

Leaves of Thyme 8:

Vigo County Historical Society

Volume 48, Number 1

Spring 1993



The Historical Society is also interested in collecting items from the recent past. This issue's cover photo shows the first compact disc issued by the Digital Audio Disc Corp of Terre Haute. *Born in the USA* by Bruce Springsteen was issued in 1984 and marketed by Columbia Broadcasting Systems. They were the only domestic source for CDs at that time. The disc is currently on display, only one of the artifacts given to the society in 1992.



FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

December was a busy time for Friends of the Museum as they spent many hours helping decorate the Museum so beautifully for the holidays. On December 14th, we had a pleasant afternoon as we travelled to Greencastle and enjoyed lunch at the Walden Inn. We are already thinking about where we might go next year.

The lovely quilt was picked up just before Christmas by the very lucky person whose name was drawn. Again, thanks so much to all the ladies who worked so faithfully on the quilt.

The Museum was closed for cleaning during the month of January, and many of the Friends assisted with a variety of cleaning chores. A special thank you is due Jan Buffington, Barbara Wilkinson and Florence Stoelting who reorganized the Museum's quilt collection. Each quilt was refolded and placed in a separate new storage box. The new storage and labeling system is much more efficient and makes the quilts easier to find when a special one is needed.

We had a wonderful turn out for the February meeting. We thoroughly enjoyed Mary Ann Craig's heartwarming story about the mothers of Abe Lincoln.

We are looking forward to the March meeting when Alice Fowler will present a program on rugs. She has collected old rugs and researched ways in which housewives used materials that would otherwise have been discarded. We hope you will plan to join us on March 15th.

Our meetings are open to the public, and everyone is invited. A social time, with light refreshments, begins at 12:30 p.m., and the program starts at 1:00 p.m. A short business meeting follows the program.

Please mark April 19th on your calendars. Because April is Volunteer Month, the Board of Directors plans to have a Luncheon honoring the Friends. It will begin at 12:30 P.M. I hope all of you will come to be recognized for your fine help at the Historical Museum.



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

In celebration of Women's History Month, the Vigo County Historical Society, the Vigo County Public Library, and YWCA are co-sponsoring events during March to honor Willa Brown Chappell, 1906 - 1992.

Willa Brown was a former resident of Terre Haute and a graduate of both Wiley High School and Indiana State Teachers College. In 1937, she received her pilot's license and was the first black woman to become a commercial pilot. During World War II, Brown was a member of the Civil Air Patrol as well as the founder and director of the Coffey School of Aeronautics, a Chicago - based school which trained black pilots.

Tara Ross will give a presentation on Willa Brown's life and career during the Women's Breakfast at the YWCA from 7:00 - 7:45 a.m., March 17 (Wed.). Reservations must be made by March 16; YWCA membership is not required. Fee is \$2.50 per person.

Displays on Willa Brown will be featured at both the Vigo County Public Library and the Vigo County Historical Society for the entire month of March. Also, a newspaper article on Brown was featured in the February 28th issue of the Tribune Star, and posters on this pioneer woman pilot have been created and distributed to the Vigo County secondary schools.

Members of the Women's History Planning Committee this year are Dorothy Jerse, Susan Dehler and David Buchanan.

SPRING EGG TREE

A sure sign that spring is just around the corner is the appearance of the Easter Egg Tree at the Historical Museum.

For the past 15 years, a different organization or school in the Vigo County School Corporation has supplied cleverly decorated eggs for the tree placed in the North Room of the Museum's main floor. This year, the students at Lost Creek Elementary School are using their imagination to create these colorful eggs.

Eggs, decorated with fabric, colored paper and all sorts of materials resemble pretty ladies, football players, animals and birds. They are fun to see and one of the most popular annual Museum exhibits.

The Spring Egg Tree will be on display from March 13th through Easter Sunday!



VISIT THE MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

*You'll be amazed and pleased at the
quality of its products. It's a great place to buy
a gift for a friend or yourself.*

Many Thanks...

The Historical Society is most appreciative of the \$9,000 donation appropriated from the Vigo County commissioners. This has been done on an annual basis and is extremely helpful in the operation of the Historical Museum.

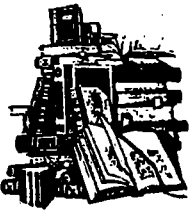
The Historical Society would like to thank the following for their recent gifts to the Museum's collection: Mary Glen Yeager Smith, David Buchanan, Mary S. Kitchel, Hermina Henry, Richard Donagen, Morris Blumberg, Carolyn Gurman, Jim Nichols, Edith Baker, the Walsh family, Anna Louise Brent, Sally Moulton, Shirley Lindeman and Florence Sedletzck.

We appreciate the monetary donations made from the following: Venture Enterprises LTD (Robert Follett), ISU Wives Club, Weston Wabash Foundation, St. Patrick School Club, Gibson Foundation, Elizabeth Scott, Mary Wright, the House Corporation, Dr. J.L. and Florence Stoelting, Nancy and Charles Bradford, Elizabeth Merrill, Mary Hooper, Dorothy Jerse, Elizabeth Jane Wheat, Carolyn Gurman, Dr. and Mrs. Wayne Schomer, Terre Haute Lions Club and the Vigo County Public Library.

Our thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Westrup for their contribution made in memory of William Knipmeyer, brother of Mrs. Avice McCrae.

Special thanks to members of the Friends of the Historical Museum for housekeeping supplies brought to the February meeting.

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YEAR OF THE HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH

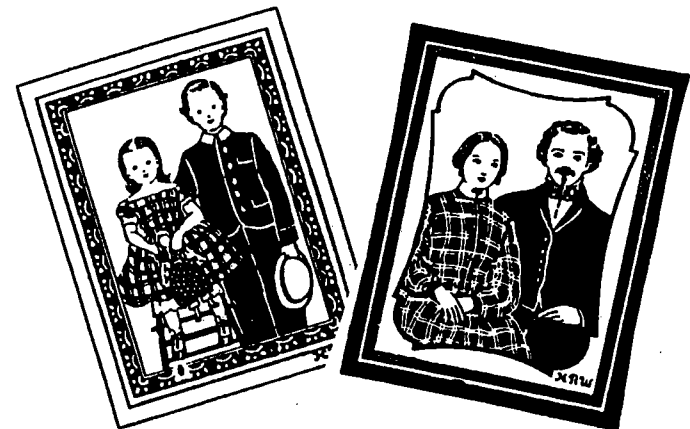
By now you are aware of and looking forward to the publication of a new Terre Haute pictorial history book. The book is co-sponsored by Terre Haute First National Bank and the Vigo County Historical Society. The publisher is G. Bradley of St. Louis.

Dorothy Jerse and Judy Calvert, who will be remembered for On the Banks of the Wabash which was published in 1983, are authors for the book. While that book has been sold out for several years, the Museum still receives calls from persons trying to locate a copy.

The authors are still considering photographs for inclusion in the book. Anyone having photographs of Terre Haute's past is asked to bring them to any branch of Terre Haute First National Bank or the Vigo County Historical Museum. The photos may be given to the Historical Society or loaned for consideration.

Of special interest are photographs of business or job related activities, drive-in movies, restaurants, neighborhood involvement and sports action.

We urge you to search through your long forgotten photographs. You may have one that would bring back a special Terre Haute memory.





EARLY DAYS OF BASEBALL IN TERRE HAUTE

(The following excerpts are from an article by A.R. Markle which appeared in the Terre Haute Tribune on Sunday, April 25, 1955)

Almost everyone knows that certain things in a boy's life tend to go in pairs - a boy and his dog, a boy and his ball, and a boy and his pets. The one of almost universal enjoyment was playing ball. Started at first as a school yard game, the boys played single or double "scrub" or other competitive games, but the most famous and the longest lived was the boys' play of baseball.

Of course we all know that father goes to the circus not for his own interest but to be able to take the boy. In the beginning of baseball the elders furnished the audience and finally emulated the example before them and men began playing baseball.

The first organized teams to bring about opposition and local interest were between the volunteer firemen's companies. The most outstanding game was that of the Mohawks and the Eurekas played on Aug. 31, 1867, which finished with the score of 61 to 83, with the Eurekas on the winning side

Very early games were played at convenient points. Some of them were played on the open field between Sycamore Street and the Vandalia Railroad on Sixth Street. Other games were played on vacant lots east of Eighth Street between Chestnut and Sycamore Streets. They also played on the vacant lots on the north side of Wabash, west of Seventh Street. Not until about the nineties was a park with a grandstand and the trimmings built near Seventeenth and Wabash.

Charlie Nehf, who knew baseball from its start, used to tell of his club holding practice sessions in this park on Sunday morning for which he paid \$5.00 rent. This was the beginning of the admission charged to see the game. Before that time, for more than twenty-five years there was no charge, not even a passing of

the hat among the spectators.

The longest field used for baseball games, particularly on Sunday was east of Ninth Street beginning at a half block north of Locust and bounded on the east by the I and St. Louis, later the Big Four System, and on the north by Fourth Avenue. At times this would accommodate three games played simultaneously. Among the teams who played there were the Aawkards and Blues, the Fasts and Slows. The earlier teams composed of the volunteer firemen had given up playing with the coming of paid fire departments.

Charlie Nehf was born in 1857. He knew baseball from the start here until he left the city for Phoenix, Arizona where he lived with his son, a famous baseball player, Arthur Nehf. Charlie died in 1953. He has written very interesting accounts of old Terre Haute and knew and played with many of our Old Timers.

Mr. Nehf managed the Slows and Albert Froeb was the manager or captain of the Fasts. The Slows won four years out of four years. The Vigo Club had among others William Tuell, Scott Bell and William Teursch. Tuell was a pitcher and Bell and Teursch were catchers. Charles Chamberlain of the Sycamores could throw a ball over 400 feet. Edward Dunn was a pitcher for the Sycamores. Charles Voorhees, son of Senator Daniel Voorhees, was also a player for the Sycamores.

According to Charlie Nehf, there have been 13 players who were from Terre Haute who have gone to the majors. Some are Cod Myers, Art Nehf, Cecil Ferguson, Mordicai Brown, Billy Nelson, Ace Stewart, Victor Aldrich and Dizzy Trout.

Terre Haute's sporting circles brought about some competition with other cities and before the organization of league teams we had one particular visiting club which came from Vincennes. This game lasted three hours and was an exciting game all the way through. Victory was perching on one side or the other all

through the game although it finished in favor of Vincennes with a score of 65 to 61.

The formation of several leagues which included Terre Haute resulted in the one which outlasted all others, the famous Three-I League --Indiana, Illinois and Iowa. At one time the bitterest (sic) rivalry was between Terre Haute and Evansville.

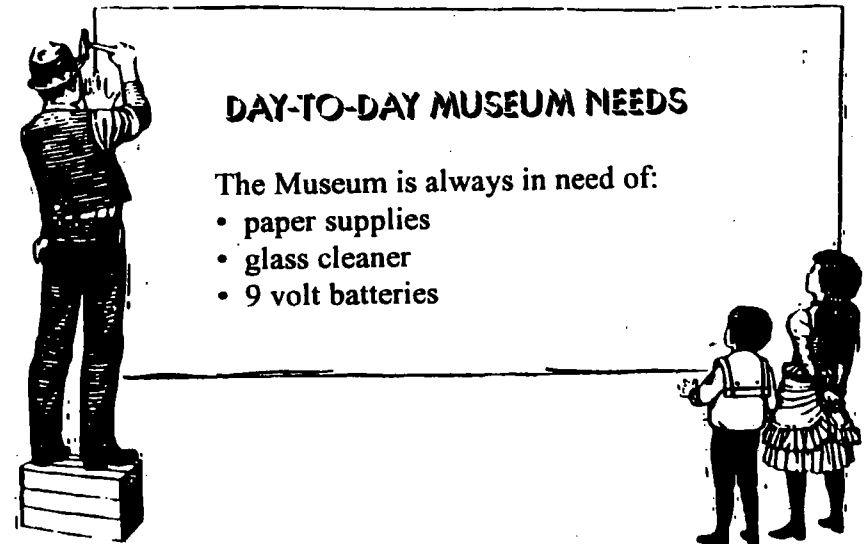
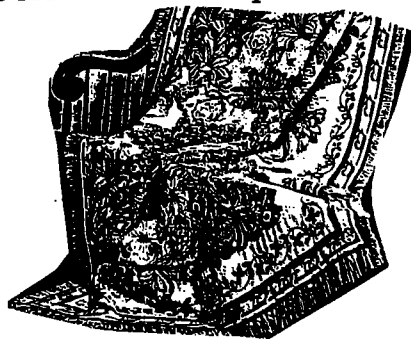
MUSEUM CELEBRATES NATIONAL QUILTING DAY

March 20th is National Quilting Day. In acknowledgement of this, Sarah Hartzler, local quilter and collector of small quilts will be at the Historical Museum on that Saturday and Sunday (the 21st) from 1 to 4 P.M. She will be demonstrating her craft as well as displaying quilts from her collection. Some have been acquired, but most have been made by Mrs. Hartzler.

The small quilts, about doll bed size and often used as wall hangings, will be exhibited at the Museum for several weeks.

Also, on those afternoons, a video called How To Take Care of Quilts will be shown. This film was made by the Quilt Guild of Austin, Texas, released in 1990 and provides information for those who are concerned about taking the best care of their prized possessions. It will be shown both days at 1:30, 2:30, and 3:30 P.M. The Historical Museum often receives inquiries from quilt owners about caring for their quilts, so this is an excellent opportunity to have those questions answered.

Arrangements for the film and quilter were made by Patricia Engelland.



Saturday, June 5th is the date set for the Historical Society's Spring Antique Flea Market. That particular day was chosen because it coincides with the Farrington's Grove yard sale. This event brings large crowds to the area, which would make for a successful Flea Market.

It will be held on the grounds of the Historical Museum, beginning at 9:00 A.M.

Please note that this spring the Flea Market is on a Saturday. Hope you'll be there!



SPRING THYME PLANT AND HERB FAIRE

On Saturday, May 8th at Fairbanks Park, the Wabash Valley Herb Society is holding its annual Faire.

This is really a special occasion and opportunity for all those who enjoy learning about and working with herbs.

In addition to the varied herbs for sale, several programs will be offered throughout the day. Sue Watson will give programs using dried herbs, Marty Mertens, general chairman of this year's Faire, will demonstrate the uses of "chilies" and David Carter of the Spencer Book Store will be speaking. Schedules for these special programs may be picked up at the information booth.

A bake sale and entertainment are planned.

Last year there were nearly 100 booths at the Herb Faire. With more national advertising, even more booths featuring herbs, pottery, cookbooks, spice blends, herb vinegars, potpourri and more will be available.

NEW EXHIBITS

Treat yourself to a pleasurable hour or more by visiting the Historical Museum to view the new exhibits.

Small quilts (about 18" x 24") are featured in the Vigo Room. All are from Sarah Hartzler's collection; most have been made by her. Among these are her Afro-American group; others were made in tribute to our troops during Desert Storm. Then there is the Sexual Harassment quilt that Mrs. Hartzler made during the Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas hearing.

There are many beautiful quilts in this collection. They are the size that may also be used as wall hangings

On display throughout the Museum are items which were given to the Historical Society during 1992. Among these are the Camp Fire Girls uniform made in about 1915 by Mrs. Avice McCrae and a 1950s Girl Scout uniform worn by her daughter, Mary.

Easter eggs and cards from past years will also be in evidence.

AND.....don't forget the Spring Egg Tree!

SUMMER CELEBRATION

It isn't too early to turn your calendar pages and circle July 10th! That's the date of the Historical Society's Summer Celebration!

It's a little early for specific details, but we can tell you that:

It's about the time when the "Big Box" first took its place in Wabash Valley living rooms -- and you turned off your lights before you turned it on. Yes.....the '50s!

It takes place at the Indiana Theatre!

It's a musical show loaded with talent!

You won't want to miss it!



TERRE HAUTE TORNADO

From May 8th to July 14th we will feature the crew and artifacts of this B-26 World War II Bomber during an exhibit at the museum. Some of the crew will be at the museum on "Tornado Day", June 6th, from 1 to 4 p.m. You won't want to miss it.

VIGO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1411 South Sixth Street

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47802

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