

MORGAN COUNTY

HISTORY CENTER & MUSEUM



Vol. 2, No. 3

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024

75th Morgan County Fair

The museum provided a display for the 75th Morgan County Fair, July 5-13. Vickie Kivett created picture boards from previous fairs which prompted walks down memory lane for many fair-goers. Large displays of past Mr. and Miss 4-H were available.

Patty Dow researched a list of the fair's presidents, 1949-2024, as well as the queens, and grand champion beef, swine, sheep, and goat winners. Inside the 4-H building was a small artifact display dating from 1957 along with photos of Mr. and Miss 4-H. It was suggested that the artifact display become a permanent fixture of the fair in coming years.

All photo boards and artifacts are on display in the museum for the summer as well as the fair insert which was in the Correspondent's June 27 issue. Research for the insert will be permanently housed at the museum and is an ongoing project.



At left, Kivett's picture of Jim Lankford, fair board member, fair president 1978 & 1979, 1990 & 1991, and Mr. 4-H 1962 visiting the fair display.

2024 Fair insert (below) containing history of the infrastructure of the fair, the people and organizations responsible for its development and growth, along

with pictures and stories. Patty Dow, museum volunteer, worked with Kathy Hazel, fair secretary, Diana Hart-Tielking and Jim Lankford to research, write, and edit the flyer under the guidance of Correspondent editor, Stephen Crane.



Our Contact Information

Address: 127 S. Main St. Martinsville, IN 46151

Telephone: 765-315-6982

Facebook page: Morgan County History Center and Museum

Email: morgancountyhistorymuseum@gmail.com

Web page: morgancountyhistorymuseum.org

Open Hours:

Monday 10:00AM-2:00PM

Thursday 4:00PM-7:00PM

Saturday 10:00AM-3:00PM

Private viewings may be booked

Museum Ice Cream Social, October 10, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Museum Yard Sale: October 11 & 12, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.



Boy Scout Exhibit

Lainey O’Neal, Taylor University student, has been the museum’s summer intern. She developed our Boy Scout exhibit using awards, memorabilia, and medals from our Emerson Laughner collection. The display highlights the 50th celebration of local troop 219, Martinsville.

Items on display include memorabilia from the 1985 seventy-fifth National Scout Jamboree, an official trail canteen, the 1930’s Court of Honor record kept by Emerson Laughner and Judy DeBaets, a boy scout fire starting kit, Troop #21’s charter, a 1942 National Defense Savings Program certificate from the United State Treasury Department recognizing Troop #21 for services rendered, and numerous other scout items.

Congratulations, Troop 219 on 75 years of service.

Board meetings for the Morgan County History Center & Museum are held the first Monday of each month in the museum, beginning at 2:15 p.m. Anyone may attend. Quarterly public meetings with a program are scheduled throughout the year. Tentative Grassyfork program September 3, 2024. Stay abreast of museum activities on our Facebook page.

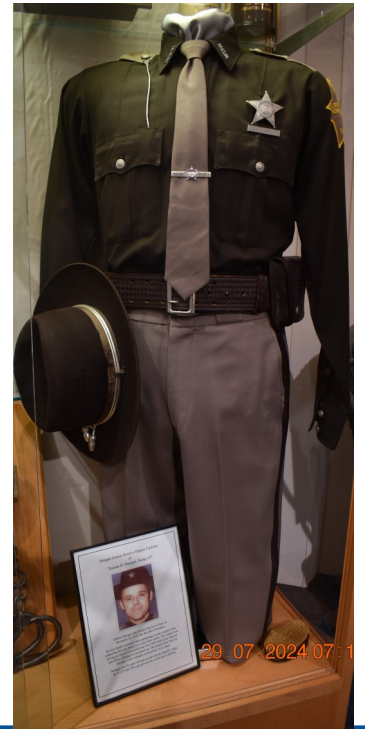
Our military display is growing. We’ve recently received a transcript and CD interview done by Don Swindle, of Mooresville, who wrote about his time in the Marines and made a PBS video with LTC. Oliver North. Don shares a very interesting insight into the 1940’s and WWII. Dennis Smith is our generous benefactor.

Fallen Officer & Sheriff Display

Our Fallen Officer and Morgan County Sheriff's display has been updated to include the uniforms of Reserve Deputy Thomas Dunigan and Sgt. Daniel Starnes. Service information is included.

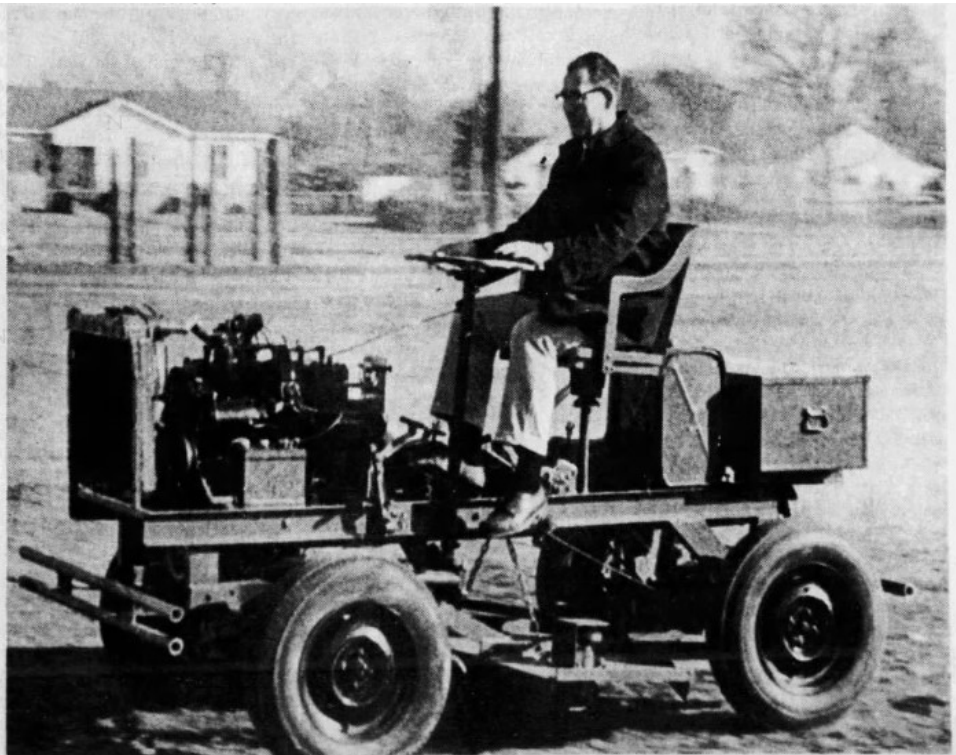
Marion O'Neal's Morgan County Courthouse Jail key, the lock from the 1890-1991 Morgan County Courthouse jail, memorabilia and pictures of past sheriffs J. W. Miller, Paul Mason, Charlie Beaver, and Morton Vance Keller are included in the exhibit.

Come peruse No. 3 Jail Register from the 1890's. Will one of your ancestors be on the list? We welcome pictures and other artifacts which you may want to share to enhance our exhibit. Stories are always welcome.



Morgan County Ingenuity

Development of many farm implements and processes have Morgan County roots.



27 Jan. 1966, The Reporter-Times reported the development of a large lawn mower by the Martinsville High School Industrial Arts students. The machine shop teacher, George Grant, and the auto mechanics teacher, Bruce McNeil, directed students for four months in building the giant lawn mower using parts from a 1951 Studebaker and an International mower.

Do you have a story of an ancestor who was integral to progress in farming or manufacturing in Morgan County?

BIG CHOPPER—To help the local schools' maintenance department with the weekly spring, summer and fall task of mowing more than 60 acres of grass, Martinsville High School industrial art students, under the direction of George Grant and Bruce McNeil, built this king size lawn mower. Mr. Grant is a machine shop teacher and Mr. McNeil the auto-mechanics teacher, and George Grant is shown riding the device. The machine has a five foot cutting width, an 85 horsepower engine, 10 forward speeds and

three reverse speeds. It will travel from one to 40 miles an hour. It took about four months to build and cost approximately \$350. A commercial mower of this size would cost about \$2,000. Major parts of the mower are from a 1951 Studebaker and an International mower. The frame, machined parts and controls were made in the high school machine shop. Principal purpose for constructing the machine was to furnish an educational experience for students in the industrial arts program. —Paul St. John photo

What is it?



The What is It in the Spring issue was a portion of a primitive mercantile scale.



Can you identify this issue's what is it? Not many young ladies in today's society would appreciate this item.

Feel free to contact us concerning Morgan County History. We are open to suggestions and love to research our history.

Wilbur Fire Tower

Back in March the museum received a message: "My name is Jeff Armantrout. My brother Mark and I are Indiana fire tower enthusiasts. Does your organization have any information or photos of the old Wilbur fire tower that you could share with us?" The men came through Morgan County during the eclipse and "visited the Cataract fire tower". The Luck of the Irish shone on us in June and we relocated a newspaper article about the tower.

Mark has a website [Indiana Fire Towers \(by Mark A\)](#) that gives information on Indiana Fire Towers. The August 4, 1954 Martinsville Reporter article stated, "a 100-foot fire tower has been (donated and) moved from property of the Eli Lilly Foundation to a tract a mile west of Wilbur, where the re-erected (tower) enabling watchmen to spot timber and brush fires as far as 20 miles away." The tower was erected by Morgan County Fire Warden Virgil Jackson, District Warden Stanley Myers, Owen County Warden Rice, Loyal Miller, Earl Richardson, Kenneth and Ronnie Mahurin on a five acre tract purchased from Peterson.

In 1930, nearly 134,000 (Indiana) acres had been burned by a series of 225 fires, according to an article in the January 1941 Outdoor Indiana. By 1933, ten fire towers had been established. Fire towers dotted the landscape throughout Indiana in an effort to better contain wildfires. Locals remember climbing the Wilbur Fire Tower in the 1960's.

