

The Huntington County Historical Society NEWS

March ~ April 2025

Huntington County History and Education Center

315 Court Street, Huntington, IN 46750

Phone: 260-356-7264 / <https://huntingtonhistoricalmuseum.com/>

Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Jean Gernand

Lyla Spath - President

Were I playing Huntington County “Jeopardy!” and was asked to name one of the most significant people involved in preserving local history, I’d say, “Who is Jean Gernand?”

Gernand has devoted decades to preserving the county’s history, starting with her efforts, while a home economics teacher, to revive the Junior Historical Society at Huntington North High School. That effort led to the establishment of the Forks of the Wabash Pioneer Festival.



Velma Jean Gernand with her daughter Caroline Runyan and husband Robert Gernand.

Jean also worked to help organize Huntington Alert, reinvigorate Huntington Heritage Days, and much more. In 2016, she was recognized by Huntington County Honors. The rural Huntington resident has a long list of recognitions, including Huntington’s Chief of the Flint

Springs Tribe, the Indiana Historical Society Hubert Hawkins History Award, and the Distinguished Hoosier Award.

Jean Gernand has long been a good friend and supporter of Huntington County History and Education Center. She has donated many meaningful Huntington County artifacts to the Center, and we are grateful for her interest and advocacy in helping preserve local history.

Director's Report

Barb Rupley - Director

I can't believe it's March, and it seems like we were just celebrating Christmas. During our hiatus in January, we started reworking the "barn" and adding new exhibits from our collections.

During March the Center will be hosting "Indiana Disasters," a traveling exhibit from the Indiana Historical Society that touches on several natural disasters over the years in Indiana: floods, tornadoes, blizzards, and drought. Stop in to see this exhibit; you might remember many of the events.

Indiana and Purdue Rivalry

by Barbara Rupley - Huntington County Historian

The two colleges first met on the football field in 1891, when Indiana traveled to West Lafayette. Purdue won, 60-0, in an encounter that was the first installment of a rivalry that led to the Old Oaken Bucket Award, first bestowed to the winner in 1925.

In 1903, Indiana and Purdue decided to play their football game at Washington Park, in Indianapolis, because the rivalry had become so keen that a neutral field was advisable.



Indiana and Purdue headed from their campuses via train to Indianapolis on October 31, 1903. But tragedy struck as the Purdue train as it headed into Indianapolis. Near 18th Street, the train carrying the football team, their families, and fans struck coal cars on the tracks (which were not supposed to be there). Seventeen people, including 14 Purdue players, were killed. The game was canceled.

When the Indiana team and other travelers heard this news, they raced to the scene to help in any way they could. The trains were only a mile apart at the time of the crash.

Jay Q. Hamilton, from Huntington, was among the Purdue players who died in the accident. As fate would have it, Jay had intended to go to Indianapolis on Friday evening instead of Saturday and had purchased his ticket. However, just before the train was scheduled to leave, he was notified he would be substituting for a regular player and therefore had to wait until Saturday to ride with the team. He was a 17-year-old sophomore at Purdue studying electrical engineering, and was a Phi Kappa Psi fraternity member. He had graduated from Huntington High and entered Purdue in September 1902. Per his parents, his funeral was held in South Bend, and he was buried there at the Riverside Cemetery.

In 1909, Purdue University built the Memorial Gymnasium to honor those who perished. The stairway at the east entrance has a step for each of the 17 who died. To mark the centennial in 2003, the tunnel of Ross-Ade Stadium was dedicated to the victims.



America Carrillo - March 19

On March 19, the Historical Society welcomes America Carrillo, a local artist with art in Huntington and with a growing reputation for civic improvement. The program begins at 7 p.m.

Become a HCHS supporter - contact the Director.

Director Barb Rupley - 356-7264 or email: huntingtonhistoricalmuseum@gmail.com

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Editors: *Charles Chapman & Mike Perkins*

Contributors: *Lyla Spath / Barbara Rupley / Mike Perkins*

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Rickert Photos

January 1952,
installation of
Huntington city
officials.



VFW Honor Guard on the courthouse steps - June 1951.



A billboard on the south side of the Courthouse lawn.



Looking south across the railroad tracks on Jefferson Street. In the center of the photo is the Huntington Herald-Press April 1936.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Huntington County Historical Society is to preserve and promote the history of Huntington County.

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Another Rickert Photo



Economy
Machine
Shop meeting
in a meeting
room of the
PSI/Duke
building,
August, 1951.

Huntington County Historical Society Membership Form

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

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GIFT RENEWAL NEW

Yearly Membership Dues:

Senior — \$20 Family — \$35 Single — \$25 Life — \$300 Sustaining — \$100

Donation _____ Signature _____

*Return this page to the Museum. Make checks payable and mail to:
Huntington County Historical Society, 315 Court St., Huntington, IN 46750.*

Membership Benefits include free admission to the museum, a bimonthly newsletter, election of officers, volunteering at the museum, and free attendance at programs on Huntington County's history.

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