen due to a Poplar Grove Friends meeting in the area. The Bassett and Rush settlements lasted approximately 75 years, from 1845 to around 1920. The former, centrally located in Ervin Township, is better known, thoroughly documented, and will also be the subject of another article.

About four miles to the east of Bassett was the Rush settlement, right on the boundary line (600 County Road West)



The Rev. David Rush is identified by name on the U.S. government's 1846 public land survey in what will be Clay Township. His mother-in-law's 80 acres were just to the west in what will be Ervin Township.

Source: Series: Field Notes for Public Land Survey Township Plats, 1789 - 1946. Record Group 49: Records of the Bureau of Land Management, 1685 - 2006

Gil Porter. Kokomo Early History Learning Center

between Ervin and Clay townships. Kokomo, the county seat, lay another six miles to the southeast. A brief published history says the settlement was named for the Rev. Rush, who founded the church there. He was a "devout and spiritual man, well-versed in the Bible, though entirely unable to read or write." He was married to Mrs. Henley's daughter.

Archival accounts say each settlement had a school and they shared a Baptist church. Rush also served over the Methodist church and a cemetery. A frame building serving as school and church survived until at least the middle of the 20th century, long after the settlement evaporated and church members migrated to Kokomotown. Researchers with a Logansport historical society reported the building's existence as late as 1947.

The Logansport researchers left a detailed record of tombstone and marker data at the cemetery. Impressive work by an Indiana University Kokomo student in 1995 added valuable new details to that preservation record. (Both manuscripts are on file at the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library.)

These are the names on the stones. John Hardiman. William Hardiman. Jane A. Hardiman. Gordon Gammons. Mary Alice Harvey. Abel Anderson. John T. Hardimon. Charity A. Hardimon. Gorden Gammon. And Alief Henley, whose striking gravestone contains the following inscription: Wife of Samuel Henley. Died October 3, 1861. Aged One Hundred and Ten years.

Mysteries remain in Mrs. Henley's story, chief among them an apparent marriage to Samuel, who is undocumented beyond

her tombstone. Also, Alief spelled with an “e” has confused researchers for at least 150 years. Archivists attempting to sync the name with other records apparently couldn’t decide if it was a man or a woman. Its earliest appearance outside of government documents is the 1877 Kingman Bros. Combination Atlas of Howard County. The name Alif Henly appears twice, though amazingly *not* with the descriptions of “Colored” people, churches or schools. First reference is among a list of early settlers, all white men, and Alif Henly. A subsequent reference repeats the tombstone age (110) but uses a male pronoun and an inaccurate age for “a son” still living.

County history combination atlases of the day were popular (still are) commercial products that relied on both official transcripts and unverifiable testimonies from aged residents. It’s remarkable that the name was remembered and recorded (with the white guys, no less!), even if details of the actual person were cloudy. That someone at least remembered her, suggests she was notable in meaningful ways. Indeed, the records we’ve uncovered and the story we share offer a legacy beyond a mere county history atlas.

Like other Indiana pioneers, they came to buy land and help build a community. Through archive documents we can positively state that the start of the Rush settlement is at least 1845. We know he’s here farming soon after, because Rev. Rush is mentioned by name in the U.S. government’s 1846 public land survey, with a claim and improvement on some 50 acres in what will be Clay Township. As the small settlement grew, he is one of three named individuals on an 1851 deed entrusted to ensure three-quarters of an acre of land in Ervin Township will be used to “Erect or cause to be Built thereon a house or place of Worship,” which will be the first African Methodist Episcopal Church. The grantor of land was his mother-in-law, making the start of the AME church part of her legacy to Howard County.

Mrs. Henley died 10 years on. Her 1861 will provided the “farm on which I now live” for her son Case and daughter, Lucy Rush (Rev. Rush’s wife). The farm and the rest of the 80 acres was eventually sold. The frame building where families worshipped and schoolchildren studied is long gone. Only the headstones in the graveyard remain, with stories long waiting to be told such as this.

She was a woman unfettered from slavery in North Carolina, who couldn’t read or write, who bought and paid for 80 acres of land with cash money, in full, on Nov. 11, 1844 – the earliest date we’ve found of an African American in Howard County, Indiana. But how old was she then? Notwithstanding her tombstone inscription, a more plausible interpretation of census schedules presumes her birth to be around 1765, so she would have been nearly 80 when she bought that land, which is remarkable to think. She was born before a revolution and died the year the Civil War started. Her life is a tribute to the enduring human spirit and perseverance spanning an epoch of American history.

Mrs. Aliff Henley deserves to be remembered as a matriarch of our community. What better symbol to her memory than the decoration on her tombstone – a rose in full bloom.

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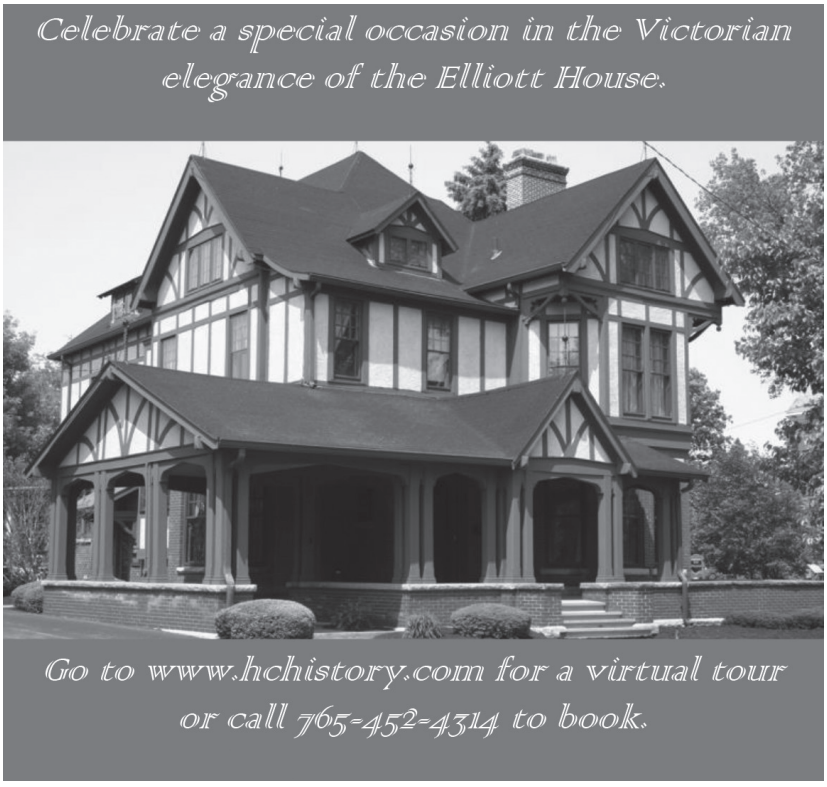
- **Annual Meeting**
  Oct. 22, live & virtual
- **Dark Pages**
  Oct. 23, 24 (rain date Oct. 30), live
- **Christmas at the Seiberling**
  Nov. 28, Dec. 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, and 19, live & virtual
- **Hall of Legends**
  March 18, 2021, live & virtual

All events will be altered due to COVID-19; check website and social media for details.



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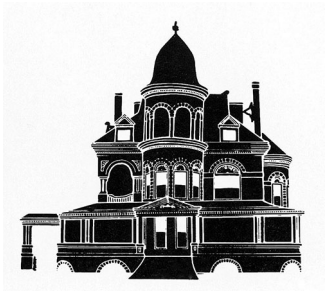

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