

### Miami County Museum Fund

The history of Miami County dates back as far as the 1700s but it was not until 1913 that a collection of historical artifacts about the area were shown publicly in a library exhibit by Judge Hal Phelps. Three years later, Miami County housed the artifacts in the county courthouse on the fourth floor and created its first historical society.

Early success was shown by the new museum, and the collection of rare artifacts, most of which were early pioneer relics, reached around eight to ten thousand people in the first few years. In 1932, a separate museum was created in an annex of the Peru library that was operated by the Peru School Corporation. The historical society took over as director of both museums in late 1932, and in the 1960s, the historical society went on the search for a new building.



In 1983, the owner of the former Senger Dept. Store donated the building on Broadway Street to become the new Miami County Museum, and five years later, the move began. It took ten years to complete all three floors of the museum and the main themes in the new museum included Miami Indians, pioneers, the Wabash and Erie Canal, the Circus, Cole Porter, and railroads. Some original objects that come from the courthouse that are still popular are the two-headed calf and the jackrabbit.

The historical society is very active in the community. They help sponsor many festivals during each year, including the Cole Porter Festival in the beginning of June, the Iron Bridge Festival in late June, and Heritage Days in August.

This mission, which states that their focus is to discover, collect, preserve, educate, and disseminate the history; historical records and data; and traditions which establishes or illustrates such history as it relates to Miami County, is focused on the residents of Miami County and how they can service those who call it home.

Since 1997, the Community Foundation has granted approximately \$72,000 to the Miami County Historical Society for various programs and projects. The historical society is also the beneficiary of approximately \$156,000 from several funds set up with the Community Foundation, including the Beulah Hoffman Fund; Marks Family Fund for the Miami County Historical Society; Miami County Historical Society, Inc. Fund; Miami County Historical Society- Ulery Annex Fund; and the Robert and Lucille Ulery Memorial Fund.