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Nolume 10, Issue 2
May 2021

A publication of the Howard County Historical Society



OF PANDEMIC

Voices of Pandemic and Protest poised to gather community's stories

by Linda Ferries

"History never looks like history when you are living through it. It always looks confusing and messy, and it always feels uncomfortable." — Author John W. Gardner

The adjective "unprecedented" has been ubiquitously applied to the year 2020 and while that description may have become tiresome or even redundant, it certainly captures the historic nature of this extraordinary time.

And while it has been a confusing ... and messy ... and often uncomfortable time, for

those of us interested in meeting the mission of the Howard County Historical Society, it's a time to be collected and preserved. In that spirit, the historical society is developing a project to capture and share experiences and artifacts about the extraordinary year of 2020 – and we need your help as well as input from around

Howard County.

"The 'Voices of Pandemic and Protest' initiative seeks to identify, collect, and preserve stories and objects from Howard County community members that illuminate their lived experiences relating to

the social justice movement and protests, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic," said Catherine Hughes, executive director of the historical society.

Local history researcher and writer Gil Porter was selected to serve as project coordinator. The initiative is being funded through a grant from the Indi-

Continued on page 11

As part of Voices of Pandemic & Protest the HCHS is collecting related objects and documents. See page 10 for the latest acquisition.

Howard County Historical Society 1200 W. Sycamore St. Kokomo, Indiana 46901 From the director

Celebrating a year with the Howard County Historical Society family

It's spring and the daffodils are lovely around the mansion. No, wait, it's spring and the snow is covering everything! What an April it was this year. I have been anticipating celebrating my first year at the historical society with warmer rhododendrons. Instead, we have been surprised with snow, hail, and freezing temps. Such is the capriciousness of spring.

We will carry on with our preparations regardless. We have a lot to do. Stew, Randy, Heather, and I are working on Phase 2 of the Howard County Afri- Transitions are always challenging, and include can American History Revealed exhibition set to open June 4. This phase focuses on creating a multi-sition has had it all. Still, in the face of Covid-19 dimensional large-scale map of the Carver neighborhood, sharing its history and highlighting various individuals and organizations. It requires an incredible amount of research and corroboration. ensuring the accuracy and veracity of each story. Our intrepid Advisory Group has been contributing their knowledge and contacts. There remain many

large and small decisions regarding text, layout, and design. I commend our team for their diligence and hard work.

June begins a busy summer season. In addition to the exhibition opening, we have the Juneteenth celweather, colorful blooms, and the scent of lilacs and ebration on June 19; the 2nd Automotive Scavenger Hunt on July 9 and 10 that includes an ice cream social; and the wrap-up of the Voices of Pandemic and Protest project.

> As I look back on my first year, I am grateful for the support of board members, staff, and volunteers. glitches and missteps along with triumphs. My tranrestrictions and illness, and a year of striking disparity and injustice, we have carried on and made strides as an organization. Thank you.

> > **Catherine Hughes HCHS Executive Director**

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Committee Corner

Continued from page 13

include the addition of track lighting in several exhibit rooms, additional lighting for the front door cloak room, improvements to the bride's room in Elliott House, and spring clean-up and planting on the grounds and flower beds. Work under consideration would involve repairs to several of the older chandeliers, addition of an intercom or PA system, wall repairs in the rear stairwell, and removal or replanting of the rose garden. Committee members are also participating in two major initiatives: planning for a new entrance ramp for better accessibility and for repairs to the mansion's deteriorating porte cochere.

In the next few years, sidewalk replacement around the mansion and new front steps for the Elliott House porch will be needed. Looking farther into the future, the long-range plan has given the Building and Grounds Committee a key role in prioritizing and implementing a series of recommendations in the 2016 Preservation Plan developed for the board by RATIO Architects.

It's worth noting that the Building and Grounds Committee is only one player in the work of preserving and presenting the history campus for the community. It works hand-in-hand with staff and other board committees, along with a key partnership with Howard County government, and a generous group of donors who provide the financial resources to keep the history alive. You can be part of that on-going effort, as a committee member, volunteer, or donor by contacting the society. Learn more at hchistory.org.

Editor's note: Dave Broman has been active in the Howard County Historical Society for more than 30 years – as member, volunteer, board member, and staffer. He retired as the society's executive director last year and recently volunteered to share his experience as chair of the Building & Grounds Committee. Welcome back!

If you missed the recent Volunteer Recruitment dates, have no fear. You can email Jill Snyder at jill.snyder@howardcountyhistory.org or call her at 765-452-4314.

Membership

Our new and renewed memberships

Jeff and Kris Himelick Ann Abel Andrew and Mary Baker Larry and Roberta Hite Beth Martin Milton Beach Henry and Phoebe Carter Ruth Massey Joseph Cross Nancy Obermeyer John Dreyer, Pastor Ruth Owens Norma Dunn Paul and Kathy Pfettscher Rex Feltenberger Sam and Pam Rhine

Sandra Grant

Goldie E. Snavely Harry and Angela Sparks Dorwin L Starr David and Carla Summers Mynarose Van Sleet Larry and Janice Waddell John and Carol Wilkinson

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Jane Richardson

Juneteenth honored at Howard County Museum

This June 19 Howard
County Historical Society will
be celebrating Juneteenth,
recognized as a state holiday
or special day of observance
in 45 states, with free entry
to the museum from 1 to 4
p.m. The day's name is a
combination of "June" and
"nineteenth", commemorating the anniversary date

of the June 19, 1865 announcement by Union
Army Major General Gordon Granger, proclaiming freedom from slavery in Texas. It is also known as African American Freedom Day or Emancipation Day. While President Abraham
Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had officially outlawed slavery in Texas and the other states in rebellion against the Union almost two and a half years earlier, there was little enforcement of



JUNETEENTH

A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Juneteenth celebrates June 19, 1865. On this date Major General Gordon Granger and Union troops of the American Civil War reached Galveston, Texas with news of the Civil War's end and that the enslaved were now free.

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of

Howard County Historical Society invites the public to enjoy free admission to the museum Saturday, June 19, 2021

the proclamation without troops. Texas was the most remote of the slave states with few Union troops, so enforcement there had been slow and inconsistent before Granger's announcement. It is on this date that slavery finally ended across all states and territories.

Generous sponsors for the day are Dave Dubois, REALTOR, The Wyman Group and Thistle Rock Farm.

Donations and Memorials

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Porte Cochere Campaign

Glenn and Nancy Grundmann
Cathy Stover

Annual Giving

Margaret Butler-Community Foundation of

West North Carolina

In Memory of Jim Aikman:

Norman and Mary Ann Saul

In Memory of Fred Odiet: Corbin King Law Office

In Memory of Wayne Kincaid:

Ron and Pam Barsh
Judy Brown
Mary Ellen Harnish
Ben Hippensteel
Stewart and Judy Lauterbach
Sondra Neal
Ashley Schneider
Dean and Susie Zell

Eric Lavonas and Family

From the president

Transition of an organization ...

hat is most memorable about 2020? That is a question being asked – of individuals and organizations – around the world. For the Howard County Historical Society, certainly one of the most memorable aspects was the transition of the executive director! Dave Broman retired from the position and Catherine Hughes was hired in the midst of the pandemic. As the pandemic raged, everyone was finding it difficult to manage all the day-by-day changes to the way we live and operate our organizations, businesses, and homes. One great thing that happened for the historical society is that we – board and staff – recognized the increasing need to be relevant and meet the needs of our community to still be able to enjoy our historical structures, events, and their membership during the pandemic. Our focus shifted on our long-range goals as we asked ourselves if we were truly pursuing the stated mission of the Howard County Historical Society: "To collect, preserve, and share the diverse history of all the peoples of Howard County."

We went to work. Within the framework of social distancing, sanitizing, and masking, we continued meeting with boards, volunteers, and staff via Zoom. Being pushed by the pandemic was one thing, but we soon recognized we were still relevant and that we needed to stretch, be intentional, and keep moving forward. Within the long-range plan were goals to reach out to our entire community and we had added a community relations committee. In response to what has been called a national reckoning of racial injustice in our country, we added our statement of community support under the umbrella of the American Association for State and Local History. We invited community members to join us in an African American Advisory Committee that helped guide our activities. We opened the first of four phases of an exhibit titled "Howard County African-American History Revealed" to share stories of individuals, organizations, and events whose contributions to Howard County development have not been included before.

Our membership and members of the community at large have been generous in supporting our efforts and we are so thankful.

As with most organizations, we have been affected by life events that have generated changes in board membership. We were sorry to have some long-time members retire or move, but because we have a great and diverse resource of community leaders, we have been blessed to add talented new board members. Like many organizations, we recognize the need for younger members, as well those from different ethnicities and community sectors that are representative of our community. Our new members have brought new perspectives and ideas that may increase membership through our greater reach in the community.

Our long-range plans also included goals of collaboration with other organizations within our community and we are currently working with the Douglass School restoration initiative and the Kokomo Howard County Public Library through our project "Voices of Pandemic and Protest." As we support one another, our community will be stronger and our historical records richer. It is often said, "People don't like change." The pandemic gave us little choice but to change, but I am finding change can work to our good!

Sharon Reed, President HCHS Board of Trustees

Phase II of exhibition opens soon

Howard County African American History Revealed

he second phase of this ongoing exhibit focus on local African American history opens

June 4 at the Howard County Museum.

The public is invited to visit the Seiberling Mansion and Museum to discover the long history of African Americans in the area.

Phase II focuses on the Carver neighborhood. The centerpiece of this phase is a 3-D map highlighting different individuals and organizations in that area of Kokomo from the 1950s-70s era. We begin by focusing on houses that were listed in the Green Book, and men who were associated with the Tuskegee Aircorps. There are QR codes to various buildings that reveal photos, videos, and other documents, which visitors can access with their phone.

The HCHS has been working with a local commu-

nity group of advisors who have informed the process with their experience and contacts. They have been invaluable.

ir Allinoo

The HCHS will be rolling out this

Phase III in the fall, and the final Phase IV in February 2021.

The goal is to find ways to incorporate new information and objects into the story of Howard County throughout the museum, so that it is seen as not separate, but as an integral part of our history.

THE TORY OF THE STORY OF THE ST

Bring your cell phone or a notepad to record your answers!

Events on the Seiberling Lawn

AN AUTOMOTIVE SCAVENGER HUNT FRIDAY, JULY 9, 2021 4-8PM SATURDAY, JULY 10, 2021 10AM-2PM

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Museum is open for tours both days 1-4 PM.

Memberships and tour tickets are available for purchase at the museum or online:

HCHistory.org 765-452-4314

COMMITTEE CORNER

By Dave Broman Chair, Building and Grounds Committee

hen the Howard County Historical Society's leadership moved the county museum into the Seiberling Mansion in the early 1970s, do you suppose they had any idea how dominant "le grande dame" would become? Or how it would become the focal point of an entire history campus ... and an icon of community pride? Their immediate goals were to find a home for the museum and its artifacts and to save the iconic mansion from the bulldozer gang. Certainly, they had dreams, but did they understand how much of their human and financial capital would have to go into the property?

They quickly realized that a dedicated group of volunteers would be necessary to provide for the mansion and grounds and established a committee to manage the property and make recommendations on the allocation of resources. For 50 years now, the role of the Building and Grounds Committee has grown as the society has grown. There are now four buildings to care for, as well as their associated grounds. Fortunately, there are also full-time staff, caretaker Bill Baldwin and executive director Catherine Hughes, to handle day-to-day tasks and keep the committee and board up to date on conditions, problems, and projects. The committee regularly inspects the properties, assists and advises the staff, provides expertise, and advances the organization's long-range plan.

The campus has been the most visible part of the historical society's growth, and the Building and Grounds Committee has been in the thick of things. From the initial 1971 rehabilitation, to a long series of roof repairs and the eventual replacement of the historic slate roof, from the interior renovation in the 1970s to the Designers' Show Home in the 1990s, campus growth has included interior and exterior work during Hoosier Celebration '88, grounds design and development, acquisition and renovation of Elliott House, renovation of the Seiberling Carriage House for the Pioneer Centennial, renovation of the Elliott Carriage House for archives and offices, and so much more. With that expansion has come an increasing need for regular, day-to-day maintenance.

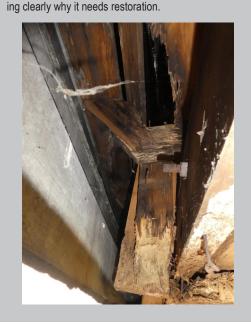
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Among the less obvious roles of the Building and Grounds Committee and staff are its behind-the-scenes work with curatorial staff to provide suitable space and furnishings for museum exhibits and artifact preservation, to support events and programs, to maintain parking lots, and to care for rental facilities.

A few projects from the committee's 2021 list



Porte Cochere needs are clear
These photographs document the deterioration of the wood beams and masonry of the porte cochere, show-



New HCHS Board of Trustee members begin

Jia HardimonEddington is a Kokomo
native and a proud mother and wife. An alumna of
Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo and Indiana
Wesleyan University, Jia
has served as the Surgical
Technology program
chair at Ivy Tech Kokomo
for more than 14 years.
This year, she is being
honored with Ivy Tech
Kokomo's President's
Award for excellence in



Jia Hardimon-Eddington

instruction and dedication to Ivy Tech's mission and is the Kokomo Campus's nominee for the Glenn W. Sample Award for Excellence in Instruction, the College's highest honor for faculty. She loves learning about history, as well as contributing to and participating with her local and statewide communities.

Alyssa Pier

She is looking forward to serving on the HCHS board.

Alyssa Pier is finishing her last semester at Indiana University Kokomo with a double major in psychology and art. She has been admitted to the graduate program for museum studies at IUPUI for this coming fall. Alyssa says she has "loved every minute" of volunteering for the historical society

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since she began in July 2020. She is an avid Disney

fan and has a large snow globe collection. She enjoys road trips with her family, especially when visiting landmarks, small towns, and museums.

Mike Carson is better known as Pastor Mike or Pastor Carson, having served African Methodist Episcopal churches throughout Michigan,

Illinois, and Indiana, including Wayman A.M.E. here in Kokomo, with 37 years in the Christian ministry. Now retired, he continues to serve in many ways. Long active in the Kokomo/Howard County community, he is a columnist for the Kokomo Tribune; has served as a chaplain for the



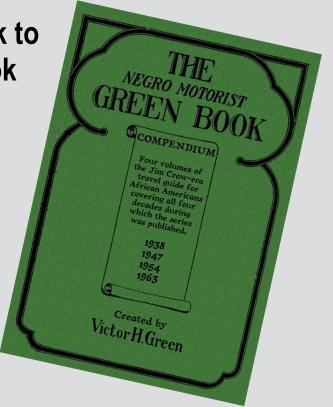
Michael Carson

sheriff's department, a local hospital, and the Kokomo Fire Department, as well as a victim assistance specialist and probation officer; has taught physical fitness at the YMCA; and served as an adjunct instructor at Ivy Tech and IU Kokomo. He is taking an active role in the HCHS's Community Relations Committee.

Find Kokomo's link to historic Green Book

Why was The Green Book green?

It was simple. It was named after its author, Victor Hugo Green, a postal carrier in Harlem. He first published the guide in 1936 to help Black Americans travel without fear, offering travel tips, advice and extensive listings on where to get service and where to avoid. His guide stood out from several others. It was for sale in Esso stations, owned by Standard Oil, which served all people. Green offered his advice in a general tone of helpfulness and even humor, avoiding overt accusations of racism.



Was this necessary everywhere?



Victor H. Green

Both northern and southern states in the USA restricted where Black Americans could seek recreation or services until the 1960s. There were "sundown towns" throughout the north and south that warned Black Americans off the streets after dark. The state of Indiana had documented sundown towns, some into the 1970s. The Green Book showed where they were welcome at Black-owned as well as Whiteowned businesses.

Come and see the exhibit *Howard County African American History Revealed* and find out where homes listed in The Green Book were located in the Carver neighborhood of Kokomo. For more information on The Green Book's history, you can go to: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/history-green-book-african-american-travelers-180958506/.

5

On the trail of Kokomo's Caldwell Connections

By Gil Porter

Howard Caldwell Jr. was a well-known, well-traveled and well-respected Indiana broadcast journalist who passed away in 2017. A recently discovered family archive has revealed that his father, Howard Senior, had a fascinating and unique connection to Kokomo history. Watch for a future installment in Footprints that will feature details about life in Kokomo, circa 1918, based on information in the family correspondence from the time. But here is the beginning of the story ...



Kokomo native Zuma

Kokomo High School

in 1916 (yearbook

photo above). For

if the newscaster

years she wondered

Howard Caldwell was

related to the Howard

Caldwell she knew at

Havnes Automobile.

MUNICIPAL SANITATION UTILITY

KOKOMO, INDIANA

September 12, 1961.

Mr. Howard Caldwell, Indianapolis, Indiana.

My dear Mr. Caldwell:

Of course, I always listen to your news reports, but as I listen, I wonder.

Several years ago I worked as a secretary for the Haynes Automobile Company. Mr. Hal Keeling was our advertising manager, and working with him as assistant Pross was a manager, was a young man by the name of Howard Caldwell. While with us, he was married. By the way, he was an Indianapolis man. stenographer at the And so, as I listen to you, I have wondered from time to time if you might be **Haynes Automobile** Company after Mr. Keeling left our company to become associated with Merle Sidener, and as I read Lebo the other day, I noted the remark about the newly decorated offices graduating from

of Caldwell, Larken and Sidener Van Riper. I did not know the company to which our Mr. Caldwell became associated, but since he and Mr. Keeling were such close friends, and Mr. Keeling went to Sidener Van Riper, I am just surmising that Mr. Caldwell might have gone with them also.

Hate to go back so far, because it does date one, but well, old memories are

Presume you were on vacation, but mixed you while you were gone . Final report is a good ending for the day.

Yours very truly.

Mrs. Zuma (Pross) Marquis.

P.S. By the way, I am office manager for this concern, and work directly for our Mayor.

The partnership between GM and Ventec to build ventilators gained nationwide attention. The local GM plant was a regular feature on national news programs and garnered a visit from Vice President Mike Pence in April.

President Donald Trump, who ordered GM to build the ventilators in March under the Defense Production Act, called Kokomo a "great place" during his daily briefing on the COVID-19 pandemic, and praised the company for using its Kokomo plant to make ventilators.

The company said in November it was "winding down production in Indiana" and that it would close by the end of the month, citing weakening demand for ventilators.

Voices of Pandemic & Protest Poised

Continued from page 1

ana Historical Society.

Members of the historical society's Oral History Committee are contributing time and expertise to the project as well. The intended goal for the first part of the ongoing project will be to create a platform that can be used to collect, store, and make available information relating to the protests and the pandemic events.

"This project will provide future researchers and community members the ability to look back and understand this historic moment from a variety of perspectives," Dr. Hughes said.

According to Hughes, the centennial of the 1918 influenza epidemic and its related coverage, reviewed so recently, has prompted many history organizations to start gathering data about the coronavirus pandemic even while we are still dealing with its effects. Plus, the ability for everyone to record and share their experiences through social media and other ways allows for a unique approach to the events of 2020.

"This will be an ongoing activity," Porter said. "The goal of the project is to create a platform and a way to collect data that the historical society can use to continue helping the community share its stories."

For Facebook users, the platform's "Memories" feature may be bringing up posts from last year that serve as reminders of what was happening and how we were feeling as the pandemic developed. "Posts, photographs, recorded interviews and videos – all these can contribute to an archive that will allow historians in the future a glimpse into the real-life significance of these global events on individuals from our community," he added.

The Kokomo-Howard County Public Library has generously shared its Digital Den and other resources with the HCHS for this project. We appreciate them as a community partner.

The project seeks stories and objects from people of all walks of life in order to capture as full a record of 2020 as possible for the HCHS archives, and potential exhibits.

If you or someone you know would like to share their story, contact the office at 765-452-4314 or info@howardcountymuseum.org.



Recent Acquisitions: Star Wars character visits the Historical Society?

By Randy Smith, **Assistant Curator**

T t may look like a Star Wars character but this is one of Howard County's contributions against COVID-19.

As part of its Voices of Pandemic and Protest project, the Howard County Historical Society is actively seeking artifacts for our COVID-19 Collection. While it was far from easy to acquire, one of the key items the historical society has collected so far is this ventilator made in Kokomo by Bothell, Wash.-based Ventec Life Systems to meet the nation's urgent need for critical care medical devices to support patients seriously ill with COVID-19.

The donation includes a custom-made stand and a partial hook-up kit. While only a shell and not a complete unit, the unit is representative of a fully working ventilator. Ventec partnered with General Motors to use a portion of the GM Component Holdings plant here to make 30,000 of these units. They closed up shop after their contract was fulfilled in late 2020, on time and on budget. Ventec called it "the fastest, largest increase in production of critical care ventilators in history. ... At its peak, the partnership produced 80 times Ventec's previous monthly production, producing one ventilator every seven minutes."

The Kokomo Tribune included this synopsis in its year-end review of 2020:

Ventec, GM make ventilators

On Oct. 31, local workers shipped out the last ventilators from the Kokomo General Motors Compo-



nents Holdings plant to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, fulfilling the \$489.4 million contract awarded to the company in April. In just 154 days, workers produced 30,000 Ventec Life Systems ventilators from inside the GM facility to add to the U.S. Strategic National Stockpile. The effort ensured hospitals around the nation had access to the life-saving machines during the COVID-19 outbreak.

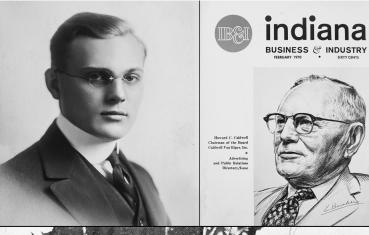
Workers cheered as they packed up the final load of ventilators, which were signed by employees and staff at the plant.

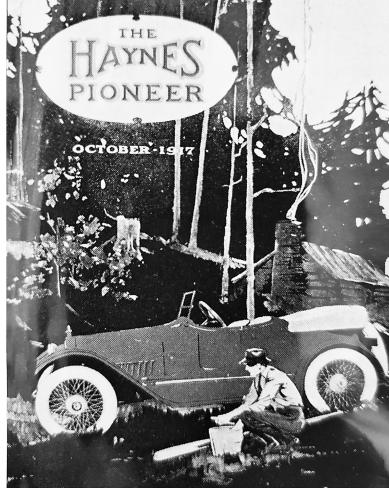
2. In his reply to Mrs. **Marquis** back in 1961, the late legendary



Howard Caldwell Jr., circa 1961.

Indianapolis newscaster Howard Caldwell Jr. acknowledged his father, Howard Caldwell Sr., did indeed live in Kokomo for a year after he graduated from **Butler College and before** enlisting in the U.S. Navy in August 1918. The elder Caldwell joined Haynes Automobile as assistant advertising manager in July 1917 (top left image). He edited The Haynes Pioneer, sent to owners of Haynes autos. His son confirmed Mrs Marquis' timeline and the individuals she named as being accurate. The newscaster's father returned to Indianapolis after military service and had a storied career in advertising (top right image).







WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 1918

Miss Elsie Felt, whose marriage to Howard Caldwell of Kokomo, formerly of Indianapolis, will take place Saturday, March 23, was the guest of honor at a miscellaneous shower given by Miss Florence Wilson, Miss Kathryn Kautz, Miss Harriet Ropkey, Miss Maurine McDaniels and Miss Opal Cornell at the home of Miss Wilson, 315 Layman avenue, Monday evening. The guests were the pledges and the active chapter of the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority of Butler College of which the bride-elect is a member. WHOLL Jonquils were used as the artistic decorations.-Indianapolis Star.

3.

Elsie Felt and Howard Caldwell were married in Indianapolis in 1918. Much of their courtship was conducted via the postal service and rail travel. For a few months after their marriage and prior to his leaving for the war, they lived in a flat on East Taylor Street.

RECEIVED AT 970HS 9 NR--CHICAGO ILLS 630P MAY 28 1918 MRS. H. C. CALDWELL 307 EAST TAYLOR ST KOKOMO IND. WILL ARRIVE TWO AM VIA PENNSYLVANIA STILL & CIVILAN. H. C. CALDWELL.

657P

Miss Elsie R. Felt,

Le No. Irving

A G SEIBERLING, GEN Mas

CHICAGO BRANCH DETROIT BRANCH

Caldwell worked for

Hal Keeling at Haynes

Automobile. At the

time of this

correspondence.

Caldwell had recently

left the company and

he and Elsie moved back to Indianapolis

before he entered the

military. Note the amazing references to

General Manager

Alton Seiberling. The

Mr. How (sic) was S.M. Howe, sales manager

at Haynes Automobile. Keeling was

advertising manager

for a year or so in Kokomo. He left in

October 1918 and like

Caldwell had a long career in advertising

in Indianapolis.

KOKOMO, IND.

July 3, 1918

Mr. H. C. Caldwell, 64 N. Irvington Ave., Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Howard:

Don't neglect, please, to write Mr. Seiberling and Mr. How. Mr. Seiberling was asking about you, and I told him you left while he was away. He said he wondered why you hadn't come in to say good-by. He thinks very highly of you, and a letter will do much to maintain that feeling. Otherwise -- well you know his disposition.

Finally got George fixed up. He got discouraged and I gave him \$27.50 per, much to his surprise. He's anxious to stay now. He's doing very well, too.

Hedges says he borrowed 50c of you to buy a tie, and doesn't recall paying it back. Let me know in your first letter and I'll get the money if it's coming to you.

Very sincerely,

History, letters and photographs from the Caldwell Family Archives, courtesy of Ginny Hingst. Text, composition and design by Gil Porter.