

The Huntington County Historical Society NEWS

May ~ July 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.

National Historic Preservation Month

Lyla Spath - President

May is National Historic Preservation Month, and a fitting time to consider what we can do — collectively and as individuals — to help preserve local history. Some things cost no money and take very little time, yet have a lasting impact. Please consider which of the following you can do to help preserve, and education others about, our history.



- Visit the Huntington County History and Education Center (HCHEC). Bring family, friends, and neighbors with you. HCHEC is open Tuesday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Volunteer to serve on an HCHEC committee, or at the Center itself. We urgently need volunteers to help catalog materials and greet visitors, among other duties. You can volunteer as an individual, or with a group. Every volunteer, and every hour volunteered, is important! Both short-term and long-term volunteers are welcome. For more information, contact the Center's executive director, Barb Rupley, at (260) 356-7264.
- Follow HCHEC on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/huntingtonhistoricalmuseum/> and share our posts.
- Attend an HCHEC program.
- Purchase from the HCHEC gift shop. Books by local authors are among items available for children and adults.

- Visit the HCHEC website, <https://huntingtonhistoricalmuseum.com/> which is updated regularly with new information about local history.
 - Give a gift of HCHEC membership to someone for their birthday, retirement, or other special occasion. HCHEC will notify the recipient of your gift.
 - Donate to HCHEC in honor of someone who appreciates local history. Donations can be made in the amount of your choice. HCHEC will notify the honoree of your gift.
 - Donate items of importance to Huntington County history to the museum. Please contact the HCHEC Acquisitions Committee, through the Center, for more information.
 - Remember HCHEC in your estate planning. Both designated and unrestricted gifts are appreciated.
 - Still not sure how you can help? Let us know! We'll find a just-the-right-size opportunity for you.
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Director's Report

Barb Rupley - Director

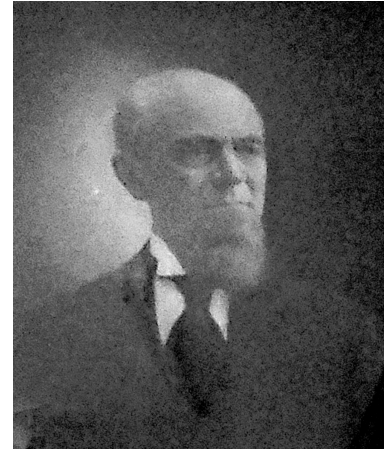
As a part of a planning committee for the 250th celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, the Huntington County Historical Society will be selling flag bunting this year for \$10. As part of this year's Heritage Days Parade, June 14th (Flag Day) the committee would like to see all businesses and homes on Jefferson Street and other areas of Huntington, hang these buntings. You can purchase them at the Huntington County History and Education Center during normal business hours, Wednesday-Friday, 10 am - 4 pm. Proceeds from the sale will be used for the Historical Society's festivities in 2026, which will celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary of the Historical Society's 100th.

During Heritage Days week this year, we will make Rickert Studio negatives available. These negatives might be your senior photos, wedding photos, Mom and Dad, or grandparents' wedding or family photos. We ask only for a monetary donation to the Huntington County Historical Society for the negatives. The museum is open and the negatives are available Wednesday - Friday June 11 - 13 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Saturday June 14 from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

George J Bippus / 1835 - 1904

by Barbara Rupley - Huntington County Historian

George J. Bippus came to Huntington County as a boy from Canal Dover, Ohio. He and his family lived near West Point — now known as the town of Bippus. The young Mr. Bippus found work in a hardware store in Huntington and mastered the tinner's trade. As time passed, his devotion to hard work was rewarded with store ownership. While a merchant, he began to deal in real estate and eventually sold the store to devote more to that business. Many subdivisions were platted in lots and sold in Huntington, extending the city limits and making homes possible for many townspeople.



In 1864, George joined another prominent family by marrying Sarah Anna Purviance, sister of David Alonzo Purviance Sr. George and Anna's home was on North Jefferson Street next to Saint Mary Catholic Church, and was the last neighboring dwelling torn down to accommodate the parking lot.

During this time railroads were being built north of Huntington, from Chicago to the Atlantic coast, Bippus quickly saw the advantages this transportation could offer Huntington. He decided that Huntington should have a railroad. He selected a route from Chicago to Marion, Ohio, and the Chicago to Atlantic Company was incorporated in the 1870s. Later, mainly through the efforts of Mr. Bippus, the line's right-of-way was sold to the Erie Railroad. With its double tracks, mammoth engines and bountiful equipment, the Erie realized Mr. Bippus's dream for better transportation for Huntington. The Erie established a rail yard on the east side of town.

In the late 1880s, companies in north central Indiana began drilling for gas. Mr. Bippus was watching the development and territory south of Huntington. Seeing the advantage being enjoyed with natural gas, he decided that he would pipe gas from the fields to Huntington because there were no wells near Huntington.

Nature's supply of fuel, however could not last forever. So Mr. Bippus bought the small artificial gas plant in Huntington, and developed it. Its new administration Building, at 217 E.

State St., was completed by George's son, James Fred Bippus, and stands as a monument to his father. George J. Bippus served his community until he died in 1904.

The Bippus families have left their mark on our community in another way with James Fred Bippus and his sons, George J. and Albert W., erecting the Hotel LaFontaine.

Huntington has had many diverse businessmen in its history, but the Bippus family certainly left its mark in social ways. Stop in the Huntington County History and Education Center and see the exhibit on the Hotel LaFontaine and the Erie Railroad and Yard.



Hotel LaFontaine.



Son of George,
Fred Bippus.



George J. and Anna
Bippus home.

Become a HCHS supporter - contact the Director.
Director Barb Rupley - 356-7264 or email: huntingtonhistoricalmuseum@gmail.com

HCHS Officers

Lyla Spath – President, Chris Whitacre – Vice President,
Linda Scheiber – Secretary, Gene Lahr – Treasurer

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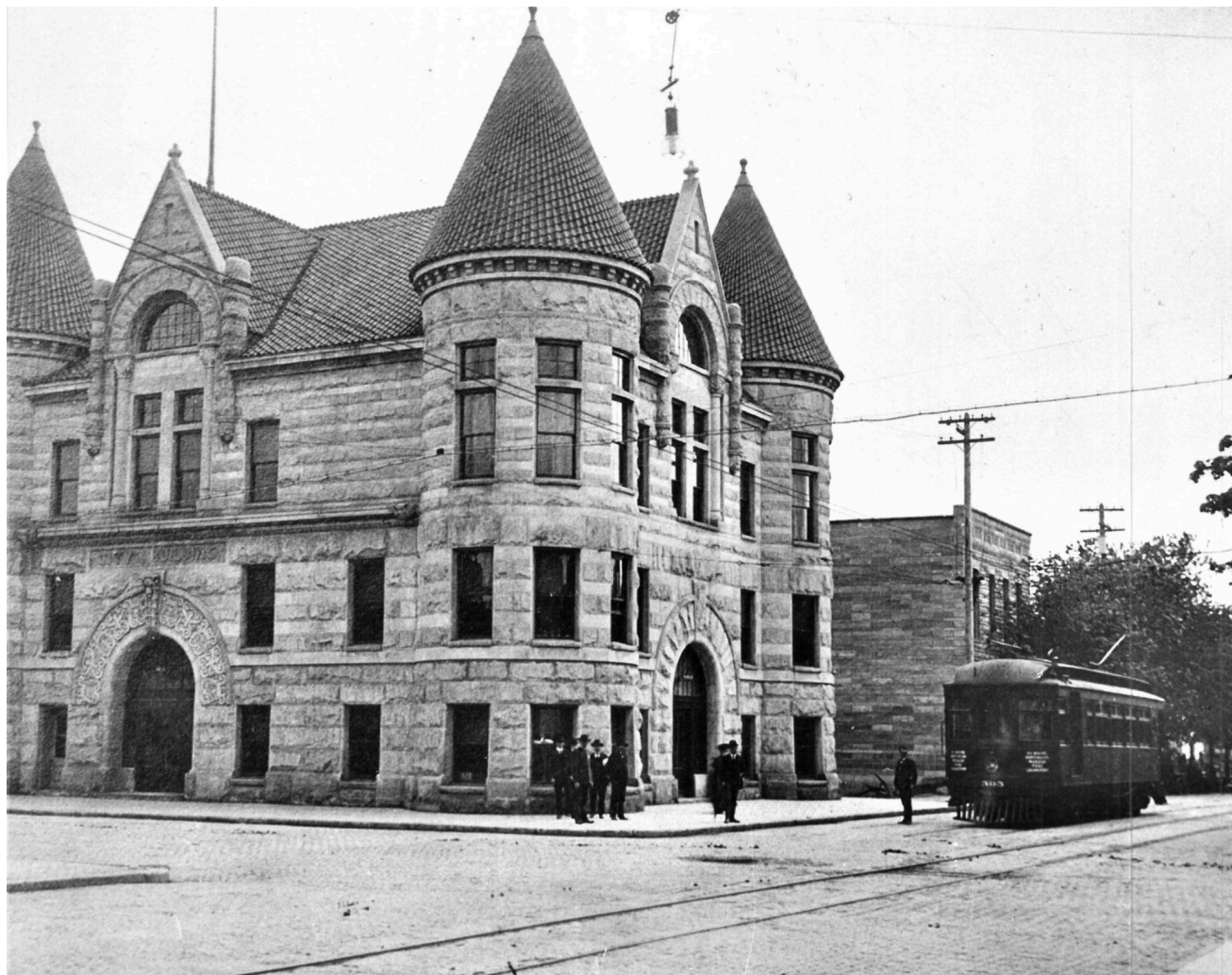
Editors: *Charles Chapman & Mike Perkins*

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

Rickert Photo



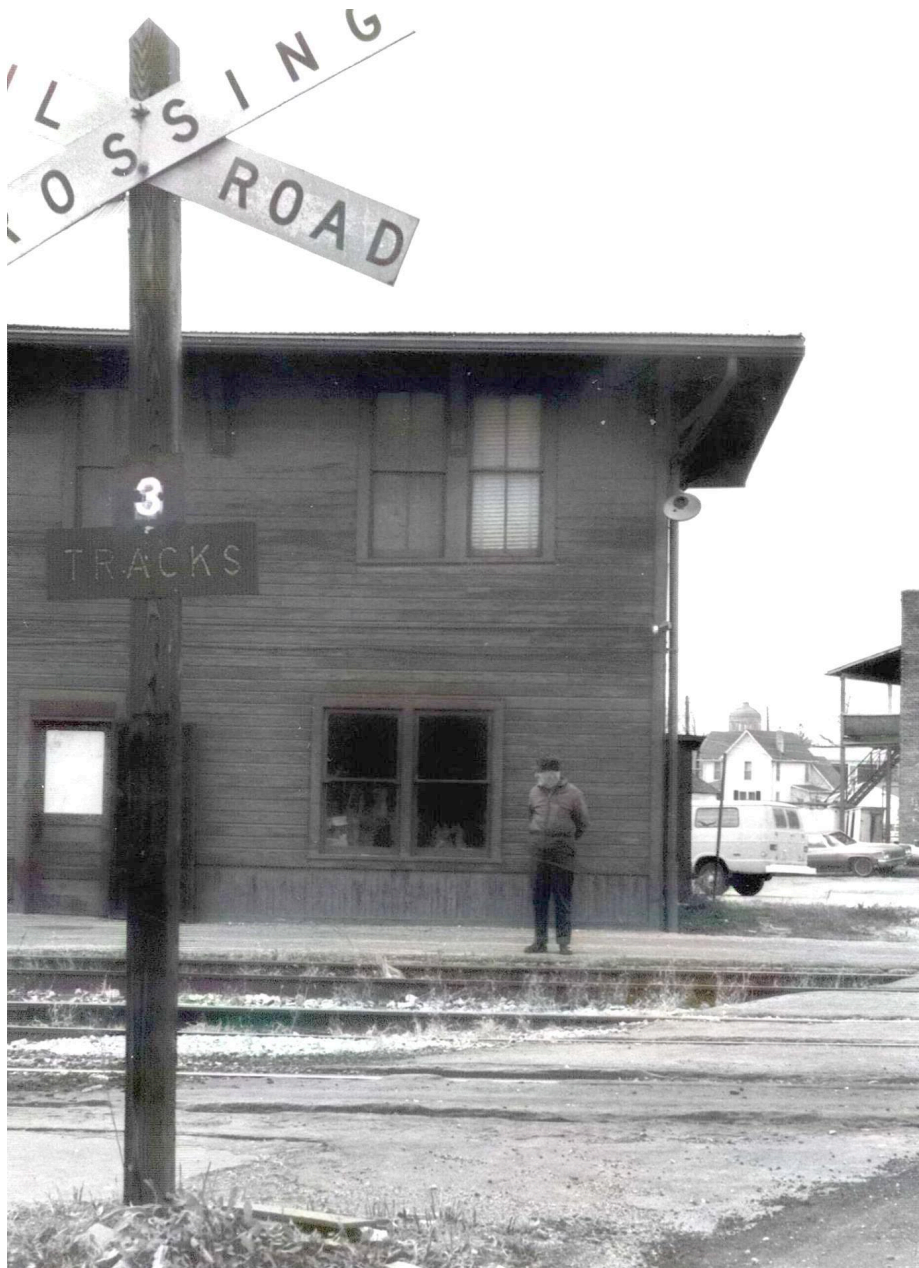
Jefferson Street, March 1960.



An Interurban on Market Street in the 1930's.



Old Drover block in 1973.



Erie depot and rail road crossing on Market Street in the 1970's.



Northside Garage at the corner of East Park Drive and Warren Street.

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Mission Statement

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

Follow us online: <https://huntingtonhistoricalmuseum.com/> or on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/huntingtonhistoricalmuseum>

HUNTINGTON COUNTY HISTORY AND EDUCATION CENTER

NOTE! HCHCEC Program on May 14, 7 p.m.

Do not miss the next program in the Center! It will feature a conversation with two Huntington legends: Doctor John Regan and Jim Wilson. They will discuss their careers and Huntington experiences during the last 60 years. Invite a friend and enjoy the evening.

Think about a Historical Society Contribution

Please consider contributing to the Historical Society using a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). A QCD directly transfers funds from an individual's IRA to a qualified charity, allowing those aged 70½ or older to donate to a charity without increasing their taxable income. This can help satisfy required minimum distributions while potentially lowering tax liabilities. Talk with your accountant or financial planner today!

Huntington County Historical Society Membership Form

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

☐ 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 Huntington County History and Education Center, a bimonthly newsletter, election of officers, volunteering at the museum, and free attendance at programs on Huntington County's history.

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315 Court Street, Huntington, IN 46750

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HUNTINGTON COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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