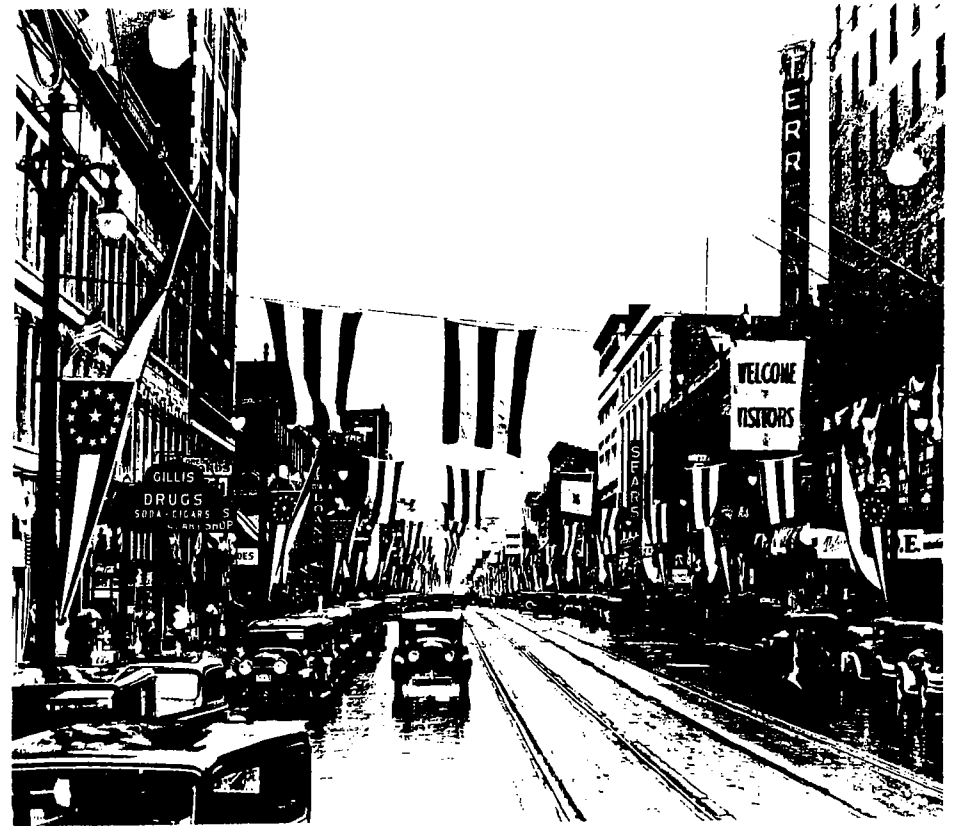


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Leaves of Thyme

VIGO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOLUME 45, NUMBER 2
SUMMER 1990



*Downtown Terre Haute in 1936.
Traffic is moving east.*

"Stardust Memories"

"Stardust Memories" will be the theme of the Vigo County Historical Society's Summer Celebration Fundraiser scheduled for Saturday, July 14th, at Hulman Center.

The evening will recall the era from 1923 to 1943 when dancing at the Trianon and other Terre Haute dance pavilions was at its height in popularity and style. A cast of dancers, singers, actors and musicians in period costumes will demonstrate why the era is fondly remembered.

The Trianon Dance Hall opened its doors in December of 1923 with a gala benefit and soon became the center of Terre Haute night life and festivities for young and old. As many as 42 dances were played each night, performed for the most part by local bands. But the sounds of the big-name bands, such as Paul Whiteman, Benny Goodman, and Wee Bennie Baker also entertained generations of Terre Hauteans for their modest admission. Dance contests and marathons provided endless hours of enjoyment for families struggling to endure the Depression of the 30's.

Co-chairman Gwen Buchanan, Kristine Felling, Kathy Jarrett, and Joy Sacopulos have announced plans for the pre-show activities beginning at 7:30 p.m. Vintage cars will be on display to set the mood for ticket holders. Dancing demonstrations and lessons will loosen the muscles and prepare the audience for a big and vigorous evening. A musical review written and produced by Sheila Wahamaki will begin at 8:30 p.m. Celebrities of the era will perform during the evening. Music, dancing, and costumes will turn the calendar back to memorable, entertaining nights at the Trianon and under the stars. A post show visit to the famous Wassell Inn for a quick dance to jukebox music will evoke the gaiety and fun of the pre-World War II era. With "Stardust Memories" the Vigo County Historical Society will once again refresh memories and create new ones from Terre Haute's past on Saturday, July 14th.

Leaves of Thyme is published by the Vigo County Historical Society, 1411 South Sixth Street, Terre Haute, Indiana 47802. Address all mail regarding change of address and material for publication to the above.

1990 Society Membership Dues: Student—\$10.00; Individual over 65—\$10.00; Individual—\$15.00; Family—\$20.00; Club or School—\$20.00; Patron—\$25.00; Contributing—\$50.00; Sustaining—\$100.00; Business Associate—\$50.00; Business Patron—\$100.00; Business Sponsor—\$250.00; LIFE MEMBERSHIP—\$500.00.

Museum hours: 1 to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. Groups are requested to make tour appointments in advance. Museum Telephone: (812) 235-9717.

A Wonderful Entertainment Era, When Bands Played for Dancing

These are excerpts from an article by Carolyn Toops that appeared in the Terre Haute Tribune-Star on September 21, 1969.

Whatever became of dancing? Whatever became of dance bands? Back in the 1920's and 1930's, Terre Haute (and the whole country) abounded in places to dance, featuring "live" music.

But customs and habits and people have a way of changing, and to many, these bygone days are just pleasant and lingering memories now.

The Trianon, which opened in December 1923, was the largest of Terre Haute's dance pavilions. It was operated for about 15 years by Homer Williams during the dance era.

Special lighting effects were employed to make elaborate decorations and draperies unnecessary. A contest was held to select a name for Terre Haute's largest dance hall and the local Trianon shared the name with others located in Cleveland, Los Angeles, Seattle and perhaps the most famous, Chicago.

The Trianon was razed years ago to make way for the Topps store on Wabash Avenue. It was used for a short time, and also housed the Simplicity Pattern Company's operation here.

The Trianon's grand opening was a gala benefit for Union Hospital, and admission was \$1.00. Afterward, it cost 10 cents for admission, 10 cents for checking and 5 cents a dance. The ballroom could hold 800 couples, and because of its size, was the only place in Terre Haute where the big name bands came to play. Many of the local bands and orchestras, including Leo Baxter's, also played often at the Trianon, which was

open nightly and on Sunday afternoons. Being outside the city limits, at that time, it was permissible to hold Sunday dances there.

Among the name bands which appeared at the Trianon were Paul Whiteman, the Kansas City Nighthawks, Buddy Rogers, King Anderson, Coon-Sanders Band, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Jan Garber, Sammy Kaye, Henry Busse, Russ Morgan, Wayne King and McKinney's Cottonpickers.

The Trianon also featured a "Moonlight Gardens" section, an outdoor pavilion for dancing in the summer. Several other suburban dancing pavilions also attracted crowds in the summer. Among them were the Summer Garden, east of the viaduct on East Wabash Avenue, reached by interurban transportation; Elm Grove, via interurban to North Terre Haute, popular for many years; Erickson's Hall, also in North Terre Haute, and Ray Park, at which several of the local bands played. Dances were held every Saturday night at the Dreamland in Clinton, on the interurban line.

Even earlier, between 1910 and 1915, the first of these summer pavilions, Chelsea Park, had operated. It was located between Sanford and St. Mary's and was also reached by interurban.

Private dances (school and sorority, etc.) were often held at the Phoenix Club at 5th and Walnut, where the Labor Temple is located. Hoagy Carmichael, the Wolverines and Dusty Rhodes, among others, appeared at the Phoenix.

Also, there was the Deming Hotel Ballroom, and later the Mayflower Room of the Terre Haute House. The first supper club with a "night club" atmosphere was at the Deming in what was later the Hoosier Room. The basic dance steps in the 1920's were the one-step, fox trot and waltz, usually in that order, making a set. You knew exactly what the next dance would be, or you could ask your partner, according to those who danced regularly. Other

favorites were the two-step, Charleston, Black Bottom, Lindy Hop, and Castle Walk. Waltzes began to go out about 1925.

According to Leo Baxter, there was also some square and round dancing during this period, but mostly at private parties.

Marathon, walkathons, the Big Apple, jitterbugging these followed. Jitterbugging heralded the arrival of separate dancing, and perhaps helped hasten the demise of ballroom dancing as it had been.

Excellent Cafe Service at Moderate Prices	 <i>Terre Haute's Newest Amusement Place</i>	Free Parking Space for Automobiles
Grand Opening---Community Ball <i>Thursday, Dec. 20th</i>		
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Admission \$1.00 Per Person (No War Tax) Doors Open 8 P. M.		
Tickets on Sale at Following Places: Oak Hall Pharmacy, Baur's, Buntin's and Gillis Drug Co. Stores		
Music By 8-Piece Orchestra---C. C. Conrad Director		
Regular Admission After Opening Night Will Be 10c		

Museum Receives Trees As Gifts

Several trees have recently had to be removed from the Museum grounds. Two have generously been replaced.

One day after the last issue of Leaves of Thyme was received, Mr. Arthur W. Lindholm brought a Sweet Gum tree to the Museum. It will replace the Mulberry we had to have cut down. Mr. Lindholm not only bought the tree, but planted it and has offered to care for the tree until it is well rooted.

Mrs. Mary Elaine Smith has also given a tree, a flowering Crab Apple, as a memorial to her late husband, Leonard, who was a professor of chemistry at ISU and had a great love of plants and flowers.

We are most appreciative of these gifts which will continue to beautify the Museum grounds.

One tree is still needed for the north tree row.



Stories Buildings Tell


On Saturday, August 11th, the Historical Society will hold a Workshop at the Museum for those interested in various styles of architecture.

The Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana has assembled a kit which includes general information and instructional materials on historical architecture. They have made this available to Historical Societies and educators throughout the state.

The Vigo County Historical Society has obtained one of the kits and is now adding material which will provide information on a local level. This is being done with the help of Don Hadley, an ISU history student with a strong interest in historic preservation. Don is creating supplementary material so that those attending the Workshop will have an opportunity to learn about architectural styles they see every day in the buildings and residences of Terre Haute.

This program will be of particular interest to teachers, but is open to anyone with an interest in architectural awareness in our community. The program will begin at 2:00 p.m. It would be appreciated, if those interested in attending would call the Museum at 235-9717.

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Paper Trails

Men have made and used maps ever since people first moved about the earth. Almost everyone has used a map at one time or another to learn about and show others the areas around us.

The next exhibit, beginning August 5th in the Vigo Room at the Historical Museum, will feature maps of Vigo County and the city of Terre Haute. These maps are from the Museum's collection. They will range from an 1854 area map to those more recently made.

Anyone having an unusual map of local interest who would be willing to loan it for a short period of time, please call the Museum.



Museum Receives "Ta-Bed"

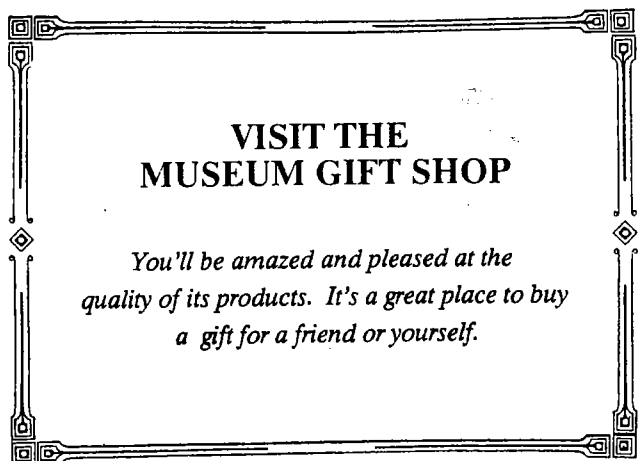
"Can I sleep in the table tonight, Mother?" This question might have been asked in the Stapleton household around the turn of the century.

The Historical Museum has recently been given a very interesting and unusual piece of furniture. It is a table which makes into a bed.

It is a gift from Alice Stapleton and comes from the home of her grandparents.

This piece of furniture is a table measuring approximately 4 by 2 feet, but when the top is lifted, a Murphy bed can be unfolded. It was made by the United Table Bed Company of Chicago under the trade mark, "Ta-Bed", and appears to have been sold at the Roots Department Store during the first decade of the new century.

This table bed will be put in the Nursery and will replace the Condit bed which belongs to the Swope Art Museum and is being returned at their request.



Friends of the Museum



The Friends had a good year. We were quite successful with the sale of raffle tickets on the quilt we made last year.

Our programs for the year were very interesting and on a variety of subjects from dolls to the future of the museum. Programs for the 1990-91 season are pretty well lined up, but contact with the people to set up dates still has to be done. We hope to have this done before our September meeting.

A new typewriter and coffee maker were purchased for the office and authorization was given for the museum to have a cumbersome piece of furniture moved by professional movers. When any other small item is needed and the Friends can help financially, we are here to do what we can.

We will soon put another quilt in a quilting frame. It will be located in the Vigo Room and anyone who quilts is welcome to add a few stitches. Chances are now on sale for \$1.00 each, so sell as many as possible.

We are in dire need of additional volunteers and anyone is welcome. We are not limited to women, so any of you men out there who would like to help are very welcome.

I wish to thank all of you who worked this past year. Keep up the good work!

Barbara Wilkinson
President

Many Thanks...

We would like to thank the following for their recent gifts to the Museum's collections:

R.K. Shook, Dorothy Jerse, Sonya North, Mrs. Robert Ryan, Frances Farris, Miriam Schloss Weil, Elza G. Schott, James S. Richardson, Thomas Charters, Sara J. Davis, Ruby Carter, Robert J. Jones and Alice Stapleton

Thanks also to those who recently gave donations to the Vigo County Historical Society:

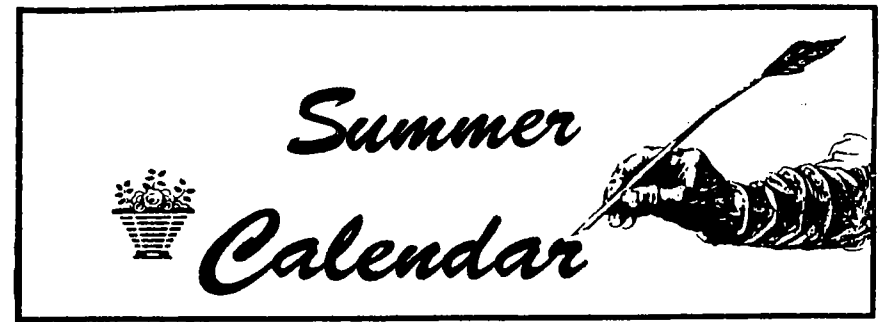
Mature Singles of United Methodist Temple, Literature and Drama Dept. of Womens Department Club, Carl Wassink, T.H. Hehman, Honey Creek Garden Club, PEO Sisterhood, Wabash Valley Craftsmen Club, Kathleen Mickelberry, Chapter DR of PEO Sisterhood and Vigo County Council Homemakers Extension Association

Special thanks to the following who made contributions in memory of Virginia Shriner:

Mr. and Mrs. George Nichols, Goodwill Industries of the Wabash Valley, Inc., Jeanne Bon Durant Sumansky, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Carpenter, Ronald E. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Poorman, Jobe Stress Center Staff and Dr. and Mrs. Richard Watson

Thank you to:

Jane Foulkes for purchasing the book, Kachinas, a Hopi artist's documentary and to Kathy Jarrett for a cash register for the Gift Shop. Also the Museum volunteers for keeping us supplied with tea and household products.



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| Current Exhibit | "Button, Button, We've Got the Buttons", featuring hundreds of unusual buttons from members of the Terre Haute Button Club. In the Vigo Room. |
| July 4 | Independence Day! (Museum closed) |
| July 14 | "Stardust Memories, Dancing at the Terre Haute Summer Celebration at 7:30 p.m. at Hulman Center. PLAN TO ATTEND! |
| July 14 and 15 | Museum is closed for the Summer Celebration |
| August 5 | New Exhibit: "Paper Trails", a display of Terre Haute and Vigo County maps from the Museum's collection. |
| August 11 | "Stories Buildings Tell", a workshop designed to increase awareness of local architecture. 2:00 p.m. at the Museum. |

Plan to attend the Annual Dinner on September 7 at Fowler Park. This particular site offers the opportunity to make this year's Annual Dinner a unique and special event.

VIGO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47802

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