

# *PAST*

## *Morgan County Sheriff's*

|                                   |                            |                           |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| James Bigger, January 1, 1822     | Willis Record, 1866        | Vance Keller, 1932        |
| Benjamin Cutler, January 16, 1822 | William Kennedy, 1870      | Omar St. John, 1934       |
| Thomas Gilpin, 1824               | Thomas Dixon, 1874         | Ray Rainwater, 1938       |
| Hiram Craig, 1830                 | John Corner, 1878          | Omar St. John, 1942       |
| Jonathan Williams, 1834           | Wiley Halton, 1882         | William St. John, 194     |
| Hiram Craig, 1838                 | Joseph Paul, 1886          | William Marvin Skaggs,    |
| Jonathan Hunt, 1840               | Bart Smith, 1890           | Victor Young, 1954        |
| William Williams, 1842            | Uriah Madison Hinson, 1894 | Fred Neal, 1962           |
| Joseph Worthington, 1844          | William Crone, 1900        | Paul "Moose" Mason, 1970  |
| Francis Phelps, 1846              | Manford St. John, 1902     | Richard Allen, 1978       |
| Joseph Johnson, 1850              | William St. John, 1908     | Robert Bauer, 1980        |
| P.B. McCoy, 1851                  | Charles Marley, 1910       | Paul Mason, 1983          |
| Richard Williams, 1852            | D Haase, 1912              | Charlie Beaver, 1986      |
| William Killian, 1856             | Eugene Haase 1914          | Terry Weddle, 1995        |
| William Tansey, 1859              | Roscoe Farmer, 1916        | Charlie Beaver, 1999      |
| Henry Sims, 1860                  | Lafayette Scott, 1920      | Robert Garner, 2003       |
| William Hynds, 1862               | Rufus Pointer 1926         | Robert "Bob" Downey, 2012 |
|                                   | Albert Lucas, 1930         |                           |

*The following is a list of Morgan County Sheriffs beginning in 1822 to the present time. I have attempted to put them in perspective with their time period to give a better understanding of the challenges each of them went through.*

### ***Putting Morgan County Sheriffs in perspective.....***

By  
*Randy J. Manley*

#### **1822 - "The Beginning"**

"Sheriff" ... a tough guy with a fast gun, shoot outs, bad guys? Well not quite, but as Thomas Jefferson, wrote "The Office of Sheriff is the most important of all the executive offices of the county."

When settlers left England to colonize the New World they brought with them many of their governmental ways, including their way of law enforcement. Confronted with crime, disorder, and violence, the pioneers turned to members of their communities to enforce order.

Proficiency with a gun and willingness to use one was a highly sought after attribute for a sheriff in those days. Keep in mind these guns were not fast draw six guns at this time. These were flintlock mechanism guns that consists of, a hammer, which contains the piece of flint that strikes the frizzen, and the flash pan, which contains the powder which ignites the powder in the barrel when the wielder pulled the trigger, the hammer with the flint would strike the frizzen, exposing the flashpan, and at the same time creating sparks, which ignited the powder in the pan, which then ignited the main powder in the barrel, then firing the projectile out of the barrel. Well you get the idea, you had better be a good shot, it may be your last!

Indiana was admitted as the 19th state in 1816. In 1820, a few families were considering what is now Morgan County to be home. Morgan County's first appointed sheriff was James Bigger. On January 1, 1822, Morgan County was brought into existence by an act of the State Legislature. This was approved by the governor December 31, 1821. James Bigger was commissioned as Sheriff of Morgan County by the governor, but he refused to accept it. However, records indicate that James Bigger was the acting sheriff from January 1, 1822 to January 16, 1822. James Bigger recommended Benjamin Cutler, and Benjamin Cutler was commissioned on the 16th of January, 1822, to take Bigger's place.

If you are wondering what type of police car they used..... it was a horse of course! Although Martinsville was picked as the

county seat in March, 1822, there was no sign of a town. Only about six families lived in Martinsville in 1822, but keep in mind the sheriff had the entire county to cover.... by horse!

In the fall of 1822 a tavern was erected, making more work for the sheriff. As G. W. Preston found out, you had to have a license for retailing liquor, and he was charged for selling liquor without a license. The defendant was found guilty, and damages were fixed at \$2 and costs. The plaintiff moved an arrest or stay of judgment on such a verdict, which was granted, and he was discharged.

By 1824 the Martinsville families grew to about sixteen and things must have been hectic for the sheriff.

### **1824 - "Stubborn Jackass"**

The third Morgan County Sheriff, Thomas Gilpin, took office in 1824.

Men were making and selling liquor more and the sheriff's job got harder. The log jail on the northeast corner of the square built this year (1824) was being put to use.... until it burned down in 1826. The first courts of Morgan County convened at the log house of Jacob Cutler, which stood about one block north of the northwest corner of the public square in Martinsville. In 1823, the work of erecting the first court house was begun, and in the autumn of 1824, the building was so nearly completed that courts convened there for the first time, as shown by the old court records. The building was a two storied hewed log house, and was located on the southwest corner of the present public square. The upper story was low, but little better than half a story, and contained the jury rooms. The lower story was the court room. This room was also the first meeting house, schoolhouse, lecture room, etc., of Martinsville. The building was about 25x35 feet on the ground level.

Politics were changing. The Democratic Party was created which broke off from the older established Democratic-Republican Party to become the Democratic Party. In the 1828 Presidential Election, opponents of Andrew Jackson told all who would listen that Andrew Jackson was a "Stubborn Jackass." Jackson was proud of his reputation for stubbornness and even wanted to use it as a good quality, so started using a donkey on his campaign posters. Democrats have been using the symbol of the Donkey ever since.

In 1825 Percussion-cap guns invented by Reverend John Forsyth - firing mechanism no longer uses flash pan, a tube lead straight into the gun barrel, the tube had an explosive cap on it that exploded when struck

### **1830 - New Jail**

In 1830, along came sheriff number four, Hiram H. Craig. A new jail was constructed on the southwest corner of the square, this time with brick on the outside, heavy logs on the inside, and stone between the logs and bricks... No more breaking out or burning down the Morgan County Jail!

The contract of constructing a brick court house on the square was let to Giles B. Mitchell for about \$2,500 in 1833. Mr. Mitchell was a practical brick maker and brick-layer, and completed the work in 1834. The building was two storied, and was about 35x40 feet on the ground. It did not contain the county offices.

1st practical U.S. coal-burning locomotive makes 1st trial run.

John Calhoun becomes 1st Vice President to resign over differences with President Jackson.

Sheriff Hiram H. Craig was elected a second time in 1832.

### **1834 - A Revolving Handgun?**

Jonathan Williams became sheriff number five in 1834. He was one of the first County Commissioners who located in the city of Martinsville. He was elected Sheriff in 1834 and again in 1836. In 1838 he was elected to the Legislature. He served with General Jackson in his first battle.

During the time Jonathan Williams was sheriff, something happened that revolutionized the world. The mechanical ingenuity of Samuel Colt, with his revolving handgun in 1835, enabled a person to pre-load six shots into a single weapon that needed no priming.

In 1836 Davy Crockett arrives in Texas, just in time for the Alamo.

### **1838 - "I'm Back"**

Ole Hiram Craig (sheriff number four from 1830) ran for sheriff again in 1838 and won. He served as sheriff for two more years. The 1st baseball game was played in America in 1839.



### **1840 - Another new jail?**

Jonathan Hunt took oath in 1840. With the county population growing, it was time for another new jail, this time built in the northeast part of Martinsville. Things were booming in Morgan County now with regular mail delivery using a one cent stamp.

### **1842 - James and Younger outlaws**

William Williams, son of Jonathan Williams (Sheriff 1834 - 1838), became the eighth Morgan County Sheriff in 1842, Williams had more than once been engaged with the James and Younger outlaws. This was during the wagon train days, when covered wagons was taking people to what is now the state of California, and Oregon.

### **1844 - Electromagnetic Telegraph ???**

Joseph Worthington became sheriff in 1844 and things begin to get modern. A new invention by Samuel Morse, a electromagnetic telegraph used with a code using dots, dashes and spaces to represent the letters of the alphabet and provided lawmen a new, fast way to communicate.  
(And we complain about cell phone signals!)

### **1846 - Gold Rush Days**

Francis Phelps became sheriff in 1846, and during his term that the California Gold Rush started. It was James Marshall that found the first gold nugget on the cold, clear morning of January 24th, 1848, his find began one of the largest human migrations in history as a half-million people from around the world descended upon California in search of instant wealth. Not many people are aware, but glacial drift that was deposited by the glaciers that once covered much of the State of Indiana that came down from Canada disseminated gold in the sands and gravels of the small streams in southern Indiana. The counties in which gold was discovered in noticeable quantities are Brown, Jennings, Morgan, Franklin, and Warren. Gold was discovered in Morgan County as early as 1837 near Morgantown, and was also reported in 1873 at Mooresville on a small creek. In the 1850's miners returning from the California Gold mines prospected the black sands of Brown and Morgan Counties.

### **1850 - One Year**

Joseph Johnson became sheriff in 1850 but only served one year.

### **1851 - Railroading**

P.B. McCoy became sheriff in 1851. About the same time, the railroad became popular in Indiana.

### **1852 - Republican Party**

During the term of office for Morgan County Sheriff Richard Williams starting in 1852, the first local newspaper (a news sheet) called the Gazette, helped spread the news of Morgan County crimes and the work being done by the sheriff. Morgan County was still growing with manufacturers including hatcheries, cooper shops, distilleries, saw mills, wagon shops, hatteries, harness and saddle shops, furniture shops and woolen factories. The largest industry was the timber production of railroad ties. Politics took another turn at this point and the Republican Party was founded in 1854 by anti-slavery expansion activists. It was often called the Grand Old Party or the GOP. Prior to the Democratic Party breaking away from the Democratic-Republican Party and the National Republicans who later evolved into the Whig Party.

## **1856 - Three Years**

In 1856 William Killian was elected sheriff fourteen and served three years.

## **1859 - Combination Jail / Courthouse**

William Tansey served for one year in 1859. In March, 1857, orders were issued for advertising for bids to erect either a combined courthouse and jail, or each to be built separately, the total cost not to exceed \$30,000. The contract was finally awarded to Perry M. Blankenship at about that price, with the jail and court house to be built together. County bonds were ordered sold to meet the expense. The building was completed in 1859, at a cost of about \$32,000. This is presently the court house, part of the old jail is still inside.

## **1860 - Underground Railroad**

In 1860 Henry Sims was elected sheriff for two years. The Civil War was brewing at this time. During the peak of the Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and safe houses were used by black slaves to escape to free states and Canada with the aid of people who were sympathetic to their cause. This created additional problems for lawmen because of Bill #5, "The Compromise of 1850" called the "Fugitive Slave Act," which made any official who did not arrest a runaway slave liable to pay a fine.

Just in time for the war, Benjamin Henry perfects the Henry rifle which was manufactured by the New Haven Arms Company and used in considerable numbers by certain Union army units in the Civil War. Confederates called the Henry "that damned Yankee rifle that they load on Sunday and shoot all week!"

## **1862 - The Civil War**

In 1862 William Hynds took office during the middle of the War Between the States. Hynds remained sheriff until the end of the Civil War.

The Civil War was devastating to Morgan County. Indiana was the first state to mobilize for the Civil War and the number of men from Indiana was 208,367, second only to Illinois. The Civil War claimed over 24,416 Hoosiers, including some Morgan County men. Indianapolis became a staging center for the training and organization of troops. In 1862, the State Fairgrounds was transformed into a prison camp named Camp Morton for Confederate soldiers. More than 5,000 Confederate prisoners of war were detained there. Panic spread through Morgan County and southern Indiana when Confederate Officer Brigadier

General John Morgan (Morgan's Raid) crossed the Ohio River into Indiana with 2,400 men. General Morgan considered attacking Camp Morton in Indianapolis to free the 5,000 plus Confederate prisoners of war imprisoned there, but he turned east.

At the end, the Civil War took 625,000 lives (364,511 Union and 260,000 Confederate).

The end of the Civil War brought a different kind of man into the arena of lawmen, the men returning home from the war were trained in fighting and shooting; they knew how to handle weapons and were not strangers to killing. 1865 was not only the end of the Civil War, it was also when the 14th President, Abraham Lincoln was killed by John Wilkes Booth while attending the comedy "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.

## **1866 - Confederate Guerrillas**

After the end of the war Willis Record was elected sheriff in 1866. Not surprising the first Ku Klux Klan group had been founded in Tennessee by veterans of the Confederate Army. It was while Willis Record was in office that Jesse and his brother Frank James, Confederate guerrillas during the Civil War, turned to crime when they created the James-Younger Gang. Their first robbery on February 13, 1866, of the Clay County Savings Association in Liberty, Missouri was the first daylight armed bank robbery in the United States during peacetime.

Several major crimes also occurred in Indiana during the post-war era. A group of brothers from Seymour, who had served in the Civil War, formed the Reno Gang, the first outlaw gang in this part of the United States. The Reno Gang named for the brothers, terrorized Indiana and the Midwest for several years. They were responsible for the first train robbery in the United States which occurred near Seymour on October 6, 1866.



## **1870 - Number Nineteen**

William Kennedy took office in 1870, and like most, served four years.

## **1874 - “Great Flood of 1875”**

Thomas Dixon became Morgan County Sheriff number twenty in 1874. The republican “elephant” started this year when a political cartoonist (Thomas Nast) who did not think President Ulysses S Grant should run for a third term had a cartoon published in Harper's Weekly in 1874 depicting the Republican Party as a stampeding elephant. Sheriff Thomas Dixon did not know at the time he took office that he would be facing the worst disaster in Morgan County history, the “Great Flood of 1875” that left Martinsville under water.

## **1878 - Billy the Kid - Wyatt Earp... OH MY!**

In 1878 John Corner took the oath of office as sheriff. As newspapers became common, information about lawmen and outlaws was spread across America. It was during this time that the notorious outlaw Billy the Kid killed six lawmen in April of 1881. In October of that same year (1881), legendary lawman Wyatt Earp, along with his brothers Virgil and Morgan, and John Henry "Doc" Holliday, won the famous gunfight at the O.K. Corral.

## **1882 - War Man**

Wiley Halton became sheriff elected by the Republicans in 1882. He enlisted in Company H, Fourteenth Indiana Volunteers, after which service he re-enlisted, in Company A, Fifty ninth Indiana Volunteers, and served in the following engagements: New Madrid, Corinth, Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hills, siege of Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge and Sherman's campaign through Georgia and to Washington.

## **1886 - Benjamin Harrison**

Joseph Paul took office in 1886. In 1888, Indiana Senator Benjamin Harrison, grandson of territorial Governor William Henry Harrison, was elected President of the United States. It was while Sheriff Joseph Paul was in office that the Spanish-American War started. The Spanish–American War was a conflict between Spain and the United States. It ultimately ended with the Americans defeating the Spaniards. After the mysterious sinking of the American battleship "Maine" in Havana harbor, political pressures pushed Republican President William McKinley, into a war McKinley had wished to avoid. The outcome was the 1898 Treaty of Paris, which was favorable to the U.S. followed by temporary American control of Cuba and indefinite colonial authority over Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. The defeat and subsequent end of the Spanish Empire was a profound shock for Spain's national psyche. The victor gained several island possessions spanning the globe and a rancorous new debate over the wisdom of imperialism.

## **1890 - Jail with living quarters.... What's next?**

Bart Smith, the newly elected sheriff of 1890 had not only a new jail, (built that same year), but the jail had a living quarters built onto it.

Most of us has heard of the Old Hickory Furniture Company, formed in Martinsville in 1892.  
Sheriff Bart Smith like many others served two - 2 year terms.

### **1894 - "Cure" for the common cold....**

Uriah Madison Hinson ran for sheriff on the Republican ticket against Democrat Stephen H. Chenoweth. Uriah M. Hinson was elected sheriff on November 6, 1894, with an even 2,500 votes, and Stephen H. Chenoweth 1,825 votes. Being a well known, and highly thought of and respected man, Uriah M. Hinson known as "Mat" served a two year term, ran again in November 1896 and won again, serving another two years. I have a copy of the (signed) original inventory list from when Bart Smith (1890) turned over the jailhouse to incoming Sheriff Uriah Madison Hinson, dated Dec. 17, 1894. Items included several coal heating stoves, coal buckets, four bath tubs (three in the jail and one in the living quarters, ball and chains, court dockets, register for fees, two pair of hand cuffs, a pair of leg irons, a kitchen chest, cooking stove and cooking utensils.

Sheriff Hinson had four sons and two daughters, Sheriff Hinson's Granddaughter Alice Gertrude Elmore, was born in the living quarters of the jail in Aug. of 1897. One of Sheriff Hinson's descendants, Beverly Farr, still works in the court house today. Sheriff Hinson was the first sheriff to have a telephone, as the "Martinsville Telephone Co." started during his term of office. The first phones were only connected to other Martinsville phones by an operator. Telephone poles were hard to get, so not much of the county had phone service for a while. Besides, who could afford a phone, the service was \$1 per month! (How did they call the sheriff before that, by horse back?) Everything is high.... why they raised the Martinsville paper to \$1 a year!!!

"John Thompson, a farmer living east of town, has been confined in the county jail for a week on several different charges "preferred" by his wife. He refuses to allow any one to go on his bond, saying he has had more peace since his incarceration than in the past 20 years." (Only a man can appreciate Mr. Thompson's thinking!!!)

In the medical field things are looking up, they have a "cure" for the common cold.... it is "Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets" the add in the Martinsville paper says a refund of your money if it fails to cure! How about that "Castor Oil", It destroys all worms (including tape worms), cures diarrhea, cures constipation, neutralizes acid and gas, regulates the stomach and bowels, and gives natural sleep!!!! "Children Love It" Wow....

(Thank you "Aley" for the information about your Great-Great-Grandfather Uriah Madison Hinson)

### **1900 - Horseless Carriage, it will never work!**

William Crone took office in 1900. At this time Morgan County residents are starting to see Coca Cola, and the automobile. Gold has been around for the last fifty years by now, but there was no true standard way to figure the value. The "Gold Standard Act" of the United States was passed in 1900 (approved on March 14) and established gold as the only standard for redeeming paper money, stopping bimetallism (which had allowed silver in exchange for gold). It was signed by President William McKinley. The Act fixed the value of the dollar consisting of  $25 \frac{8}{10}$  grains (1.67 g) of gold nine-tenths fine, as the standard unit of value, and all forms of money issued or coined by the United States shall be with this standard..." Thus the United States moved to a gold standard, made gold the sole legal-tender coinage of the United States, and set the value of the dollar at \$20.67 per Troy ounce (66.46 g/g) of gold. This made the dollar convertible to 1.5 g (23.2 grains) the same convertibility into gold that was possible on the bimetallic standard.

### **1902 - Interurban???**

While Manford St. John was in office starting in 1902, he was the first Morgan County Sheriff to use fingerprints and also the first to see the Interurban pulling in and out of its station on North Main Street in Martinsville. The tracks followed Blue Bluff Road to Centerton, Bethany Park and Mooresville, connecting Martinsville with Indianapolis. Little did Sheriff Manford St. John know at the time that American gangster, John Dillinger, would be born in Morgan County.

1903 was a special year to us pilots, the Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur were credited with inventing and building the world's first successful airplane and making the first controlled, powered and sustained heavier-than-air human flight, on December 17, 1903. In the two years afterward, the brothers developed their flying machine into the first practical fixed-wing aircraft.



## **1908 - More cars... Martinsville Auto Garage,**

### **Buicks AND Fords!**

William St. John takes office in 1908.

While most lawmen are still on horse back, Henry Ford's, Ford Motor Company introduced the Ford Model T, costing \$850.00. This was nearly one-third the price of any other car on the market, but still not cheap enough for most Morgan County residents to own one. After a few years Henry Ford perfected the assembly line production bringing the cost down to \$368.00.

The Ford dealership was located on South Main Street. Martinsville Auto Garage was built at West Morgan and Mulberry Streets in 1904. Clarks Garage became the official Buick Dealership in 1907.

The NAACP was formed in 1909, partly in response to the continuing practice of lynching and the 1908 race riot in Springfield, Illinois. Appalled at the violence that was committed against blacks, a group of white liberals called for a meeting to discuss racial justice.

## **1910 - 1st Indianapolis 500**

Charles Marley was elected to serve as sheriff in 1910, being Morgan County's twenty-eighth sheriff.

1911 was a big year for Indiana, and Morgan County. The first ever running of the Indianapolis 500 won by Ray Harroun at an average speed of 74.59 miles an hour. (We now clock cars with radar on SR 37 faster than that every day!)

## **1912 - Great White River Flood of 1913**

Sheriff D Haase was elected to office the same year the Titanic sank (1912). But Sheriff D Haase had his hands full when Morgan County had it's own deep water disaster, on March 25, 1913, when the White River swept into Martinsville, submerging homes and businesses and stranding nearly 3,000 families. The river was raising at the rate of four feet an hour and became over a mile in width, over one hundred families were left homeless. The railroad and the interurban tracks were both severely damaged, bridges were washed out, and electric and gas were cut off to the city of Martinsville. Some of the sanitariums were flooded, and guests had to be moved out.

## **1914 - World War I**

In 1914 Eugene Haase took the sheriff position and served for two years.

This was the start of a troubled time period for not only Morgan County but all of America, the beginning of the Great War (World War I).

In 1914, \$1.98 would buy you a tailor made skirt, 39 cents for a mans work shirt, a good enameled ten quart water pail was 10 cents, washing powder was 3 cents. A Sunday dinner at Harvey's with your choice of Roast Beef Angus, Roast Pork with Onion Dressing, Stewed Veal, Dumplings, or Fried Spring Chicken with Gravy, which included Creamed Potatoes, Escalloped Corn, Green String Beans, Cold Slaw, and Hot Rolls, as well as your choice of Baked Ping Apple (don't ask me?), Cream Pie, or Blackberry Pie, along with your drink of Coffie, Tea, or Milk was 35 cents!

Hey! The new Ford dealer on South Main St. is trying to sell one of those motor car things, they are brand new, 1914 Model T's called "Tin Lizzies"..... those motor cars will never replace the horse and buggy!

I thought of Sheriff Eugene Haase a few weeks ago, and how he might have written up his accident reports between the cars and the Interurban (If they even did accident reports?). I couldn't help but notice while working my last accident sitting in the police car doing the accident report on a in-car computer system connected by wireless internet that scans the drivers license and registration, fills in most of the blanks for you, has drop down menus for what is not filled in, gives the location by a in car county mapping GPS system..... that it dawns on me, the "Interurban" is not in any of the drop down windows! I wonder if the "Interurban" was in Eugene's in-car computer system in 1914???

## **1916 - Indiana Flag**

In 1916 Roscoe Farmer was elected. It was during Sheriff Roscoe Farmer's term that WWI played the biggest part for Morgan County residents. If you recall in your history class, WWI was a very complicated war and President Woodrow Wilson wished to remain neutral, but was forced into the war in April of 1917. 116,516 Americans lost their lives, making the total deaths for

WWI around 8.5 million.

General John T. Thompson invents the Thompson Submachine Gun (Tommy Gun) and started the Auto-Ordnance Company in 1916. Prior to World War II it gained notoriety in the hands of Gangsters and Mobsters during the Prohibition Era, but in World War II the Thompson Submachine Gun was adopted by the U.S. military. During the same time General Thompson was designing the Thompson Submachine Gun, a Morgan County man from Mooresville, Paul Hadley, was designing the Indiana State Flag which was adopted by the 1917 General Assembly and is still used today.

## **1920 - "Roaring Twenties"**

In 1920 another new sheriff, Sheriff Lafayette Scott was elected. This was the beginning of the "Roaring Twenties." The Roaring Twenties was an era of great economic growth and widespread prosperity, modern technology, especially automobiles, moving pictures and radio to a large part of the population. Music, jazz and dancing rose in popularity. With the passing of the 19th Amendment in 1920 came the "new woman" guaranteeing women the right to vote.... (No comment!!!) Legislation passed at the beginning of the 20th century forced many factories to shorten their workdays and pay a minimum wage.

Yep Sheriff Lafayette Scott saw some major changes! Local sheriffs were having a hard time keeping up with criminals crossing county lines. The sheriff only had police power within his county.

On July 15, 1921 the Indiana Legislature created the Indiana Motor Vehicle Police (now known as the Indiana State Police). The Motor Vehicle Police became the first law enforcement agency in the state to have statewide jurisdiction. Originally there were 16 members of the Motor Vehicle Police tasked with enforcing motor vehicle laws across the state.

In 1920, the manufacture, sale, import and export of alcohol was prohibited by the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in an attempt to alleviate various social problems; this came to be known as "Prohibition." The Eighteenth Amendment was enacted through the "Volstead Act," supported greatly by churches. America's continued desire for alcohol under prohibition led to the rise of organized crime as typified by Chicago's Al Capone, smuggling and gangster associations all over the U.S.

Also, during the 20's the "Ku Klux Klan" was a formal fraternal organization with a national and state structure. At its peak in the mid-1920's, the organization claimed to include about 15% of the nation's eligible population, approximately 4-5 million men, and yes Morgan County had some "supporters." In fact it is claimed the number in Morgan County was in the thousands!

In October of 1923 a KKK rally on the court house square was said to have brought in a "tremendous" crowd. Amazingly Sheriff Lafayette Scott lasted six years in office.

In 1922 The White River flooded again.

## **1926 - "The Untouchables"**

In 1926 Rufus R. Pointer took office as Morgan County Sheriff.

With organized crime still at a high, Federal Agent Eliot Ness begins his legendary law enforcement career and is picked to lead a group of agents nicknamed "The Untouchables".

Remember me telling you about the Eighteenth Amendment "Prohibition", prohibiting the manufacture, sale, import and export of alcohol? This caused a lot of problems for "honest" sheriffs, and within the first few days in office Sheriff Pointer and his deputy Bert Lucas, found them selves arresting local business people like Roy Wilson from the local tire shop on East Morgan St., Harlan Shan, and even nice Mrs. Mary Gwinn for violation of the "liquor law". If you want a laugh, Hoot Gibon in "Spook Ranch" is playing at the Grace Theater.

## **1930 - Deadliest year in law enforcement!**

Albert Lucas took over as sheriff in 1930, now with the crime rate at a historical all time high, it was the single deadliest year in law enforcement history, with 282 officers killed.

The last run on the Martinsville branch of the interurban was October 30, 1930. In 1931 Morgan County would see the White River flood once again. Sheriff Albert Lucas was sheriff for two years.

The Great Depression in the 1930s resulted in the abandonment of the gold standard by the United States. President Franklin Roosevelt changed the valuation of gold to \$35 per ounce of gold as an inflationary measure, where an increase in the valuation of gold tends to increase price levels in general. The Gold Reserve Act of 1934 also withdrew all gold from circulation, and Congress nullified clauses in public and private contracts that provided for payment in gold. That system, however, fell apart after debilitating inflation in the 1960s caused a run as countries began exchanging dollars for gold from the U.S. Treasury when world gold prices exceeded the \$35.00 value. President Richard Nixon announced on August 15, 1971, that the United States would no longer exchange dollars for gold. Within two years, currency exchange rates were allowed to float against each other.



These floating currency rates are set by market forces, and change constantly in foreign exchange transactions conducted through banks and currency dealers. In 1975 gold was eliminated as the basis for international monetary standards, and two years later, the prohibition against gold clauses was repealed, allowing private sales of gold. A single bill costs 4.2 cents for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to produce.

### **1932 - John Dillinger**

Vance Keller took office in 1932 as Morgan County Sheriff thirty-four. Remember when I mentioned John Dillinger Jr. earlier, well.... Little Johnny was born in Mooresville, Indiana on June 22, 1903, was married in Martinsville on April 12, 1924, and by the time Sheriff Vance Keller took office, John Dillinger Jr. had become quite a handful. Starting in 1933, Dillinger and his gang robbed two dozen banks in Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois, South Dakota, and Iowa, as well as four police stations!!! The gang attacked the State Police Arsenals in Auburn and Peru Indiana, stealing machine guns, rifles, revolvers, ammunition and bulletproof vests.

Dillinger escaped from jail twice. Wounded by federal agents in Chicago, Illinois on March 30, 1934, John Dillinger, Jr. and his girlfriend traveled to the home of Dillinger's father in Mooresville. They remained there until the wound healed. John Dillinger and his gang murdered ten law enforcement officers.... more than any other outlaw. Dillinger was shot and killed by Federal Agents on July 22, 1934, outside of the Biograph Theater in Chicago, Illinois.

Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow (Bonnie and Clyde) were two other well-known outlaws, robbers and criminals who traveled through Indiana during this time period.

The 30's were a time of the depression caused by the Wall Street crash. The economy continued to deteriorate and unemployment increased further to 24.1%. There were few jobs and many ordinary Americans were forced to live in the streets or in old cars. Thirteen million Americans were unemployed. Average wages per year were \$1,550.00. If things weren't bad enough, Tuberculosis was becoming more widespread throughout the US.

### **1934 - Repeal of prohibition**

Republican Omar St. John took the sheriff position in 1934. This was the turning point in the great depression in America with unemployment decreasing to 22%, and with the repeal of prohibition in the United States allowing 3.2% beer and wine sales when the 21st Amendment was passed repealing the 18th Amendment.

Sheriff Omar St. John was the first sheriff to see and have the use of simple things like ball point pens, a photocopier, Polaroid camera, and the tape recorder, all of which make the sheriff's job easier.

The sheriff did not have a clue, but while he was sheriff, the "King of Rock-n-Roll" (Elvis Presley) was born on January 8, 1935.

In St. John's last year in office things were looking better, in 1937 unemployment continued to drop to 14.3% dropping some 6.7% from the previous year.

### **1938 - Coming of World War II**

When Ray Rainwater became sheriff in 1938, trouble was starting to brew with the coming of World War II.

In 1939 Germany and the Soviet Union attacked Poland. Britain, France, India, Australia and New Zealand declared war on Germany. The United States decided to remain neutral but did begin rearming for war. After speaking to the physicist Albert Einstein, president Roosevelt initiated the Americas A-Bomb. Now with regular television broadcasts beginning in the United States news of the war spread fast. On December 7th 1941 the US was attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. More than 2,400 American servicemen were killed that day and America entered the WAR. With neutrality ended some 950 tanks were sent to Britain together with food, trucks, guns and ammunition.

The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) was founded in 1940 to give a voice to the sheriffs of America. The Institute provides sheriffs with the latest available information in such areas as management, technology, law, personnel and jail administration.

In 1939 Indiana becomes the first state to enact a law setting a blood-alcohol level for drunk driving, and it was set at 0.15% BAC.

After yet another White River flood, it was time to do something about it, and so the levee to prevent White River from flooding Martinsville was built in the 1940's.

### **1942 - War Savings Bonds**

Remember Sheriff Omar St. John from 1934, well he was elected again in 1942. America helped fund the war by issuing War Savings Bonds. For each \$75.00 American's invested they would receive \$100.00, raising thirteen billion dollars.

US Gas Rationing went into effect with a limit of three gallons per week. The Johnson and Johnson Pharmaceutical Division develops Duct Tape, originally called "Duck" Tape by the troops because water ran off it.

The Battle of the Bulge beginning on December 16, 1944 was one of the deadliest battles in World War II with 19,000 US soldiers killed. The USS Indianapolis was sunk by a Japanese Submarine killing 883 seamen on July 29, 1945. (Many were killed through shark attacks while awaiting rescue.)

President Harry S. Truman orders the use of the new nuclear bombs developed by Robert Oppenheimer's team. The first atomic bomb nicknamed "Little Boy" was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. The second atomic bomb nicknamed "Fat Man" was dropped on the city of Nagasaki, Japan... Five days later on August 14, 1945 Japan surrendered. (V-J Day - - Victory in Japan).

WWII was the deadliest conflict in human history, resulting in 50 million to over 70 million fatalities.

Although TV's had been developed in the early 1940's. Due to the war, TV's came to a stop until the early 1950's. Not that very many people had them any way at this time, but in 1946 they stopped making paper money (U.S. banknotes) above the \$100 denomination, and were officially withdrawn from circulation in 1969. These large denomination bills were used primarily either in inter-bank transactions or by organized crime; it was the latter usage that prompted an executive order halting their use. Notes in denominations of \$500, \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$100,000 were all produced at one time.

### **1948 - Son Father switches places**

Sheriff Omar St. John's son, William St. John, became a Deputy Sheriff under his father in 1945. By now the name St. John is a common household name in Morgan County, so it was no surprise when his son William St. John was made Sheriff in 1948 as a Republican. The roles were turned when Omar St. John became a Deputy Sheriff under his son William. Law enforcement was now getting better and safer, with fewer than 100 police officers being killed this year in the line of duty in the U.S. The "Artesian City" (Martinsville) was starting to slow down from the peak years for the Martinsville sanitarium industry that ran from 1890 to 1930, with only about four left and they going down hill.

### **1951 - Grandfather of Sheriff Robert "Bob" Downey**

"The story you have just seen is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent."..... oops sorry, I was watching Dragnet on my RCA Victor!

William Marvin Skaggs took office as the next Morgan County Sheriff in 1951. Marvin Skaggs served as Sheriff of Morgan County until 1954. He was the grandfather of present Sheriff Robert "Bob" Downey.

Marvin Skaggs was a very dedicated lawman that put in an unbelievable amount of hours. At the end of his first week in office when everything was going smooth, Sheriff Skaggs and Deputy Otis Forbes worked three wrecks (called "motor mishaps" then) in one night, resulting in four fines including one drunk driver. A few weeks later Sheriff Skaggs got another drunk driver on SR 252 that side swiped a car and left the scene, he also was charged with drunk driving. Sheriff Marvin Skaggs did not know at the time but he had a little something in common with Sheriff Vance Keller from 1932. Sheriff Skaggs had a Donald Russell in jail for burglary and theft for breaking into the West End grocery in Mooresville, the same business that John Dillinger had robbed to start his life of crime. Donald Russell pled guilty to burglary.

On one day Sheriff Skaggs worked two unrelated incidents of men beaten up and robbed, one was severely beaten by two men that stole \$5.75. One of the worst shifts for Skaggs was in a ten hour time span on a Sunday. Sheriff Skaggs worked seven wrecks involving about eight or nine cars and a truck, that ended in two dead, three in critical condition, and twelve others injured. He was not only working accidents but performing first aid to the injured, two of these were head on collisions, one was a car that rolled four times. One of the accidents was while working a wreck, a Vincennes man crashed his car into the back of my uncle Virgil Manley's wrecker, now becoming two accidents at that location, and all of a sudden a 2 1/2 ton truck trying to avoid the police car, wrecker and the two wrecked cars over turned his truck trying to avoid the wreckage! While Sheriff Skaggs thought it couldn't get any worse, before he got done with the paper work for the two cars and the truck, a car hit another car in the rear that had slowed for the accident! Five of the vehicles were towed to my uncle Virgil Manley's shop on west Morgan St.

By now Morgan County was prospering and the baby boom had started, and I was one of them!!! With the average worker earning \$3,400 per year, 3 out of 5 families owned a car, 2 out of 3 families now had a telephone, 1 in 3 homes had a television, and gas cost 25 cents per gallon. While the price of a brand new Henry was only \$1,299 at Harold's Service Station at 141 W.

Morgan St. (for you children, Henry was a car). A new 17" RCA Victor TV (black and white of course) could be bought for "Only" \$359.50 (more than a color TV today) at Davee Radio & Appliance at 112 E. Morgan St., but don't worry Maxwell's Hardware has Motorola TV's on sale for only \$299.... but Davee's carry tubes for their TV's! If you don't believe me about the sale.... pick up your black desk rotary phone, make sure no one is on your party line talking, and call Maxwell's Hardware, their phone # is 89.... yes, they have one of those short numbers. Frank Hacker's Oldsmobile over by the Hut Sut Skating Rank has the



longest number.... #217, why do they need that big of number, is there really 217 people that has a telephone? If you don't like the looks of the new Henry, you can check out the new Hudson's at John Daily's at 160 E. Morgan St., of course you are close to Crews Chevrolet and Larson Pontiac also on E. Morgan St. If you are a Ford man you want to go to Hendrickson & Company Ford on W. Morgan St..... you know, it is right close to Herschel Myers & Floyd Harper's Buick Dealership. OK, I have to go.... Red Skelton is doing Clem Kadiddlehopper, Freddy Freeloader, The Mean Widdle Kid, and Sheriff Deadeye on the tube..... "Good Night, and May God Bless"

### **1954 - President of the Indiana Sheriff Association**

For some of the old timers the name Victor Young rings a bell as both an auctioneer and sheriff, which he was. Victor was first elected sheriff in 1954 and again in 1958 as a Democrat. Sheriff Young was also elected President of the Indiana Sheriff Association. Vic Young served in the US Marine Corps during Word War II in the South pacific. It was during Sheriff Young's first year that Hiram Hutchens of Shelbyville, IN decided to rob the Paragon Bank, and made a "withdraw" of \$10,000! Upon making bail, Hutchens made a trip back to the bank to apologize for robbing them.

The Vietnam War started during Sheriff Young's term in office, the U.S. sent military advisors in the early 1950's, and U.S. involvement escalated in the early 1960s.

"If they raise the minimum wage to \$1.00, nobody will be able to hire outside help at the store." "Well when I first started driving, who would have thought gas would someday cost 29 cents a gallon."

OK, being a baby boomer maybe I am prejudice, but I think some of the best songs in history came during Sheriff Young's time as sheriff (mid to late 50's). Hits like Sh-Boom, Shake Rattle and Roll, Rock Around The Clock, Maybellene, Dance With Me Henry, Tutti Frutti, Blueberry Hill, Party Doll, Little Darlin, All Shook Up, Teddy Bear, Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On, Honeycomb, Wake Up Little Susie, Jailhouse Rock, Peggy Sue, and of course, My Special Angel with Martinsville's own Bobby Helms.

OK Marshal Dillon.... Miss Kitty, "Doc" Adams, and Chester are waiting on you at the Long Branch! Not only was Gunsmoke TV's longest running Western, it took the #1 rating in the 1957-1958 season.

### **1962 - Carol Jenkins**

Who is the # 1 Sheriff..... no no, I am not talking about Sheriff Andy Taylor from Mayberry!

During the 1950's and the 1960's was when the "Ku Klux Klan" rose again. Fred Neal became the sheriff in Morgan County in 1962. What most people remember most about the term of Sheriff Fred Neal was the slaying / stabbing of a black encyclopedia saleswoman, Carol Jenkins in 1968. No evidence was ever found to support the belief that the crime was racially motivated, but the case attracted national attention after a gathering on the courthouse square of the Ku Klux Klan shortly before her death.

Almost 30 years later, investigators discover the real murderer. Investigations determined that Kenneth Richmond of Indianapolis was the accused killer, but he died before he could be tried for the crime. Unfortunately, Martinsville lived with a terrible image of racism all of that time and many people still refused to believe it wasn't true anyway!

Ironically the new number one song that Morgan County kids were dancing to is The "Twist" by Chubby Checker.

In 1967 Indiana reduces the legal BAC to 0.10% and requires blood-alcohol tests.

The Vietnam War involvement peaked in 1968.

### **1970 - Thomas Dunigan's Death**

I had lunch with my cousin Bud Manley the other day at Forkey's, he recalled back in 1968 Paul Mason asked "Bud what do you think about me running for sheriff"? Bud replied, "Paul I think you would do great". Well as they say, the rest is history!

Sheriff Paul "Moose" Mason (1970) a soft spoken, friendly, gentle giant, who treated every one with respect. It seemed like Paul knew every one in the county by name. Paul came on as a deputy sheriff under Sheriff Fred Neal in 1963.

Sheriff Mason saw a lot of things happen during his eight years in office. He was in office as the last Sanitarium (Home Lawn Sanitarium) shut down in 1971. I might add that during Paul Mason's term was when law enforcement training made a big turn.

There was no real police training before 1969, between 1969 and 1972 basic training was voluntary, and in 1972 it became mandatory. During his 20 years in law enforcement, former Morgan County Sheriff Paul "Moose" Mason was involved in the investigation of more than 40 homicides. All homicide investigations are tough as an investigator, it is not just the blood and the gore, it is being able to deal with not only your own emotions, but those of relatives, and friends of the victim, sometimes you may know the victim, or they may be small innocent children. To stir these emotions are your thoughts and desire to catch the suspect and for justice to be done.

On December 26, 1975, Sheriff Paul Mason felt many emotions, as one of his reserve deputies was shot and killed while attempting to stop a bank robbery suspect. Reserve Deputy Thomas B. Dunigan was found by other officers with a shotgun wound to the head. The bank robber / murderer Hiram Cobb was caught soon afterwards near Fox Cliff.

There was another "race" issue, in 1975 when a black 4-H leader was accosted by a pistol waving Morgan County man. Phillip



Smith was the acting judge at the trial, when the Grand Dragon William Chaney from Marion County came for the trial. April 1975 marked the end of the Vietnam War that claimed more than 58,200 U.S. service men's lives, including many from Morgan County.

### **1978 - "We found two more"**

Richard Allen was elected sheriff in 1978. On April 28, 1979 Sheriff Allen had one of those homicides he would never forget. Mushroom hunters discovered Terry Chasteen's body in White Lick Creek, near State Road 67 and Mooresville in Morgan County. A police search of the creek led to the discovery of the bodies of three small children, aged two, four and five. Killer Steven Timothy Judy testified that he had raped Terry Chasteen and bound her hands and feet and gagged her. When Terry cried out, the children ran back up the path to them. Judy stated that the children stood around him and yelled. At that point, he strangled Terry Chasteen and threw her body into the creek. Judy testified that he then threw each of the children as far as he could into the water.

When Steven Judy came along Tom Gray was then Morgan County Prosecutor. He was among the first at the murder scene. "I'll not ever forget that morning, the eerie mist of that morning," Gray said. A moment stands out, after the mother's body was found and her daughter was found snagged on tree limbs under water nearby. *"We found two more"*, echoed a shout from downstream. "If I'd written a book about this case, that would have been the title," he said.

Gray took evidence before a grand jury and got murder indictments and a death penalty mandate. "Killing a person was not in my nature, It had to be done," Gray said. "It was an inevitable part of my job at the time. Steve Harris remembers his client as personable, polite, considerate, cooperative, and also as a calculated killer. "It was a strange situation for me, to be there with this guy who seemed so normal, so sociable on the surface, who was capable of such horrible things." Even Harris said Judy had to die. "He would have killed again had he not been executed," his lawyer said.

When Judy was 13, he posed as a Boy Scout and forced his way into a woman's home in Indianapolis. He raped her then stabbed her with a pocket knife eighteen times until the blade broke. He used a hatchet to fracture her skull and cut off a finger on her left hand as she tried to block his blows. For that brutal attack, he spent six months at a center for delinquent juveniles.

Steven Judy's foster parents Bob and Mary Carr had just bailed Steven Judy out of jail after an armed robbery arrest a week before he killed Chasteen and her children.

Judy testified that he had been committing various offenses since he was ten years old. He asserted that he had been involved in approximately two hundred shoplifting incidents, a like number of burglaries, twenty to fifty robberies, approximately twenty-four car thefts, and from twelve to sixteen rapes. Other women testified as to various attacks Judy had committed upon them. These incidents involved accosting the victims in their cars and kidnapping, threatening and beating them.

Steven Judy was the seventy-third person in Indiana to receive the death penalty. Before his electrocution on March 19, 1981, the death penalty had not been carried out in Indiana for 20 years. In 1995, the General Assembly changed the method of execution from electrocution to lethal injection. Steven Judy was the first to ever be executed in Indiana by waving appeals, since then three others have followed suit, William Vandiver - 1985, Robert Smith - 1998, and Gerald Bivins - 2001

### **1980 - Plane Crash**

Sheriff Richard Allen resigned in 1980 and Deputy Sheriff Robert Bauer was appointed to the sheriff position in November 1980, until Paul Mason again took the sheriff position in 1983. Sheriff Bauer had an odd incident in October 1981 when a aircraft crashed into a tree on Observatory Road and was lodged some 40 feet up in the tree, two people and a dog was killed in the crash.

### **1983 - Assassinate Prosecutor Jane Craney? - Murder Larry Bellmore**

Sheriff Paul Mason was no stranger as to what can happen in law enforcement, as he started another term as sheriff in 1983, he had eleven traffic deaths in the county that year. Four of the traffic deaths were car vs. semi, and one involved a 18 year old when he got out of his car after hitting a utility pole, stepped on a live electric line and was electrocuted. In January of 1984 he had an attempted jail break, when three men jumped a jail officer, Deputy Kenny Blunk that was at the jail heard the noise and went to the jailer's rescue. Other officers that showed up to help, were officers Brian Ringer, and Bob Betts, as well as Martinsville Officers Jim Thomas (now with the prosecutors office), David Scaggs, and Jon Davis (now Martinsville Chief of Police). Also in 1984 Sheriff Paul Mason foiled another attempted jail break by a man that had made plans to break out of jail and assassinate Prosecutor Jane Craney (now Judge Jane Craney). Another bank robbery??? In September of 1985 Daniel Linne robbed a Waverly Bank with a .44 magnum hand gun, Deputies Bob Betts, Robert Craig, and Bob Bauer caught and arrested the subject within 11 minutes of the time the call came in. This was the third robbery from that bank, and also the one in which



Reserve Deputy Thomas Dunigan was shot to death by robber / murderer Hiram Cobb. Sheriff Paul "Moose" Mason was also involved in the murder of Donna Denny by Larry Bellmore and Wesley Young that were hired by Wesley's Father, David Young for \$300, to "rough up" David Young's girlfriend Donna Denney after they broke up. Bellmore and Wesley went to Donna Denney's home near Martinsville, after talking on the back porch, Larry Bellmore attacked her, choked her, and stabbed her several times in the abdomen per David's instructions. They ransacked Denney's home to make it look like a Burglary, and split \$190 found in her purse. David Young latter committed suicide. Wesley Young testified against Larry Bellmore at the trial. Prosecutor Jane Crany asked for the death penalty, and the jurors recommended it. Judge James Harris sentenced Larry Bellmore to death on April 14, 1986, but on October 29, 1992 the Indiana Supreme Court Remanded for "new sentencing determination", that Larry Bellmore's tattoo of a knife dripping with blood placed on Bellmore's arm while in jail, was improperly considered as an aggravating circumstance. On December 29, 1992, in compliance with Indiana Supreme Court Opinion, Bellmore was sentenced by Morgan County Circuit Court Judge James E. Harris to 60 years imprisonment for murder. As stated before, Paul is a good man with a big heart, and as some of you may know Paul is also an auctioneer and he has done many free benefit auctions for charities. As an auctioneer myself, it was a honor and a privilege to do some auctioneering with him for a charity auction on the court house square, I was shocked at money it brought in.... not because of the value of the items we were selling, but because Paul made it fun, and people seemed to dig a little deeper to help Paul for a good cause.

### **1986 - A Democrat ?**

Most people think of Morgan County as a Republican county, but in the election during 1986 a young Democrat Deputy Sheriff ran for the sheriff position. This had die hard Republicans jumping the fence. Charlie Beaver was the first Democrat to win a major office since 1958.

Incoming Sheriff Beaver had the experience (twelve years law enforcement), the qualifications, and the training (a graduate of the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy), that were needed to be a good sheriff. He also had some of Paul Mason's personality..... Charlie is a quite, easy going, friendly, down to earth person, not just at election time, but all the time! I always thought Charlie should be teaching a class at the Law Enforcement Academy, "Officer Attitude 101". Becoming the first Democrat Sheriff for many years back wasn't the only first for Charlie, in 1989 he made Volitta Fritsche, the first "female" Deputy Sheriff of Morgan County. Volitta had been a dispatcher and a reserve deputy sheriff.

Most sheriffs have seen their share of death and destruction, and Sheriff Beaver was no exception. It seems like tornados followed him. While he was a deputy just prior to the election, Morgan County had a bad F3 tornado that left \$2.5 million in damages. In July of 1992 we had a F2 tornado, and again in November of 1992, another F3. Sheriff Beaver then set out one term.

### **1995 - Most expensive murder trial in Indiana history!**

Terry Weddle served in the U.S. Marines as a corporal in 1960-1964. He was a former police chief, patrolman, sergeant and captain for the Martinsville Police Department (1974-1994), and Morgan County sheriff from 1995-1999. He stated, the most exciting and frustrating thing that ever happened to him was being elected sheriff "It has to be the epitome for any police officer. The frustrating part is the political side. I'm not a politician, and it helps if you are," Weddle said. "I try to do what's right, and that doesn't work all the time."

It was while Terry Weddle was sheriff that Stephen Sherwood was twice convicted of the October, 1995 murder of four-year-old Hope James in a motel room south of Martinsville. Sherwood, 34, formerly of Connersville, had been convicted in 1997 of Hope James' murder and sentenced to life without parole by Circuit Court Judge James Harris. That trial was the most expensive murder trial in Indiana history. The appeals court reversed Sherwood's first conviction, and Sherwood was given a new trial. In September 2001, he was again found guilty of murder. Marion County Judge Cale Bradford was the special judge hearing the case. He sentenced Sherwood to 65 years in prison. Defense costs are about four times higher in cases in which death was sought than in comparable cases in which death was not sought. The prosecution costs in death penalty cases are 65% to 70% higher than the defense costs.

Terry Weddle was a very well qualified and experienced officer, but Terry did things "differently"! I was on the Morgan County Council at the time and we butted heads a few times!

### **1999 - Judy Kirby - Tornado - Flag At Half-Staff - More Murders!**

In the election of 1998 (for 1999 office), two very well qualified and experienced lawmen went head to head for the sheriff's position - Terry Weddle and Charlie Beaver. Normally I would put my money on: (1) the sheriff that is in office at that time, which was Weddle! (2) A Republican, again Weddle! and (3) the best qualified and experienced man ??? Charlie Beaver had the one thing that tipped the scales, "personality", and a lot of it! The Republicans were jumping the fence once again, and you



would never guess who was one of them! And so Sheriff Beaver was back for one more term. When Charlie Beaver became sheriff this time, he did something that made Morgan County history, he appointed Volitta Fritsche, a "female" as Chief Deputy. Volitta was not new to law enforcement, she started as a dispatcher for Sheriff Paul Mason in 1976, she had been a correctional officer for the Indiana Department of Corrections, and was a deputy sheriff for ten years under sheriffs Charlie Beaver and Terry Weddle. In 1996, during Weddle's administration, she was promoted to detective sergeant. Volitta was also a member of the Morgan County Death Investigation Team and certified as Medicolegal Death Investigator.

Little did he know there was more death and destruction to come. Judy Kirby, with four children in her 1989 Pontiac Firebird, entered Ind. 67 on March 25, 2000, going in the wrong direction. Kirby's car collides head-on with a van driven by Thomas Reel, of Martinsville. The impact of the two vehicles on a divided highway was horrific. Emergency workers said later they had nightmares about the scene. Killed in Kirby's car were three of her children -- Jacob, five, Joney, nine, Jordan, twelve; also Kirby's nephew, Jeremy Young, ten. The driver of the van, Thomas Reel, forty, died, as did his son Bradley, thirteen, and daughter, Jessica, fourteen.

On April 14, police arrested Judy Kirby and charged her with seven counts of murder, four felony counts of child neglect causing serious bodily injury and one count of aggravated battery. Judge Jane Craney ruled that the prosecution would not be allowed to present evidence that Kirby may have been involved in interstate drug trafficking. Kirby's ex-husband testified that she had told one of their sons she was going to commit suicide.

Witnesses begin reporting a white car, which entered southbound lanes of Ind. 67 at the exit ramp on Pumpkinvine Hill Road, driving the wrong way on the highway. The car is reported traveling at a high speed, with estimates up to 100 mph. Reports said Kirby does not appear to slow or take evasive action as she meets oncoming vehicles. Kirby's car collides head-on with a van driven by Thomas Reel, 40, of Martinsville. The collision, described by witnesses as a "horrific, spectacular explosion," kills all four children riding with Kirby. Also killed are Reel and two of his children. Judy Kirby was found guilty of murder for intentionally causing a head-on crash that killed six children and an adult. On June 13, 2001 she was sentenced to 215 years in prison.

On April 7, 2000 Melvin Moore, 55 of Martinsville shoot to death Greg Randall Wilson, 43, during an argument on Templin Road. On Oct. 30, 2000, Lee LeMaster, 24, Centerton murdered his 10-month-old son, Jonathan Nix, at LeMaster's home. Susan Gail Wilson, 20, Martinsville on Labor Day, 2000, killed her 18-month-old son, Jeramiah Dakota Wilson, when she set a fire in her apartment which took the life of the baby. In 2001 the law changed to lower the BAC for drunken driving to 0.08% from 0.10%.

*"This is an automated weather alert from the Storm Tracking Computer"* SEVERE WEATHER STATEMENT NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INDIANAPOLIS IN 1:12 PM FRI SEP 20, 2002. And then it hit! A trail of destruction left by a "large" F3 tornado a ½ mile wide that stayed on the ground at unheard of wind speeds in excess of 160 mph. Twelve or more businesses and 75 homes were heavily damaged or destroyed, fallen trees, and downed electric lines, that left 130 people injured and \$156 million in damages!

With our previous training on such matters and Sheriff Beaver's experience, everything was handled very well, officers covered major intersections (no power / no stop lights), extra officers patrolling damaged areas prevented looting, and covering hundreds of calls.

The worst day in office for Sheriff Beaver had to be the shooting of deputy sheriff Daniel Starnes. On June 14, 2001 Sgt. Dan Starnes, forty six, was shot in the chest and in the abdomen after he pulled over Tommy Pruitt of Martinsville, at Shelton and Wilbur Roads, when Sgt. Starnes got out of his car, Pruitt got out of his car and opened fire on Starnes. Morgan County Sheriff Charlie Beaver said. "I guess the Lord had other plans for him." Flags across the state and in Morgan County were flown at half-staff. "It was a very sad day for everybody. We've lost a very dedicated professional and my heart goes to the family," Beaver said. This writer was working the same day and shift as Dan. It was a warm summer day in June and bulletproof vest being hot in warm weather, we both did the same thing, left our vest at home. Ryan Starnes was in his father's car when the shooting started. Ryan grabbed his father's shotgun out of the car and held it on Pruitt until help arrived. I have never discussed it with Ryan, but I don't know If I could have had as much self control as he did. I have never went on duty since with out my vest on. Charlie's term in office would not be complete with out his story of the roll top desk.... Charlie discovered the old roll top desk in his office at the old jail was more than just an old desk, it was "history". The desk was there before our semi-auto hand guns, before police radios, and before police cars. It is signed by Morgan County Sheriffs of more than a hundred years ago, and still remains in Sheriff Robert "Bob" Downey's office today, if that desk could talk!

Ready for a break from over seeing 100 plus employees and not ready for a rocking chair, in 2003 Charlie took the position of Morgantown Marshal. Working for a town board as marshal of a small town is not as easy as you would think. I've been there, done that, but Charlie fit in like "Andy of Mayberry". When I would meet Charlie for lunch in Morgantown, I think he spoke to and knew every one that came through the door, and he did it with a smile. On October 1, 2010 he decided it was time for some personal and family time and retired as Morgantown Marshal. Morgantown is not quite the same with out Charlie there.

## 2003 - Two Generations

It seems like the name Garner has been around for ever in the Sheriff's Department, maybe that is because there were three Garner lawmen in the Sheriff's Department or maybe that two generations of Garners' "is" a long time? Deputy Sheriff Lt.



Robert Garner won the Republican race for sheriff in 2003. His father Ernest "Ed" Garner was a deputy sheriff as well as his brother Kenneth C. Garner. Bob Garner has spent more than 30 years serving his county and community. After two terms as sheriff, which began in 2003, and a career that started in 1978, Garner has served the sheriff's department in just about every way possible. He started out as a reserve deputy for the sheriff's department under Sheriff Richard Allen. In 1980, Garner took a full-time job as a jail officer. In 1981, with Robert Bauer as sheriff, he was appointed as one of the nine merit deputies. He worked in that position until 1985, when Paul Mason became sheriff. Then, Garner was appointed evidence technician and investigated crime scenes. His first case was the murder of Donna Denney. From 1985 to 2002, when he was elected sheriff, Garner had assisted in more than 40 homicides.

One of the first disasters while Garner was sheriff was on July 9, 2003, Tornado sirens were sounded after funnel clouds were reported over Paragon. The storms dropped more rain, contributing to the already swollen White River that was at 14.73 feet and rising, flood stage of the White River is 12 feet.

Homeowners, local governments and state agencies also were being plagued with problems caused by rising rivers and additional rain. Gov. Frank O'Bannon declared a state of emergency for parts of central Indiana, and U.S. Senators Richard Lugar and Evan Bayh joined O'Bannon in asking President George Bush to declare Morgan County Indiana a major disaster area because of the flooding. "Heavy rainfalls, and flooding caused damage to public and private property, including roads, bridges and sewage treatment facility overflows," the senators wrote in their letter to the President. State agencies had been activated to assist state emergency management personnel, local governments and law enforcement agencies with flood control, traffic management, public health and debris removal. Disaster canteens, equipped with generators, First Aid supplies, food and more, were serving the hardest-hit areas. Local Salvation Army corps in these communities were also providing emergency shelter and services to flood victims. The Salvation Army began preparing hygiene and flood kits for flood victims. Each flood kit contained a 5-gallon bucket, rubber and work gloves, bleach, trash bags, brooms, brushes and more to help homeowners as they battled to both save their homes and clean up the mess. Vouchers for groceries, clothing and basic living necessities were also being provided in the hardest-hit areas to help flood victims cope with conditions.

Again on June 7, 2008, "The Great 100 Year Flood", Storms dumped as much as 10 inches of rain on already saturated ground in Morgan County, threatening dams, forcing evacuations, inundating highways. Officials had no idea of the scope of evacuations, many by boat, but no fewer than several hundred homes and businesses were affected, ninety percent of Paragon was underwater. Gov. Mitch Daniels issued a new disaster declaration because of flooding in 10 counties, including Morgan.

Flooding on the White River in some areas reached levels comparable to the historic flood of 1913, said National Weather Service hydrologist. Motorboats moving through Morgan County rescuing neighbors, Duke Energy reported that 87,000 customers had lost power.

Two of the homicides Garner was involved in included Hope James, a 4-year-old girl who was killed at a local motel in 1995, and the execution-style murders of Randy Hicks and Charles Beecher at the Martinsville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post. He said that while most of the homicides made an impact on his life, the one that has haunted him the most is the death of Hope James, who he described as a little, defenseless blonde-headed girl. He said that might be because all his granddaughters are blonde, and the crime itself was so cruel and senseless. "She was a beautiful little girl," he said. (See 1995 - Hope James' murder!) Other crimes he investigated included the shooting death of warrant officer and friend Sgt. Dan Starnes (See 1999 above), the deaths of William Rice and Denise Arthur at the Crown Vending Co. in the city's Industrial Park, and the shooting death of Debra Jo Cambridge and wounding of Dicey Bennett at the Aid Ambulance office off the Ind. 39 Bypass in 1986. The homicide that gained national publicity while sheriff was that of an Indiana University student, Jill Behrman, 19, that disappeared May 31, 2000, while riding her bicycle in her hometown of Bloomington. More than 10 FBI agents and profilers joined in the investigation, along with Bloomington Police, Monroe County Sheriff Department, Indiana State Police, DNR Officers, and Morgan County Sheriff Department. The Behrman case received national publicity on "America's Most Wanted" Sept. 29, 2001, generating dozens of new leads. Behrman's parents, Eric and Marilyn Behrman, Indiana University and others offered a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible. On March 9, 2003, skeletal remains were found by a turkey hunter and his son in a Morgan County field, Behrman's remains had been found. John Myers trial began Oct. 16, 2006 in Martinsville and, for the first time, it was revealed that Jill died after a close-range blast to the back of the head by a shotgun. On Oct. 30, 2006, after only 50 minutes of deliberation, a jury found John R. Myers II guilty of her murder. All of these cases were solved. Some of his investigations are still open cases today. That include Mia Warner, whose body was found off Ind. 144, and the 1995 shooting of Barry Bilbrey, who lived alone on Mahalasville Road. Garner has also been involved with the investigation of bank robberies, thefts, burglaries, forgeries and frauds. He has also helped with Morgan County accidents where multiple deaths have occurred, plane crashes, farm accidents and motor vehicle wrecks. He also served eight years on the Morgan County SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) Team. He started the expansion / addition that adds 100 beds for a work release program. "That gets nonviolent offenders out of the jail and helps to support their families and pay for their incarceration," Garner said. "It seems to me that we have to come up with different alternatives to locking everybody up in jail and keeping them." "I've always tried to treat people fair and with respect, and I've always respected the members of my department. You're not always gauged on what you do while you're there, but what you leave behind." "I have had a great career, and I appreciate the opportunity I've had to serve as sheriff. It has truly been an honor. I feel fortunate that I have made many lifelong friends," he concluded.

There is a considerable amount of stress, as well as responsibility, that goes with the position of sheriff. Major decisions must be made (with out room for error). A good sheriff must have good people skills, be a good business man and he must "earn" respect

from his employees and the public. A sheriff can not get by with just being a boss for very long, he must be a respected leader. With having a inside view, I can honestly say that Robert "Bob" Garner fits all the above.

### **2011 - "What About Bob" (Downey)**

Last, but not least Bob Downey. Bob was raised in Morgantown by William and Karen Downey. Bob always had the desire to become a Deputy Sheriff, and his grandfather, the late Wm. Marvin Skaggs, served as Sheriff of Morgan County from 1951 thru 1954 (see above). Bob too wanted to follow in his grandfather's footsteps and become Sheriff of Morgan County someday. Bob was hired by Sheriff Charlie Beaver in July of 1988 as a Jail / Communications Officer. In January of 1991 he was appointed to the position of Deputy Sheriff. He attended and successfully completed the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, Hocking College Homicide Training, US Department of Justice Homicide, Fraternal Order of Police Homicide, Indianapolis Police Department Crime Scene Incident Command Management and Control Operations, National Sheriffs' Association Executive Level Management and Training, Indiana Sheriffs' Association Newly Elected Sheriff' School.

While continuing his education in crime scene and death investigation, he served along side Sheriff Garner as a crime scene investigator for nine years. Bob was appointed as one of the first members of the very successful Morgan County Death Investigation Team, investigating homicides and suspicious deaths. The team is still in operation today and has one of the best solvability rates in the state.

In December of 2002 Bob was notified by newly elected sheriff Robert Garner that he was being appointed to the position of Chief Deputy Sheriff. Bob has continued his education in law enforcement management, and has attended and successfully completed two Indiana Sheriffs' Association sheriff schools.

If you do not know Bob Downey, I will explain him to you in just a few words. Bob is always very neat, well groomed, polished buttons, a clean perfect fitting uniform with out so much as a wrinkle.... (how does he do that?) Bob has good people skills and attitude, and I think he must have some of Paul Mason, and Charlie Beaver in him - always polite, friendly, and respectful. Most likely will greet you with a smile and "Hi, how ya doing", and he has a calmness about him that could make a mad dog wag his tail! He is what every police officer "should be"!!!