



STEVE GARBACZ

The Strand Theatre, located at 221 S. Main St., will be one location in downtown Kendallville to receive a historical marker as part of a new historic trail being developed through an Indiana Humanities project in the city.

History Lesson

Humanities project will highlight Kendallville sites, people

BY STEVE GARBACZ

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KENDALLVILLE — Preserving Kendallville's history isn't just about fixing up old buildings.

So in a program funded by a \$10,000 grant from Indiana Humanities as part of the city's \$2 million PreservINg Main Street program, Kendallville will create a historical trail in downtown to recognize some important buildings and people to the city's past.

What that will ultimately look like is several historical markers identifying noteworthy buildings, as well as large window clings that will provide information on prominent people from Kendallville's history, along with their unique stories.

City leaders have selected 13 individuals and six sites to be highlighted on the downtown history tour along Main Street, taking advantage of the walkability in downtown thanks to the city's recent streetscape improvements.

"We will be providing a better working knowledge of Kendallville's rich history to the community, while also capturing the stories of yesteryear that

make our community special," the humanities project group said in a release. "Doing so will instill a sense of pride in the community, while also creating an interesting, permanent recreational adventure for young and old alike."

Marked locations on the trail will include:

- 113 N. Main St., the Alonso Anderson building, currently occupied by Scott Frick, CPA
 - 132-136 S. Main St., the John Mitchell building, currently occupied by ~~+~~
 - 219-225 S. Main St., the Spencer Opera House building, currently occupied by Betty Lou Designs and Graphics and the Strand Theatre
 - 201-203 S. Main St., the Klinkenberg's building, currently occupied by WhatchamaCAKES and A&G Supply
 - 101-105 S Main Street, the Kelly Hotel building, currently occupied by Kendallville Auto Value
 - Downtown pocket park at the southwest corner of Main and Rush streets, where a National Register designation marker will be placed
- The city will also ask local

businesses to post window clings in some of their larger windows celebrating historic Kendallville people. Those window clings will include a photo of the individual, birth and death dates, information on their accomplishments and/or unique story, along with other key facts.

Those historic Kendallville figures include:

- Dr. Harold Urey, recipient of Nobel Prize for chemistry, NASA scientist
- Alvin M. Strauss, architect
- Arthur Franklin Mapes, Indiana poet laureate
- Gene Stratton-Porter, famous author and local business owner
- Amos Kendall, postmaster general
- William Mitchell, "father of Kendallville"
- John Mitchell, son of William/ longtime banker and civic leader
- Simeon Flint and David Walling, founders of Flint & Walling, Kendallville's oldest manufacturer
- Elmer McCray, founder of McCray Refrigeration

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HUMANITIES: *Trail should be established by summer*

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- Robert Klinkenberg, owner of Klinkenberg's, which was in business for 111 years
 - Alonso Anderson, and African-American man who built the "seven sisters" buildings downtown
 - Cora Anderson, a Black woman who dressed as a man to secure employment in the city
 - Frank Shade, little person who owned cigar shop
- In addition to those features, the city will be printing 500 booklets that will provide more in-depth detail on the historical aspects of the Kendallville area, which will be available to anyone participating in

the walking tour, as well as to the general public; and will be uploading this same information to the Clio to serve as a permanent repository of our history, as well as tool for future self-guided walking tours.

Using the Clio, the group will create up to five different tours, based on the user's interest. For example, one tour might be specific to famous people, one might highlight the unique buildings and architecture, and one might be geared towards school-aged children as a curriculum tool for area schools and youth groups.

The initial tours will be kicked off with an "Antiques Road Show" type of event on Saturday, June 11 from

noon to 2 p.m., where community members and area historians will be invited to come and show their antiques, including items manufactured in Kendallville and Noble County.

During this event, there will be food and beverages, as well as historic walking tours hosted by local historian Terry Housholder.

Booklets are already in development, with plans for the historical data uploaded to Clio by June. Clings and historic markers are expected to be in place by summer 2022, with the road show kickoff scheduled for June. Guided walking tours will be available throughout the summer and fall, with self-guided tours available in perpetuity.

The city's humanities project team includes local historians Housholder, Mike Mapes, Amanda Blackman, Alexis Wilson; Main Street Manager Kristen Johnson; Community Learning Center Executive Director Julia Tipton; and Indiana Humanities' Samp Opshal.

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