

Howard County
Historical Society
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Footprints

A publication of the Howard County Historical Society

Volume 4, Issue 4

November 2015

Christmas at the Seiberling: A TREEmendous event

Also in this issue:

**Conger: A forgotten man
with a big impact**
Koh-Koh-Mah/Foster fun
The first hundred years
—and the next
A man named Irene



From the executive director

Kudos to the curators

You flip on the tube and there are 500 channels to choose from. The car radio has a hundred stations (unless you have satellite radio, in which case it's hundreds). Turn on your computer or smartphone and surf the web and you'll find millions of websites, millions of songs and movies, a zillion (mathematically-speaking) videos, and countless books, blogs, magazines, newspapers, mash-ups and articles. Go shopping online and the options are bewildering.

In our never-ending efforts to market products and give people options, we've driven off the cliff. Choices seem nice until you have to cope with the blizzard of decisions we face each day. (Our predecessors had no such problem, by the way, living a much simpler life.) Once upon a time, we had mechanisms for managing the plethora of options. There were only major three television networks, for example, and they picked through all the options for us, picking only the best for broadcast. The record companies did the same, weeding out the less-than-spectacular and presenting us with a selection of the better performances and artists. Publishing houses did the same.

Digital technology brought the internet, the

cheap distribution of content, and custom manufacturing. The old filters didn't work any more and the blizzard began. We haven't yet figured out how to handle it. As the saying goes, we're trying to "drink from the fire hose" and choking on consequences like information paralysis. Search engines like Google help, but even they can be overwhelming.

Museums have similar problems – there's more history every day and too much for any one person to absorb and understand – but they've developed ways to manage the problem. It's called curation and it functions as a filter to help us winnow through the stories, dates, names, and events.

HCHS is fortunate to have an excellent curatorial staff and a group of thoughtful and creative volunteers on our collection and exhibit committees. They help us focus on what matters – and present those stories in interesting and relevant ways. They are, in many respects, the heart and soul of the museum.

Kudos to the curators. The world needs more of them.

Dave Broman
HCHS Executive Director

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Membership

Thanks to all who joined the Howard County Historical Society or renewed their memberships from August through October.

Ann Abel	Cheryl Graham	Larry Newlin
Dr. Alan & Phyllis Adler	Beryl & Jacqueline Grimme	Charles & Gloria Nipple
Richard & Betty Alexander	Glenn & Nancy Grundmann	Roma North
Ron & Pam Barsh	Alan & Prudence Harnish	Tom & Betty Poppas
Larry & June Barton	Dan & Ann Harrigan	Don & Marti Pries
Don & Gail Beaton	Bill Harter & Jody Shortle	Philip & Carolyn Rankin
Doyle & June Beck	Phyllis Hedrick	Beth Rider
Marilynda Bennett	Kenneth & Diana Hill	Robert Jr. & Diana Rostron
Darlene Berry	Mark & Peggy Hobson	Dr. Thomas & Carol Scherschel
Jim & Jan Briscoe	John & Mary Ann Holmes	Shallenberger Realty, Keith Shallenberger
David Broman & Joyce Cylkowski	Bob & Betsy Hoshaw	Carol Hynds Shallenberger
Ed & Judy Brown	Patti Host	Darrell & Tonia Sherrod
Sam & Mary Pat Burrous	Dr. David & Barbra Jarrell	Bill & Lyn Shirley
James & Marvel Butcher	Richard & Marguerite Kadlec	Charles Short
Don & Ann Button	Mike & Kelly Karickhoff	Dr. Marilyn Skinner
Mayor Greg Goodnight, City of Kokomo	David & Janice Kellar	St. Vincent Kokomo Foundation, Todd Moser
Phillip & Victoria Conwell	Joan Kellum	Joan Stein Jenkins
DAR General James Cox Chapter, Rosemary Pike	King's Heating & Plumbing, Jerry King	Edward & Dixie Stone
Dorothy Dague	Phillip & Diane Knight	Stout & Son Funeral Home, Jeff Stout
Joe Dunbar	William & Margy Kring	Greg & Melody Sumpter
Charles & Mary Duncan	Judy Kruggel	Syndicate Sales, Del Demaree
Craig Dunham	Paul Kukla	Rheld & Lorina Tate
Orren & Barbara Dutton	Keith & Judy Lausch	J. Alan Teller
Robert Lee Earlywine	Jack & Maureen Lechner	Ronald & Candy Tetrick
Marion Eller	Gale & Donna Leiter	U.S. Ret. Major General Ed Trobaugh
Rick & Beth Emry	Paul & Emily Linder	Douglas & Lynn Vaughn
Ken & Linda Ferries	Jacqueline Lovejoy	Larry & Janice Waddell
Claudia Fike	Dominique Lowrance-Snyder	Art & Shirley Ward
First Farmers Bank & Trust, Gene Miles	Thomas & Marsha Maple	Pat Waymire
Heather Fouts	Juanita Martin Davis	Paul & Shelly Wyman
H. Lee Fritz	Reggie & Lois Martin	Charlotte Young
Jack & Carolyn Garrigues	Matt Michener	
Jane Goerges	Margaret Miles	
Diana Goodnight	Ann Millikan	
	Thomas & Mary Donna Morr	
	Sue Murrell	
	Larry Newberg	

ence of readers.”

His HCHS “resume” also includes serving as an editor of *Howard County: A Pictorial History* by Ned Booher, published by the society in 1994, and developing community gatherings and presentations based on various oral history projects. He is very proud of having been able to sponsor a number of internships that brought his IUK history students to volunteer at the historical society. Two – Tom Tolen and Bonnie Van Kley – went on to make major contributions as regular staff members.

Allen said he was particularly pleased to have been the second person honored with the award named for Mary Ellen Harnish. “Through Tom Tolen and Mary Ellen, I got involved in ‘de-accessioning,’” Allen said. “We started reviewing all the materials that had gathered over the years – stuffed animals, feathers ... It was quite clear that many of them really strayed from our goal of collecting, preserving and sharing Howard County history.” He credits Mary Ellen for doing “a wonderful job” over the last 25 years of developing a sound

“collections management” process to determine what meets the society’s historical criteria and what does not.

Allen retired from IUK in 2008 and moved to Bloomington, Ind., in December 2014, where he had often visited. He is now able to take full advantage of the university community and its intellectual, cultural and musical offerings.

And, no surprise, to help him settle in to his new community, he’s joined the Monroe County History Center. He’s involved in his first oral history project there, collecting memories of history center volunteers as part of a project to celebrate the bicentennials of both the state of Indiana and Indiana University.

As Mary Ellen noted in presenting the award, “Allen is missed in Howard County, but his contributions will be with us in the collections of the museum for many years.” He is working on a new article dealing with challenges in the Ryan White oral history project and his last contribution to HCHS before moving was to donate his KKK research material to the archives at the Howard County Museum.

Director clarifies pottery information

I’ve received several questions about the pottery article in the August issue of *Footprints* and would like to provide some clarification. We’ve become accustomed to talking and reading about “the pottery” in recent years, and our article did the same. That can be confusing because it implies just one pottery, when there were two distinct entities.

Great Western Pottery was the first on record, born in 1894 during the Gas Boom as a result of cheap fuel for the kilns. It was located near Morgan and Wabash streets, the present location of Syndicate Sales (which still uses some of the old Great Western buildings). Through a series of mergers, Great Western became a division of American Standard, which continued in operation until 1979.

In 1903, the Columbia Pottery was estab-

lished by local businessmen on North Union Street in some buildings previously used by Globe American. Max Gerber of Chicago bought that operation in 1932 and ran it as Kokomo Sanitary Pottery. The plant closed in 2007 but the buildings and equipment on North Union have since reopened under new owners as Patriot Porcelain.

Our article didn’t adequately explain the difference between the two plants. Our hope is that, through the original article and this clarification, the long history of kiln-based ceramic production in Kokomo will be recognized as an important part of the county’s economy since the days of the gas boom.

Dave Broman
HCHS Executive Director

The next hundred years...

The historical society is about to enter its second hundred years. We were born in the aftermath of the 1916 Hoosier Centennial, when the Woman’s Department Club in Kokomo began a local effort to recognize and preserve our heritage. Now, on the cusp of 2016, we’re no longer just preservers of history, but have taken a small place as a part of it. Our focus remains on the future, though, as we provide for the long-term protection and growth of our collections (including the Seiberling Mansion). Thus, we’ve chosen this theme for the 2015 funding campaign: “The Next Hundred Years.”

Preserving, exhibiting and interpreting our history are never-ending projects. Doing them well, and representing our community’s remarkable history in the manner it deserves,

requires professional staff and resources. With some 30,000 objects and 15,000 photographs in the collection, as well as four historic buildings, support from our members and donors is absolutely essential.

The people who built Howard County left us a great legacy, symbolized by the Seiberling Mansion and preserved, in part, in the collections of the historical society. The stories of the people and culture that give us strength and resilience are just as important as those physical remnants. Together, they are a shared heritage that binds us together, helping us pass our values on to succeeding generations. Your financial support makes that possible. Please join us in making a contribution to support the society’s work.

Flame Keepers: *the next hundred years*

Howard County
Historical Society
Annual Campaign

Levels of Giving

Leadership	\$2,000
Platinum	\$1,000-1,999
Gold	\$500-999
Silver	\$200-499
Bronze	\$100-199
Friends	\$1-99

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(Name to be used for donor recognition)

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Email _____

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\$ _____ to support the Howard County Historical Society

Gift enclosed: \$ _____
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and mail to 1200 W. Sycamore, Kokomo, IN 46901
Call 765-452-4314 for information*



Safianow honored with Mary Ellen Harnish Award

By Linda Ferries
HCHS Publications Committee Chair

When Allen Safianow came to Kokomo in 1971 to teach at the local campus of Indiana University, he wanted to find a way to go beyond the educational “ivory tower” to connect with the broader community around him. He soon found his niche at the Howard County Historical Society.

What began as “a nice way of learning more about the community I lived in and meeting other people” turned into a nearly 40-year association capped in August when Allen was recognized as the 2015 winner of the Mary Ellen Harnish Distinguished Service Award for his many contributions to HCHS.

Mary Ellen, the first recipient of the award named in her honor for her work as an HCHS volunteer since the early 1970s, presented the award to Allen during the annual Howard County Hall of Legends program Aug. 14 at Pastarrific.

In her comments, Mary Ellen noted that Allen’s involvement also goes back into the 1970s. Allen, now a professor emeritus at IUK, taught there for 36 years. A native of New Jersey, he earned his bachelor’s degree in history from Rutgers University and master’s and doctoral degrees in history from Cornell. Along with teaching and instilling a love of history in hundreds of young adults, he has done extensive research on the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, and has published several articles on the subject. In 2005, he was honored with the Emma Lou and Gayle Thornbrough Award for authorship of the best article published in 2004 in the *Indiana Magazine of History*, the lead article in the June edition titled “You Can’t Burn History”: Getting Right with the Klan in Noblesville, Indiana.”

Over the years, Allen has volunteered in many capacities at the historical society, as a



board member and in numerous committee positions. In recent years, he has worked on the society’s Collections Management Plan and led oral history projects on African-American cemeteries in Howard County, Continental Steel, Ryan White, and the Courthouse Bombing, often working closely with fellow IUK faculty member and HCHS board member Judy Lausch.

Because of Allen’s leadership, the Howard County Historical Society was honored by the Indiana Historical Society (IHS) with the 2012 Indiana History Outstanding Project Award for the Ryan White Oral History Project. The Winter 2013 edition of the IHS publication *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* featured an article by Dr. Safianow about the Ryan White oral histories. IHS honored him with the Jacob Piatt Dunn Jr. Award for his efforts in producing the article judged as the one that in 2013 “best served the magazine’s mission of presenting thoughtful, research-based articles on Indiana history in an attractive format to a broad audi-

A man named Irene

By Randy Smith
HCHS Assistant Curator
for Objects

The society recently purchased a letter written in 1872 by I.W. Rayburn announcing the intention to seek a second term as Howard County treasurer.

While researching Rayburn, I found an article in a September 1872 issue of the *Kokomo Howard County Republican* confirming that Irene W. Rayburn held the office of county treasurer.

Seeing this, I thought to myself, "How interesting that a woman held elective office even though she was not allowed to vote."

Through further research in the online newspaper archive, and Assistant Curator for Archives Cindy Morr's research on Ancestry.com, we discovered that Irene W. Rayburn was Mr. Irenaeus W. Rayburn, possibly named after a second century religious figure.

Rayburn was born near Bedford, Ind., in 1847 and moved to Kokomo with his family when he was about 5 years old.

He was elected to his first term as treasurer in 1869 at the age of 22.

A follow-up article from the *Kokomo Journal* of March 25, 1870, reported the only objection to the treasurer's race of 1869 seemed to center on Rayburn's age. Some thought that the office should have gone to one of the

older candidates who was a Civil War veteran. However, Rayburn had served with Company "C" 137th Indiana Infantry Regiment on a 100-day enlistment in 1864.

In his letter, he stated about his office, "Having filled it, I hope, to the entire satisfaction of the people, I feel no hesitancy in offering myself again, nor in asking them for their support."

He also said he thought that as most other elected office holders had been granted a second term "... I think I am fully entitled to the office."

He lauds his opponent in his letter, stating "My opponent, Mr. Nixon, is a man of good character – a true man in every sense of the word, so far as I know." However, Rayburn also states, Mr. Nixon "has plenty of this world's goods, worth about twenty-five thousand dollars," and "has a boot and shoe store in this city." Rayburn said he believed Nixon "has plenty to attend to without the Treasurers (sic) office." Further research revealed Mr. Nixon's first name was Richard.

Rayburn left office in 1873 and moved to Andersonville, Ind., where he practiced medicine. In the early 1890s, he returned to Kokomo and set up a specialist practice as an eye, ear, nose and throat doctor. In 1905, he moved to San Diego where he remained until his death in 1923.

A turning point in collection methods

The purchase of the Rayburn letter represents a turning point for the Howard County Historical Society, in that it is an example of assertive collecting.

Prior to 2014, the society's collecting has been for the most part passive, i.e., the museum has depended on the goodwill of its patrons for donations, which turn up sporadically.

The Rayburn letter is an example of an item that has been identified as something that would enhance the collection and was actively pursued. As time and money allow, I hope that this approach to collecting becomes the norm for HCHS.

This addition to the collection will be on display at the Howard County Museum.

Stew Lauterbach
HCHS Curator

It's a TREEmendous Christmas at the Seiberling

By Linda Ferries
HCHS Publications Committee Chair

A Christmas tree extravaganza is being planned as the Howard County Historical Society gears up for "A TREE-mendous Christmas at the Seiberling" this year.

Peggy Hobson, chair of the HCHS events committee and coordinator of the annual Christmas at the Seiberling celebration, says this year's effort will focus on trees of all sizes, shapes and themes. "You will still find a number of angels in the mansion, our theme for the last two years," Peggy noted, "but the focus will be on the trees gorgeously decorated by the creative organizations and individuals who are volunteering this year."

Visitors during the Christmas season will have the opportunity to vote for their favorite tree and visitors 12 and younger can compete for a prize in the "Count the Trees" contest. A special evening of crafts for kids is set for 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 18, at the Elliott House, with tickets at \$1 per craft.

Along with regular afternoon hours of 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, the mansion also will be open to visitors seven evenings during the Christmas season to take in the full experience.

The festivities will begin with the traditional Lighting Ceremony on the Saturday after Thanksgiving (Nov. 28), sponsored by the Wyman Group, with refreshments, musical entertainment, carriage rides and Santa greeting youngsters in the Elliott House. The evening will kick off at 6 p.m. with the arrival of Santa and the lighting of the museum and will continue through 9 p.m. Admission is \$10 at the door and \$7 in advance. For historical society mem-

bers, admission is free. Advance tickets are available online at howardcountymuseum.org.

The museum also will be open during evening hours on the three Thursdays and Fridays following Thanksgiving – December 3, 4, 10, 11, 17 and 18. On each of those days, the mansion will open at 1 p.m. as usual but, instead of closing at 4, will remain open until 8 p.m. and refreshments will be served each evening.

Local organizations and businesses have come forward to sponsor the six December "Nights at the Seiberling," underwriting the usual \$5 admission charge for all guests. "We are very excited about our community sponsors," Peggy said. "Everyone in the community has



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Old Silk Stocking Carriage Rides

Saturday, November 28 from 6-9 p.m.
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Deborah (Hodson) Peck recounted living and working in the Seiberling Mansion as the first live-in curator in the 1970s as Sonnie Neal and Mary Ellen Harnish listen.

Kelly Thompson Karickhoff recounted achievements during her 21 years as director of the Howard County Historical Society, offering credit to the many volunteers and staff members **Stewart Lauterbach, Bonnie Van Kley and Bill Baldwin** for their dedication and professionalism.

Mary Ellen talked about her tenure as president in the early 2000s, a period that included installation of climate control in the Seiberling as well as its transformation as the Designers Showhome.



HCHS President-Elect Judy Brown addressed members at the annual meeting with a slide show of past activities and events at the historical society in the background.

During the business meeting preceding the centennial program, members of the Howard County Historical Society approved the slate of nominees to the Board of Trustees presented by the Board Development Committee.

Re-elected to an additional term were Heather Fouts, Larry Hayes, Dean Hockney, Wayne Luttrell, and Lori Tate. Elected as new trustees were Sharon Reed-Corbett, Nick Hutchins, Randy Rusch, and Dr. Charles Simons.

Past president and outgoing board member Marilyn Skinner was recognized for her years of work for the historical society.

Current HCHS Executive Director Dave Broman took a look ahead ... to plans to continue improving the museum's collections and displays using the Seiberling as a focal point to share the impact of the 1880s Gas Boom on Kokomo and east central Indiana.

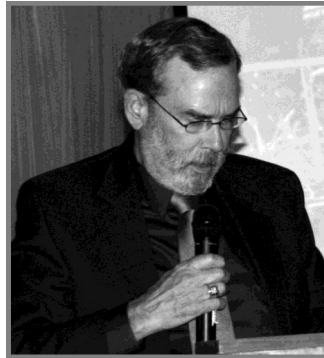
Dave urged those present to continue their participation and encouraged them to support the annual campaign that helps finance operations. More information about the HCHS centennial celebration activities will be coming soon.

Looking back at the first 100 years

By Linda Ferries
HCHS Publication Committee Chair

“We’re only here temporarily. We are only temporary custodians of history. We are here to preserve it and hopefully pass it on as much as we can to the next generation. One of the similarities from what I’ve heard from everyone is that this work isn’t what we do. It really is who we are. It’s not just a hobby, not just volunteering, but this is part of our lives. These artifacts, these buildings, they speak to us in a very real way and that’s what we honor today as we pass this along.”

With those words, former Howard County Museum curator Rich Kastl beautifully summarized the 2015 annual meeting of the Howard County Historical Society – the kick off of the organization’s celebration of its centennial next year. Kastl, who served as the museum curator from 1978 to 1985, was among eight former



Rich Kastl, museum curator from 1978 to 1985, traveled from New York to speak at the 2015 HCHS annual meeting in October.

president Mary Ellen Harnish combed through the archives for photos and historical tidbits to share, going back to the founding of the society in 1916 as part of the celebration of the State of Indiana’s 100th birthday.

Judy recounted how the museum opened in 1923, displaying its “collections” in two curio cabinets; how it moved to the basement of the courthouse in 1937; and how the society took over the Seiberling Mansion in 1972. Her timeline was interspersed with commentaries from several others:

Michael Morehead talked about his wife Kitty’s grandfather, **Ellis Learner**, who served as curator for a time during the 1950s.

Roberta Nicholson shared memories of her sister **Josephine Hobson’s** long service to the historical society, from the days she served as curator in the courthouse to her leadership in saving the mansion from years of neglect.

Deborah (Hodson) Peck shared memories of her work as the first live-in curator at the mansion – earning \$4000 a year, plus apartment and utilities at the Seiberling. She credited people like Jane Pyle and Bob Hotchkiss and a very young Mary Ellen Harnish for their work during the 1970s.

Judy read a letter from long-time volunteer **Lois Martin**, whose memories go back to the museum in the courthouse basement. She and her friends spent pleasurable hours there while waiting for her father to get off work.

Rich Kastl came from Endicott, N.Y., to help celebrate the museum’s history and his part in it. He now works as an archaeologist for the University of Binghamton in Binghamton, N.Y.

Mary Ellen Harnish read comments from an interview with **Dixie Westlin**. While Dixie wasn’t able to be at the dinner, she wanted to share memories of her 18 years on the museum staff.

the opportunity to share in the celebration, thanks to our generous donors.”

These sponsors have underwritten admission charges for the following dates:

Thursday, Dec. 3 – Community First Bank

Friday, Dec. 4 – Duke Energy

Thursday, Dec. 10 – First Farmers Bank

Friday, Dec. 11 – Ivy Tech Community College

Thursday, Dec. 17 – Solidarity Federal Credit Union

Friday, Dec. 18 – Haynes International
Of course, the extra hours mean extra volunteers on those dates.

“We need volunteers to serve as guides and room monitors, as well as people to serve refreshments,” Hobson said. “Any historical society member who would like to help on those evenings should call me at 765-271-0039.”

And for those looking for Christmas gift



PAULA GOFF PHOTOS

ideas, visitors will be able to select from among 20 international commemorative Dirilyte Christmas plates that were donated to the historical society for fundraising by Palmer’s Jewelry. The plates depict Christmas from a number of countries around the world and are offered at \$45 each. A limited number of Kokomo Opalescent Glass angel ornaments also will be for sale at \$20 each.

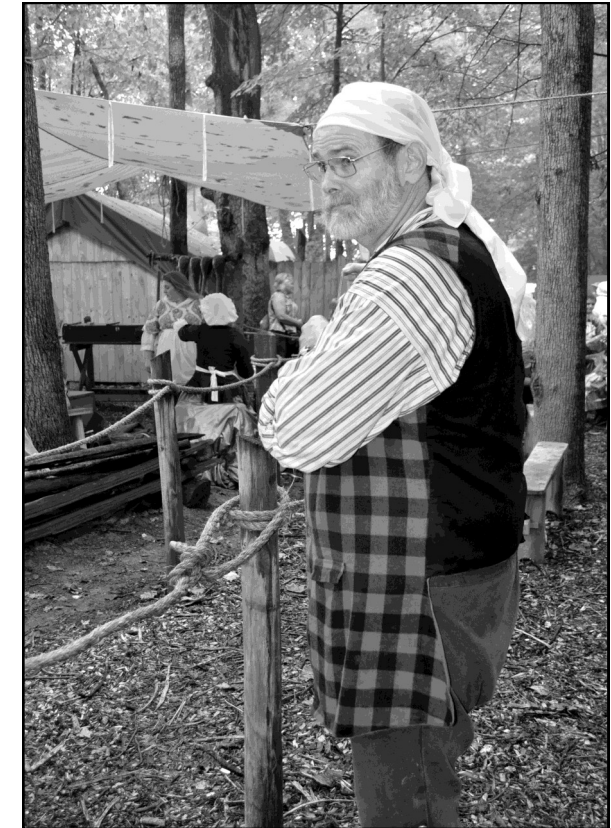
Please note the museum will be closed from Nov. 14 to 27 so decorators can work their magic and visitors can be treated to a grand reveal.



Have ornaments you aren't using? Strings of lights? How about an extra artificial Christmas tree? HCHS will gladly put your unused Christmas decorations to good use. We are especially in need of bigger trees – those nine to 12 feet tall – but any size would be welcome.

The historical society joined in the fun, providing an educational candle-dipping experience for youngsters as well as tasty, sweet corn-on-the-cob for the thousands of Hoosiers who came to immerse themselves in our history.

HCHS owes a debt of gratitude to the many people who make the weekend event possible, especially our own volunteers, who dress in period clothing to help teach kids about life before electric lights and smartphones, as well as those who clean, cook and serve hundreds of ears of corn.



Children enjoyed participating in the candle-dipping experience at the encampment. Above, Stew Lauterbach takes a break during the busy weekend. Below, Melanie Waggoner, Mackenzie Broman and Mary Ellen Harnish prep wicks for candle dipping.



HCHS provides corn, candle dipping and fun at annual encampment

David Foster and Chief Koh-koh-mah came to life again in September, if only for a few glorious fall days.

Bob Auth and friends hosted the annual Koh-koh-mah/Foster Encampment in western Howard County and invited historical reenactors from across the Midwest to join them in a re-creation of Indiana's pioneer days.



Celebrate in style...

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**catering kitchen, tables and chairs included at no extra charge*

Want a unique and beautiful holiday portrait taken on the Seiberling's festively decorated main stairway? Curt Alexander of Spectrum Photography is taking reservations for photo sessions Sunday, Nov. 22. Give him a call at (765) 437-8048 for more information



Conger: Forgotten man with big impact on region

By H.T. Ellis
HCHS Publications Committee Member

I like to consider myself as someone who “adopts” forgotten individuals from the past -- that’s what brought me to the Howard County Historical Society in the first place. There is something satisfying about keeping someone’s name alive, but it is certainly more than that.



Colonel A.L. Conger

Keeping their story alive is just as important. When I heard about A.L. Conger, I naturally became interested. Few remember who he was. The HCHS focuses on people from Howard County who contributed to the community we know today, but A.L. Conger was not from Howard County. In fact, he was not from Indiana, nor did he ever seem to reside in the Kokomo area. What, then, could be his historical significance here?

Great men do not often wander aimlessly into great situations — they are led. This was the case of Monroe Seiberling during the Gas Boom, when he was drawn from Akron, Ohio, to involve himself in two businesses in Kokomo and to build the notable, prized mansion of this county. His name is one of the most well-known in the city, and the written and oral accounts of the Seiberling family are numerous and well documented. But, if he did not simply appear here on an entrepreneurial whim, how did he get here?

This is where Colonel Conger comes in. Arthur Lantham Conger lived in Akron, Ohio, as did Seiberling. After a successful stint as a

Union Army colonel in the Civil War, Conger returned to Akron and farmed, but found his talents best suited to business and politics. In 1870, he became director of Whitman & Miles Manufacturing Company and later president of a similar company, as well as the Akron Steam Forge Company. Conger had his finger in many pies; By 1895, he was an important investor and president of several companies between Ohio and Indiana. One company was the Diamond Plate Glass Company, begun by Conger in 1887. As its president, he asked Monroe Seiberling to serve as the plant manager. The two had previously worked together on the Kokomo Strawboard factory. Diamond Plate Glass served the region well — employing approximately 750 men by 1893. Had it not been for Conger, Seiberling may not have come to Kokomo for these business endeavors, and his legacy might only belong to other cities.

Conger’s grasp reached other central Indiana cities as well. He was considered a successful investor and financier throughout the Gas Belt communities, particularly in Elwood, Hartford



Conger’s mansion in Akron, Ohio. The house has since been demolished.

City and Muncie, where he served as president of and personally became involved in numerous manufacturing companies, including Hartford City Glass Company. He maintained his presidency of the company there from its birth in 1890 until 1895, when he was voted out and replaced by another colonel from Akron named George T. Perkins. For reasons unclear, Conger had fallen into disfavor with the local citizens, and in dismay over losing his position, sold his company stock and left Hartford City behind. By this point, he had suffered greatly from the Panic of 1893, when stock prices declined, 500 banks closed and approximately 15,000 businesses across the country failed in a four-year span. Financially ruined and facing several lawsuits, the once-millionaire retreated from investing and soon became ill. He passed away in 1899 in Des Moines, Iowa, after a series of strokes. A dilapidated mausoleum houses his remains in Akron.

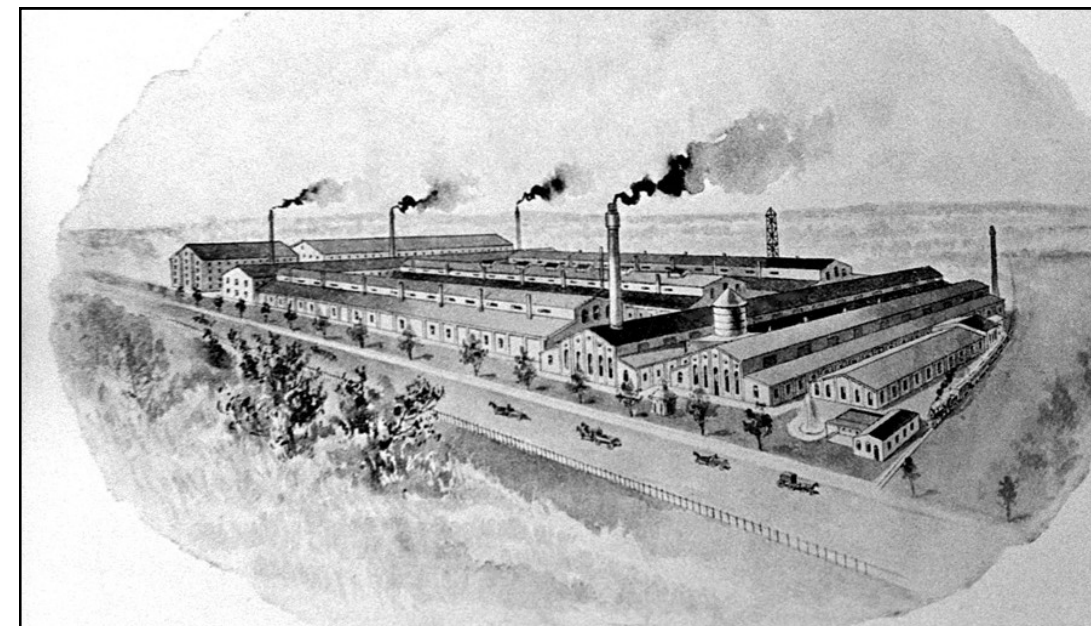
As for the fate of Diamond Plate Glass, it was the major industry in Kokomo during the Gas Boom. Not immune to the effects of the Panic

of 1893, it was merged with Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company in 1895 and was subsequently closed, certainly a disappointment to both Conger and Seiberling. It was at this point that they, once savvy business partners, both moved on as many investors do — but the importance of their financial contributions to the city and the growth it brought for several years should not be understated.

Seiberling’s name remains in Kokomo; Conger’s was lost to time. For a short while, Philips Street, south of Park Road, bore his name (it was changed around 1908). Just two blocks away was Seiberling Street, now South Lindsay). Conger’s road is now defunct and filled in with earth, much like his legacy in Howard County.



A.L. Conger in later years



The Diamond Plate Glass Company