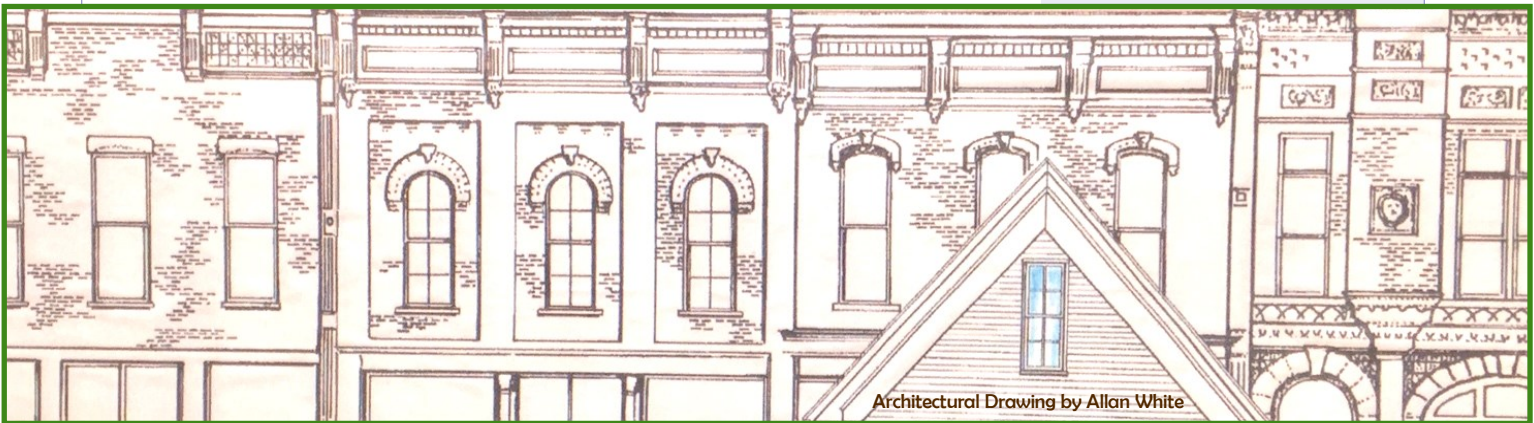


Winter

2021

North Manchester HISTORY

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



“Merry Christmas to Kathryn with love from Mrs. Muchmore 1913”



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

W. E. Billings speech ...	2
Metzger Pt. 4	4
Marketplace	5
Ice harvest.....	6
From Our Director	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

William Edward Billings Speech in Accepting the Star of Service Award, 1937, Part 2

By Gladys Airgood

(continued from last issue)

I do not mention the conditions that surrounded early North Manchester in its making with any intention of ridiculing the days of our fathers, for those were really happy days, and North Manchester, then as now, was at the front of the procession. To say to a stranger anywhere in the world that you belonged in North Manchester was to bring a compliment upon your selection of a home

And it was some town in those days. There were nineteen passenger trains every day over the Wabash, and six over the Big Four. Making the trains was then one of the important jobs of a news gatherer, for everybody leaving or coming to town travelled by railroad.

We were still living in some of the reflected glory of Custer's Concert band that had gone to Chicago and played before an admiring metropolitan audience. No one long in North Manchester, and meeting with "Pop" Sheller, Dr. Ginther, Al Benchley, Dan Sheller or George Enyeart could long remain in ignorance of that wonderful trip. These worthy men, all of whom had their active part in making North Manchester, have in comparatively recent years been called from their labors and we believe that they are playing harps in that big orchestra on the other side of the river. Anyway, heaven will not be quite right when we get there unless we are greeted by "Pop's" hearty handshake and by the merry chuckle of Doctor Ginther, the kind of chuckle he used to give when he complained that the undertaker George Bender was not paying him his share of commission in the cases he was sending him. Today in North Manchester there are three members of the famous band—Charles Felter, George Shupp and Jim Taylor, with a fourth member, Hank Weber at Wabash.

And in the fall of 1900 we were still talking about the little less than a million people who had been here in the spring for the Annual Dunkard meeting in Harter's Grove and of how we had taken care of that gathering. The fact that we went through all of it, kept our feet on the ground, able to stand prosperity and notoriety without bursting our hat bands is today a reason for justified pride, and this attitude of modesty has been the corner stone upon which this community has built its success.

Today there is only one business concern in North Manchester located in the same building and directed by the same manager as in 1900—Rice photograph gallery. All other have moved or changed man-

agers. There are seven men in business today who were heads of their concerns 37 years ago. There are three professional men who were in practice in 1900—two dentists and one physician. There is not a school teacher of the 1900 period still in service here, nor a minister of that period in any of the churches. In the News-Journal office today there is one employee who has been in constant service for nearly 33 years: Mrs. Fanny Stocker, whose fingers have put into type nearly all of the home news for North Manchester. Unseen by the public she has done her work in a back corner of the office, while the news stories she has set on the linotype have gone into the homes of nearly all of the people about North Manchester, as well as into the homes of many old timers who have moved to other localities but who are glad to hear from their old time friends back home. Harry Leffel came to the News-Journal considerably more than twenty years ago. Robert Luckenbill came to the News-Journal force to fill the vacancy occasioned by the illness and death of Tom Krisher, and today is the foreman of the mechanical department. Kent Perkins coming as a school boy to the News Journal, headed the mechanical department for several years. Miss Josephine Legan came to the News-Journal force in 1935, doing efficient office and news work. To all these members of the office force much credit is due for their tireless efforts, their faithfulness, and their drive to serve not only the paper but the community as well.



Mr. & Mrs. Billings in retirement 1937

It would not be fitting for me to neglect to mention how North Manchester met the dark hours of the depression as they loomed before us a few years ago. Winter coming on, many out of work, jobs few, with many willing hands idle, the prospect was far from bright. In those days we had the idea that it was not only ours to look after our needs at home, but to help the government as well, instead of depending on the government to help us. Reasoning it was ours to take care of our own needy, a committee of North Manchester citizens headed a movement to put one day's wage or income into a fund for this purpose. This fund was put into the hands of Jonas W. Warvel with Clay Syler as an able secretary. For two years these men so managed this fund that there was not a suffering family in the North Manchester community nor a call for additional funds. It was for this work so well done, as well as for the many other acts of good citizenship that Mr. Warvel was a few years ago awarded the North Manchester Star of Service, fully merited and highly prized by him until he was all too early called from among us.

The thirty-seven years I have spent in North Manchester, thirty-six of them telling the events of our home community, of our hopes, of our ambitions, of our successes, and sometimes our disappointments have been years of pleasure as well as years of hard work. It would be difficult to find a more kindly or a more considerate people to work among than those of North Manchester, and this evening when I speak of North Manchester, I am not restricting it to the town itself, but include the whole surrounding community, for the town and country have had to, and have worked together to bring about the conditions for which tonight we have every reason to be thankful. Every industry, every business, every profession, every church, every family, yes, every individual has had his part in this work. That I and the newspaper I represent have had their part, and that we have not been lagging in the procession is my sincere hope.

Continued on next page

This is really not an occasion for sermonizing, but I cannot resist saying that the future of North Manchester depends upon its people putting forth the same united effort that has in the past brought it to and kept it at the front. It did not just happen to be a good clean town, a town to which people were glad to come, a community to which good people from a whole nation were willing to send their children to college. It took care and constant effort to keep the town clean.

But I look forward to the future of North Manchester with faith. The younger people who are coming to the front these days are just as honorable and just as sturdy as their fathers or their grandfathers, and with their superior training should be better able to cope with the conditions that will arise from time to time than the folks of other days ever were. That it may be so is my belief and hope.

Again I want to tell you that I do appreciate the honor that has been conferred upon me tonight. I would not be truthful did I not say that I am glad to receive it as an expression of good will from the people among whom I have worked and lived so pleasantly all these years. Several times after retiring from the News-Journal I have been asked if I contemplated going into the newspaper business in some other town. My answer is the most sincere compliment I can pay to North Manchester—that had I any desire to continue in the newspaper business I would not have disposed of the News-Journal in this city.

From the News-Journal September 1937

Billings continued to write about North Manchester until he died in his sleep in 1952.

The Church Became the Center of the Solomon Metzger Family's Life

By Tom Brown

A brief recap of part 3: Clearing land was the most arduous task confronting the Metzger's and Fruit's as they journeyed to their new homes in the Eel River Community. The Church was there for them when times got really hard.

The Solomon Metzger family prospered, raising all 12 children to adulthood was rare for the period. The closest school was 2 miles to the south, with that distance being the maximum allowed. As education was important to the Metzger's, Solomon asked the township trustee for a closer school to be built on their farm, with the land as well as the structure being donated to the township. There were 29 children of Brethren families within a mile of the proposed school, so the request for a new school made sense. The trustee agreed with this generous offer of the Metzger's, but denied his request of providing a German speaking teacher, as the trustee believed strongly that all children in the township should be schooled in English. Solomon and Barbara, as well as most other Brethren in the area spoke nothing but German at home.

A crisis in the Church occurred during the Churches annual meeting in 1881, causing a deep division in the German Baptist Brethren Church. One of the basic issues, being the place of women in the Church. Other issues were: dress, missions, worldliness of members and the Biblical interpretation of the practices of ordinances. Another major issue was "free ministry" whether preachers should be paid.

Locally, and more specifically, the "Church Split" divided the Solomon Metzger family. Seven of their 12 children, as well as their families stayed with the conservatives or what is now known as the

Church of the Brethren. The other five children and their families, as well as Solomon and Barbara stayed with the more traditional ways and became “Old Orders”.

After the Church Split, things were never the same for the Solomon Metzger family, and Solomon often spoke he wished this event in the life of the Church would have never occurred, but it did, and life went on. Although the practice of shunning was never officially practiced among the Brethren, it in fact did happen, although not openly, but privately.

Solomon and Barbara raised all their children to be independent thinkers, and although they housed their bodies, they never attempted to even think they could control their thoughts! Solomon and Barbara were charter members of the Old Order Church, which continues today just north of the Dairy Queen, and they are buried in the cemetery there. Their original farm house still stands, thanks to the meticulous work of Steve and Debbie Freshour. They need to be commended for their commitment to preserving the integrity of the original house, which includes its walnut timbers that are mortise and tenon, like a barn frame. Steve has a special interest in this house as this is where he grew up. It is located at 1233 W - 1500 N. It's well worth the short drive to enjoy its majestic presence. Another interesting fact about the Solomon Metzger family, is that it's the only house in the neighborhood where the house was built before the barn was erected. Barbara insisted that if Solomon's goal to have a baby in the cradle every spring, then she deserved a nice home in which to house them, and she got her wish and so did he!

Market @ the Museum

Dec. 1-11, Tues-Fri 10-4, Sat 10-2



Watercolor from Market artist Brenda Ramseier.



A sampling of Market artist Dee Hoffman's work.



Museum volunteer Diana Iden and Market artist Susan Ring.

Harvesting Ice in January 1927

By Gladys Airgood

Did you ever have an ice box to keep food cold before refrigerators and electricity came along? Many people did and the ice companies would bring ice to the house and put it in the icebox. A colored cardboard in the window told them how much you wanted. But the ice would melt and the pan collecting the water had to be emptied often. (Paul Ebbinghouse drilled a hole in the floor for the water to drain through.) When I was a child we used to drive around to the back of the Strauss Feed Store and get a 50 pound chunk of ice put in a burlap bag. We'd take it home and, keeping it in the bag so we didn't lose any, would break it up with a maul or the back of an ax to make ice cream. 1927 was an excellent year for saving ice. The News-Journal tells of the ice harvest in January of that year.

"On January 17, Strauss started harvesting ice from their pond on Riverside cutting 9 ½" ice of good quality. Last week a crew of men kept busy pushing the snow off the ice and this morning they commenced the harvest. Most of the work is done by machinery. The sawing is done with a power saw and a tractor hoists the chunks into an ice house there which will hold about 1,500 tons, nearly enough for two year's supply in town. It is going into the ice houses at the rate of 50 tons an hour. There are four ice houses and altogether they will hold about 750 tons. The ice is clear and from pure well water. (*I remember how we kids liked to suck on the small pieces.*) These houses are insulated and will keep the ice frozen for a very long period.

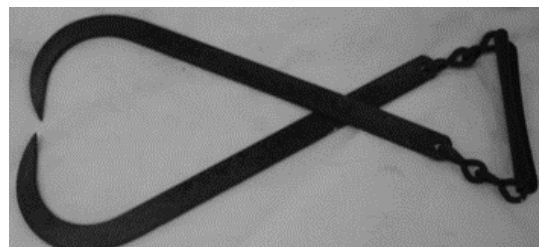
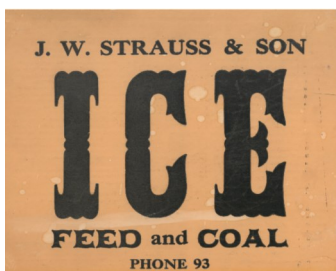


(Not local picture)

"About twenty men are employed cutting and storing the ice. It is much easier than it used to be. The ice is cut into about 140 pound cakes with a buzz saw powered by a gasoline engine and floated to an elevator by a tractor. The elevator takes up to twelve cakes at a time to any house level where desired and dumps the cakes off. Runways along the side of the house carry the ice to the nearest door where wanted and the cakes are shot into the house, then slid into place."

In earlier years, the ice was taken from lakes and rivers. It frequently froze to 12-14 inches. The ice was cut with either a handsaw or a powered saw blade into long continuous strips and then cut into large individual blocks for transport by wagon back to the ice house. Houses might be some distance from the ice source but close to a small village. In the older houses the ice was insulated with saw dust.

In the 1880's, ice was the second largest export of the US, second only to cotton. Ice harvesting would not fare well today, as with the warmer climate, water seldom freezes more than a few inches.



Strauss Ice Card and Ice Tongs in our Collection

Highlights from the Director

2021 has been a year of creativity, challenges, change and fun at the *Center for History*. As I write this, our 2nd **Market @ the Museum** is in full swing. The decorations, the vendors along with the holiday shoppers– it is such a fun time at the museum! Make sure you don't miss it. Even though the pandemic continues to hamper many things in our everyday lives the CFH and the NM Historical Society carries on with our programs and projects while enjoying visits from many of you. We committed to sharing more of our nearly 34,000 items with you by creating two new exhibits this year. Summer camp completed another successful year and students from Manchester Elementary returned for the first time in over a year. We weren't able to provide in-person monthly programs – but we adapted and continued to provide videos of our presenters. The upside is that you can watch them any time by visiting our website www.northmanchestercenterforhistory.org.

The wheels have been turning, both literally and figuratively, as we make plans for 2022. We will open our first new permanent exhibit since the Miller Barn in the spring. Those of you that attended our Member Appreciation Event got a sneak peek of that project and we are very excited to share it with everyone soon. We plan to host another member event in early summer – making use of the great space (and our new mural, “Mariposas”) in the adjacent alley while partnering with some of our downtown neighbors. Bernie Ferringer has already outlined plans for a trip in the first half of the year that we think is awesome! Finally, in the fall, we plan to launch our first guided walking tour event. It's an idea we've had swirling around for a while and this is the year we're going to make it happen!

The North Manchester Historical Society has owned this building for 20 years now – and all of our successes are built on the great support we have from the world's best volunteers, members like you and the partnerships that we have with so many organizations and businesses in our area. Thank you for helping us to continue to grow and become an even greater asset to North Manchester. Your membership and support means everything to us!

Best wishes for the Holidays and I wish you a Happy New Year!

Laura Rager

Director

Center for History

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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.

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