

Volume 11  
Issue 2  
May 2022

# Footprints

A publication of the Howard County Historical Society



*In this issue:*

**Kokomo  
Native  
Project: A  
Gathering  
on Native  
Land**

Reframing  
History

A Look at  
Collection  
Management



*Cover artwork by IUK Artists  
Adilene Rodriguez and  
David Curtis*

## From the director

I hope you enjoy this issue of Footprints. Each quarter, the publications committee brainstorms ideas for what the next issue will contain. We want to make sure everyone is updated on the historical society's activities, and we hope we might spark a few ideas with some of our own, so that you might consider the business of history and of our organization as scintillating as we do!

We would love to hear what you think in response to reading Footprints. History is the story of humankind in all its glory and tragedy. We want to do justice to both ends of that spectrum here in Footprints, as well in the Howard County Museum. Should we include more photos, longer scholarly articles, or quickly digestible tidbits of news more like Twitter? We welcome letters to the editor or comments you wish to share. Perhaps you would like to pen a guest opinion column?

In terms of HCHS business, our upcoming June event, Mr. Kingston's Car Show set for June 10 and 11, is getting everyone excited. We hope to have many historic vehicles on the lawn and racing competitions with a "pinewood derby" track.

If you haven't noticed, we're very happy to point out that we now have an entrance ramp on the northeast corner of the mansion designed to improve access for all our visitors. Finishing touches on this long-needed improvement are under way and it should be usable shortly. We are planning an official ribbon-cutting and will let you know the date. The masonry work on the porte cochere has had to wait for warmer weather but will commence shortly. With that, the porte cochere repairs will be done, which is very good news. These are two very important projects as we step up to the challenges of preserving and making accessible the historical society's largest artifact!

Thank you, readers, for your interest and support.

*Catherine*

Catherine Hughes  
HCHS Executive Director

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# From the President

With any luck, spring will be well and truly here by the time this edition of Footprints finds its way to your home. Spring – the promise of warmth, the blending of sunshine and rain, the ensuing blooms, a rebirth for all of us.

After two years of pandemic, transition and change, we are all ready for spring. With spring we have nothing but opportunities ahead for the Howard County Historical Society. I hope, you – our members and friends – are as pleased and excited about the future as I am ... and ready to lend your spirit and enthusiasm to make all our upcoming activities a success.

Our next event is, thanks to a committee led by board member Alyssa Pier, a reboot of last year's "Automotive Scavenger Hunt." This year, "Mr. Kingston's Car Show" will bring many more activities to the lawn of the Seiberling Mansion June 10 and 11. And, as promised by the name, the car show will include a number of beautifully restored vintage automobiles for your perusal. Plan to bring the kids, grandkids, nieces and nephews, neighbors ... The youngsters will have a chance to be part of our very own "Pinewood Derby" competition.

On Sunday, June 19, plan to join in our observance of the second annual federal Juneteenth holiday by visiting the Seiberling and taking in the wonderful Howard County African American History Revealed exhibits throughout the museum. Over the last year, the staff has worked with a committee of interested individuals to create a number of spaces that offer a much broader representation of Howard County history. Admission is free, so be sure to encourage family and friends to take advantage of this day designed to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States.

We'll also be honoring U.S. military veterans with a Fourth of July celebration that includes free admission for all veterans.

Mark your calendars for Thursday, Aug. 18, and the celebration of the 2022 Howard County Hall of Legends in Hingst Hall, the new community room on the campus of Ivy Tech Kokomo, 1815 E. Morgan St. Check out the next edition of Footprints, which will announce the six individuals or organizations being honored for their contributions.

Looking ahead, prepare to be entertained Oct. 21 and 22 when HCHS again presents "From Dark Pages" in celebration of Halloween. The annual meeting is scheduled for Nov. 15 and we'll be kicking off Christmas at the Seiberling Nov. 26, unveiling the work of all our creative volunteer decorators who traditionally turn the mansion into a holiday must-see.

My thanks to all our staff and volunteers for their many efforts to make all these plans a reality.

All these activities really do need your support and participation. You share our love of the Seiberling and Howard County history and we hope you'll be inspired to share that love throughout our community. Happy spring! And summer, fall and winter – at the Seiberling Mansion! Let us know your questions and how you can help.

*Linda*

Linda Ferries  
HCHS Board President

# Kokomo Native Project: A Gathering on Native Land

The history and heritage of area Native peoples past, present and future was the theme of two well-attended and well-covered-by-local-media panel discussions at Indiana University Kokomo April 21, 2022.

This first-of-its-kind event was sponsored by The Kokomo Native Project, an alliance of organizations in Howard County, Indiana, including the City of Kokomo, the Kokomo Early History Learning Center, Inc., the Howard County Historical Society, and Indiana University Kokomo, with funding and support provided by the Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission (INAIAC).

Kokomo has a unique place in Indiana history, being the last-named county seat of the last-named county in the state and today it lies within the Great Miami Reserve, the last communal land



Local historian Gilbert Porter makes introductions during Kokomo Native Project: Heritage and Homeland. (CREDIT: Kelly Lafferty Gerber, Kokomo Tribune)

of the Miami Tribe of Indians. Organizing the 19th state in the union meant eliminating Indians statewide through treaty and policy, but removal could never erase Native identity and culture.

Delegates from several of Indiana's Native tribes gathered to talk about those themes, including Diane Hunter from the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, Michael Pace of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, John Warren from the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, and Kokomo resident and Choctaw Nation member Sally Tuttle, representing INAIAC.

"Our goal is an honest view of the past," local history writer Gil Porter told the crowd before introducing the panelists. "Today, we will learn from all these tribes that call Indiana home. Notice I used the word call in the present tense because Indian history was not lost. It was paused, and today, we press play." It was an enlivening, educational and illuminating conversation.



Kokomo Mayor Tyler Moore welcomes guests and speaks about the importance of the event during the Kokomo Native Project: Heritage and Homeland panel discussion at IU Kokomo (CREDIT: Lisa Welch, Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission)





John Warren of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi says an opening prayer for the Kokomo Native Project: Heritage and Homeland panel discussion. (CREDIT: Kelly Lafferty Gerber, Kokomo Tribune)

## Excerpts from media coverage:

“Everybody teaches about the history, and they think of us native people as part of the history. But what about us today? ... For instance, so many people don’t realize that we have a government that takes care of our people. They don’t realize that in our government, we have agencies, a council, healthcare. The tribes are a functioning government of their own. So I want people to just take us out of the history books and let people know we exist today right here in Kokomo.”

*Sally Tuttle, Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma  
“Native American affairs take center stage during panel discussion”  
Kokomo Tribune, April 22, 2022*

“I think the more people who know our language, the more likely it is to live on. Language is instructions on how to live. For instance, there are certain foods, when you look at healthy foods that doctors try to get you to eat, those are all named in our language the same way so I can use it as a set of instructions. Language changes the way you look at the world and look at each other.”

*John Warren, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi  
“Native History Project highlights heritage”  
Kokomo Lantern, April 25, 2022*

“(In 1846) ... The U.S. Army came to our villages and started rounding us up. They took us to a prison camp in Peru (Indiana), and then they loaded us up on canal boats on the Wabash and Erie Canal and took us by canal away from our homes.” (The Miami were transported through Fort Wayne, then Ohio, then by steamboat along the Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri rivers, ➡)



Diane Hunter of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma talks about the history of the Miami Tribe during Kokomo Native Project: Heritage and Homeland at IU Kokomo. (CREDIT: Kelly Lafferty Gerber, Kokomo Tribune)

eventually ending up in Kansas City, Missouri.)

"We then went another 50 miles over land to our new reservation on Sugar Creek in what is today Kansas. Now, there were seven deaths during the journey, and six of them were children. ... After we arrived, at least another 23 died in the following weeks. It was a cold, hard winter in Kansas. But the next spring, we started making it our home. ... But 20 years later, the U.S. government wanted us to remove again. This time, they asked us to remove to Indian territory in northeastern Oklahoma."

*Diane Hunter, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma  
"Native American affairs take center stage  
during panel discussion"  
Kokomo Tribune, April 22, 2022*

"To protect your language culture and history is paramount. With language, if you go two

generations without speaking it, you'll never hear it again. There are more than 530 tribes in the United States. Out of that, 120 languages are still spoken. And when my generation goes, that will be about 60. But those 60 will be preserved. The languages are archived and available. That's why we'd like to influence students to look into linguistics, anthropology, archaeology."

*Michael Pace, Delaware Tribe of Indians  
"Native History Project highlights heritage"  
Kokomo Lantern, April 25, 2022*

"I think the more people who know our language, the more likely it is to live on. Language is instructions on how to live. For instance, there are certain foods, when you look at healthy foods that doctors try to get you to eat, those are all named in our language the

same way so I can use it as a set of instructions. Language changes the way you look at the world and look at each other.”

*John Warren, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi  
“Native History Project highlights heritage”  
Kokomo Lantern, April 25, 2022*

“It was just a great opportunity to take the history of Kokomo a little further back than just our automotive heritage. To have representatives from three federally recognized tribal nations come to Kokomo to share their stories, I think was just an incredible opportunity. As proud as everyone is and that we have been of our automotive heritage, that we like to embrace it and promote it, I think it’s time to weave the Native American heritage into the tapestry that is our story as well.”

*Kokomo Mayor Tyler Moore  
“Native American affairs take center stage during panel discussion”  
Kokomo Tribune, April 22, 2022*

“The last reservation or reserve was right here in Howard County for the entire state. I think that’s important and I think Howard County and Kokomo needs to own that — that this was the last place that natives had (a) homeland.”

*Sally Tuttle, Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma  
WRTV-6, April 21, 2022*



Michael Pace of the Delaware Tribe of Indians tells a story about stereotyping during the Kokomo Native Project. (CREDIT: Kelly Lafferty Gerber, Kokomo Tribune)

“Our county heritage is tied to native history. That’s why this event was designed, to celebrate that heritage and that history. Kokomo Mayor Tyler Moore is a descendant of Chief Richardville of the Miami tribe, for whom Howard County, Indiana, was first named. Mayor Moore is a citizen of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, so it is as if history has come full circle.”

*Local Historian Gil Porter  
WISH-TV Life!Style!Live!, April 14, 2022 ■*



***Save the Date!***

***Howard County Hall of Legends  
Thursday, August 18, 2022  
Details to be announced soon.  
[www.hchistory.org](http://www.hchistory.org)***



## Upcoming events



# MR. KINGSTON'S CAR SHOW

Celebrate Howard County's automotive heritage!

Antique Car Show ~ Family Friendly ~ Derby Track Race ~ Prizes

Friday, June 10  
4 - 8 PM

Saturday, June 11  
10 AM - 2 PM

With support from The Severns Family Fund and Martin Wrecker Service

Special thank you to our event sponsors:



Seiberling Mansion Howard County Museum is also open for general admission  
1-4 PM both days. \$10 adults, \$5 K-12 students, under 5 free admission.

## JUNETEENTH

A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE



Howard County Historical Society  
invites you to enjoy FREE admission on

**Sunday, June 19, 2022**

Museum Open 1-4 PM

SAT  
MAY 21,  
2022  
11AM-1PM



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# Reframing History

By Catherine Hughes, HCHS Executive Director

In the wake of the current historic moment, history museums have become centers for a critical discussion – what is the definition of history, how does it work and why does history matter, who gets to say what happened in history? How can we engage people without immediately putting them on the defensive and feeding into current political polarization for how people understand the past?

The American Association of State and Local History (AASLH), the national organization in which most accredited history museums, including the Howard County Historical Society, are members, has brought together several groups of historians and partnered with the FrameWorks Institute in a two-year research project to create a toolkit of strategies for communicating history. As a member of AASLH, the historical society has access to the toolkit and several streaming events and podcasts on Reframing History that will enable us to engage with these ideas.

The toolkit is meant to support and embolden history museums to help the public better understand history and shift the conversation from being about abstract truth to critical engagement of the past.

*“History helps us to make progress toward a more just future.”*

The central metaphor proposed by this toolkit is that of a detective story. This study found that equating the process of engaging in historical research to a detective looking for clues connects to the general public better than other tested metaphors. Making personal connections, telling stories, especially highlighting local narratives with a national story all help to illuminate the process and product of history.

Critical thinking is the goal of the toolkit. Rather than conceiving of one truth, one story, which we all adhere to without skepticism, this project is helping history museums to encourage debate while avoiding common communication traps that often lead to an increase in polarization.

Helping people understand history with an eye to the future rather than the past is one such suggestion. Rather than saying, “The value of history is that it helps us learn from past mistakes,” we can offer, “History helps us to make progress toward a more just future.”

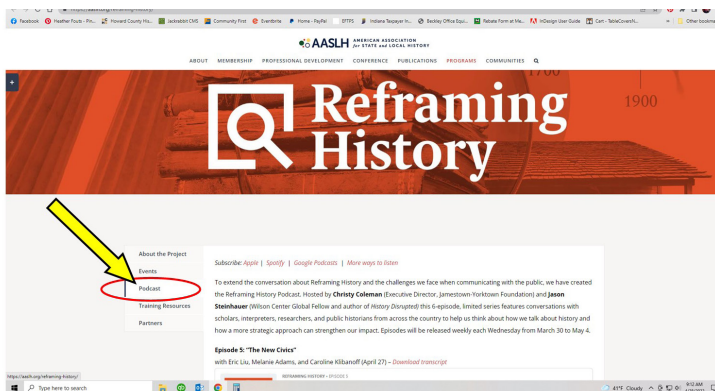
For many people, when they hear of a new historic discovery and it alters what they were taught in school, it can feel as though historians are rewriting history, possibly to suit a political agenda. This report is proposing that we counter this assumption with the “Doing Detective Work” metaphor, and suggest that “just like good detective work takes new evidence and uses it to update a case, historians use new evidence to update and deepen our understanding of what happened in the past.”



It highlights the importance for anyone to evaluate differing perspectives and sources in order to think critically and interpret historic evidence. We especially want students to understand the varying weight of different sources, such as a diary or a newspaper account of an historic event. Including questions in exhibit text panels and in discussions with visitors offers the chance to consider more than one truth. We always have an incomplete picture of history and, by encouraging visitors to be comfortable with that unfinished view, we can stimulate critical thinking. For example, the Howard County Historical Society is offering new information such as the discovery of Mrs. Aliff Henley, the first African American to purchase land in Howard County. We see from the historic records she was able to pay \$280 cash for the land in 1844, but how did she find herself, 43 years and 500 miles from bondage, in the middle of Indiana with such a sum of money? We don't know, but it does invite a few theories that can lead to new detective work.



Why does history matter? History inspires us, provides us with a roadmap, and puts a mirror up to the ideas and beliefs we hold today for comparison. The study of history, with no Ph.D. required, can help us better understand our society and how it came to be. As this toolkit suggests, we can talk with visitors and each other about how “we can study the past in pursuit of a more just future.” It is the constant pursuit of a fuller, more comprehensive view of the past for all people, any gender, any race, color or creed. It’s clear from this study that how we talk about history matters. ■



To listen to AASLH podcasts, visit:  
<https://aaslh.org/reframing-history/> and choose the “podcast” option on the menu.

# Three Old Houses

*Continued from the March 2022 issue of Footprints: Vol. 11, Issue 1*

By Jon Russell, Howard County Historian

## Part 2: THE GENEALOGY OF AN OLD FARMHOUSE

I have often been asked how to research the history of a house. Most people want to know who once lived there, when it was built, or what it originally looked like.

Researching an old house can be a challenge, even when the researcher is part of the family whose ancestors built the house. In that case, you may have some of the history, but often there are still those mysteries that Grandpa never told you about. So, how do we find out?

There are many ways to research the history of an old house. In this article, I will list ways that I use that will help you research your own home. The homes in Howard County aren't very old. Only a few date back to the early 1850s; most are from a period beginning in 1870 that continued to the turn-of-the-century. After that, "old" becomes a relative term. The turn-of-the-century works for this article because after 1900, many (if not most) of the pioneer settlers were deceased.

There are, however, some hidden gems. Only a few are "real old," built by the earliest settlers in the county that prior to the 1840s had been part of the Big Miami Reserve. Additionally, many have been altered from their original appearance. Unfortunately, most of the really old houses have been replaced and are no longer part of the landscape.

**"So, How Old Is It?"** How can you determine the age of a house?

**Style:** If the house is relatively original, one of the easiest methods of dating it, at least within a relative period of time, is by the architectural style in which it was built. Generally, the earliest houses found in our area begin with the Greek Revival Style, circa 1820 to 1860. After the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the late 16th century, along with other items of Greco-Roman antiquity, the western world became fascinated by all things "Classical." As Americans, we fancied our new country as the "rebirth of these great civilizations" and adopted classical architecture with wholehearted enthusiasm. Governmental and ecclesiastical buildings took on the air of Greek temples, while great houses in the East were imposing monoliths that would rival the villas of ancient Rome. As with all things, the purer styles seen in the East, when transmitted to the hinterlands, were reinterpreted, the modifications creating "vernacular" buildings.

What does "Vernacular" mean? When discussing style, another term comes into use: Vernacular. The ability to reproduce the intricacies of formal design may be subject to the availability of materials, the affordability for the owner, and the skills of the craftsmen hired to reproduce these architectural details.

Buildings used for domestic purposes were generally built by local carpenters and their purpose was more for function than for display. Therefore, many buildings designated "Greek Revival" did not resurrect the "glory of the ancient past," as the title seems to indicate, but only reflect some of the architectural details found within the concept of the "Greek Temple." To the average viewer, they don't seem to resemble a Greek temple at all! For instance, many "I-Houses," commonly





Greek Revival I-houses were found throughout Indiana, Illinois and Iowa.

found on farms throughout Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa (hence, the “I-”) are classified Greek Revival. Because of the variants within the details, the buildings are commonly referred to as being “vernacular Greek Revival.” Sort of ... “local” in nature.

In the city, you can look around the neighborhood to determine the approximate age of a house. For instance, a walk through the eastern half of the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood can reveal an earlier period, generally the 1870s and 80s. In the western half, it's generally the 1890s through 1910s. The older Eastlake, Second Empire, Italianate, and Greek Revival styles intermingle with Craftsman and Stick Style houses, whereas, the western half seems to reveal a later Queen Anne, Tudor and other “Revival” styles, Bungalow and the omnipresent American Foursquare, at times trimmed out with the finest Neo-Colonial details.

When one really wants to determine the age, they can leap into a whole-house renovation, as Howard County resident Tim Carter recently did with his early 1850s home. In the process, he found the original transitional timber framing (more on that below). Leaving

the original section of the house pretty much intact with the interior framing exposed, he has renovated the house for modern living.

An interesting sidenote: Carter has the original abstract for the property, and in it he found the house was within the area called the Seven Mile Strip, a seven-mile-wide tract originally deeded by the U.S. Government (as acquired from the Miami Reserve) to the State of Indiana. Once the state obtained it, the land was to be deeded on to the trustees of the Wabash & Erie Canal for the proposed purpose of adding a section of the canal extending to Frankfort. For a number of reasons that changed, and the land was then sold to various individuals. Willis Blanche obtained Canal Patent No. 988 on February 24, 1844. Blanche was a recently married man. However, he and his bride seem not to have lived there, as he left for “California riches” in 1850, a month or so after his “assignee,” John E. Brown, was granted the deed (according to the abstract) in July 1850. It may seem a bit odd, but while Mrs. Blanche didn't join her husband, her brother did! Blanche returned to Howard County the following year. The brother-in-law, eventually joined by his wife stayed in California, and probably got rich. Back in Kokomo, Willis later enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War. After serving as a commander of the 57th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, he returned a colonel at war's end. He lived the rest of his life on his new farm, now located within the city limits on the south side of town.

Pressing on, we come to our next way to date a house:

**Expert Assessment:** When in doubt, have an expert determine what the probable build date may be. Though style is a function of determining the date of a house, it may be that the house was altered somewhere along the line.





The Elliott House, now a Tudor Revival, began life as a Queen Anne.

For example: The Elliott House, the house west of the Seiberling Mansion, appears to be a Tudor Revival house, a 20th Century development, though the basic shape of the house appears to reflect another style. The reason? The Tudor Revival detailing (shown bottom left) covers the original Queen Anne facade. In fact, the house was built in the 1880s, pre-dating the Seiberling.

**Construction:** Speaking of “construction:” In determining the age of the house, it is unlikely that the actual framing has changed, unless there are “new parts” that may indicate storm or fire damage.

Locally, the very old houses have what I call “transitional timber framing.” As I will discuss in the next issue on the “bones” of the house, this early framing resembles what one might call “barn framing.” Timber frame construction began to disappear when “balloon framing” became common, mostly after the Civil War in this area though balloon framing developed in Chicago in 1837.

**Nails, Moldings, and Paint Colors:** Finer details can also provide a method for determining the age of a house. For example, the nails used in building houses prior to 1890 were generally called “cut nails” or “square nails.” These were machine produced with a

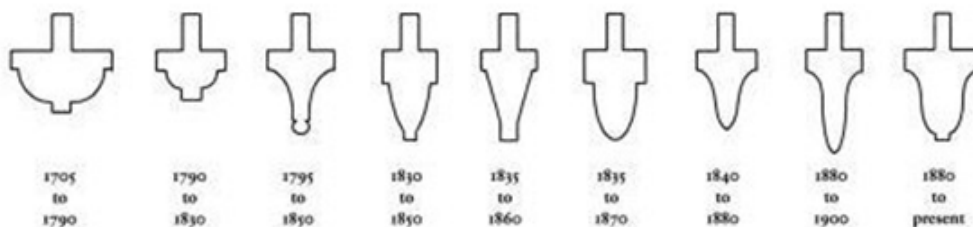
more squared-off shank. Prior to 1800, most nails had to be hand-forged by a blacksmith. We don’t find those in our county. After 1890, most nails were “wire nails,” or rounded-shanked “modern” nails.

Another date-determining factor can be found in windows, original windows (those that rate the National Register of Historic Places Most Endangered List, unfortunately for good reason). The cut of the muntin, for example, can determine the age of the house. Muntins are that slender piece of wood that separates the panes of glass in six-over-six double-hung windows, for example. Detailing wasn’t standardized until the late 19th Century, and various eras saw a variety of profile (or cross-section) details for window muntin. (With standardization, window muntins built in 1900 have basically the same profile as in windows built today.)

Determining age based on existing paint is a bit more difficult. Basically, early paints were handmade; chemical analysis is needed to determine true colors based upon pigmentation. However, exposing paint layers can help determine age based on the era when a particular color was most popular. As color changes were made, they were usually applied over a previous coating, building up the overall thickness of the coatings. Reducing the layers by scraping, or other gentle means, can expose the various colors a room or trim once wore. Chemical analysis of a first paint coat on the trim, then matching that color to a corresponding color on the wall, may possibly link it to a date when the trim was manufactured. Likewise, if there are layers on the wall below the first layer applied to the existing trim, that trim probably came later. Examining the wall may reveal the outline of an earlier, possibly original trim design.

**Door Hardware:** Like nails, moldings and paint colors, door hardware can tell the





Window Muntin Details Through the Ages. ([http://www.james-garvin.com/images/Window\\_Sashes](http://www.james-garvin.com/images/Window_Sashes))

potential age of a house. (Note: Quality European and eastern American-made hardware was available when local hardware might still have been crudely handmade). If, however, a hinge seems to appear from the era that was estimated for the door, and it is unchanged (no extra screw holes under the hinge), it may confirm the age of that door. If it is a mass-produced Victorian-era hinge, old catalogs found in the library or “on-line” may help determine the age.

**Check the Records:** Of course! There are various written documents available to the home researcher. After the turn-of-the-century, homeowners had to start getting permits when building houses or making changes in plumbing, electricity, etc., especially in towns. These official records back up “guesstimated” dates when the house was built.

State historic preservation officers can guide the homeowner in finding the right resources within their area, such as county archives, preservation trusts, and local historical societies and genealogical centers.

County offices hold records such as maps (for example, Sanborn insurance maps), deeds, and other documentation helpful in determining the age of your house. Newspaper archives can be researched to see what may have happened at the house in the past. This was one of the ways I discovered the age and original owner of the Charles Ford House on West Jefferson Street that was destroyed by fire last fall.

Don’t forget tax records. When someone

builds or acquires a property, they start paying taxes on it, and that information provides an exact record for your property, at least through the 20th century. In some states, this can go much further back.

And, of course, old city directories and telephone books, if they were available can provide information; however, very early houses built before telephones, etc., won’t have these resources. Start with a date when you know the address of the house, then work your way back until there are no listings.

**NOTE:** Be aware that the U.S. Post Office changed addresses in Kokomo many years ago. This gave addresses that once had two numbers a “prefix.” For example, an address such as 121 East XXX Street may have originally been simply “21 East.” In those days, “121” may have been a block further ... if the address existed at all.

**Photographs:** Old photographs, when they exist, can often tell more than dates, especially when you plan to restore your house to its early appearance. Check with former owners, local historical societies, and photo collectors. That old adage “A picture is worth a thousand words” still applies. You might get lucky and find some photos taken early enough in the home’s history to show what it originally looked like!

In the next edition of *Footprints*, we will cover more specifically the construction methods and materials used in historic architecture. ■



**Call out for stories!**

Share your story with future generations.

**What was 2020 like for you?**

# VOICES

## OF PANDEMIC & PROTEST



Record on

**zoom**



Submit a short story to the historical society by emailing

**[voices@howardcountymuseum.org](mailto:voices@howardcountymuseum.org)**

or calling 765-452-4314 to arrange an interview.

***Do it now, so we don't lose your voice!***

# Committee Corner:

## A Look at the Collections - Part 1

By Stew Lauterbach, HCHS Curator

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** What do a root that looks like a snake, a jar of Mount St. Helens ash and Emma Seiberling's teaspoons all have in common? In a two-part series, HCHS Curator Stew Lauterbach and long-time volunteer and board member Mary Ellen Harnish take a look at the collections of the Howard County Historical Society and the role of the HCHS Collections Management Committee in corralling them.

### Mary Ellen's Memories

Mary Ellen Harnish has supported the Howard County Historical Society since she helped with its move to the Seiberling Mansion in 1972. She has served the society in many capacities, most notably as board president and as the chairperson of the Collections Management Committee for many years. When I discussed this article with her, she shared the following memories with me:

"In 1972, everything owned by the Howard County Historical Society was moved from the Howard County Courthouse basement to the Seiberling Mansion. That move was really the beginning of the Howard County Museum we enjoy today.

"The many rooms of the mansion seemed spacious in comparison to the courthouse basement where everything was crammed together. We felt like we had to fill it. And the community must have felt we needed to fill it too. Everyone donated things to display. It wasn't uncommon for the staff to show up for work and find stuff people had left on our

porches. They left anything and everything.

"I remember all the different places that we worked on the collection. The basement of the mansion, the former curator's apartment on the second floor, the floor of the ballroom, the Seiberling carriage house, the third floor in the Elliott house, the Elliott carriage house, and even on occasion, outdoors on the grounds."



The Howard County Museum when it was located in the basement of the Howard County Courthouse. Depicted are a number of artifacts, including farm tools and porcelain jugs.

### A New Beginning

When I arrived at HCHS in 2001, I inherited management of a collection 85 years old consisting of an estimated 45,000 objects, historic images, archival materials and books. It seemed that, in its early days, the museum did indeed take anything and everything. If not on display, most of the items were stored



higgledy piggledy in three closets on the third floor of the mansion, a curator's workroom in the northwest corner of the second floor, the third floor of the Elliott House and a closet in the Seiberling carriage house. A few years earlier, an attempt had been made to catalog the collection using a flat file database, but the attempt had stalled. By the time I was employed, HCHS had purchased PastPerfect museum management software and had been using it for a year. Residents from the community were donating things at a rate of about 1,000 items annually.

It quickly became apparent that the first thing to do was gain intellectual and physical control of the collection. Intellectual control is knowing what you have; physical control is knowing where it is. HCHS knew neither. To gain control of the collection, we used volunteers to inventory its contents and to key the results and existing accession book information into the PastPerfect database. An

accession book is the journal that lists all of the items that a museum takes into its collection. We are fortunate to have two sets of accession books, one series begun in 1923 and another begun in 1938. However, the information they contain about the donations is scant, usually just listing the donor and a brief description of the object.

I fondly remember one inventory session performed with a junior high school class. From this event we learned that the collection contained an "early computer" (manual typewriter), some "steel rectangles" (disposable safety razor blades), and my personal favorite, a "bug thing" (cast iron boot jack in the shape of a beetle).

Conducting the physical inventory meant going through the collection item by item, recording each object's name, object identification number, physical description and its current location, then entering this information into PastPerfect. Keying the data



The Howard County museum interior when it was located in the basement of the Howard County courthouse. Many artifacts are shown in the photo.



W. Spencer Huffman, first vice president of the Howard County Historical Society, standing in front of cases of Greentown Glass in the courthouse basement.

**Note: These photos were taken April 12, 1959, by Elwood Luellen during a Greentown Glass open house in the HCHS museum in the courthouse basement.**



from the accession books into PastPerfect gave us the object name, object identification number, physical description and name of the donor for each item. Then came the job of matching them up!



Case of mistaken Identity. Object ID # on this stove was inventoried as 77.11.7 but is actually 77.167

Where the inventory and accession data matched, everything was fine; when they didn't, another volunteer worked with me to trouble shoot the discrepancies. A close physical examination of the item and comparison to its PastPerfect record usually solved the issue. Often a number was misread (see photo cookstove) or an object name was wrong or a variant (Is the item in hand properly called a bag or a sack or a poke?). In other cases, we had to do some creative hypothesizing to come up with a plausible explanation for why things were the way they were.

As we worked to catalog the collection, gaining even partial control paid off. For instance, there was the time a donor called and wondered if we still had her mother's diploma. I told her I didn't know, but to check back next year since we had just begun the inventory process. She called the next year and I had to report the same. On her third call, I checked our database and found the diploma and its exact location!

Or the time a woman and her daughter walked in and wanted to see their grandfather's mandolin. I checked the database but couldn't find a single mandolin. I then asked her for the

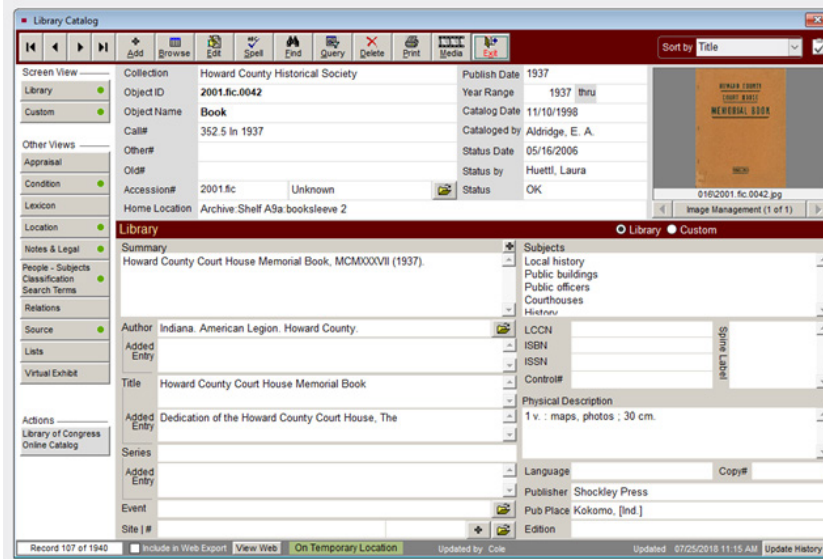
name of the donor and within seconds found a listing for a violin made from a desk drawer and a piece of threshold from the Howard County Courthouse. When we visited the Seiberling carriage house, where the violin was stored, they were delighted to see this homemade instrument.

As the database grew and we gained physical and intellectual control of our collection, I learned that during my first five years at HCHS, I had accepted many objects that we already had. While in one sense this was a little discouraging, in another it was marvelous to be able to check on things as they were offered. For instance, we are regularly offered and decline the books *Howard County in the World War* and the *Howard County Memorial Book* (1937 county courthouse dedication) since the database informs us that the former is Obj. # 2001.fic.0005, stored on shelf 11b in the archives, and the latter is Obj. # 2001.fic.0042 and stored on shelf A9a in book sleeve 2.

The entire project, including proofreading the entire database twice, ended up taking about 17 years. At the end we discovered that HCHS had a collection of around 35,000 objects that vary in their relevance to Howard County, ranging from a root that looks like a snake (yes, a tree root enhanced by carving eyes and a mouth into it to resemble a snake) to a jar labeled "Ash from Mt. St. Helens" to several Kingston carburetors.

While the work continues as we accept new items into our collection, I cannot stress enough the importance of cataloging the collection using PastPerfect. The staff uses it every day and its use makes us prominent among history organizations of our size. It is the foundation for the society's future collecting and exhibit work.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** I especially want to recognize the role played by former Curator of Archives Bonnie Van Kley in this project. While



Screen shot of courthouse memorial book listing in PastPerfect software used by the curatorial staff at HCHS.

I dealt with the three-dimensional objects, she simultaneously supervised work on the photographs, archival materials and books. No doubt she has similar experiences she could share. HCHS owes her a tremendous debt of gratitude for all of her dedication and

hard work, and I know that our database would not be as complete as it is without her tireless efforts.

Next: Searching for significance and what we learned from Emma Seiberling's teaspoons. ■

## Online presence grows...

The Seiberling Mansion may be an 19th century house, but it's proving to be part of the YouTube generation! In the last three weeks alone, the video tour of the Seiberling Mansion and Howard County Museum has garnered 37 comments from people all over the map. Some comments come from those who have visited and wish to share their experience, as viewer Tara Joyce commented 11 days ago: "The most amazing docent and a must see if you are near Kokomo." Others are just appreciative from afar, like viewer Jan Kent who wrote: "The restoration is stunning. To have lost this beautiful lady would have been a crime. Thank you for saving her and sharing the beauty." This video has been available to watch since March 17, 2020, and has been viewed 57,770 times. It has received 959 likes. Sharing our history in this way can be overlooked as we focus on the live visitor experience, but it has an impressive reach and allows for anyone to see and recognize what a gem we have here in Kokomo, Indiana!



# English Rose Cafe and Tea Room

By Tammy Greene, HCHS Board Member

The English Rose Café and Tea Room, at 502 W. Jefferson St., is a must-see on any historic tour of Kokomo. Although it has had many owners, names and functions, this beautiful 5,047-square-foot Queen Anne Victorian home has been an intriguing part of Kokomo for nearly 120 years. The land at the corner of Jefferson and what was then Smith Street (now called Webster) was purchased by John M. Leach in 1901. John was born in Litchfield County, Connecticut, in 1844, and moved to Kokomo with his family at the age of 10. He would grow up to become a very prominent Kokomo businessman.

After his service as a veterinarian in the Union Army, John returned to Kokomo in 1866 and opened a livery and brick business. A year later, he married his first wife, Mary Ritner, with whom he had two children, Nettie and Howard. In 1874, he started the J.M. Leach Manufacturing and Ice Company and shortly thereafter established the gas company, giving him control of much of the industry in Kokomo.

Mary Ritner Leach passed away in 1875. The grand Queen Anne home {pictured} that is now the English Rose Tea Room was completed in 1903 as a wedding gift for John's second wife, Emma Dean, who was considerably younger, and a share of the house was given to her in an ante-nuptial (today called a pre-nuptial) agreement recorded in the property's abstract. A handwritten note tucked into the abstract says Emma {pictured} did not like the house, but the couple continued to live there until John's death in 1914. In his last will and testament, John left two-fifths of the house to each of his children, Nettie and Howard, and one-fifth to Emma. Howard and Emma sold their shares to Nettie for \$1 in 1917 and Nettie lived there until 1941.

The property has changed hands many times since then, being owned by individuals as a home, briefly by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the 1950s and the Peru Federal Savings and Loan Association in the 1970s due to delinquent taxes. The home was also owned by the Soupley family for a brief time.

Through all the changes in ownership, the elaborate interior of the house – with lavish wood paneling and coffered ceilings, sparkling opalescent glass windows and even a “Turkish corner”



KOKOMO'S MOST HANDSOME HOMES—RESIDENCE OF J. M. LEACH.

J.M. Leach residence c. 1938. Located at 502 W. Jefferson Street.



Emma Dean.



on the second floor – has remained largely unaltered since its construction in 1903, with the exception of updated kitchen and bathrooms. Offering an amazing look into upper middle class life of the early 20th century, the home was purchased by history buff Claudia Fike who opened the Crystal Tea Room there in 2010. In 2021, the home was purchased by JoAnn and Henry David Dellenger of Greenwood, who had scoured the Midwest for an appropriate venue to realize their goal of operating their own tea room. Defying the pandemic, they opened the English Rose Café and Tea Room in June 2021, two months after they moved in.

The entire historic structure was endangered when fire started in a vacant home two doors west on Sept. 8, 2021, and spread to the home next to the tea room. Luckily for the tea room, the fire was contained before any damage came to the house or the carriage house/garage that the Dellengers have converted into a bed and breakfast available through Airbnb.



Photos on this page were provided by JoAnn and Henry David Dallenger, owners of the English Rose Cafe and Tea Room.



More information about the English Rose Café and Tea Room is available at their website at <https://englishrosecafe.com/> . To make reservations for brunch, lunch or a traditional English tea service, call them at (765) 450-4934. ■



# Volunteer spotlight

## Angela Washington

Angela was born in Kokomo. She went to college at IUPUI for nursing. After graduation, she lived in Chicagoland and worked in the medical field for 30 years. She returned to Kokomo in 2012 and started volunteering for the Secondary Missionary Baptist Church where she attended as a child. Last year Angela decorated the parlor in the mansion for the 2021 Christmas season. She helped us create the second floor Sunday hats display. She loves history and decorating and has decided to train as a docent for the mansion. Angela will also be involved with decorating this year for Christmas at the Seiberling.

Thanks, Angela!

## THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS



## Marella Williams

Marella has lived her entire life in Kokomo. She attended Indiana University and then worked for Chrysler for 39 years. She is a member and missionary of Wayman Chapel Church. Marella is supportive of her family and proud of her two grandchildren. Her hobbies are sewing, decorating and shopping and she does make a fashion statement. She has been involved with the Designer Show Home, Community Women's Guild, and La Femme Debutantes. She decided to volunteer as a docent after decorating at Christmas at the mansion and learned about some of Howard County's history.

Welcome, Marella!

## Donations



We want to celebrate the incredible impact of HCHS benefactor Jim Long and offer him a hearty and sincere thank you for his continued support of the Howard County Historical Society. His generous gift this year of \$20,000 supports our operations, preservation efforts, programming, and exhibits.

*Thank You Jim!*

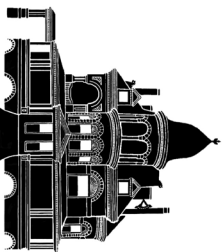
## New and renewed memberships

Ann Abel  
Milton Beach  
Marsha Bowling  
Judy Brown  
Michael Carson  
Henry and Phoebe Carter  
Dorothy Dague  
JoAnn and Henry Dellinger  
Janet Duchateau  
Arthur Fross  
Sandra Grant  
Jia Hardimon  
Nancy Harper  
Jeff and Kris Himelick  
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Mike and Kelly Karickhoff

Suzanne King  
Jim and Judy Kruggel  
Chuck and Doris Lingelbaugh  
Krista MacNamara  
Ruth Massey  
Taylor Mills and family  
Ruth Owens  
Sam and Pam Rhine  
Jane Richardson  
Goldie E. Snavelly  
David and Carla Summers  
J. Alan Teller  
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