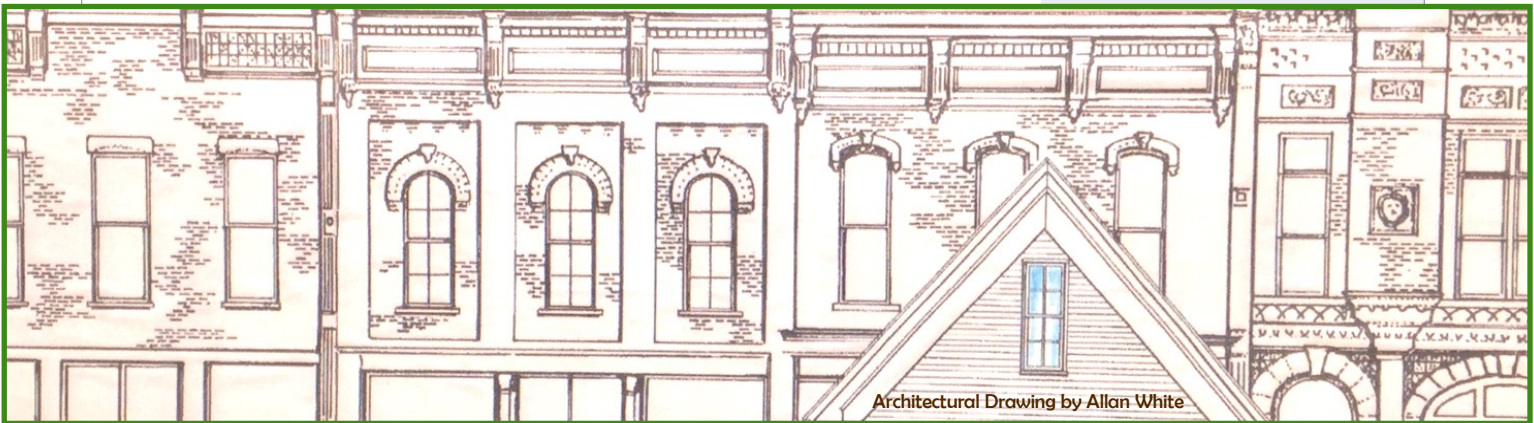


Spring

2022

North Manchester HISTORY

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



Architectural Drawing by Allan White

Grand Opening

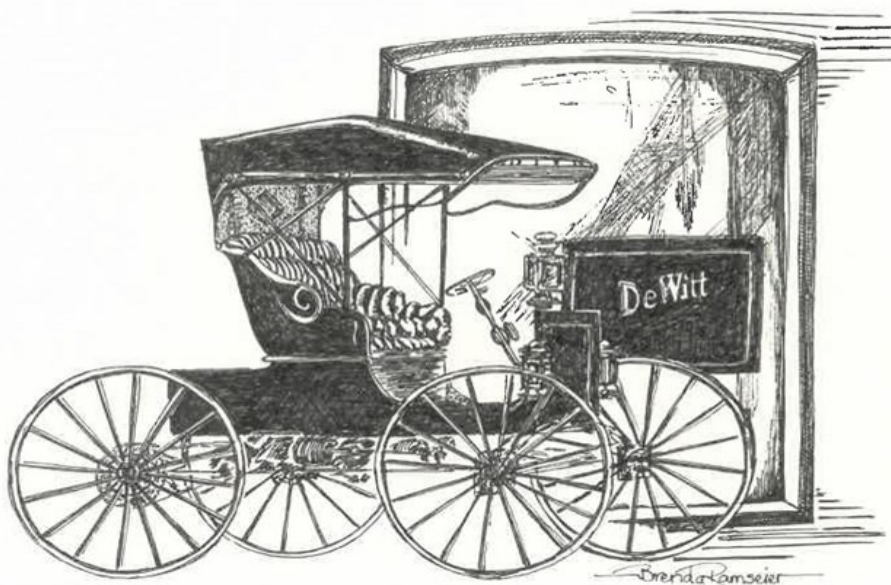
of the

DeWitt Auto Factory

Thursday, April 14 5:00-7:00 p.m.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Zinnias circa 1940	2
Virgil DeWitt.....	3
Flower Power.....	4
Auto Indiana	4
Pudge Egolf.....	5
Thomas Marshall	6
From the Director.....	7



DeWitt auto buggies were manufactured in North Manchester 1909-10. Thanks to the generosity of Janet and Russell (Pudge) Egolf, we now have an original and two replicas in our collection.

OFFICERS AND BOARD

Jim Myer, *President*

Mary Chrastil
President Emeritus

Nancy Alspaugh
Vice-President

Kathy Prater, *Secretary*

Matt Mize, *Treasurer*

Tom Brown
Bernie Ferringier
Karen Hewitt
Jack Schuler
Tim Taylor
Abigail Van Vlerah
Joe Vogel

ADMINISTRATION

Laura Rager
Director

Joyce Joy
Archivist . Office Manager

Diana Bucher
Docent Coordinator

Sandra Bendsen
Youth Program

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Laura Rager . *Editor*

Gladys Airgood . *Contributor*

Tom Brown . *Contributor*

Social Media :

www.facebook.com/

North Manchester Center for History

Instagram: [north_manchester_history](https://www.instagram.com/north_manchester_history)

Website::

northmanchestercenterforhistory.org

Email:

nmhistory@cinergymetro.net

Phone: (260) 982.0672

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

ZINNIA CHOSEN AS OFFICIAL FLOWER

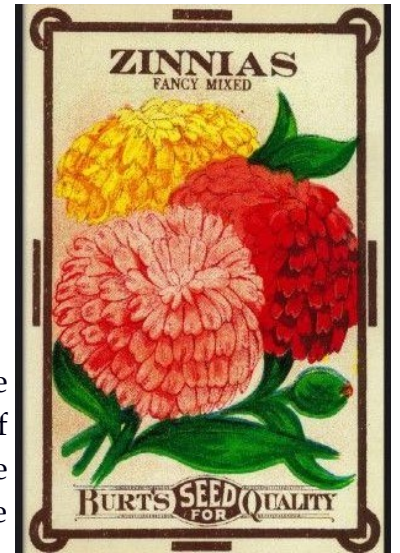
The zinnia has been accepted as the official North Manchester flower. Zinnia beds at each of the five entrances to the town will give a cheery welcome to all visitors, and bright beds of zinnias will be found in almost every yard if plans of the North Manchester Garden Club go through.

The flower was chosen by a committee composed of representatives of many of the town's organizations under the chairmanship of Mrs. D. W. Boyer of the Garden Club. The decision of the committee was reported to the Garden Club at its meeting Wednesday afternoon at the home of Mrs. J. W. Dewey. Plans for the distribution of free seed, for the arrangements and care of the town gardens and other details will be worked out later.

The zinnia was chosen because it is inexpensive, colorful, comparatively free from insects and disease, is drought resistant, easy to grow and blooms all summer. It is an annual, and (*at the time*) is the official Indiana flower. The zinnia derives its name from J.G. Zinn, professor of medicine at Gottinger in old Prussia, who lived between 1727 and 1759 and first developed the bloom. It was chosen from a list of suggested flowers including zinnigolds, petunias and roses.

Those on the committee selecting the flower were Ivan Little, Rotary; Mrs. Maynard Card, Kiwanis and Business and Professional Women; Mrs. J. H. Miller, North Manchester Woman's Club; Mrs. Cecil Eiler, Athenian; Mrs. Duane DeLancey, Fine Arts; and Mrs. Walter Loucks and Mrs. Ernest Singer, Garden Club.

News-Journal Feb. 8, 1940



In recognition of the official flower of North Manchester, the Center for History is offering a free packet of zinnia seeds to our first one hundred visitors this year. North Manchester Parks and Recreation, NM Public Library and the downtown streetscape will be joining us in celebrating the zinnia!

Virgil L. DeWitt

By Gladys Airgood

In April 1909, Virgil DeWitt completed the first auto buggy manufactured in North Manchester. The factory was located at 901 West Main Street, west of the Big Four Railroad track, and was the result of a partnership between DeWitt and W.H. McIntyre. DeWitt, a resident of Auburn, Indiana, was connected to the Kiblinger-McIntyre Company a manufacturer of buggies and wagons. Knowing that they were planning an expansion of their auto buggies, he offered to produce them in North Manchester under the name of DeWitt Motor Vehicle Company.

The DeWitt auto buggies were copies of the autos being produced in Auburn. Selling for just \$592.50, they were advertised as being equipped with steering wheel, spark and throttle on the steering post, five gallon gas tank, brass horn, chain drive to each rear wheel, 13.6 horse power, two forward speeds, with a maximum speed of 30 miles per hour but best use 15-20 miles per hour. Two models were produced until April of 1910 when a second story fire gutted the building. Although the fire started in the paint and body stock area, the exact cause is unknown.

Despite lore saying Virgil emigrated from Sweden, census records and his death certificate say he was born in Ohio to Daniel and Elizabeth (Whetzel) DeWitt on April 26, 1852. Daniel and Elizabeth were also born in the United States. On July 2, 1876, Virgil married Mary Jones in DeKalb County, Indiana. In an 1880 census, he was residing in Wilmington, Indiana. Living with him and Mary were a son, Harry, age 3, his father, Daniel age 56, and his brother Commodore age 18. Apparently during this time he became associated with the Kiblinger Auto factory and Mr. McIntyre, who had purchased it.

In August of 1906, DeWitt purchased two lots from Isaac Gingerick on South Maple Street to begin construction of what a Sept. 13, 1906, News Journal article reported, "it is understood to be one of the finest residences in the city." Before construction began however, DeWitt moved an existing house on the lots to the north to make more room for his new home. After the factory fire DeWitt filed bankruptcy and the home was then sold to Ademar and Jane Ruffle proprietors of Ruffle Jewelry downtown.

In 1920 the DeWitts had moved to Long Beach, California, where he owned property. Virgil died March 10, 1924, of myocardial degeneration. Mary died Nov. 11, 1925, of apoplexy. They are interred in the Sunnyside Mausoleum in Long Beach, Ca.

Automobiles in Indiana were first manufactured in 1898 when six makes were built. The number of makes reached a total of 280. By the 1930s less than 20 makes were being built in Indiana. Avanti and Studebaker were the last ending their production in 1963.

Flower Power

Submitted by Paula Adams

People traveling the 2nd and 3rd blocks of north Market Street are noticing the “crocuses are up!” But more than heralding spring, the crocuses have a story known only to a few participants and residents. The story belongs to the town.

In the 1990s there were crocus at the corner of 3rd and Market.

Those first sprouts inspired the idea of a trail of crocuses in nearby tree lawns, but the idea was doomed! It was mid-November and

the ground would soon be frozen too hard to plant. Also, it was Christmas-time and there were no crocus corms in town. Cheryl Wilson, a neighbor, became involved and suggested calling Bernie Ferringer at Manchester Greenhouse to see if he could find corms. He found a supplier who would let them have his last 800 bulbs at cost.

Neighbors rallied; some made cash donations, others gave sweat and shovel help, and some gave both. They dug trenches before the ground froze and kept the removed dirt unfrozen under tarps.

The neighborhood was ready!

When the crocus bulbs arrived, they were bedded in the stone-hard trenches and covered with the blanket of soft, stored dirt. The next year, in September, 1200 more bulbs were planted. The dramatic serpentine of crocus color in the spring helped win North Manchester the North Manchester in Bloom designation. Each spring when the crocuses bloom, it shows “Flower Power” and its accompanying good will can build community and bring us together.



Auto Indiana

This traveling exhibit will be at the North Manchester Center for History from April 1-29.

From inventors and innovators like Elwood Haynes and Ralph Teetor to automakers like Studebaker and Duesenberg, Indiana has left an indelible mark on the industry for more than a century – and vice versa.

This exhibit illuminates ties between the automobiles and the development of many other economic opportunities for the “Crossroads of America”, such as the iron, steel and glass businesses. It also explores how the automobile became part of the American Dream and popular culture, from movies to making personal memories. Guests can also gaze down the road ahead for Hoosiers, from environmental impact of automobiles to a look at manufacturing today.

This traveling exhibit is made possible by Local History Services, a division of the Indiana Historical Society, with special funding by Kroger.

RUSSELL (PUDGE) EGOLF

In 1972, Russell (Pudge) Egolf was helping with the float committee for the Historical Society entry in the Fun Fest parade. He thought an old car would be unique and he loved old cars. Joe Leffel had found some old newspapers in the city dump that told of the DeWitt Car company in North Manchester. That was all it took to motivate Egolf. Pudge and Bill Poston went in search of an original DeWitt and found one (possibly the only one still in existence) in Ottawa, Illinois, in a private museum. It was too expensive and difficult to bring the car to Manchester for a parade, but Pudge took a lot of pictures and found a company catalog in the local public library. He assigned himself the job of building a replica of the original for the parade.



For a month he and others worked in his garage building a collector's item worth over \$3500 at the time. Pudge had checked over 80 sources for a 2 cylinder motor surprisingly finding one here in town at Harold Bolinger's. An Amish buggy maker was found to build the wheels and top for the horseless carriage. Pudge's brother, Jerry, and Russell Tracy of Apex Tool and Die created the running gear. Iron castings were made by the Manchester Foundry and brass castings by Vice Brothers Foundry in Wabash. It was painted deep wine with red leather upholstery, red running gear, and red cloth lining with a black artificial leather top. The result is a perfect replica of the original. The car was driven in the Fun Fest parade in 1973 by Max and Sara Allen. It was later displayed in the original DeWitt factory now Custom Magnetics. Pudge remarked, "It's been a lot of fun!"

In December of 1973, Pudge gave his original replica to the North Manchester Historical Society in memory of Bob Floyd, an old car buff who had inspired Pudge.

Eight years later, Pudge approached Steve Farringer with the idea of building and selling the replicas. Between 1982 and 1985 twelve automobiles were completed and are now scattered around the world. Their test car was driven more than 10,000 miles, including two 100 mile trips. Both a two seater runabout and a two seater light truck were produced by the new company. A four seater touring car was also developed, although there is no record that original DeWitts were produced in this configuration. In 1984 two runabouts were taken to the Chrysler proving grounds in Detroit for testing by Car and Driver magazine. The editors had a great time!

Unfortunately, the endeavor to reproduce DeWitt auto buggies was not financially self supporting and production ceased at the end of 1985. However, in the mid 1990s a Canadian production company asked them to build a four seater for the Broadway production of "Showboat". The design had to include an electric-powered motor for use on the stage. Three vehicles were produced. They were also used in "Shepherd of the Hills" presentations in Nashville. When the production companies were through with them, Pudge bought them back. Later one of these was presented to the Historical Society.

In 1998, Pudge negotiated the purchase of the original DeWitt. It was thought to have last been driven in the 1950s when there was an engine failure. Two rod bolts sheared, resulting in a severely bent connecting rod, broken piston, broken cylinder, bent crankshaft, and crankcase broken in several pieces. It was not in good shape, but he hoped to repair it and use it again.

Pudge died in 2017 and his widow, Janet, presented the original to the North Manchester Historical Society. It remains as he left it.

Thomas Riley Marshall

Governor 1909-1913, Vice-President 1913-1921

Thomas Riley Marshall was born March 14, 1854, in a frame house at the southeast corner of the Center for History. Much has been written about him, but in honor of his birthday, we include some of the writings from his book of recollections, "A Hoosier Salad", written just before his death in 1925. Marshall's book includes short items about a great many people he knew, but there is never a negative word about them.



- Wherever there are no rules, there is barbarism, and wherever rules are established and persons are chosen to settle controversies, there real civilization begins.
- Betsy Ross did not make her flag to float over doctors and lawyers and ministers; over butchers and bakers and candle-stick makers. She made it to float over one person only – the American citizen; the man who looks up to nobody, looks down on nobody, but who looks straight into the eyes of everybody.
- Now and then I forget what should be the prayer of every public man upon arising in the morning: "Oh, God, keep me humble this day." Once in my wife's presence I bragged that I had made one hundred and sixty-nine speeches in my strenuous campaign throughout Indiana. Mrs. Marshall stopped me and reminded me, "Oh, Tom, don't tell that story! I was with you all the while and what you mean to say is that you made one speech one hundred and sixty-nine times in Indiana."
- I had a compassion, strange as it may seem, during the war for those of foreign birth and foreign extraction. I had great hopes that out of the World War there would really come a united American citizenship among which no question of race or religious belief would ever again arise.
- It did come to an end at last; partly of course, by arms and munitions and military strategy, but a large factor was the confidence of the world in the desire of the president to bring about a peace without victory. (edited)
- Thomas Riley Marshall achieved a small measure of immortality with his quip, "What This Country Needs Is a Really Good Five-Cent Cigar." He never claimed the comment as his own, but its application to a senate (that "cave of winds") speech gave it lively currency.

**The Thomas Marshall House museum is open the first Saturday of the month
April—November 1-4 p.m.**

Highlights from the Director

Hopefully you are rested and regenerated after the cold winter months. Staff and volunteers at the museum have done anything but rest. Old exhibits have been dismantled and new ones have taken their place. Our Bee Hive gift shop was given a fresh coat of paint, along with new signage, and we are welcoming new vendors Brenda Ramseier and Nofsinger Farms (locally sourced honey).

The sounds of hammers, drills and saws have been prevalent the last two months. An unexpected gift from docent coordinator, Diana Bucher, has led to the remodeling of our kitchen. Storage!! We are very excited! Work on our newest permanent exhibit, The DeWitt Motor Vehicle Company is almost complete, and we hope you join us on April 14 when we have our opening. Timing is everything they say—our exhibit will open almost exactly 113 years after the first car was completed in April of 1909. A shout out to our wonderful volunteer crew; Jack Schuler, Tim Taylor, Jose Delgado, Randy Middleton, Tom Brown and Jim Myer. Also, on April 14, we will host our first guest artist of the year, Karen Eberly and her exhibit “100 Day Challenge.” We’re sure that you will love the opportunity to see Karen’s work and perhaps make a purchase.

Speaking of Myer and Brown, they along with Bernie Ferringer and Jack Schuler, have spent many hours cleaning, scraping, repairing and painting the very large shutters from the Thomas Marshall house. A thankless task that they’ve been carrying out in the basement. We are relieved to announce that the Marshall house will be getting a new standing seam metal roof this summer. The current roof is overdue for replacement, and we are grateful for the funding that is being provided by the *Paul Speicher-Ralph Naragon Advised Fund*.

The Ferringers have been busy planning and taking reservations for our first trip of 2022, the Smoky Mountain Redneck Tour. There are only a handful of seats available so if you’ve been debating don’t delay any longer! The trip dates are May 16-19. Information is available on our website.

In this issue you have read about the zinnia being designated the official flower of North Manchester more than 80 years ago. To welcome you back to the Center this spring we are giving a packet of seeds to the first 100 visitors. What a wonderful display of color it will be around our town if everyone plants zinnias this year!

Finally, as we are about to open for 2022, I want to thank all of the many volunteers who have helped this winter and all of the docents who make it possible to keep the doors open 5 days each week, Tuesday through Saturday. We appreciate the support we receive in so many ways from so many people. Don’t be a stranger—come visit!

Laura Rager
Director

Free Admission Sponsored by:

Batteries + Bulbs.

FORD METER BOX

VISIT 
WABASH
COUNTY
INDIANA

POET
biorefining
 **Manchester**
University

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

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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



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.

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 _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone _____ Total Enclosed _____

Email _____

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.