

Morgan County Historic Preservation Society
 P. O. Box 1377
 Martinsville, IN 46151
<http://www.mchps.org>

January 2006

PRESERVATION NEWS

ALL MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRED December 31st

(With the exception of lifetime memberships. See list on last page.)

Please detach the membership form immediately, fill it out, and send with appropriate payment to:
 MCHPS P. O. Box 1377 Martinsville, IN 46151

Eleventh Annual Historic Homes Tour

Tina Chafey (765) 342-6082 or (765) 349-1949
thummingbird@sbcglobal.net

The 2005 Historic Homes Tour went without a hitch, with dry weather and relatively warm winter temperatures. Director Tina Chafey reports that 184 people attended, generating a profit of approximately \$1200 for the Society.

Tina is planning an all-East Washington Street tour next year, with as many houses as possible being open to tour goers. We'll deck the sidewalks with luminaries, put out a call for strolling minstrels, and have other musicians playing in the houses. If you're an East Washington Street resident, please consider being part of the tour. And, if you'd like to help organize the event, please contact Tina.

Morgantown Historic District

Joe Mills (765) 342-0391
mills@reliable-net.net

The National Register nomination has been submitted to the state preservation office and is undergoing final technical review. It should go before the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board in April, with official listing following in about three months. Please see the insert for more detailed information about the district.

News Briefs

Board of Directors

Wooden Books (Tina Chafey) ▪ MCHPS has entered into a sales agreement with the NCAA Hall of Fame, which is now selling copies of *Wooden on Leadership* with our own special edition, autographed bookplates.

Check out or website at www.mchps.org

Sales have been steady and are expected to pick up significantly during the 2005 NCAA Division I Women's Championship in April.

Historic District Signs (Joanne Stuttgen) ▪ The signs are still in storage at the city highway department, where crews are waiting for warm weather and thawed earth. Installation will occur whenever the planets, stars, temperature, and other key elements are in perfect alignment.

Old Jail (Steve and Cheryl Edwards) ▪ Wendell Bolin has been hired to begin work on repairing the plaster walls damaged by water seepage. As you should recall, the copper gutters were restored a year ago. Bolin's first task is the stairwell. The Board will proceed with other necessary repairs as funds and time allow.

4th Annual

Cabin Fever Garage Sale

Saturday, February 18, 2006
 doors open 8:00 a.m.
 4-H Building
 Morgan County Fairgrounds
 Martinsville, Indiana

Interested in lending a hand? Call Tina Chafey
 (765) 349-1949 or (765) 342-6082

Items For Sale by MCHPS

For more information, contact Tina Chafey at (765) 342-6082 or (765) 349-1949 or thummingbird@sbcglobal.net

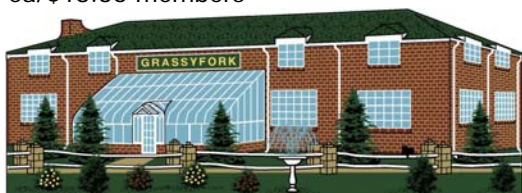
Members receive 20% discount. All items available at Hummingbird Heaven and Jailbird Antiques and the Martinsville Candy Kitchen.

Cat's Meow Village

GRASSYFORK FISHERIES

NEW!

2005 Special Edition Cat's Meow® piece
\$21.95 ea/\$18.36 members



MARTINSVILLE CANDY KITCHEN

Back by popular demand! Cat's Meow® 2000 reissue with updated text on reverse. \$14.95/\$11.96 members



VANDALIA DEPOT

2004 Special Edition Cat's Meow® piece
\$21.95 ea/\$18.36 members



HALL SCHOOL

2005 Special Edition Cat's Meow® piece
\$21.95 ea/\$18.36 members

Sales benefit the Hall Civic Association
For more information, contact Randy and Jackie Marsh at (317) 996-3980 or mjackie8@aol.com



MORGAN COUNTY AFGHAN

NEW!

Hot off the loom! This 100% cotton throw measures 50" x 65". Colors are navy, cranberry red, and natural. Featured historic sites include the Glen Curtis Gym in Martinsville, Morgan County Public Library, Grassyfork Fisheries Office and Showroom, Mooresville—Home of the State Flag, Goethe Link Observatory, Rock House in Morgantown, Vandalia Depot in Martinsville, farming scene, Fall Foliage Festival logo, and the Morgan County Courthouse. Limited number available. \$50.00/\$40.00 members

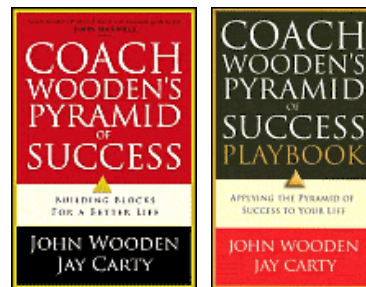


JOHN WOODEN BOOKS

NEW!

Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success and *Playbook* are now available from MCHPS. Sorry, no signed bookplates with these titles.

Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success features 32 daily readings based on the key values—from confidence to faith—that have brought Coach to the pinnacle of success as a leader, a teacher and a follower of God. \$17.99/\$14.40 members



The *Playbook*, consisting of reflection pages and key questions to personalize the principles of success to your life, makes it easy to apply these practical, down-to-earth, biblical tips. \$4.99/\$3.99 members

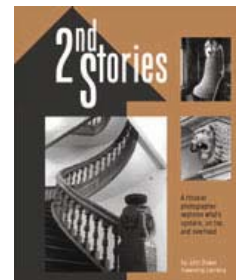
Still in popular demand! *Inch and Miles*, *My Personal Best*, and *Wooden on Leadership*—all with special edition autographed bookplates. *Adventure Underground*, a new paperback chapter book about Inch and Miles, is due out in January. We'll have it as soon as it's available.

2nd STORIES by John Bower

NEW!

A Hoosier photographer explores what's upstairs on top, and overhead in this 144-page soft cover book filled with black and white photographs of historic buildings throughout Indiana. The Morgan County Sheriff's Residence and Jail is included.

\$22.00/no member discount



ALL MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRED 12/31/05

with the exception of lifetime memberships below.
Please detach the membership form, fill it out, and
send with appropriate payment to:
MCHPS P. O. Box 1377 Martinsville, IN 46151

Current MCHPS Board Members

President: Joe Mills, Martinsville (765) 342-0391
Vice President: Tina Chafey, Martinsville (765) 342-6082
Secretary: Cheryl Edwards, Mooresville (317) 831-3904
Treasurer: Rick Durnal, Martinsville (765) 318-0742
 Del Chafey, Martinsville (765) 342-6082
 John W. Badger XIV, Martinsville (765) 342-0744
 Pam Badger, Martinsville (765) 342-0744
 Randy Marsh, Monrovia (317) 996-3980
 Steve Edwards, Mooresville (317) 831-3904
 Cheryl Edwards, Mooresville (317) 831-3904
 Terry Bunton, Mooresville (317) 831-9794
 Deb Bunton, Mooresville (317) 831-9794
 Joanne Stuttgen, Martinsville (765) 349-1537
 Hallie Durnal, Martinsville (765) 318-0633

**Lifetime Memberships—
Please DO NOT RENEW**

James and Marilyn Bickley
 Doris Corey
 Drs. Allen and Dianna Griggs
 John E. Hurt
 Gene and Sue Levell

NEEDED NEEDED NEEDED NEEDED NEEDED NEEDED NEEDED

New board members.

Joe Mills, who has served as President for the past three years, and Joanne Stuttgen, secretary and newsletter editor, are stepping down from the board. This leaves two immediate vacancies that need to be filled. Other board members have served for many years and are interested in pursuing other interests. Please! Consider taking a turn at managing and directing the Society. We need new ideas, new blood, and new energy.

Contact Joe Mills at (765) 342-0391 or mills @reliable-net.net if you are willing to take your turn and make your membership count for even more.

MCHPS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM			
Name:			
Street Address:			
Mailing Address (if different):			
Phone:		E-mail:	
Areas of special interest or expertise:			
Please check membership: new <input type="checkbox"/> renew <input type="checkbox"/>		For office use only	
		date rec:	exp: comp? y n reason:
Student	Free		
Individual	\$18.00	Thank you for your support. Memberships expire December 31. Memberships received after October 1 will be extended through the following year. Please mail completed form to: Morgan County Historic Preservation Society P. O. Box 1377 Martinsville, IN 46151 For more information call (765) 342-0391 or (765) 349-1949 or see our website at http://www.mchps.org	
Joint	\$25.00		
Organization	\$35.00		
Supporting	\$50.00		
Corporate	\$200.00		
Donation	\$		

Morgantown Historic District

The Morgantown Historic District is one of four districts in the county and the last to be nominated and listed. Bounded by Marion St. (State Road 135) on the west, the District encompasses approximately six blocks on the north and south sides of Washington St., the main thoroughfare. It is representative of and associated with the founding, development, and maturity of a typical Indiana small town, especially in the areas of commerce, politics, and transportation. It also embodies the distinctive characteristics of a variety of types of commercial, residential, and ecclesiastical architecture ranging from Greek Revival and nineteenth-century vernacular through early- and mid-twentieth century vernacular and popular styles.

Platted in 1831 by Robert Bowles and Samuel Teeters, Morgantown originated as a mill town on Indian Creek comprised of 52 lots roughly one-fifth acre in size, beginning at Church St. on the east and centered on Washington St.. A portion of the plat is today's historic district. The entire area was replatted by Isabelle Teeters and Colonel John Vawter in 1836.

The town grew slowly during its formative years. A corn cracker was built by Joshua Whitley about 1830, followed by two other mills which operated on Indian Creek. The first post office was established in 1833. By 1835, postmaster John Fee was operating a dry goods store and linseed oil mill, and Vawter was proprietor of a general store. Other businesses, including wagon shops, a blacksmith, woolen mill, and cabinet shop, provided essential needs to about 15 families, or 70 residents, and others in the surrounding area. The first frame school was built in 1840, the same decade that the Methodist and Christian churches were organized. The Baptist Church followed in 1850.

The coming of the Martinsville-Franklin Flatbar Railroad in 1853, and its extension to Fairland (thereinafter called the Big Four) following the Civil War, had a dramatic impact on Morgantown. James McCallister built a wool carding mill in the 1850s, and William Hickey established a plug tobacco business in the 1860s. The increase in population and demand for building lots led, in 1859, to the first addition to the city north and east of the original plat. In the 1870s, a fine brick school building was erected and the early church buildings were replaced with more permanent buildings, among them was the Christian Church (018) built in 1871. By 1880, the town's population had reached over 600, and new businesses, attracted by ready access to the rail line, were thriving. The discovery of a natural gas well marked the beginning of municipal improvements.

The Morgantown Historic District along Washington St. represents this early period of prosperity. The earliest buildings are the Greek Revival-influenced Fesler House (c.1840) and Hickey-McGrayel House (c.1851). Other mid-nineteenth-century buildings include the Greek Revival Obenshain Hotel (1860) and the Parkhurst House (1865). Post-Civil War residential construction is represented by the Roberts House (1870), a blend of Greek Revival and Italianate styles and a side hall plan, and the Parkhurst House (c.1875).

The 1890s constituted a major period of rebuilding following an 1894 fire that destroyed all of the buildings on the south side of Washington St. between Marion and Cross St. Rebuilding began immediately, with the Masonic Lodge and Mitchell Hardware, both built 1894, among the first buildings to go up. In 1895, Dr. R. C. Griffitt tore down his father's store and post office and rebuilt a fine Queen Anne style house on the same site.

Fire and rebuilding also characterized the first decades of the twentieth century. In 1908, fire destroyed all of the buildings on the south side of Washington St. between Cross and Church St. The G. W. Crawford Building (1910) was the first to go up, followed, in 1914, by Woods Dodge/Plymouth Dealership and the Ezra Shultz Building, later the Woods Annex. Morgantown soon prospered with the establishment of an electric light plant (and its improvement following a 1903 crash) and telephone system, founding of the first bank (1900), installation of the first concrete sidewalks (1907), the arrival of the Indiana Southern Railroad (later renamed the Illinois Central) in 1910 and, about the same time, the founding of Fulmore Furniture Manufacturing Company, which became Faucett Umphrey Chair Company in 1916. Among the buildings that present this prosperity are the Telephone Exchange (1906), Odd Fellows Lodge (1903) Redmen's Lodge (1908), and the O. O. Elkins Ice House (1914).

The 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s were a period of maturity. Town government moved into a permanent home in Town Hall (built c.1900) in

1925. Redevelopment occurred on E. Washington St. with remodeling of the Methodist Church and construction of the new Community Hall in 1923, and the replacement of older housing stock with new styles. The 1926 Miller House, a stucco covered bungalow, is a good example. Enhancement of infrastructure was marked by installation of a municipal water system in 1927. The Wisby Hotel (1923) represents the beginning of Morgantown's transition from a self-supporting, self-sustained village to a stopover for tourists to and from Nashville and Brown County. Increasing reliance on automobiles is reflected in the number of private and commercial garages, the founding of Whitaker Chevrolet in 1933, and the paving of State Road 135 in 1941. Highway travel soon trumped travel by rail, with Scenic Bus Lines service available to and from Indianapolis, Nashville, and Camp Atterbury, resulting in the pull-out of the Big Four in 1945. The post-war years also brought new construction: Lonyo Liquor Store (1945) and Haase Liquor Store (1954).

By the 1950s and 1960s, Morgantown had attained an uneasy balance of stability and decline. Redevelopment occurred in the downtown area with the replacement of Whitaker's Store with the Cowden Building (1957); the demolition of Graham Lumber Company at the corner of Washington and Church St.; and the replacement of the two buildings on the southeast corner of Washington and Marion St. with a Pure Oil station. Long-established businesses began to close, among them the Morgantown Packing Company about 1950, Woods Dodge/Plymouth in 1958, Faucett Umphrey Chair Company in 1962 or 1963. The high school closed in 1967 (the grade school followed 20 years later). It was during this period that the rural fire department—it was not yet a municipal fire department—moved into the Crawford and Woods Annexes; the bank moved into its new Neoclassical home; and Blanche Crawford, who designed and supervised the new bank building, built the house at 139 E. Washington St.—the most recent resource in the district.

By the 1970s, buildings had gone without conscientious and regular maintenance for several decades, and, generally speaking, both businesses and homeowners rotated on a steady basis. By the mid-1980s, Morgantown residents began to envision a new chapter in the town's history patterned after that of nearby Nashville. Morgantown could become a tourist destination—or at least a stop on the way to Nashville. The Chamber of Commerce was formed in the 1980s, followed in the 1990s by the Morgantown Merchants Association, whose primary objective was downtown revitalization and improvement. A Project Main Street grant funded tree planting, improvements to sidewalks and gutters, improvement of the Illinois Central Railroad crossing, and the construction of public restrooms behind Town Hall. The 2000s have been characterized by a continuing earnestness for improvement, increased emphasis on tourism, and celebration and promotion of Morgantown's unique cultural heritage.

Architecture

The architecture of the Morgantown Historic District is primarily characterized by vernacular forms with minimal high-style decorative influences. Vernacular house forms reflect the Southern Upland heritage of the earliest settlers, with folk I-houses and side hall plans among the earliest extant examples. Vernacular commercial buildings are a more popular variety, perhaps influenced by what builders and merchants saw in other communities, in plan books and builder's guides, and other widely distributed sources.

Built about 1840, the Fesler House at 149 E. Washington St. is the oldest resource in the district. It is a traditional I-house, with a central passage flanked by two rooms on each of the first and second floors. It exhibits modest mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival influence with its bold frieze, cornice returns, and entrance framed by a transom and sidelights. Slightly later is the Hickey-McGrayel House at 49 E. Washington St. It, too, is a Greek revival-influenced I-house with a dentiled frieze, cornice returns, and entrance framed by a transom and sidelights.

With classical stylistic details ranging from gable fronts, columns, and dentiled cornices, Greek Revival was the dominant style of American domestic architecture from about 1830 to 1860. Interest in classical buildings was inspired by archaeological investigation in Greece, Greece's war for independence, and America's disenchantment with British architectural models following the War of 1812. The style was largely spread by carpenter's guides and pattern books. Its enduring legacy to American domestic architecture is the gable front house.

The Greek Revival influence is more readily apparent in three gable front buildings: the Obenshain Hotel, the Parkhurst House, and the Roberts House (1870). The Roberts House also exhibits Italianate influence in its bracketed window hoods and six-over-six double hung windows. Both the Parkhurst and Roberts Houses have a vernacular side hall plan. Although it is now impossible to ascertain due to extensive remodeling, it is likely that the Obenshain Hotel also originally had a side hall plan.

The late Victorian Italianate style originated in England as part of the Picturesque movement that rejected formal classical ideals in art and architecture. In America, Italianate developed into a truly indigenous style with only hints of its Latin origin. Identifying characteristics include an overall boxlike form, a height of two or three stories, low-pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets; tall, narrow, arched windows, often with decorative hoods; and square cupolas and towers.

In the Morgantown Historic District, the Italianate style is reduced to a few token features; most common are arched windows with modest decorative hoods and bracketed cornices. Examples include the Christian Church (1881) and Redmen's Lodge, whose arched windows are borrowed from the style, and the Mitchell Hardware Store, with its bracketed tin cornice.

Built in 1894 following a fire that destroyed the entire block, the Mitchell Hardware Store is the District's only example of a commercial sheet metal storefront manufactured by George L. Mesker and Company of Evansville, Indiana. It is now covered with new ribbed metal panels. From its founding in 1879 through the first two decades of the twentieth century, Mesker sold an estimated 5,000 storefronts across the country. Its largest market was Indiana. For a storeowner like William Mitchell whose business had been destroyed by fire, rebuilding with a Mesker storefront was a stylish, inexpensive, and easy solution to getting back into business relatively quickly.

The Griffith-Murphy House, also built in 1894, is now the district's only representation of the Queen Anne style of architecture, the most dominant style of American domestic buildings from about 1880 to 1900. English in origin, the style is inspired by late Medieval models. Spread by popular pattern books, builder's guides, and catalogues, and American interpretations introduced spindle work and pre-cut "gingerbread" details, such as seen on the Griffith-Murphy House. Prior to its demolition in 1995, a Queen Anne cottage—the Lake House—stood just east of the Griffith-Murphy House.

The great majority of buildings in the Morgantown Historic District are late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century vernacular. The origins of their mainstream plans and familiar designs are unknown. Materials tend to be locally derived. Brick was made in kilns nearby or manufactured at the brick yards in nearby Martinsville. Concrete, a relatively new building material, was molded into blocks of various shapes, sizes, and finishes. Local contractor Thomas Stockton experimented with making concrete "brick" and stucco enhanced with chips of colored glass. His handwork is evident in the bungalow porch on the Roberts House, the front facade of Town Hall, and the Miller House. He may also have manufactured the rusticated block used to build the Wisby Garage and the Woods Garage. Smooth ashlar block was used in the construction of the Roush Garage, Haase Liquor Store, Lonyo Liquor Store, and the Loop Garage and Woodworking Shop. Ashlar block is also used as the foundation of the Loop House made of glazed tile brick.

A significant feature of the vernacular landscape is the location of outbuildings in rear yards. These can be rural in nature, such as the Griffith-Murphy Livery Barn; accessory in nature, such as the Roberts Shed and Coal Shed and any number of automobile garages behind houses; vocational in nature, such as the Loop woodworking shop; and commercial in nature, such as the Roush Garage and the noncontributing Butler Garage, used first for a porcelain coating business, then as an automobile repair garage, and now for storage.

The Morgantown Historic District also reflects the influence of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century revival styles, as well as twentieth-century American architectural movements. With its Gothic arch stained glass windows and limestone capped buttresses, the Methodist Church and Community Hall features Late Gothic Revival stylistic details. Next door on the east, the Parsonage and Miller House, with their wall coverings of brick and stucco, exhibit the side and front gabled roof with wide overhanging eaves and front porch that are characteristics of the Craftsman style.

The latest architectural style represented in the Morgantown Historic District is Neoclassical. In 1968, the First State Bank received a full-height porch with a dentiled pediment supported by Doric columns. The

Neoclassical makeover also included an entrance door topped with a broken pediment, a coat of bright white paint, and a cornice decorated with dentils. The style, an eclectic blend of Georgian, Adam, Classical Revival, and Greek Revival architectural traditions dates from the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. The exposition's planners mandated a classical theme, with monumental buildings featuring dramatic colonnades, domes, and other classical elements. Widely photographed, reported, and attended, the so-called White City set a standard for public, commercial, and domestic architecture for more than 60 years.

Conclusion

From 1831 until the present day, the core historic area of Morgantown has continually met the needs of the community. It has been the center of commerce and professional life, home to merchants, professionals such as lawyers and physicians, and tradesmen. Its upper stories provided homes to workers and families, many of whom owned and/or tended businesses at St. level. Its streets and public sidewalks served as festival grounds for national holidays and local celebrations, such as the town's centennial in 1931 and today's Colonel Vawter Day celebration. Its buildings provided recreational opportunities ranging from public lectures, theatrical performances, moving picture shows, and athletic contests. It was also here that educational interests were met by the library, social interests were met by clubs, lodges, and restaurants, and the town was run by elected members of the town board.

From here the town spread out to accept new technologies--telephone service, gas and electric power, the municipal water and sewer system--and improvements such as concrete sidewalks and paved roads. Its merchants stayed in step with the changing times, offering citizens their first automobiles, their first Victrolas, their first televisions. It was in the core historic district that the Methodist and Christian congregations worshipped and marked rituals of the life cycle. And it was at the intersection of Washington and Marion St. that the town was connected to other Indiana cities by means of the state highway system.

In 2006, Morgantown merchants and residents desire National Register status for downtown Morgantown in order to commemorate its heritage and promote it as an exciting and viable tourist and shopping destination.

This National Register of Historic Places nomination was prepared by Joanne Stuttgen for the Morgan County Historic Preservation Society. Funding was provided by a federal Historic Preservation Grant awarded by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology. Research was conducted by Henrietta Hickman, a native of Morgantown and valued MCHPS member, and Jeanne Weaver, a former Morgantown businesswoman and a 60-year resident. Both women have a keen interest in Morgantown history and a concern for its future. Without their assistance, this nomination would not have been possible. Historic postcards were shared by Curtis Tomak.



East Main St. (W. Washington St.) from Marion St. looking east, prior to 1908

HGTV *presents MCHPS members **Don and Joyce Robinson** in*

If Walls Could Talk . . .

Tales of Restoration

First, Marsha and Butch Hawn from Pittman, New Jersey, had history literally hanging from the woodwork in their 1796 farmhouse. With a little elbow grease and a lot of research, the Hawns updated their home and its history. Next, in Anchorage, Alaska, Susan and Mark Lutz bought a home that doubled as a construction site. They cleaned up the place and in the process found interesting clues about the homeowner, who lead a double life.

Then, secret codes lead Joyce and Don Robinson to decipher the Quaker family who once owned their 1859 farmhouse in Mooresville, Indiana.

Finally, in Moorhead, Minnesota, Lori and Tony Schevving bought their 1913 farmhouse packed with pieces that lead to a discovery of a tragedy that resulted in a happy ending.

AIR TIMES March 12, 2006 10:00 PM and March 13, 2006 2:00 AM

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