

Footprints

Volume 7, Issue 2

May 2018



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**The devastating robbery of Kokomo's first bank
HCHS welcomes new technology *and* a new staff member**

A publication of the Howard County Historical Society

Learning lessons from the past

Indiana Jones was a fun movie, but true to life? Not really. The rolling boulder thing is pretty far-fetched, and ancient engineering didn't include spinning head-choppers. From Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones, to Nicolas Cage in the National Treasure movies, or the grey-haired, musty, crusty hoarder of old stuff, the stereotypical history or museum person isn't much more than a cartoon character. Media images of historians are a real problem.

The natural assumption that historical organizations are all about the past is as far from the truth as Indiana Jones. Okay, we do tend to have a lot of old stuff in our museums and collections, and we will go out of our way to see and sometimes collect such things. Yes, old things can be pretty cool, but the work of historians and museum people is done entirely for the future.

Why expend time and resources saving stories and things that have no use today? They inform our understanding of our lives today and preserve that understanding for tomorrow. They carry lessons, deeply rooted in human behavior, about why we do some of the things we do, what mistakes we should avoid repeating, and which successes we can build on.

For example, the Seiberling Mansion stands today because of the Indiana Gas Boom, and its story is testament to the hubris and lack of foresight that wasted a huge natural resource,

burning it off into the air as if it was inexhaustible. *Lesson: Our planet and its resources are finite and must be protected and used wisely.* The mansion stands today because people like George Kingston and Elwood Haynes buckled down when the gas field dried up and figured out other ways to remain vital and relevant. *Lesson: Hard-working, inventive people have kept the community alive and are our greatest resource.* The mansion is here because the population explosion of the gas boom years brought together thousands of people with different ideas and different backgrounds. *Lesson: Innovation comes from diversity, not from homogeneity and discrimination.* The mansion is still standing because it provided a home for a great boom in education after World War II. *Lesson: Invest in people if you want to have a future.*

Seiberling Mansion is just one – certainly the largest — of the thousands of artifacts, photos and documents in the historical society's collections. Likewise, its stories and lessons are only a small part of the thousands preserved at the museum.

Our past is kept alive at the mansion and museum, and our future depends heavily on what we learn from it.

Dave Broman
HCHS Executive Director

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Now accepting nominations for Hall of Legends

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

Perhaps our greatest gifts to the world at large, and the true basis for our worldwide connections, are our children and grandchildren. We worry about the “brain drain” and those who leave Howard County to seek their fortunes elsewhere, but perhaps that’s a symptom of our worries about our own success here at home, a fear that that they’ll take the future with them when they leave. Let’s think instead about the positive impact they have on the world and how it reflects back on us.

The arts are better for the lives of Margaret Hillis, Misch Kohn and Strother Martin. Journalism is better because of Steve Kroft and David Ashenfelter. Our country is safer because of military leaders like William Kepner, Ed Trobaugh and Don Moon. We’ve given the world doctors, inventors, engineers, business leaders, political leaders, labor leaders, philanthropists, authors and educators. They all left Howard County, taking a bit of us with them on their journey and adding their own bit to Howard County’s reputation in the world.

The program was established in 2010 to recognize those people who have had an impact on the world, and to help establish a standard of achievement for coming generations of Hoosiers. You can learn more about past hon-

orees at howardcountymuseum.org, where you’ll also find information about nominations.

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

- ◆ Public Service
- ◆ Commerce and Industry
- ◆ Science
- ◆ Technology
- ◆ Health Sciences
- ◆ Art
- ◆ Literature/Journalism
- ◆ Humanities
- ◆ Performing Arts

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

Now would be a good time to think about individuals who deserve recognition and submit their names for consideration by the selection committee.

Your nomination should include your contact information, the name of the nominee, the rationale for your nomination and supporting information and documentation. Nominations may be delivered, mailed or emailed. Send them to:

Hall of Legends
Howard County Historical Society
1200 W. Sycamore St.
Kokomo, IN 46901
or to legends@howardcountymuseum.org

The devastating robbery of Kokomo's first bank

By Gil Porter
HCHS Publications Committee Member

In June 22, 1862, a massive “nor’easter” tornado toppled a structure under construction on the east side of the Howard County Courthouse square onto the building immediately to the south. This adjacent building, situated on the northeast corner of Main and Sycamore streets, was demolished, curtailing the activities in the first-floor general store, whose partners were notable pioneers Harles Ashley, John Bohan and Kokomo founder David Foster. The *Howard Tribune*, which at the time published from the building’s second floor, was also almost put out of business.

That disaster came a little more than a year after an equally devastating calamity befell proprietors of that corner property. On Sunday night, April 28, 1861, more than \$14,000 – all of the deposits – was stolen from the Indian Reserve Bank. Seven years earlier Ashley, Bohan and Foster had started the enterprise – Kokomo’s first bank – which operated in the back of the store.

This robbery remains unsolved and would forever change lives, reverberate in the legal system for more than a dozen years and redraw the map of Kokomo.

The following text is the first

of two excerpts from an upcoming book entitled “The Bank,” by HCHS Publications Member Gil Porter. The complete story will take the reader back to Kokomo at the time of the robbery and then as witness to David Foster’s diligent — and successful — effort to raise the money he needed to pay back the depositors of the “Indian Reserve Bank.”

“The Bank” – Part 1

It was roughly the equivalent of \$3 million today.

Howard County had just recently completed the collection of its spring installment of taxes. County treasurer Hiram Jones gathered up the hefty deposit totaling \$11,832.41 – much of the county’s assets at that moment – to get it in the bank before the weekend.

Jones’ office was likely in the one of the two small brick buildings on the northerly east and west sides of the courthouse square. These two smaller structures had been constructed around 1852, replacing the county’s original two-story courthouse that had been torn down. A bit of history on that first courthouse – and the significance of the names David Foster, Harles Ashley and John Bohan:

In May 1844, town founder David Foster had agreed “to build a good log building twenty four feet square” for the county commissioners as part of a title bond that included his original donation of “forty Acres be the same more or less” to establish the county seat of Richardville County in Kokomo. In March 1845, Foster was released from this obligation (for reasons not recorded), and, according to the first county records book, he and a “Dennis McCormick” were ordered to “select a lot to set the Courthouse on and in Case they do not agree to call a third person.”

A range of contractors contributed to construction. Foster himself provided the lumber and was tasked to get a suitable number of

A vintage advertisement for Bohan, Ashley & Foster. The text is arranged in a vertical layout. At the top, it says "HEAD QUARTERS" in a bold, serif font. Below that, "BOHAN, ASHLEY & FOSTER," is written in a similar font. A smaller line of text follows: "Have just received a mammoth stock of". Then, "Spring & Summer" is written in a large, bold, serif font. Below that, "GOODS!" is written in a very large, bold, serif font. At the bottom, "OUR MOTTO IS" is written in a small, serif font, followed by "Low Prices Win." in a large, bold, serif font.

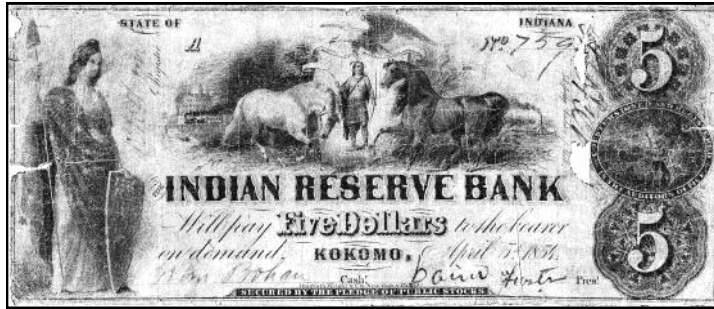
seats for the small two-story log building (the 1844 title bond had also stipulated Foster "furnish in his store quality stores sufficient for all public buildings in said County.>"). Work progressed during the summer

of 1845, and the county record book shows the commissioners "met at the Courthouse in Kokomo" Sept. 1 that year. The building wasn't quite finished, as the commissioners on June 3, 1846, called on county auditor John Bohan to sell the completion of the courthouse to the lowest bidder (apparently the roof still needed work). At that same June meeting, treasurer Harles Ashley had presented Richardville County's first-ever financial report, for 1845.

(Another trivia note: John Bohan was the first county official to write "Howard County" in the county record books, in an entry dated Jan. 11, 1847. The Indiana General Assembly changed the county name to "Howard" from "Richardville" on Dec. 28, 1846; the formal copy of the notification was filed by the clerk of the circuit court here on Feb. 13, 1847.)

Commercial activity and civic concerns had thus often brought Ashley, Bohan and Foster together for collective community projects, and by the early 1850s, the three enterprising pioneers naturally enough picked up a new pursuit: establishing a bank.

This was the "Free Bank Era," 1837-1862, when state banks had replaced the federal banking system. Bank charters during this time required only approved articles of incorporation, rather than an act from a state legislature. According to one source, the number of banks in the United States jumped from about 25 to more than 700 at this time. Kokomo itself had no bank during its first 10 years. Indiana's Free Banking Act of 1852 resulted in a peak of 77 newly created banks through 1854, of which 42



Five-dollar bank note from the Indian Reserve Bank.

IMAGE FROM HERITAGE AUCTIONS HA.COM.

were shuttered by November that year. Caught up in this "new-bank" mania, our three successful businessmen focused on finance, assessed their assets, selected a site (space in the back of 100 N.

Main St. behind the John Bohan and Co. general store), presented the appropriate paperwork to Judge Charles D. Murray of Howard County and Kokomo's first bank — the "Indian Reserve Bank" — was incorporated April 1, 1854. Harles Ashley was the "active figure in the banking enterprise," John Bohan was cashier, David Foster, president.

Of the hundreds of banks nationwide that were chartered and then failed during this heady time (also commonly referred to as — coincidentally — the "Wildcat Banking" era), the Indian Reserve Bank seemed to have been a success. It's interesting to see its name in numerous contemporaneous archives, present among the 40 or so "Indiana specie-paying banks" operating statewide in the late 1850s. Messrs. Bohan and Foster are the respective officers duly listed in the illustrious Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1858 and 1859.

Alas, the Indian Reserve Bank also failed, and closed its books sometime during the late-1860s or early 1870s (the bank was still listed on the state auditor's reports regarding the condition of "the old free banks, not yet wound up" as late as 1867). We do know that the event that triggered the demise of Kokomo's ill-fated Indian Reserve Bank after seven seemingly solvent years in the back of what was known as "the Buckhorn Corner" building was due not to mismanagement or malfeasance, corporate negligence or counterfeiting.

Someone simply stole the key to the safe.

THE TRIBUNE
Tuesday, April 30, 1861
HEAVY ROBBERY!
\$12,000 Stolen!
NO CLUE TO THE THIEF.

A letter of considerable length had arrived in the *Kokomo Tribune* office on or about June 1, 1931.

The newspaper had recently printed a front-page article about the 70th anniversary of the “Biggest Local Robbery” that was still a “Deep Mystery.” Seventy years on, “no one knows who robbed the ‘Indian Reserve Bank’” the sub-headlines stated. The event was a “Sensation of Early Days,” the thief “got \$14,700 in cold cash,” and most significantly – and a fact unchallenged yet today – “Not a Penny Was Ever Recovered.”

From the start, the event was well-documented. “Our town was startled this morning by the news that the safe in the store of John Bohan had been opened last night and all the money taken out” began the story in the *Howard Tribune* on Tuesday, April 30, 1861 (the newspaper published weekly then). The basic facts remained in circulation for decades, re-appeared as brief references in various county histories and were more prominently re-presented in occasional retrospective accounts in the newspapers.

The initial details reported in the *Howard Tribune* are as follows:

- The robbery occurred on the night of Sunday, April 28, 1861.
- The safe was the one used by Bohan, Foster and Ashley.
- Ashley had one of the keys to the safe.
- On Sunday night, Ashley’s house was entered. (He lived at 208 E. Walnut St., on property that later was the site of the former YMCA building at Union and Walnut streets.)
- His trousers were removed from the resi-

dence and left in the alley.

- The safe key and \$200 cash had been taken from the trousers.
- The banking room was entered through a window.

- Notes and other papers that had been in the safe were found scattered over the floor.

The initial theft amount was reportedly \$12,000, later amended to \$14,700 (*Tribune*, May 7, 1861), of which \$11,832.41 were the deposits for the county treasury.

Additional reporting through the years revealed no goods were stolen from the store; indeed, “nothing about the property was molested except the bank’s safe.”

...

Louisa Eugenie Foster was born in Kokomo Oct. 7, 1855, the youngest of David and Elizabeth Foster’s 11 children. She was born at home in the first Foster cabin, which at that time sat in the middle of what is now South Main Street, its front facing north. Later in life, she shared stories from childhood about how her father “had to cut away the underbrush and trim the trees for my mother to hang out her first washing” and how Foster himself had carried the water to clean the clothes “up the hill from Wildcat creek.”

The twice-married Louisa Foster at some point adopted the name “Ida” and is thus known to historical researchers through her two husbands — Thomas Baker and later William Henry Harrison Clark — as Ida Foster Baker Clark.

“Mrs. W.H. Clark” was also the author of the lengthy letter that appeared in the *Tribune* offices in early June 1931. She had seen the article about the Indian Reserve Bank robbery, and though she was just a child that Sunday night 70 years earlier, she now provided stunning new details about a pivotal moment in Kokomo’s history.

In particular, Ida Foster Baker Clark seemed intent still on coming to the defense of her father’s considerable esteem and reputation (which was never really tarnished, for reasons to explored later in this story). The three

“accommodating and useful citizens” that ran the bank – Harles Ashley, John Bohan and David Foster – in the very first week after the robbery apparently were the immediate subject of “malicious stories,” of an “undertone of gossip,” and outright innuendo as to what became of the money. Her father, Mrs. Clark pointed out, was a titular president, not actively involved in bank affairs, and “was as much surprised” as everyone else by what had happened. (The *Howard Tribune* in its May 7, 1861, issue was much more forceful in condemning the rampant rumormongers regarding the robbery: “We wonder that the lips of some folks are not sealed by a miraculous stroke from Omnipotence.”)

What’s more, the “whole burden of making good the loss” fell upon David Foster. As the owners of a privately run bank, the three principal officers were completely liable. Through an odd set of circumstances, Foster was the only

bank owner of the three who “held property subject to execution;” Bohan and Ashley’s property was all in their wives’ names. At any rate, an even worse fate awaited Ashley (he would be killed three years later in the Civil War).

But Ida Foster Baker Clark had something important to add to the story – information that “seems to have not been printed” in any of the initial reporting from the 1860s.

Appearing for the first time in print that day (June 3, 1931) was Mrs. Clark’s recollections of a young man related to Ashley who slept in the Bohan store every night. This night watchman’s apparent purview primarily was protecting the store and the bank safe. Plus, his permanent companion was a “large and savage dog,” Mrs. Clark recalled, who was “particularly vigilant.” So attuned was the animal that a mere “footfall on the sidewalk” either in front of the store or in the alley behind would cause the

[7-12-1861]

Indian Reserve Bank
Kokomo Sept 15th 1861

J H Sharp Esq
Cashier
Dear Sir

Enclosed find
Draft from Dicking fund office, on
Branch Bank for \$232.50
for which please send Exchange
to John Thompson N.Y. for our
Credit

Respectfully
John Bohan Cashier

✓ 232.50
176 174
58 230.76
174

[8-23-1861]

Indian Reserve Bank
Kokomo Aug 25th 1861

J H Sharp Esq
Cashier
Dear Sir

Enclosed find
Draft from E. Current on Branch
Bank for \$372
for which send Exchange to
John Thompson N.Y. for our
Credit

Respectfully
John Bohan Cashier

✓

Handwritten cashiers notes signed by John Bohan.

IMAGES FROM THE INDIANA STATE ARCHIVES

dog to rush around the store, “barking and snarling.” Once alerted, “the master” would have to have a look around the building before the “dog could be quieted.”

Reference in the article is also made to persons passing the store on their way from church *that very Sunday evening* saying they “recalled hearing the dog, their footfalls having aroused him.”

...

The day after the *Tribune* published the story about receiving Mrs. Clark’s letter with its startling new details, an 81-year-old man walked into the *Tribune* offices at the northeast corner of Union and Mulberry streets. He was no doubt greeted warmly and by name. His was a familiar face.

DeLos Bell, besides being touted in 1931 as “one of Kokomo’s oldest citizens in point of continuous residence within its borders,” was at the time of his death three years later also regaled as the oldest member by “continuous connection” with the local branch of the Typographical Union. His appearance that June afternoon in the *Tribune* was thus not atypical, since “as long as he was able to get around he made almost daily calls at the *Tribune*’s composing room.” His association with the *Tribune* reached back almost 70 years. He had barely entered his teens when he was apprenticed with the newspaper, then still the *Howard Tribune* (undoubtedly his earliest typesetting tasks were original reports of Civil War battles). When Bell started, it’s possible the paper was still located on the second floor of the Buckhorn Corner building at Main and Sycamore, above the John Bohan and Co. store and the Indian Reserve Bank.

At age 81, therefore, his knowledge about Kokomo and its history was “fully and accurately informed,” his reminiscences practically unimpeachable. There was a very simple reason for that. He physically printed most of it.

...

At the time of the bank robbery, Bell was “a lad of about ten years of age” and “resided

within a block of the institution.” The Bell home was on Buckeye Street, a short distance south of Walnut, which would put the residence presumably in the vicinity of Walnut and Sycamore on the west side of the Courthouse square, opposite the Buckhorn Corner at Main and Sycamore on the east side of the square. (Although the *Tribune* refers to the elder Bell as a “pioneer resident,” according to the first county records book, L.C. Bell was not one of the original lot purchasers in June 1845, so they perhaps bought a house in the second wave of settlers.)

While Ida Foster Baker Clark likely was relating details she had learned later (she was only 5 years old at the time of the robbery), Bell was not only older, but he was actually there. That day in June 1931 at the *Tribune*, he said Mrs. Clark’s letter stated “very accurately the facts and circumstances” of the Monday morning following the robbery as he recalled them. He remembered being “in the crowd that milled around the front of the building where the bank operated” and of the excitement that followed the discovery of the robbery. He remembered many of the people who had assembled there, though as far as he knew all “are now dead.”

Bell too related the story of “the mysterious young man and savage dog” supposedly in the banking room the night of the robbery. Bell further confirmed to the *Tribune* that he “knew the young man and recalls the dog as a particularly large and savage animal.”

DeLos Bell and Ida Foster Baker Clark further agreed on one stupendous detail. According to Mrs. Clark, when the robbery was discovered that Monday morning, “neither master nor the dog could be found.”

Their disappearance – and whatever happened to the \$14,700 stolen from Kokomo’s Indian Reserve Bank – remain mysteries to this day.

(Editor’s note: See the next issue of *Footprints* to learn what happened next – and its impact on the development of Kokomo.)

Community Foundation grant supports today's technology for yesterday's treasures

By Gil Porter
HCHS Publications Committee Member

Facts and figures answer a lot of questions about an organization's past, present and future.

Are we meeting the budget? Do we have the space we need? How much will it cost to replace the roof on the 125-year-old historic property that is home to our museum?

Numbers thus are an important part of the Howard County Historical Society story. Some are easy to understand: In 2016, the museum hosted 69 events on site, added 242 artifacts to its collection and welcomed guests from 34 states and six countries. Not to mention the more than \$550,000 raised for the roof project – finished ahead of schedule and under budget.

A new figure to consider is \$2,250. That's the size of a recent grant from the Community Foundation of Howard County and it's earmarked for the historical society's Archive Scanning-2018 Project. Drawn from the Community Foundation's Miller Fund, the grant will have a lot to do with numbers and will greatly expand the society's technical capabilities.

The numbers are, well, impressive. As of April 2018, the HCHS database boasts 55,284 records – one for every item in the collection; everything from a horse saddle and vintage clothing, to industrial products and catalogs, to yearbooks, cookbooks and all sorts of other ephemera. Of that, about half (26,814) are single-photo records. And all of them must be cataloged, scanned and stored. It's a daunting job requiring appropriate tools.

Consider that the historical society maintains four primary repositories in the database: objects, archives, library and photos. Every single physical "thing" that is curated and accepted as "historically relevant" or "significant" to Howard County is assigned to one of the four buckets.

A healthy images archive is critical; photos are among the most-requested items and have universal appeal to visitors. The supply seems endless as well. Families and organizations often accumulate a large number of photos over a lifetime and eventually want to donate them to the historical society (note: the significance of the photos to Howard County history is assessed to determine if they should be accepted into the HCHS collection).

Also impacting the job is the fact that time and technology have changed the way people access the collection. Just a generation ago, viewing a photo archive meant doing it in person at the location where the photos were stored.

As the historical society's photo tech, Gale Leiter is the one responsible for converting the thousands of original images and documents into digital files that today are searchable, scalable and discoverable by anybody anywhere anytime. Essentially, any item requiring conversion to a digital, or visual, format for record-keeping or research access will pass before Leiter's eyes.

To do his work, Leiter needs quality image-scanning equipment and robust computers with plenty of processing power and lots of storage space. The cumulative storage size of all those digital files is about 392 gigabytes, roughly the equivalent of storing 78,000 individual copies of the complete works of Shakespeare or about 6,500 hours of music (basically listening to music nonstop for about a year). Most of the Miller Fund grant will provide either new hardware or help upgrade the software tools Leiter needs to do his job.

The curatorial team definitely needs some new tools to stay current with professional standards, Leiter said. A planned new image scanner, for example, will extend the types of

See "Grant" on page 18



Something to celebrate

The mansion roof project is complete

**By Dean Despinoy,
HCHS Publications Committee Member**

When the public campaign to “Save Our Seiberling” kicked off on May 17, 2016, the goal seemed almost impossible to achieve. The facts were clear. The roof of the mansion was failing and its leaks were damaging the interior of the precious Seiberling home. Countless stop gap repairs conducted over the years were no longer an option. A projected \$600,000 was needed to replace the slate roof and repair interior damage to the mansion.

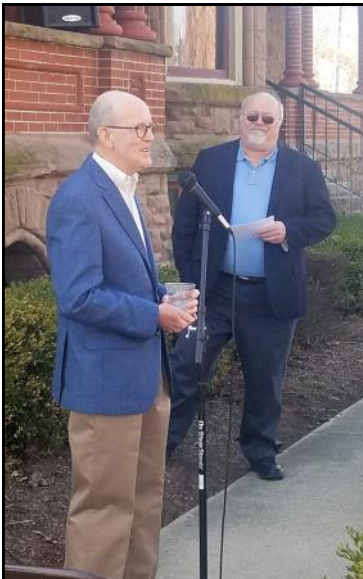
In preparation for this epic public effort, \$50,000 grants from the Indiana Historical Society's Lilly Endowment funds, the Community Foundation of Howard County and the Howard County Historical Society provided the seed money, but those seeds would have to really grow to reach the goal.

On April 19, an energized crowd of 80 dedicated people gathered in the East Garden of

the mansion to celebrate the successful completion of the long-awaited roof project. The winter-that-seems-to-never-end paused long enough to let the sun shine down on the assembled group as well as the pristine new roof of the Seiberling. Few noticed the relentless chill of the breeze as they were warmed by feelings of accomplishment and pride.

The executive director of the Howard County Historical Society, Dave Broman, opened the short ceremony. He reflected on how important the mansion is to Kokomo and Howard County, standing today as a centerpiece of community pride. Dave also introduced representatives of RATIO Architects, the project managers; Hinshaw Roofing of Frankfort, experts in slate roofing and historic structures, who replaced the nearly 14,000 slate tiles comprising the roof; Hoosier Waterjet, who cut some of the original slates into commemorative coasters; and Kokomo Opalescent Glass, who etched the mansion's image into some of the coasters.

Donor James Long, left, addressed those gathered to celebrate the completion of the Save Our Seiberling roof project, as did Commissioner Paul Wyman, SOS co-chair Steve Daily and HCHS Executive Director Dave Broman, right photo.



With a laugh, Steve Daily, former Kokomo mayor and co-chair of the “Save Our Seiberling” campaign, called the initiative the most “un-sexy” campaign in which he had ever been involved. He said he was truly amazed at the generosity of the people of our community to provide so much money for superstructure.

Howard County Commissioner Paul Wyman was next at the mic, remembering the mansion this last Christmas. The splendor of the Seiberling, decked out for Christmas, peeked through \$50,000 of scaffolding surrounding the house to support the roofing crew. A holiday visitor to the mansion asked Paul if he was displeased with all the construction equipment contaminating the normally picturesque holiday scene. Knowing that it meant that the mansion would be with us for another hundred years, Paul replied, “I think it’s the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen.”

In thanking the many donors and grantors, Broman singled out Tom and Judy Sheehan, Bill and Ginny Hingst, and James Long for their generous gifts and moral support. Long, a

friend of the Seiberling Mansion for many years and the single largest donor to the roof campaign, spoke of his personal history with the historic house and his time attending Indiana University at Kokomo when the university occupied the mansion. Howard County Historical Society President Judy Brown concluded the ceremony by giving special thanks to Dave Broman and his entire staff.

Members of the assembled crowd were all looking up at the roof as they made their way around the building to the main entrance of the mansion. Inside they were greeted with a delicious presentation of



In addition to replacing the failing roof, a rotted eyebrow window from the top of the mansion was also replaced.

Continued on page 19



Broman and others, including HCHS President Judy Brown, Larry Hayes, Randy Rusch, Linda Clark, Curator Stew Lauterbach and Chris Wisler toured the Seiberling Mansion before the April 17 board meeting. Several areas inside the mansion required plaster and other repairs, damaged by years of leaks through the aging roof.

Thank you to the many roof campaign donors

Capstone

Howard County
James Long
Community Foundation of Howard County
Indiana Historical Society and Lilly Endowment
William and Virginia Hingst
Thomas and Judy Sheehan

Gable

Efroymson Family Fund – Central Indiana Community Foundation

Pillar

Steve Daily
Charles and Patricia Hinders
Dr. Charles and Alice Simons
Richard and Diane Smith
St. Vincent Kokomo
Carl Van Dorn
Paul and Shelly Wyman

Cornerstone

Judge William and Martha
Menges
E. P. Severns
James Allman
Michael and Kelly Karickhoff
Lynn Smith
Kokomo Travel Club
William and Lyn Shirley
Dr. Phillip and Connie Burgan
Don and Marti Pries

Robert and Robin Auth
Edward and Judy Brown
Don Button
H.C. and Mary Ann Byrd
Omar England
Geoffrey Godlove
Hayes Brothers Inc.
Robert and Betsy Hoshaw
Ken and Marcheta Humphrey
Dr. David and Barbro Jarrell

Kokomo New Car Dealers
Association
Margaret Miles
Richard and Margie Moore
Tom and Betty Poppas
Coca Cola Bottling Company
of Kokomo
Cathy Stover
Don and Anita Tenbrook
Conrad and Karen Uitts

Foundation

Dr. Alan and Phyllis Adler
Richard and Betty Alexander
AndyMark, Inc.
John and Dane Auzins
Ron and Pam Barsh
David and Mae Bastin
Milton Beach
Kent and Marcia Blacklidge
Darrell and Bruce Blasius

Glen R. Boise
Kevin and Mary Bolyard
Susan Bonness
Jan Briscoe
Joseph and Traci Broman
David Broman and Joyce
Cylkowski
C. Milton Brown
James and Marvel Butcher

Henry and Phoebe Carter
Bill and Sharon Carter
Linda Clark
Phillip and Victoria Conwell
Weezie Cook
Hilary Crook
DAR General James Cox
Chapter
Mr. and Mrs. Dean Despinoy

Dimensions, Inc.
 Joe Dunbar
 Charles and Mary Duncan
 Greta Dunlap
 Orren and Barbara Dutton
 Marion Eller
 Beryl Etherington
 Dan Fawcett
 Ken and Linda Ferries
 Harold and Joyce Fields
 Garrett and Vivian Floyd
 Tom and Lynn Folkers
 Heather Fouts
 Madonna Frazier
 H. Lee Fritz
 Tim and Susan Garner
 Jack Garrigues
 Gene Gatman
 Ted and Paula Goff
 Diana Goodnight
 Added Grace - Grace United
 Methodist Church
 Sandra Grant
 Glenn and Nancy Grundmann
 Jay and Karen Hall
 Joan Hardesty
 Mary Ellen Harnish
 Thomas and Jeanne Harrell
 Dan and Ann Harrigan
 Bill and Jody Harter
 Frank Harvey
 John Hearn
 Phyllis A. Hedrick
 Mark and Peggy Hobson
 Robert and Joan Hoch
 Peggy and Helen
 Hollingsworth
 John and Mary Ann Holmes
 Joseph Holtson
 Patti Host
 Kathleen Hull
 Jacqueline Hunt
 Cliff Hunt
 Mike and Brenda Imbler
 Larry and Judy Ingle

Steve Johnson
 Shelley Johnson
 Richard and Marguerite Kadlec
 Ed and Carolyn Kammeyer
 Glenda Kamosa
 Jay and Marjorie Katzenmeyer
 Joan Kellum
 Rhonda Kidwell
 William and Julie Killingbeck
 Suzanne King
 Dale and Grace Kingseed
 Phillip and Diane Knight
 Kathryn Kolb
 Joan Lacey
 Charles and Diana Lambuth
 Keith and Judy Lausch
 Stewart and Judy Lauterbach
 Jack and Maureen Lechner
 Shirley Lee
 Rebecca Lepper
 Mary H. Lewis
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The Intangible Preservationist

By Jonathan Russell
Howard County Historian

Recently, I took a tour through an old factory building. Like other industrial structures, the building is becoming a rare commodity in the Kokomo landscape: A 19th Century brick factory building of a plan originally designed for the New England textile mills. It's the classic long, narrow structure with windows on both sides, allowing light from the many large, doubled-up windows to illuminate the machines that were the original purpose of its existence.

Once they were everywhere. As time passed, so did the old brick factories and, unfortunately, the livelihood of those that worked there.

As I toured the building, I began to think back to another time in Kokomo's history, those days of the "Gas Boom" and the industrialization of the small, rural towns in Indiana, once dependent upon agriculture and small shops to provide an economy.

Then, I began to wonder: Who were the people who built that building? Who worked there? Were they born in the area, or did they come from some other place? What customs did they bring with them? What were their names? Did they have families? What were their lives like? Some had careers, the titles of which are as foreign to us today as "Network Engineer" would have been to them. Others, like "brick layers", "carpenters", "roofers", are relatively unchanged and have been around for centuries relatively unchanged.

Who were they?

Preservation of the tiny house on North Buckeye Street is another example of a more "abstracted" historic preservation concept. This little structure, at 904 North Buckeye Street, may be the oldest house in Kokomo. It possibly was erected as a bunkhouse for the workers

who built the city's first railroad. According to research, the house was built very early and very cheaply – having a rubble stone foundation with no mortar, horse-hair mixed with the wall plaster, square-headed nails and old band saw marks on the wood.

Neither of these buildings are what one may consider important examples of architecture, nor are they of the historical significance that revolves around persons of fame. They are just common, or once-common, buildings that have grown old and really have seen better days (structurally). But what they do represent is "life". They represent a period of growth in Kokomo when the lives of our early residents began to change significantly. The factory building represented the change from a rural economy to an industrial one. And the little house, the coming of a railroad that allowed the industrialization to happen.

In the early years, Kokomo was a tiny, backwoods village of pioneer farmers, traders and native people. It was in an inhospitable swamp and forest, populated by wild animals, snakes, and bugs, mostly flies and mosquitos, I'm sure. Stroll through any of the tiny pioneer-era graveyards and you will find many graves of young people, too often children, many of whom perished from one of a number of maladies, including typhoid fever, malaria, cholera, tetanus, dysentery, influenza — the list is eternal. And the demon: "Bugs", many of them too small to be seen. Graveyards are part of our collective history, an important archive of sorts, a testament on how we lived and how we died in those early days.

Once, the area was part of the last Indian reserve in Indiana and all that that connotes. Then came those with English, German, French, Dutch and Irish surnames. The Quakers came, then African-Americans and Jews. They set up villages and institutions, and con-

tributed to our heritage. The settlers were farmers, railroad workers, laborers, tradesmen, shopkeepers and some “roughnecks”. Then, a few doctors, lawyers and school teachers began to enter the area — to combat the problems brought on by the bugs and the roughnecks — and teach us to read and write and count and to develop our society.

And here we are today. Exploring our past, preserving our history and culture and our architecture, or at least some of it. The architecture is the easy part of this equation, followed by our cemeteries and monuments. But what about the “culture”, those elements that developed from ethnicity, religion, education and other social aspects that make Howard County what it is today? How does “historic preservation” tackle that question? How do we place regulations on, or mark as “historic”, our cultural heritage?

Those of us that consider ourselves “preservationists” must examine the makeup of our efforts in preserving all aspects of our history, whether it is related to architecture and landscape, or those elements that define beliefs, customs and practices.

As we enter the 21st Century, the intangible forms of historic preservation must be developed along with the tangible aspects so that we not only see structures, landscapes, and monuments, but understand why they were built and why they were considered so important to our county and to our state and nation. And as a bonus, we may discover those organizations, businesses and institutions, activities and events, and the people that made us who we are today.

“Historic preservation” then becomes “meaningful”.

Upcoming events

Garden Stroll lunch at Elliott House Saturday, June 23, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Seiberling Mansion will serve as welcome center for the 18th annual Howard County Master Gardener Association’s Garden Stroll (set for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) Along with offering \$10 at-the-door garden stroll tickets, the welcome center will include vendors and a plant sale.

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., hungry “strollers” can enjoy a box lunch, featuring chicken salad sandwiches with sides and a drink, for \$7, courtesy of HCHS. Lunch will be served in Elliott House.

Advance tickets for the six-garden stroll, at \$8 each, will be on sale starting June 1 at a variety of locations, including the HCHS office. Admission is free for children younger than 12.

Howard County Hall of Legends Banquet Friday, Aug. 24

The annual Howard County Hall of Legends Banquet will take place at Bel Air Events Center.

Kokomo Downtown Farmers Market “Farm to Fork Dinner” Saturday, Oct. 13

This year’s “Farm to Fork Dinner” is set for the grounds of the Seiberling Mansion.

HCHS Annual Meeting Tuesday, Oct. 16

Look for more information to come.

From the Dark Pages Friday and Saturday, Oct. 19 and 20

For the second year, the Seiberling will be haunted by Victorian novelists and the terrifying monsters they created. Details available later in the summer.

Saturday, Nov. 24, to Sunday, Dec. 30 Christmas at the Seiberling

It will be all-things-snowman for the 2018 edition of the perennially popular Christmas at the Seiberling mansion-decorating extravaganza. Opening night is Saturday, Nov. 24, with the mansion lighting at 6 p.m. Details to come on additional special events during the holiday season.

New HCHS volunteer/membership coordinator happy to be 'back home' in Howard County

By Linda Ferries
HCHS Publications Committee Chair

She may be a Logansport native and she may live in Galveston, but Jill Snyder is back "at home" in Howard County and happy to be settling into her new job as volunteer/membership coordinator for the Howard County Historical Society.

A little more than a year after she retired as executive director of the Mental Health Association (now Mental Health America) in Howard County, Jill was ready to get involved in the community. And because of her past connection to Howard County, she says this is where she wanted to be. When the part-time HCHS position came open, she threw her hat in the ring and was hired.

"We are so excited that we now have Jill on our team," said HCHS Executive Director Dave Broman. "After serving as head of MHA for 10 years, Jill brings a wealth of non-profit experience to the job. She knows the importance of working with people. She knows how to work with volunteers and donors and budgets and the public. She's already looking at ways we can improve and expand the offerings of the historical society."

Jill noted she has had experience in the use of volunteers, the importance of training and communication and ways to support current volunteers and recruit new ones.

"It's important to make sure that our volunteers have the best environment we can give them so they can be the best they can be,"

she said.

She also understands the importance of membership support.

"You need to keep the members you have and reach out to new members," she said, adding she wants to look at ways to attract younger people as members and volunteers to bring new energy and new ideas to the organization.

"A non-profit cannot run without both of these things – members and volunteers. That's just a given," she said. "It's very important to make your volunteers happy and very important to make your members happy."

Jill already is busy meeting with the volunteers who serve as hosts and guides at the Howard County Museum and working on increasing the daily staffing. She works Tuesdays and Thursdays, and some week-ends as needed, and will be glad to answer any questions potential volunteers and members may have. She can be reached at the museum office, 765-452-4314 or jill.snyder@howardcountymuseum.org.



Jill Snyder recently joined the HCHS staff as volunteer/membership coordinator.

Meet Jill Snyder

Education: Associate degree from Ball State University, bachelor's degree from Indiana University Kokomo and master's degree from Indiana State University; majored in criminal justice and psychology. Continuing education, training and certifications, including drug and alcohol counselor.

Began career as an educational counselor at Grissom Air Force Base; worked with juveniles at the Kokomo Academy and Kinsey Youth Center; served as a correctional counselor at the Miami Correctional Facility; spent six years at Four-County Counseling in Logansport and Peru; served as executive director of Mental Health

America (formerly the Mental Health Association) in Howard County. Served as a CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocate) in Howard and Miami counties.

Has taught criminology as an adjunct instructor at Ivy Tech Community College for the last nine years.

Loves reading, swimming, biking and dabbling in ceramics.

Is an HGTV and DIY fanatic who loves working on her house.

Has volunteered for more than 20 years in animal rescue and currently cares for four "inside" rescue cats and a couple of "outside" feral.

Is the mother of three and grandmother of 10.



Be one of the amazing people who support and promote Howard County - volunteer in Kokomo's historic Seiberling Mansion! Learn more at hchistory.org

Grant, continued from page 9

original artwork Leiter can scan. "The new scanner will scan film, negatives, even 35mm slides," he said, "in fact just about anything somebody can bring in."

Smartphones may have put the world and all its data in the palm of everyone's hand, but someone must "prep" all that data and get it into the pipeline. Leiter, a retired teacher who began as a volunteer at the historical society in 1999 (he's a distant cousin to the notable Howard County historian Carl Leiter), can process about 200 images in a day. Having up-to-date tools is critical for visual experts like Leiter, as each source image is unique and each requires slightly different adjustments to get the same results.

The work can be startlingly transformative. Leiter will open a scanned photo file for editing and then deftly maneuver the mouse to enhance image clarity or composition. With just a few mouse-clicks, long-hidden text details emerge, obscured faces become recognizable, once-muted colors now vibrant and lifelike. One scanned image may need more sharpening, another needs extraneous details cropped out. All – that is, every single image – must be manipulated in some way. It's meticulous work, requiring experience, patience and the skills of

a surgeon.

Maintaining this capability ensures the historical society can continue to better serve professional researchers and casual inquiries alike with information about our fascinating past. Digital image technology requires ongoing investment.

It's important to "stay current," especially since the "old tools have outlived their usefulness," Leiter explained. Up-to-date software and equipment is more reliable and cost-effective in the long run and helps the curatorial team work smarter and more efficiently. And sometimes helps them find surprises. While sorting through a group of photos on the computer, Leiter once discovered an older untitled, uncategorized archive with about 50 pictures that had not been added to the collections database. In an archive listed as part of a donation from the Blacklidge family, Leiter had stumbled upon an intriguing set of images from the zoo in Highland Park, circa 1910.

Pictures included bears, wolves, even an alligator, an unusual mix in southwest Kokomo. For Leiter, who helped the odd menagerie find a new home in the photos archive, it was all in a day's work.

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Membership

Thanks to all who joined or renewed their memberships through Feb. 1st

Curt Alexander
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Andrew and Mary Baker
Milton Beach
Carol Brock Cameron
Henry and Phoebe Carter
Janice Chase
Kirk and Wendy Daniels
Norma Dunn
David Foster
Deanna Gifford
Harry Hanson
Cary Hiers

Jeff Himelick
Peggy and Helen
Hollingsworth
Gloyd Johnson
Suzanne King
Ruth Massey
Sister Martin McEntee
Richard and Marsh Miller
Sherry Rahl
Jane Richardson
Sherry Riley
Emily Golightly Rusk
Cinda Rutherford

Goldie Snavelly
Dorwin Starr
James and Sandi Stitt
David and Carla Summers
Matt and Ellen Tate
Dr. Marvin and Bonnie
Van Kley
Dianne Waggaman
Rick and Sandy Warner
John and Carol Wilkinson
Karen Williamson

Celebration, continued from Page 11

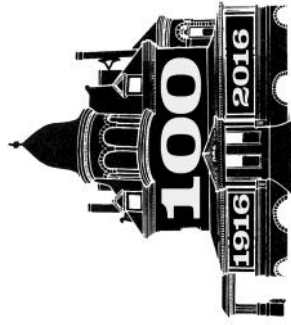
hors d'oeuvres and various beverages. People filled their plates with a delectable variety of food and proceeded to find any appropriate flat area to help manage the plate, fork and glasses each carried. It was a cheerful group of people who were familiar with each other. Although coming from many walks of life, they all came together for this cause and their personal love of history. Passing through the often shoulder-to-shoulder gathering, one could overhear countless stories of personal involvement and memories of the Seiberling.

As the donors, dignitaries, board members, staff and caring community members slowly dispersed, they left knowing that each one had been crucial to the success of this worthwhile project and each was personally responsible in helping "Save Our Seiberling."



The bullet-ridden, lightning-struck former roof finial was on display during the celebration.

**Howard County
Historical Society
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