

40th Anniversary Look Back: Founding of the Historical Society **By Andrew Wright**

It is official! This year we begin the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the CCHS. Every other edition of this year's Depot Dispatch will include a highlight from our organization's past.

For our first Look Back, let's start at the beginning. The Carmel Clay Historical Society was born out of the desire of the Bicentennial Commission to collect and incorporate Carmel's history with the celebration of the nation's founding. The first act of the steering committee, which preceded the commission, was to reprint the two histories of Carmel "Reminiscences of the Long Ago", written by Zina Warren in 1911, and "Carmel Centennial Book", the official program of the 1937 Carmel centennial celebration. That same year, Phil Hinshaw donated a wing of the 1875 Warren home to be moved on to W Main St and serve as the office of the Carmel Chamber of Commerce. Dubbed the Bicentennial House at the time, the building now houses the World's Smallest Children's Art Gallery.



On June 1st of 1975, fifty residents, many of them on the Bicentennial Commission, met in the 1837 Kinzer cabin to establish the CCHS with the mission "to further historical interest and to preserve historic buildings in the Carmel-Clay area". That mission was engaged almost immediately when the historical society offered to purchase the dilapidated Monon Depot from the LNA&C railroad company. The historical society eagerly began a decade long restoration of the 1883 depot, which stands as a testament to our earnest belief in our mission. Less than 6 months after the historical society was founded, Carmel became a city and swore in Albert Pickett as the first mayor. As the growth continues, so does our duty to maintain the relevance and accessibility of our history.

40th Anniversary Look-Back: Saving the Monon Depot



The historical society fully utilized the interest in local history generated by the lead-up to the Bicentennial celebration for their first mission: the Monon Depot restoration. Passenger service on the Monon ended in 1959, but the depot remained active as a freight stop until 1974. After the doors were closed, residents became concerned that the building would fall further into disrepair. The newly founded historical society made an offer to purchase the depot from the railroad company. The railroad agreed to the offer as long as the building was relocated.

In 1980, the building was moved to a concrete foundation one lot west of its original location. Following the relocation, a significant interior and exterior renovation began that included replacing wood shingles and siding. Many of the 1920s floorboards were also replaced. A wall dividing the passenger areas from the rest of the depot was removed to create an open floor plan. The most significant change occurred in 1981 when a wing was added to the south that included a kitchenette. In the 90s a wood deck was added.

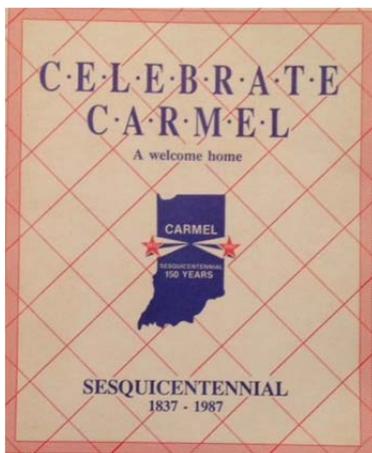


Saving and restoring the depot was no small feat, considering that the effort was undertaken in the first months of the historical society's existence. For many years, the key fundraising event was the County Christmas Bazaar. The judged crafts event was held annually for more than a decade and drew thousands from all over central Indiana.



A project of this scale took tremendous dedication from the charter members. The Monon Depot's stands today because the Carmel Clay Historical Society took on the daunting task and devoted countless hours towards its preservation. It should inspire our present organization. Many of the buildings and structures of our humble beginnings are gone. Let us continue our mission to collect and preserve our history.

40th Anniversary Look-Back: CCHS and the Sesquicentennial Celebration



Carmel turned 150 years old in 1987, and as it was during the Bicentennial, the city and its many community organizations wanted the Sesquicentennial celebration to be big! Planning began in 1984 when Mayor Jane Reiman appointed Fran Shoup as chairman of the Sesquicentennial Commission. The commission met monthly for the next two years. Festivities began with the Founders Day Breakfast and Founders Week at Carmel Clay Schools in the spring of 1987, leading up to the big celebration during the Fourth of July weekend.

Many community groups held events including the Carmel Chamber of Commerce's Golf Classic and Dinner, Carmel Dad's Club Youth Day - this event included activities for kids as well as autograph sessions with the Pacers, Colts and our former hockey

team, the Indianapolis Checkers. Other events included a formal ball, quilting bees, community barbeque, community flea market, and walking tours/carriage rides. The Carmel Ice Skadium featured a show on ice called "Celebrate Carmel".



The Carmel Clay Historical Society had several plans for the Sesquicentennial. First CCHS held a commemorative license plate design contest for Carmel High School students. The top three designs were printed and sold for \$5. The historical society also raised funds through the sale of a pewter commemorative plate depicting the Monon Depot.

On May 3rd, CCHS held a Sesquicentennial Luncheon and Yesteryear Style Show, themed "Swing into Spring". The Goodwill Guild presented a fashion show with members of the society serving as the models. 145 tickets were sold with proceeds going towards the depot restoration.



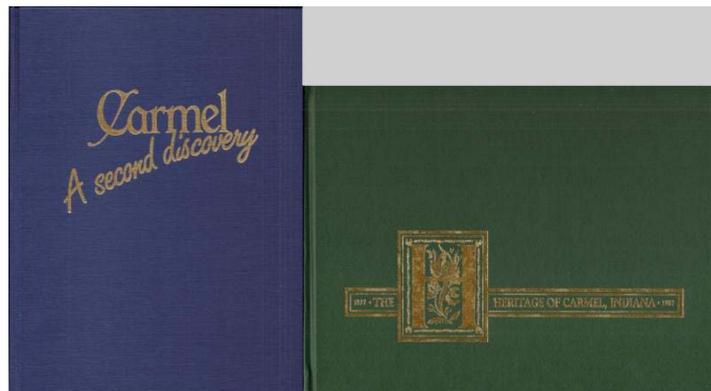
Sandy McGuire models one of the outfits at the CCHS Spring Luncheon and Style Show.

CCHS's big event was the opening of the newly restored Monon Depot during the main celebration of the Sesquicentennial on the 4th and 5th of July. Over 300 people came to see depot on its official debut. The open houses culminated more than a decade of fund raising and restoration work.

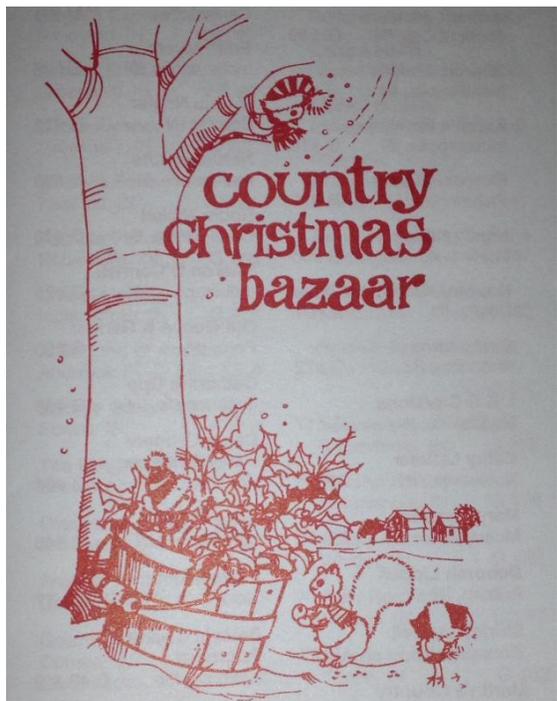
The Sesquicentennial Commission published two important histories of Carmel, *Carmel: A Second Discovery*, by Dorothy Smith, and *The Heritage of Carmel, Indiana 1837-1987*, by Phil Hinshaw, a founding member of CCHS. These books covered the history of Carmel from 1910 to 1987. Without the occasion of the Sesquicentennial, it is unlikely that such a daunting project would have been undertaken.

Much has happened, progressed and changed in the last 28 years. In that time, CCHS has endeavored to collect and preserve history as it happens. Hopefully our resources will benefit the author of Carmel's next history book, whoever they may be.

If you do not have either of the Sesquicentennial history books, they are very interesting and would be a great addition to your library. We only have a limited number of each, so contact us if you would like a copy.



40th Anniversary Look Back: Country Christmas Bazaar



A year after the Carmel Clay Historical Society was founded, the leadership needed to come up with a fundraiser to finance the restoration of the Monon Depot. In 1976, they held a juried craft-sale event. Though the inaugural Country Christmas Bazaar was mostly ceramics and macramé, the event was successful enough to warrant another. For 31 years (1976-2007), the bazaar was CCHS's primary fundraiser. Money was raised through door donations, booth rental, sales at the society's booth, and refreshments sales at coke and coffee booth.

The bazaar was first held in the Lumberyard Mall. We quickly outgrew that location and moved to Carmel Elementary School. Each of the middle schools as well as Carmel High School, even Target mall, hosted the event over the years, and each year proved to be more successful than the last! By 1978, the bazaar raised \$1200. That number more than doubled in 1981 as attendance grew to over 1,300 people. The following year, funds doubled as the number of exhibitors rose to 107. Attendance

swelled to 4,000 during the the 10th bazaar with 150 exhibitors, bringing in \$10,000 to save the Depot.

In its heyday, entertainment at the bazaar including local radio and television personalities and various musical and dance performers. In 1987 the bazaar was so popular it was listed in the Chicago Tribune's Midwest Calendar of Events. Indiana's Governor Orr even attended one year. An old newsletter reported that he arrived on crutches and immediately ordered persimmon pudding!

The Holiday Gift Bazaar, as it was renamed in 2006, had not only saved the Monon Depot but funded the growth of the historical society for more than three decades. It became an annual destination event for craft enthusiasts and craft makers from all over the Midwest. It is a testament to the determination of our founding members to save the beloved Depot.

40th Anniversary Look Back: Phil Hinshaw

Phil Hinshaw, a charter member of the CCHS, truly embodied our mission to collect, preserve and interpret our local history. Phil was born in Carmel in 1925. He graduated from Carmel High School in 1943. After service during WWII and later college, Phil returned to Carmel and began to establish quite a legacy of community service. Phil was a Town Board member, Police Commissioner, volunteer fire fighter, Zoning and Planning Board member, Bicentennial Committee member, and Carmel Sesquicentennial member. The Rotary Club recognized his impact, honoring him with the Rotary Outstanding Service Award.

Phil's father, Rue Hinshaw, was the authority on our local history during his day. He passed down his collection and passion to Phil who continued to collect, research and write about Carmel's past. As a Bicentennial Committee member, Phil was instrumental in making sure our local history was prominently featured during the celebrations through the founding of the historical society. It was also during the Bicentennial year that Phil donated a wing of the Zina Warren home to serve as the office of the Carmel Chamber of Commerce (now the World's Smallest Children's Art Gallery). Perhaps his greatest contribution was the publication of the history of Carmel up to the 1940s, *The Heritage of Carmel*.



Founders Day Celebration 1976

For 25 years, Phil and his wife Nancy, ran an antique shop called The Heritage of Carmel. He wrote articles for local papers and continued to interpret and recall our history. Several years ago, Nancy donated a collection of early Carmel newspapers from the early 1900s. These are the only known copies. If the Hinshaws had not saved these newspapers, the information they contained would have been lost forever.

Many communities benefit from individuals who take it upon themselves to collect and document local history. Some of our members are doing that now with ongoing research on local farms and businesses. If you have an interest in some aspect of Carmel history, start the project! The CCHS will support you with a knowledgeable member base and an archive full of local history.

40th Anniversary Look Back: Ineva Chapman

Ineva Chapman moved to Carmel with her husband and three children in 1961. She taught third grade in several Carmel elementary schools for the next 16 years. In preparing a curriculum to teach her students about their local history, she found that there was little information to be found. Ineva decided to collect the information herself. Not only did she seek out print sources, she interviewed older residents to learn their stories of our collective past.

Her interest in local history led her to co-found the CCHS in 1975. She later served as its president and historian as well as a member of the Save the Depot Restoration Committee. When she retired from teaching in 1978, she devoted much of her time to creating educational services for CCHS. That year Ineva took Carmel students on a bus tour of historically significant sites, including the Kinzer cabin, the Lumberyard Mall, where Carmel HS basketball played in the early years, the Carmel Friends Church on N. Range Line, the Monon Depot and the McShane house.



Chapman with Forest Dale students in 1981.

These tours left lasting impression on students. This author certainly remembers hearing about Leslie Haines' traffic signal as the bus rumbled past Haines' old shop.

Ineva was truly a remarkable person. She gave so much of herself to many other organizations

including Hamilton County Teachers' Association, Alpha Delta Kappa, American University Women, Indiana State Teachers' Association, and the Indiana State Teachers' Retirement Association. She was honored as the Senior Volunteer of the Year for Hamilton, Boone, Madison and Marion Counties in 2002. Other honors included Carmel Business and Professional Women's Woman of the Year in 1982, and the Carmel Jaycees' Outstanding Citizen in 1979.

Ineva was the type of person who improved the lives of those around her. We are fortunate her passions included local history. Today a team of volunteers, many of them retired teachers, continue the work Ineva started. Each elementary school takes a field trip to the Monon Depot to learn about the early years of our ever-growing city.

40th Anniversary Look Back: Saving the McShane House

Historical preservation is one of the most important services we offer our community. Ongoing preservation projects include the digitization of oral history and the scanning of newspapers and photographs, but our most significant feat of preservation since the Depot Museum began in 2011 when the likeliest fate of the 1886 McShane house was demolition.

In the fall of 2010 the last tenants moved out and the bank took back the property. The home was vacant for the next two years. Vandals broke windows and destroyed much of the interior. Thieves stole wiring and architectural features. Mold began to grow in much of the home. The house was in a sorry state. It was during this time that the historical society got involved. Former Executive Director Katherine Dill worked tirelessly to convince the owners, their bank and its attorneys of the home's significance, offering to take title (and burden!) and allow the bank to take advantage of the charitable contribution tax deductions and historic tax credits that might be available.

Katherine informed the township trustees of her concerns about the property. The trustees installed a security light and saw to it that the house was boarded up and the lawn was mowed. The CCHS began an information campaign, working with the Current in Carmel and the Indianapolis Star to raise awareness. For the next 18 months, CCHS fielded calls from interested buyers. When the house went to sheriff's sale, the CCHS staff and board members attended, hoping to speak to the new owners. Fortunately, the home did not sell.

In 2012 the CCHS enlisted the help of Indiana Landmarks, who purchased the home at auction in October of that year. The Ehrgott family was also at the auction and purchased the property from Indiana Landmarks with covenants in place to ensure the home's protection. The following spring, the CCHS organized 45 volunteers to clean up the property and get it ready for the extensive renovation. The Ehrgotts completed a beautiful renovation in 2014.

Due to the tireless efforts of the Carmel Clay Historical Society through the leadership of Katherine Dill, Carmel now has a treasured landmark property. It is a success story we need to be reminded of when the next historical property is threatened and serves as a model for how to save it.

