

# GRANT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2023

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**Museum:** [marion.lib.in.us/museum](http://marion.lib.in.us/museum)

**Address:** P. O. Box 1951, Marion, IN 46952

**Phone (Indiana Room)** 765- 668-2900 ext 1154

## From The President's Desk

**By Travis LeMaster**

As the holiday season ends and the New Year begins, I reflect on the accomplishments of the Society this year and consider resolutions for the new year.

The GCHS can be proud of many accomplishments during 2022: reorganization including updated by-laws; obtaining the rights to "Marion: A Pictorial History," participation at community events and hosting special events for the public at the library that were well-attended.

Resolutions for the new year from my desk include increasing the membership of the society, strengthening our committees, and continuing to get the word out about the GCHS in the community.

We continue to be financially sound and are capable of embarking on special projects and programs that would allow us to collect, interpret and preserve Grant County's history.

However, there is one asset of which we need more: members.

There are three types of members that I feel we need more of: we need more younger members, we need more diverse members and we need more active members.

Each of us is a defacto member of the Membership Committee – we all know someone who has an interest in Grant County history that we could invite (or invite back) to become a part of the Society.

Again, this is your Society and we need your input. If you have an idea that you feel would benefit the Society, please reach out to me at [travis.lemaster@gmail.com](mailto:travis.lemaster@gmail.com)



## ON THE CALENDAR

### JANUARY

No meeting

### FEBRUARY

\*The weekend before Valentine's day- Check the Marion City calendar for the Chocolate Walk downtown. (Plans have not been etched in stone at the newsletter's printing.)

15- GCHS meeting 6:15, Meeting Room B at MPL.

### MARCH

15- GCHS meeting 6:15, Meeting Room B at MPL.

## What's New at the Museum?

**The Marion Public Library Museum is  
looking for volunteers.**

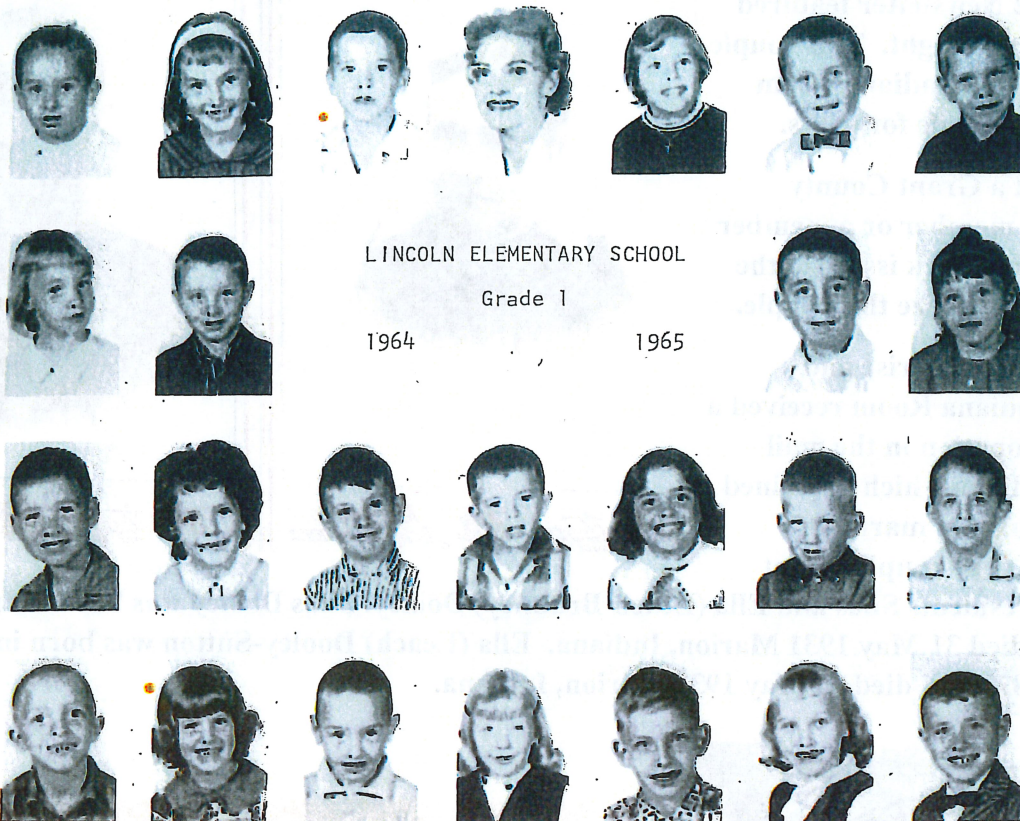
**Contact Museum Director Collen Cramer  
at 765-668-2900 ext 1131 for information.**





# Can You Identify Anyone?

(Contact the History Center at MPL 668-2900 x1154)



## Memory Lane by Your name here

Do you have a family history or childhood memory to share?

It can be about a person/ people, a place, business, or an experience. Submit your story and an accompanying photo or sketch, if you have one, to the Grant County Historical Society Newsletter.

Mail your story to GCHS, P.O. Box 1951, Marion, IN 46952 or email it to [rbissellcole@marion.lib.in.us](mailto:rbissellcole@marion.lib.in.us)



## UPDATE from the Summer 2022 Newsletter:

### Can You Identify This Couple?

The Summer 2022 Newsletter featured the couple pictured at right. This couple has been in the (MPL) Indiana Room “Unidentified” photo pile for years.

The hope was that a Grant County Historical Society member or a member of the public reading back issues of the newsletter might recognize this couple.

It was with complete surprise and delight that the Indiana Room received a large, packaged donation in the mail from southern Indiana which contained a framed drawing and a marriage certificate for this very couple. Meet

Marion, Indiana residents Silas and Ella (Leach-Brumley) Dooley. Silas Dooley was born in Indiana 10 Aug 1867 and died 31 May 1931 Marion, Indiana. Ella (Leach) Dooley-Sutton was born in Grant County 15 May 1872 and died 04 May 1938 Marion, Indiana.



Many thanks to Debbie Ruth for her diligent research on the Dooleys.



# CRIME TIME

**“Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!”**

**-Sir Walter Scott, 1808**

*Dear reader,*

*When I first stumbled upon a short article about a young woman hysterical and swooning after accidentally shooting her gentleman friend, I thought it was a tale of woe (times 3) and innocence. I was simply going to clear up whether her name was Alma or Emma, as both were given in separate newspaper articles. Once Miss Vandevener/ Vandevander's first name was established you would learn in this newsletter of a tragic accident during the wee hours of July 12, 1904 and two other tragedies that had befallen the young woman. Poor thing.*

*Then thanks to the computer age and digital records, I walked into a web of 118 year-old lies or poor reporting across the state. You will find four articles below in which the telling of the story varies. A list of facts follow the articles and you are free to draw your own conclusions. GCHS would enjoy hearing your hypothesis. Will we all draw the same conclusion? Email your supposition (subject: Mystery) to Renee at [rbissellcole@marion.lib.in.us](mailto:rbissellcole@marion.lib.in.us). Theories may be published in the next issue of the GCHS newsletter.*

1) From the Marion Chronicle, Tuesday, 12 July 1904 – typed as the article was written

## **DEATH LURKS IN REVOLVER HELD BY ALMA VANDEVENER**

**Snaps Weapon Once, Second Attempt Sends Bullet into Brain of Her Companion, Who Falls to Floor.**

**LESLEY BRADFORD, AGED 19, KILLED AT JONESBORO EARLY THIS MORNING**

**Bradford Brothers, Alma VanDevener and Ethel Creviston Together in a Room When Shooting Occurred – Both Women in Jail**

Lesley Bradford, age 19, son of Benjamin Bradford, of North Jonesboro, was shot by a revolver in the hands of Mrs. **Alma** VanDevener, in a room adjoining the saloon of Jerome Shoemaker at the west end of the Jonesboro-Gas City river bridge, at 12:10 o'clock this morning, and death resulted at 2:40 a.m. It is claimed the shooting was accidental, but the authorities have placed Mrs. VanDevener and her companion, Ethel Creviston, in the Jonesboro jail and a rigid investigation is being conducted.

Jack and Lesley Bradford, brothers, aged 21 and 19, respectively, went to the room adjoining Shoemaker's saloon with the young women. The officers have obtained the story that the revolver was lying on the counter and that it belonged to the proprietor or bartender of the saloon. It is claimed that Mrs. VanDevener picked up the revolver and snapped it towards Lesley Bradford, with the result that the revolver was discharged, and the bullet took effect in the young man's right temple, entering the brain.

Dr. J. S. Whitson was summoned, and the wounded man was stretched out on a cot in the room. He lingered until 2:40 a.m. when death came. He did not regain consciousness and there was nothing the attending physician could do for him.

A short time after his death the body of Lesley Bradford was removed to his home in North Jonesboro. He had been employed in the United States glass factory where his father is foreman of the mould department. Jack Bradford, the brother, is a barber. Both young men were good musicians, playing mandolins and were popular among their associates and clubs where music was in demand.



The room in which the shooting occurred contained a counter, three chairs and a sofa. The room is just north of the saloon and was formerly occupied by a restaurant. A door from it leads into a hallway and a doorway from this hallway leads into the saloon of Shoemaker.

Jack Rains, a bartender at the Shoemaker saloon, was in the place last night, it is claimed, when the shooting occurred. Jerome Shoemaker, proprietor of the saloon, stated today that he knew nothing of the affair which resulted in the shooting.

The two young women locked up in the Jonesboro jail are greatly distressed over the affair, especially Mrs. VanDevener, who did the shooting. They live in Gas City. The coroner's investigation will be held this evening. The authorities say while all parties concerned claim the shooting was accidental, they will investigate thoroughly before releasing the young women.

**2) From the Richmond Daily Palladium newspaper, Richmond, Indiana  
13 July 1904- typed as the article was written.**

**ANOTHER KILLING. LESLIE BRADFORD SHOT AT JONESBORO BY A YOUNG WOMAN.  
IS TAKEN IN CUSTODY. THE TWO WERE FRIENDS AND IT IS CLAIMED THAT THE  
SHOOTING WAS ACCIDENTAL. THE KILLING OCCURRED AT AN EARLY HOUR IN  
RESTAURANT. BROTHER OF VICTIM PRESENT.**

Jonesboro, Indiana- Leslie Burke Bradford, aged nineteen, was shot and killed by Miss Alma Vandeventer yesterday morning at 1 o'clock, in a restaurant conducted by Jack Rente of Jonesboro. Leslie Bradford and his brother, Jack Bradford, had visited Gas City last night, taking with them a guitar and mandolin. They had serenaded Miss Vandeventer and Miss Ethel Creviston. The young women in company with the Bradfords, went to Jonesboro and entered a restaurant to get lunch.

A revolver which was lying on the counter was picked up by Miss Vandeventer, who pointed it at Leslie Bradford, pulled the trigger and the bullet entered his right temple, killing him instantly. The two young women are in jail awaiting an investigation by the coroner. The girls claim that the shooting was an accident. Jack Bradford, brother of Leslie Bradford, says that he believes the shooting was an accident. Leslie was employed in the Unites States Glass Factory as a gatherer. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin (Clarinda) Bradford.

**3) From the Huntington Herald – Huntington, Indiana  
Thursday – 14 July 1904 – Page 4 – typed as the article was written**

**A THIRD TRAGEDY  
The History of the Vandevender Family**

Leslie Bradford, a young man whose home was at Jonesboro, was accidentally shot and killed in a restaurant in Jonesboro Tuesday morning by Mrs. Alma VanDevender. The accident resulted from ignorance in handling a revolver, and Mrs. VanDevender is well nigh crazed over the awful affair.

Mrs. VanDevender is the divorced wife of a son of Engineer VanDevender, at one time a resident of Huntington and an employee of the Erie. The killing of Bradford is the third tragic event in the VanDevender family. Engineer VanDevender, after leaving Huntington, was employed on the Cincinnati, Jackson & Mackinac Railroad. When making a run one day VanDevender and his fireman engaged in a fight in their engine cab while the engine was running at full speed. VanDevender was killed, it is said, by being struck over the head with a hammer. The fireman ran the train into Van Wert and reported that tramps had attacked the them and that VanDevender was killed. Later the fireman confessed to the murder and was given a penitentiary sentence. After his release he became insane and died in an asylum.

Edward VanDevender, a brother of Alma's divorced husband, was killed in this city about eighteen years ago. He got into an altercation in front of the opera house with Blair Mock over politics, and was



stabbed to death. Mock was tried and sent to the penitentiary, but afterwards was pardoned by Gov. Gray, and is now a resident of Marion.

4) From the Hartford City Telegram – Hartford City, Indiana  
Wednesday – 20 July 1904 – Page 7, Col 2. – typed as the article was written

## GIRL SHOOTER GETS FREEDOM KILLING OF LESLIE BRADFORD BY MISS VANDEVENTER WAS AN ACCIDENT.

Miss Emma Vandeventer, who shot Leslie Bradford in a restaurant at Jonesboro Tuesday morning, has been dismissed from jail. The finding of Coroner Whitson was that Bradford was killed by a bullet fired from the revolver in the hands of Miss Vandeventer, but that the affair was an accident and the girl was not to be held on the charge of murder.

Miss Vandeventer is almost prostrated by the shock, is hysterical at times and swooned several times while in jail.

This is the third tragedy in the Vandeventer family. The father of the girl was murdered and a brother was shot and killed. The father, who was a locomotive engineer, had a fight with his fireman on the engine. The fireman hit him with a hammer, crushed his skull and then took the body to Van Wert, Ohio, turned it over to the officers and told them a gang of tramps had attacked and killed him. The fireman later admitted the murder, was sent to prison and died in an insane hospital.

Edward Vandeventer, a brother of the girl, was shot and killed on the street in Huntington, Ind., by Blair Mock of Marion.

Section 10 of the Health Law, as Amended  
by an Act Approved Feb. 7, 1899.

MARGIN REVERSED - BINDING

Write the name of the disease which caused the death. If the patient had pulmonary tuberculosis and died from hemorrhage of the lungs, write pulmonary tuberculosis as the disease causing death and pulmonary hemorrhage as the remote cause, giving in statement as far as possible some of the most common and faithful statements in regard to the disease.

Write entire original to be mailed DIRECT to State Board of Health, at Indianapolis, not later than the 4th of each month.

PLATE OF DEATH.  
County of Grant  
Township of Mill  
City of \_\_\_\_\_  
No. \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_  
Ward \_\_\_\_\_

Indiana State Board of Health.

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.

Record Number 319  
500

(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number.)

Full Name Edward C. Vandeventer

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS.

Sex Male Color White  
Single, Married, Widowed or Divorced, Married  
Name of Husband or Wife, Alma  
Date of Birth 12-3-89 Month. Day. Year.  
Age 31 years 6 months 9 days.  
Occupation glassworker  
Birthplace Penna. (State or Country.)  
Place of Death Mill Twp  
Name of Father Madison Van  
Birthplace of Father Penna. (State or Country.)  
Maiden Name of Mother Sarah Strayer  
Birthplace of Mother Penna. (State or Country.)

Medical Certificate of Death.

Date of Death 6-12-1906 Month. Day. Year.  
I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from June 11 1906, to June 12 1906  
that I last saw him alive on June 11 1906, and that death occurred on the date stated above, at 5-10 o'clock A. M.  
to the best of my knowledge and belief the cause of death was as follows:  
Chief Cause Submersion of lungs Duration 1 hr  
Immediate Cause \_\_\_\_\_  
Duration \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signed) J. C. Wright M. D.,  
June 13 1906 (Address) Jonesboro Ind.

SPECIAL INFORMATION ONLY FOR HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, TRANSIENTS OR RECENT RESIDENTS.

Former or usual Residence \_\_\_\_\_  
How long at Place of death \_\_\_\_\_  
Where was disease contracted if not at place of death? \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Burial or Removal Has City Proposed Date of Interment 6-23-06  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Filed June 13 1906 Health Officer or Deputy, W. C. Wallace M.D.  
(Address) Has City Ind.

The above stated personal particulars are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(INFORMANT) Quay Vandeventer  
(Address) Has City

(IF UNABLE TO ANSWER ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, WRITE "UNKNOWN.")



## Timeline of Facts

- **M. Matthew and Sarah VanDevander** had the following children: **Harry M. 1862-1886**, John W. 1866-1949, Samuel B. 1869-1898, William E. 1869-1914, **Edward C. 1874-1906**, Guy C. 1878-1957, and only daughter Lulu 1883-1901.
- **Madison “Matt” VanDevander**, an engineer for the C. J & M Railroad, was killed by his angered fireman on 18 Jul 1890.
- **Harry M.** Vandevander married Emily “Emma” Mitten in 1884. The couple’s marriage came to an abrupt end in **1886** when Harry was murdered by **Blair Mock**. (The full trial transcript is on file in the Indiana Room.)
- **Mrs. Emma** VanDevander remarried in **1888** to Fortunatus Kellogg and the couple removed to Tacoma, Washington, raised a family and died there. She could not have given her name to reporters or police, nor been involved with the Bradford shooting in 1904.
- **Edward C.** VanDevander both married and was separated from Alma “Unknown” between 1901 and 1904.
- **Lesley Burke Bradford** is shot in the head by Mrs. Alma VanDeventer and dies in the wee hours of 12 Jul **1904**.
- **Edward C.** VanDevander was alive and living in Gas City in 1904 and he did not die **until 12 Jun 1906**. His cause of death was tuberculosis of the lungs and was not at the hands of **Blair Mock**. Edward’s brother, Guy, listed Alma as “wife” on Edward’s death certificate in 1906.
- **Alma VanDevander** is not found in any Indiana records or newspaper articles after the shooting accident in 1904.

1. If the cause of the disease which caused the death is not stated, the physician should state the name of the disease, the organ affected, and the kind, from the knowledge of the lungs, with pulmonary tuberculosis as the disease causing death and pulmonary hemorrhage as the immediate cause.

# SUGGESTIONS TO PHYSICIANS RELATIVE TO STATE- MENT OF CAUSES OF DEATH.

Section 10 of the Health Law, as Amended  
by an Act Approved Feb. 7, 1899.

PLACE OF DEATH,  
County of Franklin  
Township of Franklin  
City of Franklin  
No. 12 St. Franklin  
Ward. Franklin

## Indiana State Board of Health.

### CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.

Record Number

119

(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give the name and number of the institution.)

#### PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

Sex Male Color White  
Single, Married, Widowed or Divorced, }  
Name of Husband as wife  
Date of Birth March 9 1885  
Month Day Year  
Age 19 years 4 months 4 days  
Occupation Glazier Worker  
Birthplace Franklin, Ind.  
(State or Country)  
Place of Death Franklin  
Name of Father Benj. Bradford  
Birthplace of Father Franklin, Ind.  
(State or Country)  
Maiden Name of Mother Elizabeth A. Haines  
Birthplace of Mother Franklin  
(State or Country)

The above stated personal particulars are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(INFORMANT) Benj. Bradford  
Address Franklin, Ind.

#### MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.

Date of Death July 12 1900  
Month Day Year  
I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from 1900 to 1900  
and that death occurred on the date stated above, at 12 o'clock A. M.  
To the best of my knowledge and belief the cause of death was as follows:  
(Chief Cause) Chorea of the heart  
(Duration) 10 days  
Immediate Cause Chorea of the heart  
(Signed) John A. Haines M. D.  
July 12, 1900 (Address) Franklin, Ind.

SPECIAL INFORMATION ONLY FOR HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, TRANSIENTS OR RECENT RESIDENTS.

Former or usual Residence Franklin, Ind.  
How long at Place of death 10 days  
Where was disease contracted if not at place of death?  
Place of Birth or Removal Franklin, Ind. Proposed date of burial July 13, 1900  
Under-taker John A. Haines  
Filed July 12, 1900  
(Address) Franklin, Ind.

(IF UNABLE TO ANSWER ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, WRITE "UNKNOWN".)



## Industry: Diamond Cracker Factory

Just before Christmas in the year 1890, the contract was signed for \$75, 000 to build a steam bakery and cracker factory in Marion with an expectation of employing 75 workers.

Arthur LaBelle, architect, engaged draughtsman A. R. James in January of 1891 for his many years of experience, to begin plans for the large, ornate, three-story Cracker Factory to be built at the southwest corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and New York Avenue, Marion, just east of the newly built York Inn.

There was a line of contractors lined up and ready to make opening bids in February. To be sure, no moss was growing under their feet to get this concern off the ground. Of the many contractors, Benjamin Long of Rochester, NY was the lowest bidder and gained the contract, insuring the addition of another important industry for the Queen City in the gas belt.

The first floor contained three storerooms, one for a bakery storefront and two storage rooms for rent, and behind these was the bake shop followed by a room for ovens and engine room. The ovens were powered by natural gas, which provided even, steady heat to insure a better product. The bake shop held \$15,000 worth of machinery to turn out product bearing the name of Marion and the label of "crackers" and "biscuits" to distribute all over the country. On the second floor was a mixing room, and a packaging room, while on the third floor were more storage rooms and a large water tank. All was awash with light by 137 windows. The impressive building had an elevator that ran from cellar to attic.



Continued...



## Industry: con't

With the completion of the 80' x 200' building in June of 1891, articles to incorporate the Diamond Cracker Company were filed in July with County Recorder Rybolt so the company could begin the business of manufacturing and selling crackers, biscuits, cakes, and breads, and other transactions needed to market its products.

The directors chosen for the company's first year were George L. Mason, Ashley F. Murdoff, Charles H. Dunbar, Daniel F. Burgess, and John Frey. They were entrusted with the corporation and its capital stock value of \$125,000, divided by 2,500 shareholders at \$50 a share, whose principle office was located in the magnificent new building west of town.

The ovens were delivered in August to much fanfare as excitement grew about the rapid growth of the Queen City and Marion's west side. Though the factory would only employ a slow-start of 75 employees, it planned to reach numbers near 125 men to put out an average 500 barrels of crackers every twenty-four hours along with a variety of sweet stuffs and biscuits. Delivery of other necessary items for the company in the form of cutters and mixers did not arrive for another six months. Housewives of the time might have been surprised to learn and see these mixers held six barrels of flour each and did her job on a wholesale scale. Another delay for the company was a lack of thousands and thousands of labels from a Cincinnati company, which were a very important factor in advertising and labeling one's products. The labels bear the name of the company and proudly displayed a picture of the building.

The delay of necessary equipment and marketing essentials prevented the cracker company from producing goods and generating much needed income. There were bills to pay and employees to compensate. Board member Daniel Burgess, by way of his attorneys, Brownlee & Paulus, filed a complaint with the circuit court in October of 1892 asking for the appointment of a receiver. He, having 65 shares in the company, was worried about debt management. He informed the court of a judgement of \$4,000 against the factory, two notes due totaling \$2,700, other outstanding obligations including a \$5,000 note due within 30 days. He also shared that the factory should have been in operation in May, 1892, but reasoned that without money or credit it could not begin to run. It was decided October 1 by stockholders to sell the plant, though Burgess objected as the plant would not bring what it was worth and the debts only totaled roughly \$14,000. After an investigation, Judge St. John appointed William Neal as the receiver, who was ordered to take control of the factory until he had further instructions from the court. It was understood by those concerned about the factory that it was in the hands of one who would know how to run it, and that the impressive structure would not stand idle much longer. Burgess quickly sold his shares to H. T. Hamilton and was out of the picture. Mr. Hamilton speaking with assurance claimed arrangements were being made to have the factory in operation by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1893, as the newly hired foreman was wont to leave his current employer until the end of the year.

While the building was quiet from a lack of production that fall, Rev. Johnson of the First M. E. church held revival services for several weeks at the cracker factory. All were cordially invited to attend, and enjoy music provided by Rev. Johnson's son Bertie.

March of 1893 saw no activity in the building. The Baker's Trust of Ohio expressed interest in acquiring the Diamond Cracker Company to add to their pool of bakery concerns that made up the United States Baking Company. Hamilton held out for more money and was moving ahead to begin production at the plant in late spring.

In April of 1893 an interesting literary and music program was held at the cracker factory by the M. E. church. It was the first in a series to be held there.

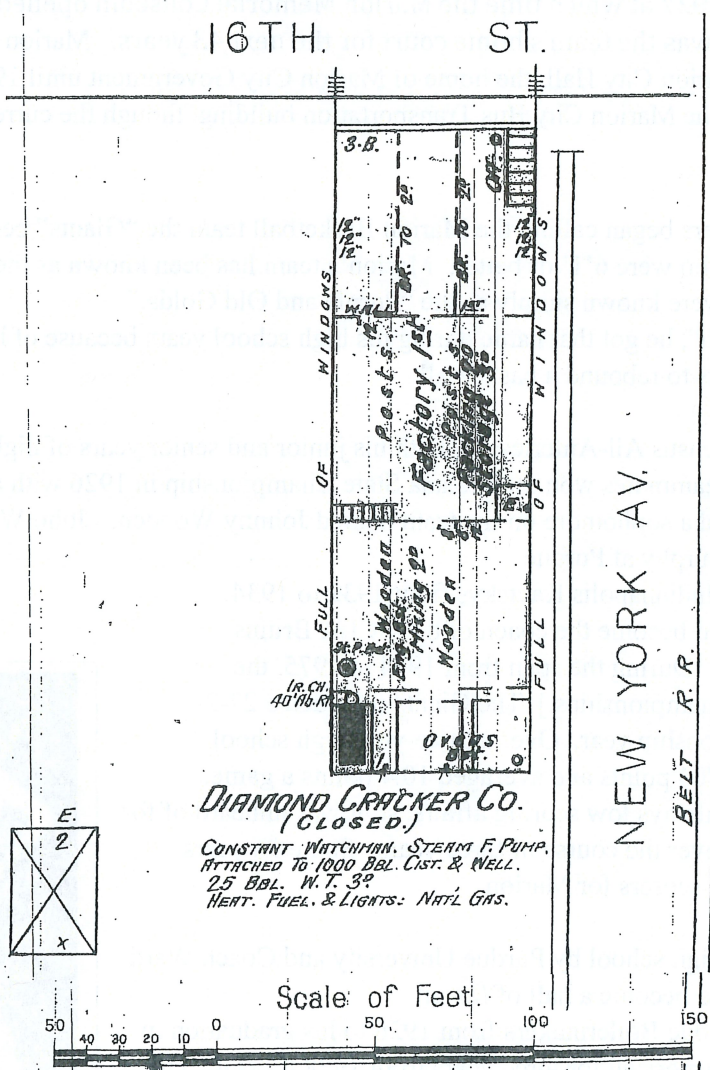
Continued...



By May Hamilton was reporting to stockholders the factory would never make a cracker. He had several offers for the company, but thought none appeared to be the right fit. One offer was from a large furniture factory that would have employed many hands. While he waited for the right buyer, he employed a night and day watchman who could do nothing but watch the lovely building deteriorate.

Grant Circuit Court offered for sale, at 2pm on Saturday, the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, 1893 at the factory building of Diamond Cracker Company in Franklin township, the property of the factory both real and personal, which included: Lots, one, two, three, four, five, six, thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight, thirty-nine, forty in Block Seventeen in the New York addition, and the buildings thereon. This private sale included the boiler and engine, fireproof safe, office desk and all other property belonging to the company. No bids were received for the immense rooms which had never been used.

Fast forward to February of 1894 when the sale of the Diamond Cracker factory was finally sold to Phillip Matter for the sum of \$10,300. Mr. Matter bought it on speculation and said it is for sale to anyone wishing to start any business. Interested parties are a wholesale glass company, a Chicago Beer enterprise, and the furniture company mention in our last newsletter.



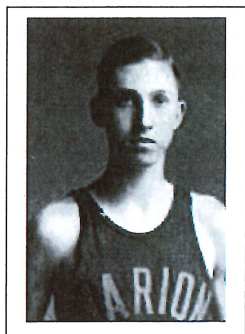


## SPORTS:

### Basketball Hall of Famer Stretch Murphy of Marion

By Steve Collins

Charles Carroll Murphy was born on Wednesday, April 10, 1907 in Marion, Indiana to Ray Elmer and Lalie Dell (Trowbridge) Murphy. Ray and Lalie were married on New Year's day 1907 in Marion. Mr. Murphy died on November 10, 1908, when Charles was only 18 months old. With Ray's death Lalie was widowed and left alone to raise Charles as a single parent. Eleven years would pass until Lalie Murphy married Charles W. Merkert on June 28, 1919 in Marion. The two would remain married 46 years until Charles Merkert's death on April 24, 1965. Charles' step-father is buried in the Converse Cemetery.



In the fall of 1923 Charles was a gangly sophomore as he began his journey as a Marion High School basketball player. He, along with Robert "Bob" Chapman were the nucleus of a team that new coach, Gene Thomas had to believe was a contender for the Indiana State Championship title. At that time, Marion basketball was played at Marion Civic Hall on the second floor of the building, which at capacity held approximately 4,000 fans. Marion Civic Hall was located on the southwest corner of Adams and Second Streets. The Marion five played their home games there from 1914 through 1927 at which time the Marion Memorial Coliseum opened across the river. The coliseum was the team's home court for the next 43 years. Marion Civic Hall was later named Marion City Hall, the home of Marion City Government until 1980. That location is currently the Marion City Bus Transportation building, though the current entity is a newer structure.

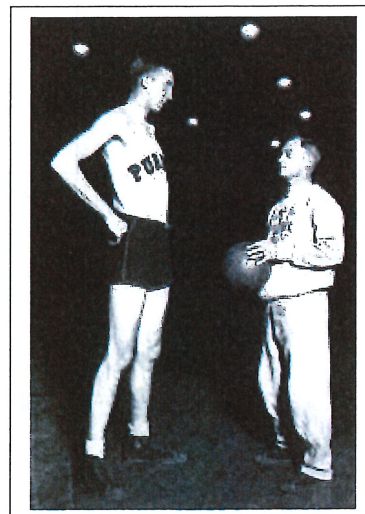
In 1925, the Marion newspapers began calling the Marion Basketball team the "Giants" because the team had four players in their starting lineup, who were 6'1" or better. Marion's team has been known as the Giants since that time. Before 1925, all teams at MHS were known simply as the "Purple and Old Golds."

As for Charles nickname "Stretch", he got that name during his high school years because of his ability as a tall man of 6'6" to reach above his opponents to rebound a basketball.

Charles was a two-time Consensus All-American in both his junior and senior years of high school, '24-'25 and '25-'26. Charles and his Giant teammates won the Indiana State Championship in 1926 with a 30-27 victory over the Martinsville Artesians, which had a sophomore on the team named Johnny Wooden. John Wooden would eventually become a teammate of Stretch Murphy at Purdue and a teammate on the pro team Indianapolis Kautskys from 1932 to 1934. [As an aside, John Wooden would become the coach of the UCLA Bruins basketball team from 1948-1975. During the span from 1964 to 1975, the Bruins would win 10 National Championships.] The Giants recorded a 27-2 record in the 1925-1926 Championship year. Over a three-year high school career, Charles Murphy scored 704 points and averaged 10.4 points a game. Games in the early 1900's were always low scoring affairs, so it was unheard of for one athlete to record 704 points over the course of three years. Some 96 years later, Charles is still in the top 50 scorers for Marion.

Charles was recruited out of high school by Purdue University and Coach Ward "Piggy" Lambert, who would also become a hall of famer.

Charles was a member of the Purdue Boilermakers from 1926 to his graduation in 1930. He was a Consensus All-American for three years from 1928 to 1930, and an All-Big Ten Player in 1929 and 1930.

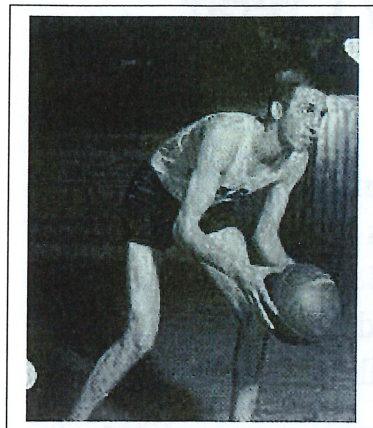


CON'T



## Stretch Murphy con't

Purdue was named the Mythical Collegiate Basketball Champions (MNC) in 1930. Stretch and John Wooden, who was recruited to Purdue in 1928, lead Purdue to the 1930 Championship with an overall record of 13-2. Altogether during the four years Charles played for the Boilermakers they had a 53-13 record. He set records during the 1928/29 season, scoring 143 points, and 137 points the following season. In 49 Big Ten games he averaged 11.7 points per game. Coach Ward Lambert's style of play was 'up tempo and get the ball down the court quickly.' Stretch would rebound the basketball and get it down the floor for a quick two points, and nobody did that better than Charles "Stretch" Murphy. John Wooden was also named a Consensus All-American from 1930 to 1932. Charles was considered the best big man to play basketball in the first 40 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. There was no one more knowledgeable than John Wooden at that time, and he said that without a doubt Stretch was the best big man of his time.

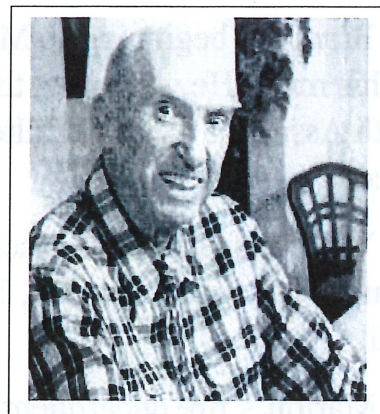


After his graduation from Purdue in 1930, Charles married Ruth E. Thomas on August 30, 1930 in Marion. Ruth was born July 26, 1904 in Marion to Charles Arthur and Lula May (Meyers) Thomas. Charles' professional basketball career began with the Chicago Bruins for two years. Then in 1932 he played for two years with the Indianapolis Kautskys alongside the aforementioned John Wooden. They both received \$50 a game. Pro basketball salaries in the early 30's are nothing like the salaries of ball players today. While playing pro basketball, Charles was also coaching Edinburgh and Winchester High Schools.

After his basketball career ended, Charles received his Master's degree from Columbia University in New York City. After which, Charles landed in Bristol, Connecticut where he found his next passion in life. He would become involved with The Boys' Club of America for the next 30 years of his life. He and Ruth would stay in Bristol until 1950 before moving to Tampa, Florida. He remained involved with the Boys' Club until 1972 when he retired at the age of 65 after 22 years of service. Charles became a member of the Board of Directors and turned Tampa's Boys' Club into the third largest in the country. Charles Murphy was inducted into Tampa's Hall of Fame, not for basketball, but for his dedication to the Boys' Club of America and what he did for the organization.

In 1960 Charles "Stretch" Murphy was inducted into the College Basketball Naismith Hall of Fame. He was then inducted into the Indiana State Basketball Hall of Fame in 1963. Charles was among the inaugural fifteen-member athletes inducted into the Grant County Hall of Fame, and he was listed on the Second All-Century team in the year 2000.

Ruth and Charles enjoyed a quiet life together in retirement. Charles' mother, Lalie Dell (Trowbridge) Murphy Merkert died July 23, 1982 in Marion. She is buried in the Converse Cemetery in an unmarked grave. Charles Carroll Murphy died on Monday, August 17, 1992 in Tampa, Florida. His cremains were given to family. Charles was a man who, through his association with the Boys' Club of America, helped thousands of children over the years, though his only survivor was his wife, Ruth, as they had no children of their own. Charles and Ruth would have been married 62 years had he lived another 13 days. Ruth lived another 10 yrs, 4 mo, and 13 days when she died January 01, 2003 in Tampa. Ruth's cremains were also, apparently, given to relatives. There appear to be no gravestones, though Marion Giants will long remember a favorite son.



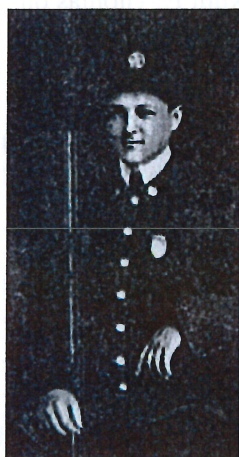


## Grant County Citizen Spotlight

### Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fire Chief Billy Crerar

By Steve Collins

Though William A. Crerar spent his adult life and career in Marion, he began life in Bay City, Michigan on March 21, 1878. He was welcomed by his parents Peter and Elizabeth Jean (O'Neill) Crerar who removed to Warsaw, New York around 1885. Shortly after the death of his father on June 9, 1898, William, his mother Elizabeth and one sister moved to Marion, Indiana where Elizabeth's parents, John and Rebecca O'Neill called home.



William became a member of the Marion Fire Department on July 1, 1901 as a lineman. The MFD fire chief at the time was Warren Oldham Butler, a Civil War veteran, who served as chief from September 1900 to September 1902. Positions within the fire department began to shift over the next few years. William resigned from the MFD on June 1, 1903, but was reappointed on May 1, 1904, again as a lineman. Charles Rifner Case was named the Marion fire chief in September 1902 and held the position until September of 1904 when he was assigned to the Ladder truck at No. 1 Station. William was appointed Assistant Chief on September 1 that same year under the newly appointed Fire Chief Oscar Newton Boyd. Boyd resigned as chief on July 27, 1905, but the City Council did not act on the resignation for another seven months when they elevated William to chief. Homer Burr "Burr" Hamilton was named Billy's assistant chief on February 27, 1906 and remained Chief Crerar's long-time assistant chief until William's death.

From the beginning as Marion Fire Chief, William gained the highest trust and respect of his men. He was given the nickname of "Billy" or "Uncle Billy" by his men. He, along with Assistant Chief Hamilton, achieved the respect of other fire departments that was second to none.

William married his much-adored wife Zella M. (Hall) Allen, a thirty-one year old Marion gal, on January 24, 1908. Zella was the daughter of Joseph J. and Ida M. (Sullivan) Hall.

Marion's fire department, as were most departments of that time, consisted of all-horse and wagons. Marion's transition to motorized vehicles began around 1914 and accelerated to all engine-powered vehicles by c1917. Billy rode on the



## Grant County Citizen Con't...



vehicles as would any Private firefighter. Approximately seven years before his death, he was riding on the back of a fire wagon at Thanksgiving and was thrown from the truck when it swerved and hit a pole causing injuries to his back and hips. He never fully recovered from those injuries. On another winter run a year later, a ladder fell from the truck crushing Billy's foot so badly that he suffered blood poisoning and chronic pain. Billy had many bumps, bruises, and injuries from his many fire runs throughout the years, but the quiet, reserved chief kept the pain and agony to himself. Most of his friends were unaware of his constant pain. The last few years of his service to

the department he was unable to fight fires as he once had. Billy was a fearless firefighter and a very capable handler of his men and department situations. He was liked by anyone with whom he came into contact.

Billy suffered the loss of his beloved mother Elizabeth on December 14, 1923, who was at the home of her daughter, Maud Elizabeth Bell at the time of her passing. Elizabeth is buried at the IOOF/ Estates of Serenity Cemetery.



Billy was also a relentless go-getter as a firefighter and his compound injuries eventually brought about his early demise. William died at the age of 48 at his home located at 4<sup>th</sup> and Nebraska Streets on Friday, August 23, 1926. Because of his affiliation and memberships with the Masonic fraternity, the IOOF, the Elks, the Eagle Lodge, and his many friends, Billy's body was moved to the Masonic Temple where it lay in state, accommodating the many mourners. He is buried at the IOOF/ Estates of Serenity Cemetery.

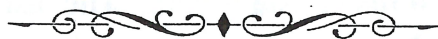
Tragically, Zella died in her home just three months after William, on October 2, 1926. She had remarked to friends that without William by her side she had no desire to live. She tried to asphyxiate herself by turning on her gas stove and closing all the windows of her home. She was found unconscious on her kitchen floor but was revived by Chief Hamilton and Ohmer McNair, sadly dying shortly thereafter.





Burr Hamilton was elevated to the position of Marion Fire Chief upon Chief Crerar's passing. He would serve another 18 years on the department until his death on October 24, 1944. Together the two men, "Billy" and "Burr" served 38 years of exemplary service as Marion Fire Chiefs.

In 2014 the Marion Fire Department began the Marion Fire Department Hall of Fame. William A. "Billy" Crerar was inducted into the hall of fame in 2015, a very deserving honor.



## Vital Statistics

from Monday, January 1, 1923, Marion Chronicle

### Page 7 Announcements

- Miss Green Married- A Christmas party of the Modern Marthas Club, at Mrs. Ina A. Dean's home at 1813 S. Boots St. was where the announcement of marriage of Miss Flora Green and Adolph Sayres of Farmland. The marriage occurred Nov. 29.
- A Spanish War party at Gertrude Ballou's home on S. Boots was held last evening. The party was also held to celebrate the 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday of Colonel George Gunder.
- A surprise party was thrown for Mrs. R. Doyle by a number of her friends on the anniversary of her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Frank Caldwell, of New York City, was called to Marion by the death of his mother.

### Page 11 Deaths

- Mrs. Chloe Shipley, 36, wife of Claude C. Shipley, has died.
- Maynard Jones, 15-month old son of Mr. and Mrs. James Jones has died.
- George Turner of Muncie, formerly connected to Malleable Iron Works of Marion has died.

### Page 12 Births and Other Announcements

- A baby girl named Patty Lou was born Dec. 31, 1922 to Mr. and Mrs. John B. Sisson, 2502 S. Boots St.
- Marriage License- Fred Rasterholz, 30, a merchant from Brookville, Indiana and Ethel Barnett, 26, a school teacher from Jonesboro were issued a marriage license.



## The First Travel Camper

The American Centennial of Automobiles 1896-1996. The spotlight beam shined on Frank Duryea and brother Charles when they started series production of automobiles in Springfield Mass., 1896.

Recreational Vehicles: Travel Trailers, Fold-Downs, Fifth Wheels, Motor Homes, Pop-Ups, Conversion Vans are observed as they traverse the National Highways to end their journey to a lake campground or a recreational court yard in the southern states.

Today there is a nation wide appeal for fellows to collect and restore antique and classic automobiles and trucks as well a new chapter of collectors and restoring antique Campers, RV' S.

"Where and Who built that first Camper"? Camper "HELOMIDO" may be the first vehicle for adventure, possibly the first Camper Truck ever built.

MARION, INDIANA : 1919; A bright and warm Sunday afternoon in August 1919 with all the necessary groceries being packed away in the storage compartments, the bedding was stowed and the camper truck was gassed and ready to go, caring two Marion families on a leisurely cross-country trip to California. Friends gathered at the Mecca Club in Marion to wish the families, Mr. & Mrs. Harry Goldthwaite and Mr. & Mrs. Charles Barley a safe and pleasant journey.

In August 1919 a plan to cross 2,700 miles of America was a bold adventure. This newfangled Vehicle was possibly the first camper truck ever built to make such a trip. The early camper was built on the chassis of a 2 1/2 ton truck, out fitted in real Pullman car style. The body was built in the Indiana Truck Co. shops over a period of about two months, relying on the expert cabinet makers. The body was designed with berths on each side for accommodation of two persons each. Separate compartment with toilet and lavatory. One of the luxuries of the truck was a built-in ice chest, that held one hundred pounds of ice and food for five people, included also a complete camping outfit, two stoves one gasoline and one wood stove, two tables, eight chairs and a complete set of aluminum utensils.

Camper name "Helomido" was made up from the first two letters- Helen, Louise, Mildred and Dorothy, daughters of Indiana Truck Co. vice president J. W. Stephenson. The tour party included Harry Goldthwaite and wife Kitty Goldthwaite was president of Motor Securities Corp. and department stores, Boston and Big Store Co., and Charles G. Barley and wife Mae. Barley was president of Indiana Truck Corp., Modern Laundry co. and was vice president of Marion Ice and Cold Storage and treasure of Barley and Spencer Lumber co and Boston and Big Store Co. The driver was Albert L. Spranger, a machinist at the truck plant.

The families viewed the cross-country trip as a pleasant and unusual vacation and also the promoting "The good roads movement". The party set out on August 10, 1919, they had 60 gallons of water and a pumping system on the truck to draw water from streams on the way. The first stop was Indianapolis then on to Terre Haute, the tourist took only enough food for two days. Telegram from Barley stated that every detail of the trip was progressing splendid fashion as HELEMIDO rode on nine by 42 inch tires with a winch mounted on the left rear wheel hub. For 65 miles through southwestern Illinois outside of St. Louis, HELOMIDO plowed through mud eight to ten inches deep. The trip route included St. Louis and on to Kansas City. Progress continued in splendid fashion making 140-50- miles per day. There were many people along the route, residents of small farming communities, that wanted to see the big truck as it passed through. The party took their time visiting scenic camping spots just like modern vacationers. When the trip was over the truck camper had covered 3,279 miles in total running time of 235 hours. Although daily distance covered sometimes ran to 170 miles, the average speed with stops at many points along the way, was a respectable 14 miles an hour.



The surprising aspect of the trip was the relatively trouble free crossing. There were two flat tires and a broken fan belt, a record considering the lack of roads.

The impressive mechanical record established by the HELOMIDO did much for the reputation of INDIANA TRUCKS! The HELOMIDO was displayed at FLORIDA State Fair at Jacksonville with later showings at New York and Chicago.

INDIANA TRUCK President Charles Barley writes that he gave Marion plenty of free advertising along the way, that HELOMIDO was a product of the Marion Indiana Factory.

Marion Indiana along with its other titles could rightfully claim to be the home of AMERICA' S first Camper!

Reference; Marion Chronicle-Tribune Magazine--- 1972


**"The Magneto Functioned Perfectly"**  
Remarkable Trip of the Indiana Motor Truck - The "Helomido"  
**From Marion, Indiana, to Los Angeles, Cal.**  
3279 Miles

Through miles of bad roads, through blizzards, through the Great American Desert and through the Gulf States, the Helomido was able to make the trip without a single breakdown.

**EQUIPPED WITH MAGNETO IGNITION**

After making the longest journey in the history of California, the "Helomido" has returned to Marion, Indiana, after a trip of 3279 miles, from New York, and from there to Los Angeles, Cal.


**With Never a Sign of Faltering or Trouble With Its Ignition**



For a trip of this nature, the Engineers of the Indiana Truck Company have equipped the Helomido with the highest quality material. They know that when you're out of town, from a long trip, with no service, you need a reliable source of ignition must be absolutely dependable and the Magneto Ignition is just the thing.

**OF COURSE, IT WAS AN**  
**EISEMANN**  
**MAGNETO**

The  
Eisemann Magneto Corporation  
22 West Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.  
Eisemann Magneto Ignition  
The Magneto Ignition







## FROM THE 1927 KITCHEN

### SPECIAL MENUS

Do you serve a special meal for President's Day?

### Washington's Birthday

#### Cherry Cocktail

Olives    Salted Nuts    Oyster Bisque

Fried Chicken    Cream Gravy

French Peas

Sweet Potatoes (Southern Style)

White Grape Salad    Beaten Biscuit

Washington Pie    Fruit Cake

Fruit Punch    Coffee



### Presidents Day

The story of Presidents' Day date begins in 1800 following the death of George Washington in 1799, his February 22 birthday became a perennial day of remembrance. It was signed into law as a federal holiday in 1879 by Rutherford B. Hayes.

Congress proposed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act in the 1960's, passing in 1968, and taking effect in 1971 following an executive order from Richard M. Nixon. This combined the celebration of Abraham Lincoln's February 12<sup>th</sup> birthday with Washington's to create more three-day weekends for the nation's workers. It is now popularly viewed as a day to celebrate all U. S. presidents, past and present.

From the 1927 Kitchen  
of Mrs. A. G. Jagel

### WASHINGTON PIE

#### Part I

1 cup sugar

Juice and peel of 1 lemon

1 Tbsp melted butter

1 heaping spoon flour

#### Part II

2 egg yolks\*, mixed well

1 cup milk

Combine parts I and II and fold in the stiffly beaten whites of 2 eggs. Bake slowly ½ hour in open crust.

We can assume today's oven temp is set at 350 degrees.

From the 1927 Kitchen  
of Mrs. A. S. Gregg

### SWEET POTATOES

(Southern Style)

Bake sweet potatoes until thoroughly done, remove from oven and cut in halves lengthwise; remove potato from skin carefully, so as to keep skin in condition to refill. Mash potatoes, adding sufficient melted butter and cream to moisten the potato. Mixture should be of the consistency of mashed potatoes when put back in the shells. Season with salt and pepper. Refill the shells, brush the top with butter and brown five minutes in hot oven. (425 degree oven today)





GCHS, P.O. BOX 1951, MARION, IN 46952

**GRANT COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Membership Application

Mr. / Mrs. / Miss / Ms.

Address

City, State, ZIP

Phone

Email

\$10.00 Student  
\$20.00 Individual  
\$30.00 Family  
\$100.00 Business Sponsor

Membership dues are payable to the Grant County Historical Society. Payment may be sent to P. O. Box 1951, Marion, Indiana 46952 or paid at any GCHS meeting.

Members receive the Society's newsletter.

For more information about programs and activities, you may email the Society, access the Society's website or visit the Society's Facebook page.