

# Prospect Hill Prospectus



Autumn 1998

edited by Chris Sturbaum

## Annual Fall Neighborhood Party

New location...

### Building Trades Park

...in the shelterhouse

**Saturday, October 24**

**3:30 PM**

**Rain date: Oct. 25**

*Bring a favorite dish,  
flatware & a lawnchair*

*Live Music*

**Come One, Come All!**

### **Around the Neighborhood**

There is new light shining beside the large walking ramp at Building Trades Park, thanks to the persistence of Rick Gudal, who walks the track regularly for exercise. Dave Williams of the Parks Department, contacted PSI and the light was reactivated after many years of darkness.

Thanks to all the volunteers who have been working on the little park we've adopted behind the Convention Center. It needs a new tree, which we plan to plant this spring, and it needs a

name and perhaps even some art work. Good work all you volunteers!

The neighborhood clean-up was also a great success. Some wonderful volunteers spent much of their Saturday, helping to clear brush, carry heavy items for neighbors and load the dumpsters which the HAND dept. from the city provided. There were tired smiles on the faces of the neighbors who were helped as well as the neighbors who did the helping. Thanks to all who participated from the city and Prospect Hill.

The Prospect Hill Neighborhood party and pitch-in will be the 24th of October at Building Trades Park. We

will start activities around 3:30 with a volleyball game or other group activities. Music will be from 4:30 to 5:00 and we will eat at 5:15. Sunday the 25th is a rain day. We are trying out the park because it might be more fun for some of our neighbors and perhaps the people in the more western part of Prospect Hill will feel its their party too. Plus change is good and for you who will miss rolling into the hay bales we will do that next summer.

The weekend of the Wisconsin game, Rick Harter was working on his house, the gray and yellow Victorian on the west side of Rogers Street, when a man about 75 years old, looking slightly lost, said to Rick, "That's my garage you're working on." The man pointed to the historic sign naming the house "The Correl House" and he said, "I'm Phillip Correl and I grew up in this house!" After a half hour of reminiscing and several photos of Phillip and his wife in front of the house with it's sign, names were exchanged and Phil promised to send Rick pictures which will show additional details and "gingerbread" that has been missing from the house for at least 30 years. Needless to say, they were thrilled that the house was alive again and had a couple owning the house who clearly cared for it. Phil remembered smoking under certain porches in the neighborhood and we might do an interview soon to gather his other memories of this area when he was a child. Sometimes you wonder why you do this and sometimes the universe stops by and tells you.

The house on Smith Street between Rogers and Jackson is being restored. It will join the eclectic collection of early affordable housing, which makes up that half block of Prospect Hill. It may have been a stable

before it was added to in 1923, though Mr. Apple insists it was a chicken coop. In any case, it was inhabited after that, though there is a rumor that it was perhaps a simple store for some time. It looks like it was an inexpensive way to put a roof over someone's head. David Weirhake and Licia Webber will move back in after it is completely restored and remodeled. B.R.I. (Bloomington Restoration Inc.) has loaned money from it's revolving fund to help make the project possible.

The house at 620 West Howe is also a project by Bloomington Restorations. This house is part of a new affordable housing initiative by B.R.I. Thanks to the neighbors who helped B.R.I. volunteers take out the old carpets and remove the aluminum siding. There may be another work session and we may consider a volunteer painting party some day so stay tuned if this interests you. This one will be sold to a buyer who qualifies by earning 80% of the average income. If anyone you know is interested in this house or the two others across from Morrison's Appliances on 5th Street, they should contact Housing Solutions to get qualified and take their homeowner class. They should also get in touch with B.R.I. at 336-0909 and leave a message on the recorder. B.R.I. is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to preserving Bloomington's past. If you are interested in joining this preservation group, call the same number or talk to a member you know.

Rick Gudal lives at 206 South Maple and is a neighborhood association representative for his area. If you have questions or ideas he asks you to call or email. (home phone: 336-2314 / work: 1-800-382-9467 / gudal@aol.com or rgudal@iga.state.in.us).

Tom Rosnowski and Trish have painted their bungalow at 706 W. 3rd and it has never looked better.

Chris Clothier on Fairview Street has removed the old fake brick siding from the front of her house and is painting it. The house is transformed and you can see what it will look like when she gets time to remove the remaining siding.

Steve Merry and Julia Carr are working on a house at 615 W. Howe, right across from the BRI affordable house. Like all the redone houses in the area, Steve is removing the aluminum siding and will paint the old clapboards after renovating the structure.

Culver and Caroline Godfrey put a new roof on their historic house at 332 S. Rogers. They are rebuilding an old cistern cover behind the house as well as fixing a little decay that was discovered beneath the exterior boards. Old houses have their surprises.

Every year the neighborhood looks better and better. It's like a giant garden and as each house flowers and bears fruit, the entire garden benefits.

## **How To Start A House Work Co-op**

(report submitted by Cynthia Bretheim)

I bought my first house and moved in last August. It's a little house on Maple just off 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. It needs a lot of work and I don't know how to do many house projects yet. I enjoy working on a friend's house more than my own. I also have a lot more fun working on my own house when I have friends helping me. So I started a housework co-op with some friends and neighbors. We've gotten a lot done and had a good time so far.

We started with outdoor projects a Gary's house; winterizing his porch, planting vegetables, caulking his green house. The next project was removing the old roof and putting on the new roof at Miki's house on Fairview. At my house, we moved the limestone side walk so it went from the back door to the alley, rather than from the bedroom to what used to be the outhouse, and we caulked around the kitchen cabinets and under the sink. The next project will be insulating or gardening at Dawn's place.

I highly recommend forming a house work cooperative with your friends and neighbors. There are many ways to organize. There six of us, so we agreed to work at each other's houses. Six four-hour work sessions is a lot but not too overwhelming. After we've gone through one work exchange at each of our houses, we will evaluate how well this works, invite others to join or end our co-op.

Work sessions are four hours long. The host house plans and has ready the tools and ideas for the crew. The more organized the host house is about what needs to be done, of course, the more work gets done. The host house sets the date and time, and calls everyone to see who can be there and how to dress or what tools to bring. I had several projects ready, some indoor and outdoor in case of inclement weather, some heavy work and some light work so everyone could help. The host house provides plenty of good things to drink while we work. Sometimes we have bagels and goodies to munch. Barn raisings used to be a community effort. I guess we've made things more complicated, but it works the same neighborly way. A friend or mine started her own co-op after hearing about ours. Her first work session was a big

success. Friends painted her house, moved her garden and planted flowers around her house. The next project is helping Mary move into her new house near Bryan Park. I highly recommend working together to make our homes more comfortable. It's lots of fun and good work gets done too.

### **Economic Inequality May Be Bad For Your Health**

(article submitted by Bill Sturbaum)

The Washington Post reports a study published in the July issue of the American Journal of Public Health, that mortality rates in 282 studies cities are linked to the degree of economic inequality in those cities. Cities with lower economic inequality had lower mortality rates. A second study by two researchers of the Harvard School of Public Health indicates that the effect on mortality rates may be due to an erosion of trust caused by a disparity in income.

The Harvard study cited the city of Roseto, PA, an Italian/American town whose residents smoked heavily and ate food cooked with lard yet had an unusually low incidence of heart attack. A physician-sociologist team of researchers in the 1950's traced the community's good health to an old fashion immigrant culture and closeness. By the 1960's the community's children had reach adulthood and adopted a more individualistic life that contrasted with their parents' close, immigrant life style. They moved off the front porch and built terraces in the back of their homes. They locked their doors and installed security lights. They no longer trusted their neighborhoods. By the 1970's Roseto's heart attack fatality rate matched those of neighboring towns.

Perhaps living in a neighborhood where people are friendly and trust on another is as good for one's health as dieting and exercising.

### **Prospect Hill Historic Sidewalk Project Ready to Go**

Nearly 60% of all the historic sidewalk owners applied for sidewalk repair! This was a wonderful response. We have some masons who will be starting in just a few weeks on the first four walks. Most of you who responded will need to be patient as we have many more walks than we can do for now.

The walks were given priority based on the date the applications were received. Many came on the same day so the names were randomly drawn to create a fair order for the next sidewalks. After the first four walks, we will try to do as many of the walks with a "2" rating so we can get the most walks done for the money.

Due to the response and the scope of the work, we are going to need more money! Fortunately, the HAND dept. still has some money left for this cycle of grants and more will be coming next year. There are many worthwhile projects for our neighborhood but we have this one in gear and the application work is all in place and we simply are going to need more money to take care of even half of the applicants. As long as this project continues, our priority list will not change.

So be patient and help us ask for more grant money to finish the job. In the meantime, you could help your sidewalk by getting the grass out of the cracks. Thanks again for your interest and concern in preserving these great old historic walks!

**Interview with  
Robert Dale Sylvester**

328 S. Davisson / October 10, 1998

**Q:** I understand that you worked for the WPA on sidewalks in Bloomington

**Robert:** Yes I did but I worked on the concrete ones they did at the same time the limestone walks were done.

**Q:** How old were you then?

**Robert:** About 20. I was married at 19.

**Q:** How did you get the job?

**Robert:** There was an employment office.

**Q:** Were people hungry?

**Robert:** There weren't many jobs. It was hard times, really hard times. People without jobs could work and were paid in grocery orders. They'd give you what everyone called a "bean order". Maybe \$2.50. It was a government program, maybe the FERA before the WPA.

**Q:** What were the sidewalks you worked on like?

**Robert:** Well, I was concrete finisher and I finished the sidewalks. I did work on the drainage ditches of limestone to in the cemetery. My grother cut stone and he worked on the walls and the fountain. That's a beautiful spot. That's a nice peaceful place. I'd sit there sometimes and meditate there when I used to walk in the cemetary for exercise. It's a shame vandals are tearing it up.

**Q:** How many people worked on the sidewalks?

**Robert:** There were 8 to 10 people to a crew and they would tear up the old walks and we would follow and put them back.

**Q:** What was it like then?

**Robert:** Most people didn't have jobs. I bought my house from my landlord for ten dollars down and ten dollars a

month. But I lost the house back to him when I couldn't pay the taxes which were fifteen dollars. I was able to buy it back from him again later when I had save a little money but I learned a lesson on that one. People always wonder why I didn't get the money from relatives or something. There just was no money. You can't get blood from a turnip.

**Q:** Did people keep gardens?

**Robert:** Oh yes. I f you didn't grow something you didn't eat back then.

**Q:** Did people keep chickens.

**Robert:** When we first came here there was some of that. When we first moved here people thought this was out in the country. Down across from Walker St. there was a field and a woman kept a lot of chickens and a couple of cows and horses.

**Q:** How long did you work for the WPA?

**Robert:** Until the war started...Dec. 7, 1941. Then I went to war-work. I worked at Curtis-Wright in Indianapolis making plane parts. A year before that I worked at Crane finishing concrete. I made \$1.35 and hour. I drove an old ford pickup truck.

**Q:** Were you on city water?

**Robert:** Yes but there were outhouses before we went on septic. We didn't get on city sewer until the 50's.

**Q:** What were the roads like in our neighborhood then?

**Robert:** Walker and 3<sup>rd</sup> St. were crushed stone. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. was a country road and was a popular place to learn to drive a car. Most of the small roads were crushed stone but jackson might have been brick.

**Q:** Do you remember the lake beyond Walker St.?

**Robert:** Yes, you me Monon Lake. There are still some stones from the dam

down where those tanks are. (On the right side of the road, before Adams St.)

**Q:** What do you remember about the grocery stores in the neighborhood?

**Robert:** Macanish Grocery was on 6<sup>th</sup> St. and one block west of Maple (Euclid), I think. I shopped there. The grocery at Howe and Maple, it had a lot of owners before Quakenbush. Livingstone's was on 2<sup>nd</sup> and Buckner. Joe Chambers owned it later. Then there was one up on 7<sup>th</sup> and Elm I think.

**Q:** That must have been a tough time to own a store.

**Robert:** They sold enough to get by and that's about all they did. They were really handy.

**Q:** Do you remember the old Fairview School with the tower?

**Robert:** I went there. That was a beautiful building. That was one they shouldn't have torn down.

**Q:** How about the old Central School? (Bloomington's first elementary school)

**Robert:** That was where the new hotel is now beside the Convention Center. That's another that should have been kept.

**Q:** Those were the only two elementary schools at that time?

**Robert:** After grade six you went right to the High School, where Krogers and the Ponderosa is now.

**Q:** What do remember about those days?

**Robert:** I had fifteen cents everyday for lunch money. We had an hour for lunch and I would walk downtown to Kreske's where they had a soda fountain (Now the Bakehouse) and for a nickle I could get a soda. For another five cents, I'd buy a coney and with the last nickel I would buy chunks of chocolate for dessert. Then I would walk up Fifth St. to the campus. IU was small then, just the Crescent area and the Well House. By

the time I got back, class was ready to start again.

**Q:** What do you remember about the quarry that was where Building Trades Park is now?

**Robert's daughter:** The old Blue Hole! When we walked to Hunter School we had to go around it. Girls were especially not allowed near it.

**Robert's son-in-law:** They had a program on the radio to raise money to fill in the quarry because of it's danger to kids and they got enough attention that it got filled in.

**Q:** What do you remember about the Wigwam:

**Robert's son-in-law:** It was down at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Rogers and it looked like a giant teepee. You could get cokes, things to eat and magazines there.

**Q:** What else do you recall about those days?

**Robert:** We worked on the jail beside the old City Hall (now the Waldron Arts Center). That was a WPA project. My dad finished concrete too and we were working on a sidewalk by the old gas house which was near the current gas company and the old gas tower (where the Bicycle Apartments are now), and I remember that was where we were working when Social Security first started. A funny memory was when we had just poured a sidewalk in front of Victor-Settle Jewelers on Walnut Street. Dad had not had time to move the barricade when this woman came walking down the sidewalk. Dad told here she couldn't walk there and she replied that she would walk where she pleased. Her next step was into ankle-deep concrete.

**Q:** What did you think of President Roosevelt?

**Robert:** I thought he was a very smart man; some people didn't think so though.

**Q:** Can you imagine what would have happened without WPA?

**Robert:** No, not really. People really needed the work.

**Q:** Well, the people he helped remembered him and liked him, didn't they?

**Robert:** You better believe it!

## The Past is a Foreign Country

I have been thinking a lot about the Bloomington that existed when the Paris-Dunning House was new. The only other building we are sure is that old is the gray brick house across from Grant Street Furnishings, 218 S. Rogers. Except for remnants like the original one room log cabin that is enclosed in the Morrison-Graves House, 608 West Kirkwood, the Wylie House, and some old stone markers on Rose Hill, that era of Bloomington's past has few survivors.

In 1870, the population of Bloomington was only 2,860 people. (That is about the size of a large high school!) Indianapolis grew from 8,091 in 1850 to 48,244 by 1870. If Bloomington followed the same growth pattern, we can assume a population of 486 in 1850.

The Indiana State Seminary which opened its doors in 1824 with one professor. By 1827 the student population had grown to 26, and a second professor from Ohio was hired. He walked the entire distance from Oxford with a friend. The seminary was upgraded to Indiana College, and in 1829, Andrew Wylie and family arrived in Bloomington. His wife complained

about the muddy streets, in what was in anyone's definition, a very small town.

If you've ever visited an Amish community and driven the dirt roads that separate the small farms which fill the countryside, you probably saw Bloomington and Monroe County of the 1850's. Everyone was "Amish" then and didn't know it.

West Third Street was a country dirt road as was Second Street (Bloomfield Road), both of which the farmers traveled on the weekends to do their "trading" in town. Our neighborhood was mostly farmland and woods and the little cemetery then seemed a good distance from "downtown".

By 1870, 58% of the population of Indiana worked in agriculture. Monroe County would likely have had an even higher percentage of farmers. Andrew Wylie ran a farm in addition to a young college and the location of the Wylie House shows that a very compact town made up of the square and perhaps a block in any direction was surrounded by working family farms of one size or another. Everyone had horses and the well off had carriages. The first courthouse and school was a two room wooden structure which was built collectively by the early townspeople. A blacksmith shop, a carriage shop, a drygoods store, a few churches and a couple of taverns probably comprised the earliest settlement.

In a town this size, you can imagine what a small social circle existed. Soon after Wylie arrived, the little community split into factions supporting Wylie, the outsider, and those who were sympathetic with the two original professors. The feud started over a letter of criticism which was mistakenly attributed to Wylie. The two

left the young college but the bad feelings didn't end. The factions wouldn't speak to each other and it was literally endangering the young institution. Finally one of the new faculty members gave a dinner party and secretly invited both factions and the small board of trustees. The evening is said to have found the two groups silently sitting at opposite sides of the room. Courtesy and manners eventually led to a little peacemaking and the feud was finally settled.

I would guess that the early town felt more like a commune than a modern day town. (Everyone seemed to be making it up as they went along). A town of 500 to 1,000 would have had a mere handful of educated people among the roughly 400 men in the population to become the lawyers, politicians, teachers and doctor.

In 1832 there was a cholera epidemic which scared the area and closed the college but mostly spared the young town. Disease was much more frightening with the primitive medical care of the day and a well and rainwater source of drinking water often spread diseases.

In 1849, the fugitive slave act was passed and there were people like the Covenanter Community who protected runaway slaves but there were also bounty hunters, who would turn in runaways for money. Fist fights often broke out downtown over the politics of the day and stories of lawyers in court punching a witness or an opposing lawyer give a hint of a slightly less civilized climate than today, or perhaps people were just more up front about their feelings.

It's interesting to note that in 1870, Bloomington had three newspapers. It says something about

literacy levels and also reminds us that this was the only media of the day. Civil war news was often weeks after the battle. It was a slower time in many ways. Old 37 was called the Dixie Highway and many a soldier went south in anticipation of glory and the fortunate ones limped their way home on this same route.

Historian David Lowenthal said, "the past is a foreign country". It was a far different Bloomington when the new bricks, made on site for the Paris Dunning house, were first laid in place in 1845. We are fortunate that some of these remnants from another time are still in our midst, for they provide a dim window on our past through which our minds may try to find the way.

## **The Gravestones and Stories of Rose Hill Cemetery**

Two stones sit side by side in the southeast corner of Rose Hill Cemetery, (where the alley meets West Third Street). Their dates read 1863 and 1884. Like all the other stones on the hill, they have a story, a piece of the puzzle that is Bloomington's history. The names on these stones are Sarah Dunning and Paris Dunning. (It is a name associated with the large brick house at Third and Jackson, which has come to be named the Paris Dunning House). Here is their story.

When Paris Dunning's mother moved from North Carolina to Bloomington following the death of his father with Paris and one of his six older brothers, Paris was only 17 years of age. Whether the Dunning's had been slave-owners is not known, but his future campaigning for Stephan Douglas may have stemmed from his family roots.

Indiana, the state he would grow up to serve, was only seven years old when the Dunnings arrived. Mrs. Dunning saw challenge and opportunity in a tiny wilderness farming community optimistically called Bloomington.

To be educated in the "frontier" in those days was a ticket to many opportunities, and Paris Dunning's mother saw to it that her youngest son finished the education that had begun in North Carolina. To be well educated in the Indiana at that time was to be a big fish in a very small pool. He was trained to be a doctor in Louisville and even practiced a little in Rockville but he didn't take to the profession and returned to Bloomington after two years.

Here he began to learn law from future governor and politician James Whitcomb. In those days it took little time to become a doctor and in law you simply apprenticed with a practicing lawyer to learn that trade. I imagine that passing the bar was pretty much a nod and a handshake by some old drinking buddies as well.

This is where Sarah Alexander, the daughter of a prosperous Bloomington farmer entered his life. The Alexander family lore called her "the prettiest girl in Indiana." She was 15 years old when Paris began apprenticing in James Whitcomb's law office. "He often noticed the smiling brown-eyed little Alexander girl when she passed by the office. She seemed to be a pet of the entire town with her winsome ways and intelligent interest in all that was going on."

Paris and Sarah were married just one month after her 16th birthday and young Paris Dunning was elected to the General Assembly that same year. This began a 30 year political career which culminated in serving as Indiana's ninth

governor and President of the state senate. His career followed closely in his mentor's footsteps. In 1836 he won the state senate seat vacated by Whitcomb.

In 1844 he worked as an elector for the unsuccessful national Democratic presidential ticket of Polk and Dallas. In the days before radio and TV, live speaking was the only alternative to the print media. Paris made 147 speeches and his style was described as "fluent and with marked emphasis. His style, both in speaking and writing is nervous and bold." (Note the word, nervous, refers to its older meaning of 'high strung, spirited or bold.' Interestingly, the modern meaning of the word was not commonly used in 1845.)

Again in 1846 he ran and won as lieutenant governor on the ticket, which made his old friend the 8th governor of Indiana. The new governor and his wife included the young couple in most of the social affairs of the state. But James Whitcomb wasn't done. After the sudden death of his wife just two years after his election, he successfully ran for the U.S. Senate and at ages 42 and 39, Paris and Sarah found themselves to be the Governor and First Lady of Indiana serving out the remainder of Whitcomb's term.

Indianapolis was an exciting place in 1848. Sarah liked to go to the new city market for fresh fruit and vegetables. A Lyceum and Athenaeum Club had been formed and she and Paris liked to go there for community sings. Indianapolis also had a theatrical season "with an orchestra and scenery and all the fancy trappings. When Paris and Sarah went to the theater it was in a wagon shop opposite the courthouse." Indianapolis in 1850 was a town of 8,091.

After two years as Governor, the Dunnings returned to Bloomington. The family had grown to seven members: three girls, Martha (Whitcomb's wife was named Martha), Mary, and Rachel, and two sons, Paris and James (probably named after his mentor and friend, James Whitcomb, who was quite possibly the namesake of Indiana's poet, James Whitcomb Riley, whose politically minded father probably had a different career in mind for his artistic son).

Paris resumed his law practice and probably walked to court. In 1854 or 1856 he was nominated for Congress by his strong Democratic supporters but he declined to run for reasons reportedly unsatisfactory to his friends. Donald Hoover, a great grandson of Paris Dunning said, "Great Grandpa Dunning liked a generous nip of spirits now and then." Perhaps he was just ready to stay in Bloomington and enjoy a simpler life, a radical idea then, as it is today.

He strongly supported Stephen Douglas for president over Lincoln by working for his nomination and speaking for him during the election, but when the Civil War started, he supported the union. In 1862, Dunning was elected to the state senate with the unusual support of both Democrats and Unionists and he was elected to be president of the senate. During Dunning's tenure at the senate, Governor Morton of Indiana, loaned state money to the federal government in critically needed support of the Union cause during the war. Morton Street bears his name. In 1862, Sarah bought the so-called Paris Dunning house for the family.

After Dunning's term was up, he was nominated both for State Senate and the House of Representatives. Again he declined so he could return to

Bloomington and practice law. Sarah had died in 1863 so Paris returned to Bloomington alone.

He remarried in September of 1865 to a Mrs. Allen D. Ashford, a widow from Evansville and the daughter of a doctor. They had one son together, Smith Lane Dunning. The house at 3rd and Jackson was sold in 1869 and the new couple lived out their years elsewhere in Bloomington.

Paris Dunning had a good reputation as a lawyer and had many friends. He practiced law until his death in 1884. At the age of 78, while arguing a case at the old Greek Revival brick courthouse, he fell to the floor, stricken with paralysis. Before his death a few days later, he had made his wishes known that he was to be buried beside his first wife Sarah, where they rest side by side to this day at the southeast corner of Rose Hill Cemetery. Her simple marble stone shows a finger pointing heavenward with the words above which say, "Gone Home". For 21 years he had visited her stone. Today Paris's modest stone stands immediately to her right.

His portrait artist commented that the Governor "had enough individual character to make the likeness as strong as I wish." His impressions were of a confident, friendly and alert man, whose eyes reflected a genuine interest in people and events.