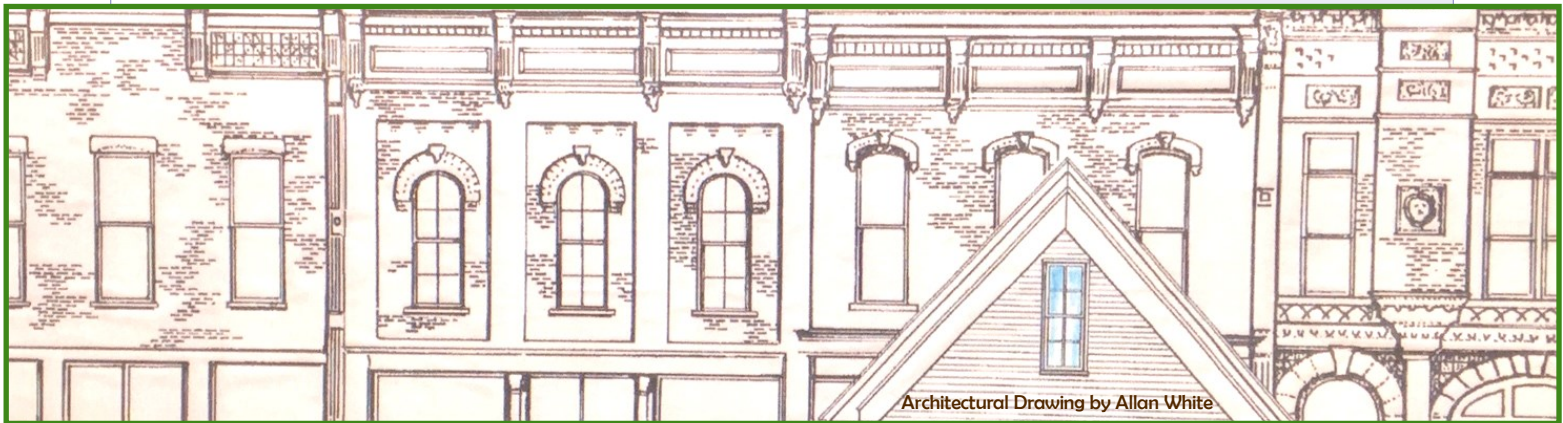


Fall

2019

# North Manchester HISTORY

*Interpreting the History  
of North Manchester  
and the Eel River Valley*



## *The Search for Entertainment in 19th Century North Manchester, by Ladoska Z. Bunker*

By 1871, North Manchester had two railroads. Along with food, the railroads brought theatrical troupes—"tour shows." Presenting *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was an annual affair. North Manchester was on a main line into Chicago, so sometimes exceptional talent came—Nora Bayes, the star of *Shine on Harvest Moon* and Fay Templeton, among others. Local people occasionally put on home talent shows, usually black face minstrels.

Traveling circuses, often dog and pony shows, came to town. Medicine shows, first with a minstrel and later with wild west themes, held forth on Henney's Lot, the vacant block on Main and Elm streets.

For about a decade, 1910-1920, a remarkable institution, the Redpath Chatauquah, spent a summer week here camped out on the Central School ground. It was billed as strictly high class, educational, family entertainment. They brought in large bands, fading opera stars, U.S. Senators, poets, British propaganda speakers, and an occasional play.

Transportation and education produced a more sophisticated citizenry. By the 1920s, radio, and later talking and colored movies, and still later, television assumed leading roles in entertainment.

*This is an excerpt of an article taken from the book A Sense of Place: Reflections on the Life and Times of North Manchester. You can purchase this book in our Gift Shop for \$3.50.*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Entertainment .....	1
Museum visitors .....	2
Life on the Farm .....	3
Then and Now.....	6
Crossroads .....	7

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### The Center for History

122 East Main Street

Tuesday through Friday, Mar—Dec

10:00a—4:00p

Saturday 10:00a—2:00p

### Visit Thomas Marshall House

409 North Market Street

First Saturday Apr—Dec

1:00p—4:00p

## OUR VISITORS COME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

### OTHER

#### COUNTRIES

Solomon Islands

Norway

Netherlands

New Zealand

Paris, France

#### OTHER STATES

##### Alabama

Woodville

##### Arizona

Mesa

Chandler

Pea Ridge

##### Arkansas

Bentonville

##### California

Chico

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Lake Mary

St. Petersburg

The Village

Winter Haven

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##### Georgia

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Chicago

Mahomet

Park Forest

Peoria

##### Iowa

Prairie City

##### Kansas

Manhattan

McPherson

Olaine

##### Michigan

Ann Arbor

Charlesvoix

Chelsea

Fenton

Grand Blanc

Lansing

Novi

Worthville

##### Minnesota

Minneapolis

Prior Lake

##### Missouri

St. Louis

##### Nevada

Reno

##### New York

Honeoye Falls

Grand Island

##### North Carolina

Asheville

Raleigh

Cary

Hendersonville

##### Ohio

Cincinnati

Cleveland Heights

Cloverdale

Continental

Eaton

Garrettsville

Medina

Ney

North Olmstead

Smithville

Willoughby

##### Oregon

Ashland

Forest Grove

##### Pennsylvania

Downingtown

##### South Carolina

Camden

Hilton Head

##### Tennessee

Friendsville

Nashville

Primm Springs

##### Texas

Austin

Shady Shores

##### Utah

Provo

##### Vermont

Plainfield

##### Virginia

Arlington

Ashburn

McLean

Richmond

Woodbridge

##### West Virginia

Hermit

##### INDIANA

Akron

Andrews

Angola

Batesville

Bloomington

Bremen

Claypool

Columbia City

Columbus

Crown Point

Elkhart

Etna Green

Fishers

Fort Wayne

Galveston

Greensburg

Hartford City

Hudson

Huntington

Indianapolis

Knox

Kokomo

Lafayette

Lagro

Laketon

Leesburg

Leo

Logansport

Marion

Mishawaka

Monticello

Nappanee

New Paris

New Waverly

Noblesville

North Webster

Osceola

Pendleton

Peru

Pierceton

Roann

Rochester

Rossville

Silver Lake

South Whitley

Syracuse

Tipton

Urbana

Somerset

Wabash

Warren

Warsaw

Westfield

Winamac

Winona Lake

# *My Life on the Farm*

*by Garland Wilcox*

**M**y parents, Amelia and Ernest Wilcox, got married in 1917. They purchased a 120 acre farm from my Grandpa Wilcox. Things went well for them until 1929-1930. By that time, they had six children, five boys and one girl. I was born in 1930 in the depth of the Depression. There were three more children after that. When the Depression hit, Dad had no money to make a payment on the farm. Dad didn't want to lose what he had worked so hard for. Dad told the two oldest boys that he was going to lose the farm. The boys said, "We are not going to lose this farm. We will work as hard as we can to save it."

Dad had worked with the Bippus State Bank to buy the property. This bank was one of the few banks in Indiana that didn't go broke during the Depression. Dad went to the bank and to ask if something could be worked out. People at the bank told Dad to see a lawyer, a Mr. Eberhart. The two oldest boys went with him and told Mr. Eberhart they would work to save the farm.

Mom took care of the house with help from her oldest daughter. Our house was fairly old and needed repairs around the windows and doors. When it was very windy and snowed, the snow would blow in around the sashes. The kitchen range was more for cooking than it was for heating a large area. The fire would almost always die by morning. Mom put a pail of water out in the kitchen in the evening, but it sometimes froze over by morning.

To heat our house, we had a wood and coal stove in the living room. It was one of those that would burn your front side and freeze your backside when you stood near it. You could bank the stove so it would stay warm all night and the coals would be ready the next morning. Dad took care of the stove.

We had two bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs. Mom and dad slept downstairs to watch the stove. The girls had one bedroom upstairs. The boys slept two and three to a bed in their room upstairs. One time I had a straw tick bed to myself that was quite neat.

We did have water piped into the house with a suction pump, but in the winter time mom would let the suction out so it would drain the water back into the well. Then each morning we had to put some water back into the pump to get the suction back so we could pump water again.



Ernest and Amelia Wilcox  
July 7, 1917

In the fall, we hunted squirrels, rabbits, quail, and a few ducks or geese for food. The older boys hunted raccoon, opossum, skunk, muskrat, mink and fox for fur they could sell. Sometimes these animals would get into the neighbors' chickens and the neighbors would call us to remedy that.

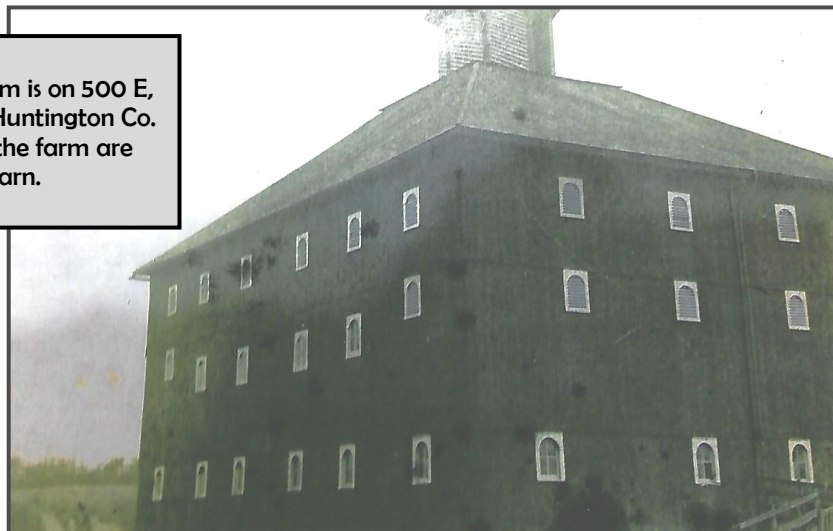
When dad harvested his corn, he always saved the best ears to be seed the next year. In late winter, he would shell the corn that was good and dry. He had a couple of shellers that fit in the palm of his hand.

Spring was the time to think about what fields would be planted in each crop and what was to be put into the garden. Mom always planted plenty of vegetables and flowers. She would go to Mrs. Brodbeck in Bippus to get plants such as sweet potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage, or onions. The children helped carry water, hoe, or plant beans and peas in the garden. We used horses to cultivate our large truck patch. We put our potatoes, sweet corn and rows of sorghum molasses in the truck patch. We also grew grapes, gooseberries, peaches, crab apples and currants. Mom picked wild raspberries and blackberries for jelly, jam, and toppings. We had a quince bush. Quince was only good to put in with other fruit to make jelly. Mom also canned a lot of cherries and peaches.

In the spring, the men plowed and worked the ground to plant spring crops, then it was time to make hay. As the wagons went to the fields, the lane would get so dusty from the wheels that it would almost cover our feet. When Sunday came we would go fishing in the creek or hunting mushrooms. We enjoyed our days off!

Then it was summer and time to cut our wheat and oats with a binder that tied the plants into small bundles. These bundles were put into shocks to cure and dry the kernels of grain. The shocks could be left for quite some time this way. As fall would start to show, we cleaned the barn to get ready for threshing the wheat and oats. A German gentleman on a farm around a corner from us had a threshing machine. A lot of farmers would get together and hire him to thrash for everyone. He had a tractor to run the machine. Each of the farmers had a wagon to throw the bundles of wheat or oats in to bring them to the threshing machine. The threshing machine would blow the straw into the barn or blow it into a large pile outside where the cattle and hogs would lay around in it. The grain would

The Ernest Wilcox farm is on 500 E, south of SR 16, near Huntington Co. line. All buildings on the farm are gone, including the barn.



go into another wagon. Most farms had a granary to put the grain in, or the grain was stored in another building or the barn.

When the threshing work was completed, Mr. Urschel would hire my dad to take each farm's bushels of grain and figure out how much they owed him for threshing their grain. Mr. Urschel would pick an evening for all the families to bring their bills. He would go to Huntington to the Double Dip Ice Cream Factory and bring back enough ice cream for everyone to enjoy, all they could eat. It was wonderful.

Then about late fall and early winter work. Frost killed the corn stalks and they dried in the field awhile. Someone had a corn binder, a machine that cut the corn stalks off and tied them into small bundles. These bundles would be stood up on the cut end and collected into shocks that looked like a tee pee. They did this to dry the corn kernels and let the stalks cure.

Dad bought a very old corn shredder. He had an old Hart Parr tractor that had steel lug wheels on the back. Those wheels dug into the road bed but that didn't matter since the roads were all gravel anyway. Dad would go from farm to farm to shred the corn stalks into fodder to be used for bedding for livestock or food for the animals. The ears of corn were pulled off the stalks and shucked. The ears were carried up into a wagon for grain for all the animals. Most of the ear corn was put into a corn crib to be used later.

I think dad knew almost everybody in eight townships. As he would go from one place to another, people would ask if he could do their shredding, so he would work a lot of days in the winter. That really helped his bottom line when it came to keeping his farm. Dad died fairly young at only 61. The funeral director said that was the largest funeral he had, up to that time.

I remember Mom dressed a turkey for Mr. Eberhart every Thanksgiving and Christmas. He would always say, "Thank you," but he would not pay her anything. He came year after year and got his turkeys but it was always "Thank you," and never any pay. I asked my brothers about it, but they didn't understand it either. I wondered about that for years. When our mother died almost thirty years later, I was co-executor for her estate. After getting things settled, I found out about my mystery, and that was the largest shock of my life.

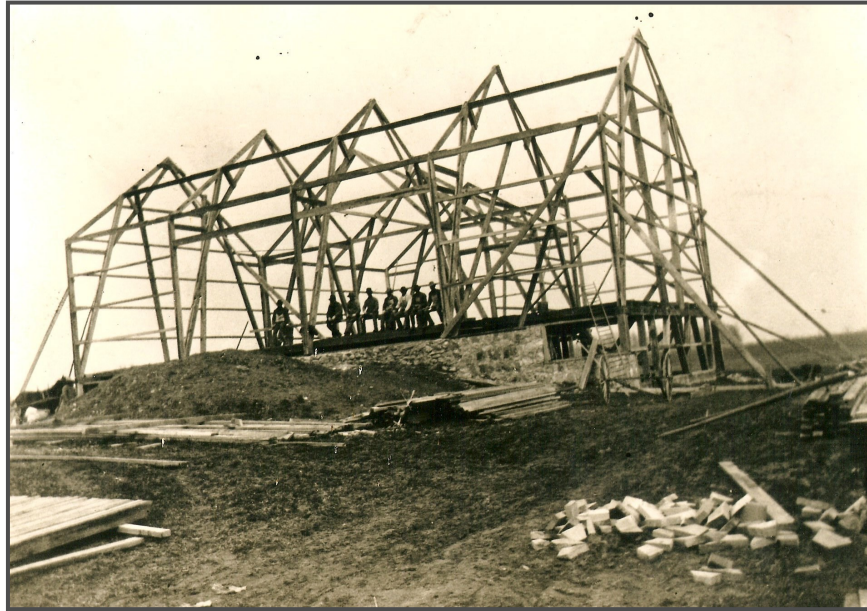
Mr. Eberhart had written a note to my parents and they put it in with the final papers. The note said that he would hold the deed to the farm, made out to him. If they got back on their feet again to take over the payments on the farm, Mr. Eberhart would sign the deed back to our parents. That was his payment, dressed turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas for all those years. I felt that was more than fair on his part. I also thought that is what you call buying a farm with a turkey!

*Dad bought  
the farm  
with a  
turkey!*

*Garland Wilcox is a resident of Timbercrest Retirement Community. He was wounded in the Korean War which left his right arm and hand disabled. Even so he was able to have a career in floor covering for 41 years. He was a pool champion at the age of 89. He bought himself a new tractor for his 89th birthday to surprise his children.*

# THEN and NOW

1903



North Manchester Center for History Collection

Barn raising on the Ellis Miller farm, 100 E, north of North Manchester. Stone foundation built in 1902, barn built by Ellis in April 1903. When his son Harold married he took over the farm and his father moved to town. After Harold retired, he made a room in the barn into a museum of old farming equipment, some from the 1840s. After his death these items were donated to the Center for History. Come in to see a full barn display from the Miller farm.

2019



Photo by Scott McAlpine

## *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*

The Center for History is planning many events from March 21—May 3, 2020. These events will be held at the Center. Details are forthcoming.

### **March**

21	10-9	Ribbon Cutting, Grand Opening
22	1-4	Art Workshop with Hannah Burnworth
28	3-5	Local Musicians

### **April**

4	2-5	Art Workshop with Heidi Lovett
11	2-4	Pete Jones Lecture
19	2-4	Art Workshop with Britta Glass
25	2-4	Jeff Diesburg Lecture

### **May**

2	6-9	Closing Party
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Jody Rockwell's 2nd grade class was asked to draw a picture of a local farm and bring it with them when they visited the Center in September. All pictures will be available for parents to see during Crossroads.

North Manchester Historical Society  
P. O. Box 361  
122 East Main Street  
North Manchester, Indiana 46962

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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

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your newsletter by  
email to reduce cost to the  
Center for History**  
nmhistory@cinergymetro.net



**Center for  
HISTORY**  
North Manchester

## North Manchester Center for History

### Mission Statement

The North Manchester Center for History of the North Manchester Historical Society serves to promote the Society's mission as a nonprofit educational association that collects, preserves, and interprets the history of North Manchester and northern Indiana (the area of the Eel River Basin) from the arrival of the first Native Americans in the region to the present day through the collecting and preserving of books, documents, artifacts and other cultural objects. The Center interprets its collection to the public by means of a museum facility, educational programs, lectures, public events and publications and encourages others to help collect, preserve and interpret the history of North Manchester area.

## Renew your membership NOW

**so you will be eligible to vote at the January Annual Meeting!!**

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please Make Checks Payable to North Manchester Historical Society  
PO Box 361  
North Manchester, IN 46962  
260.982.0672

\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_ Renewal  
\_\_\_ Individual \$30 \_\_\_ Couples \$50 \_\_\_ Sustaining \$75 \_\_\_ Supporting \$100

In addition to membership, I would like to give a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be used for:

\_\_\_ Where most needed \_\_\_ Center for History \_\_\_ Thomas Marshall House  
\_\_\_ Other (Please specify)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Would you prefer to receive your Newsletter by Email? \_\_\_ Yes

We are a 501-(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.  
Note: Membership dues provide specific member benefits and are not the same as Annual Fund gifts, which provide purely philanthropic support.