An Archives & Special Collections Exhibit

From Magic City to Middletown: 150 YEARS OF MUNCIE HISTORY

July 6 - September 30, 2015

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Archives and Special Collections would like to thank Jeff Koenker for contributing artifacts from his personal collection for this exhibit.

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Foreword

The Ball State University Libraries is pleased to present From Magic City to Middletown: 150 Years of Muncie History, an exhibit in celebration of our community’s sesquicentennial anniversary. We hope you find pieces of our common history that you may have never seen before, or at least that bring back fond memories for you.

This exhibit is intended to showcase a sampling of Archives and Special Collections’ vast trove of historical treasures documenting Muncie. It has been arranged to illustrate the diversity and range of both Muncie’s history and our collections that document that history. The arrangement follows the six categories of the original Middletown Studies, since that division often guides the Archives’ collecting efforts.

Even with this type of topical arrangement, narrowing the selection of materials was an enormous undertaking for the staff and students working on the exhibit. We hope we have presented items that capture your memory and imagination, and will whet your appetite to visit Archives and Special Collections or go online to the Ball State Digital Media Repository to see more.

Creating this type of wide-ranging exhibit requires the work and dedication of a lot of people. The Libraries use these opportunities to present our Ball State student assistants with immersive and entrepreneurial experiences they can use in their later careers. From conducting research to writing creative captions and arranging items in informative and entertaining ways, the students make these exhibits their own. I hope you agree that they did a great job.

Muncie and Ball State University share a long history of working together. We think this exhibit stands as a testament to that tradition as we share this view of Muncie from the Gas Boom to Middletown and to the Muncie of today, as illustrated through the collections of the University Libraries.

John B. Straw
Assistant Dean for Digital Initiatives and Special Collections
Ball State University Libraries
August 6, 2015

Introduction

From Magic City to Middletown: 150 Years of Muncie’s History, an Archives and Special Collections exhibit, celebrates Muncie’s 150 year history through the scope of the Middletown studies that were conducted in the early twentieth century. It runs from July 6, 2015 to September 30, 2015 on the second floor of Bracken Library.

Though the industrial revolution is an era consistently associated with the late eighteen and early nineteen centuries, it took time for its concepts to spread to smaller cities. For Muncie, this came in 1886 with the beginning of the Gas Boom era. Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture (1929) was a study that examined sociological changes in Muncie from 1890 to 1925. “Middletown” was the descriptive pseudonym given to Muncie, suggesting its selection was due to its “normalcy” as a typical small city representative of “contemporary American life.”

The exhibit is organized into the six categories identified in the original study by authors Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd: Getting a Living; Making a Home; Training the Young; Using Leisure; Engaging in Religious Practices; Engaging in Community Activities.

The Muncie Sesquicentennial is being celebrated throughout Bracken Library. In addition to Archives and Special Collections’ exhibit, the GIS Research and Map Collection located on the second floor of Bracken Library has a display of historical Muncie maps. A map corresponding to the Thomas Neely diaries was created especially for the exhibit. University Libraries’ Information Services has a display of local history books on the first floor of Bracken Library.
“Getting A Living”

Muncie’s transition from a sleepy agricultural town to a booming industrial city began with the natural gas boom of the 1880’s. With new opportunities arising, Muncie began to grow and establish itself in this “Golden Age” as expressed by the Lynds in their Middletown survey of 1929. The construction of downtown led to large industries including the Ball Brothers Glass Company, Warner Gear, and Indiana Steel and Wire. The attraction of new industrial jobs helped maintain other local businesses, including restaurants, drug stores, and banks. The landscape of Muncie’s businesses reflects the changes surrounding the economy as well as the citizens working there.

Exhibit Items:
*The Story of Magic City: A Souvenir of Muncie, Indiana* booklet, 1912
*Muncie, IN: The Natural Gas City of the West* souvenir booklet, 1889
Muncie gas main construction photographs, circa 1890s
**Indiana Steel and Wire Company**
- Poultry fence catalog, 1923
- Barbed wire
- Indiana Iron Company advertisement, circa 1890s
- Original factory photograph, circa 1900s-1910s
- Galvanized wire coil in glass tube
Piner’s Café photograph, 1920
Star Drug Store inventory book, 1885
Warner Gear machines photograph, 1917
Marhoefer Packing Company promotional hat and pension publications, 1962 and 1970s
Indiana Bridge Company plaque (1886) and plant photograph (1890)
Merchant’s National Bank of Muncie bank notes, 1929
Industrial Trust and Savings Bank bag, circa 1950s
Muncie business advertisements, circa 1912
Muncie Chevrolet Company workers photograph, circa 1950
McNaughton’s catalogue, 1924
Schwartz Paper Company hat and engraving plates, circa 1980s
In their first publication, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture*, Robert and Helen Lynd dedicated a section to “Making a Home.” Here, they researched the types of houses citizens lived in, their marriages, child-rearing practices, food, clothing, and other housework typical of Muncie.

**Exhibit Items:**
- Margaret Bourke-White Muncie neighborhood photograph, 1937
- *LIFE* magazine Margaret Bourke-White photo essay, 1937
- Mary Beeman recipe box
- *A Babe in the House and How to Care for Him* baby book, 1919
- Mina McCormick Becket
  - Birth announcement, 1951
  - Letter to her daughter, 1948
  - Property assessment, circa 1950s
  - Notes about her new home, circa 1950s
  - Diary, 1934
- Gilbert-Andrews land deed, 1859
- Wedding invitations and reception cards, 1883-1903
- Rosemary Ball Bracken wedding photograph, 1932
- Rosemary Ball Bracken wedding memories book, 1932
- John Rollin and Susie Marsh correspondence, 1899
- Lida Ryan and Mildred Marsh correspondence, 1893
“Training the Young”

The third section of *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* is titled “Training the Young.” The Lynds focused the formal schooling of the Muncie youth and tried answering questions such as who went to school, what was learned in school, who was teaching, and what school life was like.

**Exhibit Items:**
- Mt. Pleasant Township, Delaware County, Indiana School #8 notice of petition (May 12, 1880) and photograph (circa 1950s)
- Photograph of horse-drawn school bus in front of West Longfellow Elementary, 1905
- Photograph of Muncie Central High School boys’ basketball state championship team (1951-1952) and *Magician* yearbook (1959)
- Southside High School building dedication program (January 27, 1963) and *Our Muncie Schools* newspaper article about construction of the school building (April 25, 1962)
- Northside High School first annual commencement program, May 28, 1972
- Muncie Community Schools Board of Trustees meeting minutes, November 18, 2013
- *The Star Press* article about first days of the 2014-2015 school year after the consolidation of Muncie Central and Southside High School, August 14, 2014
- Screen capture from “One Muncie” promotional video featuring Ryan Kerrigan and Brandon Gorin, April 2014
- Burris Laboratory School postcard, buttons (circa 1982), handbook (1949-1950), and elementary time capsule (April 14, 1987)
- Photograph of first graduating class of Muncie High School (1868), photograph of first graduating class 50th reunion (June 18, 1918), 25th annual commencement program (1893), first annual commencement program (June 26, 1868), *XYZ Quarterly* newsletter (Easter 1903), and *The Helicon* yearbook (June 1901)
- Emerson Elementary School class photograph, circa 1920
- Muncie Trade School brochure and photograph, circa 1942
From sports to parks to county fairs, Muncie’s offerings for free time entertainment caters to all its citizens. The growth of Muncie throughout its history has allowed for community activities to expand as well, creating new spaces for the public to enjoy, including the Wysor Grand Opera Theater, events such as the circus at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, and numerous parks across the city.

**Exhibit Items:**

**Circus**
- Frederick Putnam diary entry about Cooks Circus arrival, 1879
- Wallace Circus’ calliope photograph, 1890

**Delaware County Fair**
- Harness racing photograph, circa 1910s
- 73rd Annual Fair of Delaware County Agriculture and Mechanical Society program, 1925
- *Premium List of the One Hundredth Anniversary Delaware County Fair*, 1952

**Wysor Grand Theater**
- *Merchant of Venice* cast photograph, 1898
- Muncie Club Minstrels performance program, 1901
- Front elevation architectural drawing print, circa 1891
- 3-D printed architectural features

**Kitselman Roller Skates, 1884**

**Muncie Roller Skate purchase order, 1884**

**Sports in Muncie**
- Marhoefer Meats baseball team photograph, circa 1910s
- Horseracing photograph, circa 1910s
- Warner Gear baseball player photograph, circa 1910s-1920s
- Wachtell’s Royals roller polo team photograph, 1900
- Congerville Flyers team photograph, circa 1920-1924

“From Magic City to Middletown” video compilation from the Ball State University Libraries Digital Media Repository
“Engaging in Religious Practices”

In the first Middletown study, the Lynds explained that the residents of Muncie engaged in religious practices as means by which to “seek to understand and to cope with the too-bigness of life.” As a recent graduate of Union Theological Seminary in 1923, Robert Lynd was particularly interested in the role that religious beliefs, practices, and observances played in American society and this is reflected in the prominence they are given in the first Middletown study. The Lynds further divided the category of “Engaging in Religious Practices” into the following sub-categories: Dominant Religious Beliefs, Where and When Religious Rites are Carried on, Leaders and Participants in Religious Rites, and Religious Observances.

Notably, the religious practices of Muncie’s Catholic, Jewish, and African American Protestant communities were largely considered by the Lynds to be negligible and were therefore excluded from their study. This omission was addressed and rectified by subsequent Middletown studies including *A History of Negroes in Muncie* (1976), *All Faithful People: Change and Continuity in Middletown’s Religion* (1983), and *Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of an American Jewish Community* (1997).

Exhibit Items:

**Temple Beth El**
- Congregation directory, 1989-1990
- Newspaper article about student rabbi Keith W. Stern, 1983
- Photograph of Bar Mitzvah service conducted by student rabbi Keith Stern, circa 1982-1984
- *Jewish News* newsletter featuring an article about Martin Schwartz, October 1946
- Helen Schwartz Bat Mitzvah certificate, 1995
- List of rabbis who have served the Temple Beth El congregation, circa 1989

**St. Lawrence Catholic Church**
- Program for Rev. William Schmidt’s Silver Jubilee, December 19, 1899
- St. Lawrence School graduating class photograph, 1916
- Photograph of priests and altar boys, circa 1940s
- Catholic prayer cards, late 19th century

**Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA)**
- Original Articles of Incorporation, December 20, 1911
- Promotional pamphlets, 1945, 1952-1953
- Summer camp group photograph, circa 1920s

**Unitarian Universalist Church**
- Diary of Rev. Marion Crosley, 1862
- Photograph of Rev. Marion Crosley, circa 1900
- Revised church constitution and by-laws, 1870
- First Universalist Church Sunday school class photograph, 1914
- Letter from Frank C. Ball to church treasurer confirming a donation by the church to the Anti-Saloon League of Indiana, October 11, 1920

**Antioch Baptist Church**
- Cornerstone laying ceremony photographs, 1953
- 70th anniversary program, 1975

**Jackson Street Christian Church**
- Letter and survey from Robert S. Lynd to Jackson Street Church, May 15, 1924
- Photograph of Rev. Frances E. Smith and family, 1914
- Women’s Sunday school class photograph, 1914
“Engaging in Community Activities”

Though this group title is vague, the Middletown Studies defines engaging in community activities as those having to do with civic and social issues. As such, it is broken down further into five sub-categories:

The Machinery of Government
This category certainly includes politics and politicians, but it also includes the process and institution of city government as well as law enforcement organizations and the court system.

Keeping Healthy and Caring for the Unable
Examples in this category extend beyond hospitals and orphanages. Also included are aid societies such as the American Red Cross, independent and small medical practices, and medical research that leads to the development of new medical technology.

Getting Information
At the time of the initial study in 1925, newspapers were the primary way information was spread in Muncie.

Group Solidarity
Included in this subcategory are organizations and clubs that unite a group of people in a common cause. Examples include unions, women suffrage groups, and fraternal organizations.

Exhibit Items:
John Brady (1803-1884) and Arthur Wolfe Brady (1865-1933) photographs
James P. Carey political position letters, 1987
Thomas Neely diary entry regarding Job Swain and Marcus C. Smith mayoral election, 1867
Muncie Post-Democrat newspaper headlines and article, 1923
Dr. Rollin H. Bunch and George R. Dale photograph, circa 1935-1936
George Dale pardon signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933
Muncie Times newspaper, 1991
Richard A. Greene camera, 1923
Muncie Evening Press newsroom photograph, 1940
Muncie City Hall terra-cotta molding and photograph, 1925
Muncietown map, circa 1840s
Muncie settlers photograph, 1876
Women's Franchise League scrapbook and program, circa 1914