The History House
A History

The History House sits at 712 8th street a few dozen yards from the Indiana Memorial Union in the University Courts neighborhood. Herman Bowman, local limestone entrepreneur, built the California Bungalow in 1922. Paul McNutt, arguably the most distinguished resident, lived there in the early 1920s, around the time he was Dean of the Indiana University Law School. The citizens of Indiana later elected McNutt as governor and he soon became a political figure on the national scene. In 1937, Roosevelt appointed McNutt High Commissioner of the Philippines, where McNutt raised some concerns by arguing against its independence because of its inability to defend itself in the event of foreign aggression. Historians credit McNutt with working with Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon to persuade the US to allow the entry each year into the Philippines of one thousand Jewish refugees fleeing fascist regimes in Europe. This was at a time when refugees could not legally enter the United States itself in large numbers. McNutt’s role in aiding the Jewish Diaspora has become a point of pride for many at Indiana University.

Bloomingtion’s surveyors platted the historic district north of the Indiana Memorial Union, known better as University Courts, between 1910 and 1913 on land that formerly belonged to attorney and farmer Moses Dunn. The Dunn farm and property stood just east of the present neighborhood on

From the Archive

Primary Source 3, no. 6
(March 1985)

Your own HURRYIN’ HAPSBURGS -- the graduate student basketball team -- finished its intramural season by losing in the second round of the playoffs. Victories were few (2) for those top-notch athletes, but, in the immortal words of the bard, winning ain’t everything. Hustle, determination, and fair play characterized their approach to the game. Led by captains Sam Goodfellow and David Hoth, the team fought nobly against the co-evils of Hoosier Hysteria and age discrimination. Our hats go off to those heroes of the boards. Members of the team included Howard Brown, Bill Bishel, Ben McRee, Rick Champagne (from Political Science), Howard Trivers, Max Wright, and Steve Towne).
the site of the Indiana University HPER building (the former Men’s Gym, since renamed the School of Public Health). In 1883, after the fire at Seminary Square, the university began to construct a new campus on the Dunn farmstead. This immediately enhanced the real estate potential of all the adjacent land. The development at University Courts sought to capitalize on the proximity of the “Old Crescent.” The original developers were Elvet and Cora Rhodes and the German American Trust Co. In 1913, Thomas and Nettie Sare purchased the remainder of the land. One of the four subdivisions is now a part of the Indiana University campus, including the History House and the Graduate House. Developers, “limestone men,” and others whose fortunes derived from Bloomington’s boom period built large homes, some of which went to Indiana University’s distinguished academic community.

This is in way of introducing a house that today is partially condemned, falling apart, and standing empty since 2008.

University Courts and the History House saw the gathering and later dispersing of much of IU’s Hellenic life. Many of the originally single-family homes saw reconstruction and refurbishment as Greek houses, while the university transformed others into office space in the 1960s, responding to Indiana University’s growth. The district maintains some of its older charm by preserving Bloomington’s only remaining brick streetscape.

According to the Primary Source (Vol 6, no. 1 (September 1987)), the department gifted the use of the History Department’s office-house to the graduate students after they lost space in Ballantine Hall. Prior to the 1987-1988 academic year, history graduate students had both a space for A.I. office hours and a graduate student lounge on the 7th floor of Ballantine.

From the acquisition of the History House in 1987 to its closure in 2008, the HGSA experienced something of a Golden Age. The History House represented for some a home away from the department and ample room for storage and study, social gatherings and alternative classroom space. The house was naturally off-limits for A.I. office hours, making it a welcome refuge from undergraduate students. The
History House also housed the office of Professor Paul Lucas, namesake of the annual HGSA Conference. Professor Lucas suffered from a debilitating fear of heights, which prevented him from occupying space high in Ballantine Hall, though his proximity meant that graduate students in the History House had access to his microfilm reader through the early 1990s until his untimely passing.

At some level, maintenance costs and the financial burden of the History House seem to have been its undoing. The university condemned the upper floor and attic space following repeated pest infestation, including fox squirrels. The nesting of squirrels raised serious, if overcautious, concerns, as squirrels and other rodents (and their fleas) are known to possibly carry *Yersinia pestis* (which causes both the bubonic and pneumonic forms of plague), though no cases of the plague seem to have ever been reported in Indiana.

The decaying state of the house in the 2000s, combined with the new planning of the university, together spelled the end of the History House.

The IU Master Plan of 2008 called for the eventual closing of all homebound university office space. After IU designated the History House and other properties in the neighborhood as unessential, a potential buyer appeared with Hillel House’s plans to leave their home on 3rd street. Hillel’s current building struggles to accommodate IU’s large Jewish community, which they estimate at above 10% of the total student population.

The fiscal and real estate crises of 2008 quashed these plans temporarily, but the department shuttered the History House in the same year. The financial burden and continuing health concerns were the writing on the wall. HGSA moved out of the building and remains without a space of its own.

The History House has stood empty since 2008, though its signage remains unchanged. After contacting Rabbi Sue Silberberg, the HGSA learned that the long-planned Hillel move is again under way. In her correspondence, Rabbi Silberberg explained that Hillel only recently revived their moving plans. Hillel’s board has finalized the architectural plans and are currently in discussion with their donors. Hillel is hoping to include a Holocaust museum, including an appropriate remembrance of Paul McNutt. Rabbi Silberberg expressed interest on Hillel’s behalf of a partnership with the History Department with regard to this museum.

The History House was something of a happy accident, not unlike many such cozy home-university-office-spaces found through the campus-scape of 20th-century America. Its passing is sad and represents for some a transition to an unknowable future for the department and IU at large.
Meeting Minutes
HGSA Meeting Minutes – 12/6/13

Geoff Ralston, GPSO Representative: The VP for Human Resources attended the GPSO meeting, which immediately followed the HGSA meeting on 12/6. The VP answered questions regarding the changes in the student health insurance policy. HGSA members contributed a list of questions for the GPSO representative to ask at that meeting. He will report this information soon.

The Graduate House (803 E 8th St.) is open to all graduate students and has study space. Question posed as to whether or not history students would be interested in renting out office space in this building, due to the slight possibility that this may be available in the future. The GPSO rep will find out more information, such as cost and if this move will go forward, and report back.

Nominations for GPSO executive positions are now open. Any graduate student may nominate themselves or apply for positions if interested. Contact GPSO officials if interested.

HGSA Co-Coordinators:
Alexa Justice’s tenure as co-coordinator of HGSA is up as of the end of this semester. Nominations for a new co-coordinator are now open. Anyone may nominate himself or herself, or another history graduate student. Contact Alexa Justice with nominations. HGSA will vote on this position at the end of the year.

Pedagogy Workshops, Tara Saunders:
Pedagogy workshops will start up again next semester. We look forward to seeing you then!

HGSA Conference Committee:
Call for Papers for HGSA’s Spring Conference has been sent out. Abstracts are due January 17th. The conference will be held April 5th. The Committee has lined up a speaker, a Latin Americanist.

Social Committee: Planning for the Winter Soiree is underway. The event for graduate students and professors will take place in January, location and date TBD.

Meeting closed

Printing Maps
A How-To Guide

Would you like to own your own early 19th-century map of the conquests of Alexander the Great? Perhaps you’d like to have a large-format wall-hanging of one of the pre-Conquest Codices? Printing nice maps and images for your wall or personal study is easy to do and the means to do so are located conveniently in the Information Commons on the first floor of Wells Library (West Tower). The cost is charged directly to your bursar bill, and it is a nominal cost. For $10, you received an entire “plot,” in glossy or matte finish, measuring 36 X 108 inches (3 feet by 9 feet). The staff at the Information Commons is on hand 24/7 to help you through the process, but by your second visit you’ll be able to do the entire process by yourself.

The next question you may ask is what quality, exactly, do you need to have for your large format map or picture? One wants to avoid pixelation and other digital blemishes. Allow me to introduce to you the excellent, free-to-use David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.
Once you complete your registration with the website, you may download extremely large and high-resolution images of any of over 45,000 maps, some several hundred years old. These maps include atlases with large fold-out maps that have been scanned at high resolution, meaning you may effectively enlarge already-large format maps from book-size to wall-size with no discernible loss in quality or legibility. The plotter prints at relatively high DPI (I believe around 200 dots per inch), meaning that your high-resolution image that looks fine at 96 DPI on your monitor may not be large enough. In short, I find that images over 3000 pixels on a side at 96 DPI look quite nice on the plotter.

The site is very thoroughly indexed. Using this resource, I’ve printed about a dozen high quality maps during my time at Indiana University, for myself and for others. High quality historical maps of your town or county make great gifts for the folks back home! The paper is high quality and will hang well even without a frame; naturally, lamination or glass fronting in addition to good framing will turn an attractive wall map into a family heirloom. The framing and preparation may be expensive, but you can easily fit three large maps, photographs, or other large prints on a 3’ X 9’ $10 roll of paper.

**Departmental Statistics**

As the editor pro tempore of the *Primary Source*, I can offer no official analysis of the following data. As a student in the Russian field here at IU, I find it unsurprising that the number of new students studying Russian history has more or less collapsed following the fall of the Soviet Union. Most heartening for me is the appearance of a strong trend to matriculate more historians of Latin America, though the continued absence of historians of East Asia and the Near East is more than a little depressing. Numbers are down universally. One consequence we can expect is continued difficulty managing seminar requirements for those in smaller fields, considering the continued insistence on a minimum of 5 students to hold a class. Other departments have been able to lift this requirement, but to my knowledge only for LCTLS (Less Commonly Taught Languages) and other courses bearing considerable funding from outside sources. In short, if a professor of East Asia cannot expect an average of one new graduate student per year, it seems unlikely that those admitted will be able to take a seminar, let alone two, in the short period of their coursework.

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