



Let's Piece Together a Tippecanoe Puzzle of Memories

There is a new game I just discovered, but first some background. If you enter any senior entertainment space-Tipp Senior Center, SpringMeade Whitehouse, Randall Residence or Story Point, for example, you will find a puzzle ready to go somewhere in a room (rules differ, so always check to see if you can add a piece or if it is "hands off- this is mine or ours!!!!)

The new game is a puzzle to work requiring no physical space, table or cardboard puzzle. It happens when a person such as Bob Bartley (who is not happy being compared to two elderly lady historians) says, "can you remember what was out at the "Dixie Corner (now the corner of 571 and 25A) in the 50's and 60's? Everyone in the room is silent for a few minutes and then out come the pieces of the invisible, but real puzzle. People make notes, make phone calls and texts go out and are received. Here come the pieces, the smiles, the memories, the connections, the wonder at changes. It's a time when we are all grateful that we are sitting in the Grace Kinney room where so many pieces of the puzzle are ready for us to find. Bur what follows means you can play this game wherever you are.

Susie says a friend of hers lived in a cabin behind the motel that stood where the Fifth Third Bank stands at 1551 West Main (also known as Rt. 571) (piece 1); The bank moved from downtown Tipp City to the 1551 location in 1980 (piece 2); Shirley Black Rawlins comments that there was a restaurant on the northwest Corner that served the best pork sandwiches. Shirley's family lived next door to the restaurant (pieces 3 and 4); Shirley also told of the Fennell Family that lived in the first house north of the restaurant and that Vocke Nursery had their office in the cottage next door. It now houses the tattoo business (pieces 5 and 6); Ruth reminded everyone that a big brick apartment house stood on the southeast corner that had a large underground parking garage for the residents in the back below ground (pieces 7 and 8); Cathy remembers a "burger joint" following the motel and cabins before The Fifth Third Bank relocated there at 1551 West Main St in 1980 (piece 9); Billy Fischer adds that Joe Cook's sister owned that apartment house (piece 10).

Also, from Billy – when she was a farm wife, Marvin, her husband, feared she would be hit by a semi coming down 25A as she exited a tractor corn planter and entered the driver's seat of their truck (piece 10). Yes, a semi on 25A as it was then and still is the Dixie Highway and was the main highway from Miami, Florida to Grand Rapids Michigan (piece 11); John Greer remembers a pool table was an important part of the restaurant that served pork sandwiches (piece 12); Billy adds the Long family farmed the ground on the southwest corner (piece 13); Norm Barnhart remembers the southwest corner was a farm owned by Shorty Long where he used to hold part time jobs on weekends and in the summer helping out on the farm for 30 cents an hour (he never knew Shorty's real first name). Norm does remember the casual restaurant and believes it was on the Northeast corner that went in around 1945-50. The building is still there just north of 5/3 Bank (piece 14); Here comes a major "corner piece" #15. The Fennells, Hazel and Frank, owned the restaurant on the northwest corner. The restaurant also had gas pumps. Someone in the family pumped gas for waiting customers. Oh, here is another piece- #16: Marilyn Fennell shared a business card from the restaurant reading "Fennell's, at the junction of Route 25 and Route 71" (which became Route 571 in 1962 when Interstate 71 was created. And that's how you play the **PUZZLE OF MEMORIES!**

Submitted by Ruth White



Century Homes Project Update

The latest group of plaques and certificates has been distributed. In the beginning, the thought was homeowners would “beat down our door” to get a plaque. The first dispersal went well and then COVID hit! Some changes have been made to make it easier for homeowners to apply and receive the Century Homes designation.

A significant change is that we will now target a street for participation on the project. Targeting is done by delivering the introduction letter and application form to those homes that have been verified as filling the “age” requirement.

At the January Board meeting, an additional change was approved to give Century Homes owners a FREE 1-year membership. We hope their exposure to all that our Society provides to the community will create interest in joining. Only time will tell whether we will welcome them as new members.

Of course, the targeting of a single street at a time does not prevent any individual from applying to this project. If you know anyone who might be interested, please encourage him/her to contact me (937-506-7498) and I’ll answer any questions thrown my way.

Jackie Wahl



From the Museum Director

- I would like to thank those volunteers who have manned the museum every Saturday from 10:00 - 12:00. And thanks also to Liz Miller for taking her time to line up the volunteers for each Saturday.
- Roger Presley brought us posters and information about the several walking paths that he has cleared.
- Ron Re' brought a big box of framed photos of police officers who have served the community through the years.
- The Mohr family brought in some items from the very popular chicken business they ran from their place on St. Rt. 571 west of town. The property has been sold and they were cleaning out the office.
- The family of Don Looker, a retired Tipp school teacher, coach, and Driver's Ed instructor, asked for pictures for his January 8th, 90th birthday party. We sent copies from yearbooks and had Dave Cook send out information through his newsletter contacts to send cards.
- The hitching post project has finally been completed.
- A lady inquired about a newly purchased property on Ford Ave. We didn't have information for her but told her of other sources. She was able to follow through on those suggestions and we asked her to provide us with what she found to build our files.

And so it goes at the Tippecanoe Historical Society Museum.....

By Susie Spittler

History of the White House at Spring Meade

Continued from October '21 Newsletter

Robert H. & Ruth Brundrett

Robert H. & Ruth Brundrett bought the property from Jacob Detrick, about 1933. They raised cattle and grains. They had six children. It is uncertain when they moved in but there is an old photo of Ruth Hawley standing on the diving board when she was a child. They had a cattle operation on the farm but Robert was an accountant in Dayton. The Brundretts remodeled the house again and changed the heavy coverings on the porches and opened them up. Wrought iron was added and the structure at the entrance was changed to wrought iron as well, and the name was changed to Mon Repose or Mon Repos.



William E. Lesher & Leonora (Sally) Flannery Lesher

William Lesher began cash renting the Mon Repose Farm from the Brundretts about 1950. In 1963 the Leshers purchased the farm from the Brundrett Trust.

Recently, over a cup of tea, Marilyn Lesher Richards recalled growing up on the farm. The family moved there in 1964. She said that her father agreed that if her mother moved there, she could have help with the housework. Marilyn said that never really happened. They all helped out and that was the “help” that her mother received. Marilyn and her brother Joel helped do all of the chores around the farm. They raised corn, wheat, soybeans, and sod on the farm. One of their jobs was removing rocks from the fields after the sod had been harvested. It helped greatly when it was time to cut the sod the next time. In the beginning, Marilyn remembers that she found out that Joel was receiving \$1.00/hour while she was still receiving 50 cents. She talked to her father about this, and he agreed that, since she put in the same work ethic that Joel did, she should get \$1.00/hour as well. From then on, she and Joel were treated the same. One summer her girlfriend and she chopped weeds out of the bean field for a similar wage. Because of their farm work, she and Joel were able to buy their own “toys”. They each owned their own motorcycles and cars. They learned to drive vehicles of all kinds at a very young age and Marilyn thinks she was able to shift a double clutch like a pro at the age of nine. She also bought her own horse, had her bred and ended up with 3 horses for which she cared. The rule was that if you wanted to do something, you had to do the work that went with it.

When Joel and Marilyn were in high school, they were given the opportunity to rent 100 acres from their father. They rented the ground, the equipment and bought the seed corn & fertilizer to raise 100 acres of corn every year. After all of the expenses were taken out, they got to keep the profits. Marilyn paid for her one year at Western Michigan University with her profits. She and John Richards were married the following year and it helped give them a start to their new life together.

Since both sets of grandparents lived in the area, the Leshers hosted numerous family reunions every year. When they weren't hosting a specific party or reunion, they had “Open Volleyball Sundays”. Whomever wanted to come would stop in during the afternoon for numerous games of volleyball, interspersed with dips in the swimming pool to cool off. Everyone brought a covered dish to share and then they ate supper before the end of a fun filled day.

White House at Spring Meade cont.

In 1966, the Lesher family added on to the house. They built an addition between the house and garage. It housed a master bedroom and extension to the upstairs bath. Downstairs was a large family room with a wood dance floor in the center of the room. A large beam was brought in from a barn that was being torn down for the airport expansion. It was placed on the south wall and used as a type of mantle that extended the entire length of the room. This beam was removed later. It was wide enough that Sally could walk on it with her sweeper to vacuum.

Marilyn said "When we added the large room (now activity center), Dad bought the stairway from a funeral home in Celina, Ohio. That was a very big job because we completely refinished every inch of it and then put it back together in our new room. It was very difficult because the risers were all different and it had to be adjusted to fit into that room and make it come out right. One step is narrower than the others and that was how it was originally. The pool table is in the room that used to be our dining room."

There is a Spring that runs under the house, which supplied the house and the barns with all their water. It then flowed into the fishpond on the backside of the house, becoming a stream that runs east and now flows under the highway to Lesher Woods, southwest of the new high school.

The previous owners had done extensive landscaping to the property around the buildings. When Leshers moved there, rows of rhubarb, asparagus, daffodils, and lilacs were in the north yard. There were also peonies, snowball bushes and numerous other wonderful plants. There was also an old ginkgo tree in the north yard that was assumed to be the oldest in the county, but that was never confirmed. It was, however, a female ginkgo and produced a horrible smelling fruit that was hard to rake up. In the fall, it was an unwanted task to be the one to rake the leaves in that part of the yard. There were many kinds of trees and a lot of them were old when they lived there. Several of the trees on the land had been filled with cement block to help give them structure and to help them last longer. About 1966, there was a windstorm (mini tornado) that destroyed numerous trees. It looked like a war zone. Relatives were visiting and their new car was totally destroyed.

In December of 1971, Bill Lesher was welding a trailer hitch onto their van in preparation for a trip to Florida for the holidays. A spark hit the gas tank and caused a fire. He called the fire department and they responded immediately. Joel was coming from their farm south of Tipp, dropped John Richards off at his home in Tipp and headed north on Hyatt Street. He had heard the fire whistle and was going to see where the fire was. As he passed Winco Corp, he noticed the smoke was coming from their barn and as he rounded the corner, he hit gravel and lost control of his car. He was taken to Miami Valley Hospital where his condition was listed as critical. Marilyn was in Kalamazoo Michigan attending college when she got the news. They did not go to Florida until spring. Joel had several surgeries to repair his broken back and knees as well as internal injuries. When he returned home, the big room was set up as a hospital room.

The following August, Marilyn, John Richards (Marilyn's then fiancé) and Tom Struewing were working in a sod field south of Tipp. Marilyn left for an appointment but while she was gone there was another horrible accident. John had lost his footing and was pulled up into the wheel of the sod harvester. The ambulance was called but it took Dr. Pyles and the fire department using the Jaws of Life to cut him out of the machine. John was taken straight to Miami Valley Hospital and spent the next 12 weeks in traction. He was then sent home to spend six more weeks in a body cast.

Submitted by Marilyn Lesher Richards

To be continued....The third and final installment of this story will be in the April newsletter

Hitching Post Donation

A year or so ago Shirley Fosnot contacted the Society about donating a hitching post that sat on a property that her family had owned for many years. As it was a rental property, they had never lived there. The parents had passed, the family sold the property, and they wanted to donate the hitching post out front to the Historical Society.

For some time, we discussed: how to remove it, where to put it and how to reinstall it somewhere. Bob Bartley and Gordon Honeyman spent quite a bit of time researching the options. When the city was contacted, they found it could not be installed between the curb and sidewalk outside the museum. They suggested contacting Tony Hunt with the Parks Department. He was very helpful and offered to remove the post and store it until we could decide where to put it. The idea came up to place it in the park. Several met and decided just west of the Roundhouse would provide a safe yet visible spot.

The family wanted a plaque placed with the post that would recognize the family as having donated it. It took a while, but the message was finally agreed upon. The plaque reads: "This hitching post was donated to the Tippecanoe Historical Society by the Roth Family in memory of Thomas and Nancy Roth. For many years it was in front of the property they owned from May 1987 to 2020, at 309 S. Second St., in Tipp City, Ohio. The post was manufactured at Honeyman's Concrete Plant located at 21 W. South St. in Tippecanoe, Ohio (now known as Tipp City)."

The next step was determining how to obtain a plaque. Spitlers went to Abbottsville Monuments south of Greenville. The owner, Mr. Brown, said he is a history buff and would have an appropriate plaque made and would donate it for this project.

With Tony as overseer, the post and plaque were installed. This was followed by a simple dedication on a cold December day.

Pictured are Bob Bartley, Shirley Fosnot and Tony Hunt. Gordon Honeyman was not able to be present.



By Susie Spitler

In Memory



Tippecanoe Historical Society lost a life member since our last newsletter. We are grateful for her many contributions and send condolences to her families.

E. Irene Miller
5-16-27 to 12-27-21

Membership as of 1/15/22

Total members - 101

Letter from the President

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! Were your holidays all you hoped they would be? I love the hubbub of the holidays but to be honest, I'm always glad to resume my normal life when January rolls around.

It's now time to look down the road about events and what's happening with the Society. As you know by now, Covid is making planning extremely difficult. At this moment, I actually have no idea if or when events will occur. We're going to have to rely on email to keep everyone informed in a timely manner. Keep your fingers crossed!

Obviously, the Appraisal Fair isn't happening in January. Finding someone to conduct this event has proved to be quite difficult. Gordon Honeyman has been beating the bushes but so far, no success. I've told Gordon if we get lucky and someone steps up to fill the role of appraiser, we'll plan it to mesh with his/her schedule.

Board elections are coming up! If you are contacted to sit on the board, please give the request serious consideration. I will be more than happy to talk to anyone with questions. I am a firm believer in being as open as possible about expectations. Last year when I approached a member about a board position, she was honest and stated that while she was more than happy to do the job that I was asking of her, she had no interest in working at the museum. I told her that she was to agree to do only the jobs she wanted to do. I certainly wasn't going to try and twist her arm otherwise (it's known as treating adults like adults)! The point of this is to illustrate that I don't expect anyone to come in and take over. That isn't healthy for any organization.

Speaking of board elections, Jo Stull has resigned as Membership Chair due to health issues. She'll remain a member, but she is lightening her load of responsibility as she should. Membership chair is responsible for keeping the records of who has paid dues and passing info such as addresses (email and/or home) on to Annette so she can get newsletters to members. It certainly would be nice if someone would volunteer!

As of now, I'm keeping my fingers crossed that we will be able to hold the Annual Banquet and begin anew the Tapings of Oral Histories. Of course, both of these are indoor activities, so we'll just have to wait and see what happens.

There are a few shout-outs I neglected to mention in the last newsletter and these individuals are due all the credit possible for their hard work with the Society.

Bob Bartley – His passion about restoring the Iron Dog is almost at fruition! Plus, he goes above the “call of duty” time and time again!

Mike Jackson – He's working on the Veterans Project. Unfortunately, he's having to spend time cleaning up faulty information in the spreadsheet.

Ken Noffsinger – He is our new website master and has really been a huge asset trying to pull us into the 21st century!

Please take care and stay safe!

Jackie Wahl

