



MONROE COUNTY FIELD NOTES

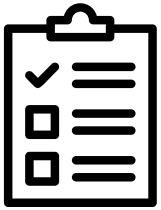
A virtual dig for early 19th-century landmarks and people
1816–1876

Visit fieldnotes.mcpl.info to get started.



Monroe County
Public Library
Read, Learn, Connect & Create

The Project



Local history is significant only when it is accessible. Sadly, there are gaps in primary records covering the most dramatic moments in our county's first 60 years. Some of our documents and newspapers were lost in a fire, and some of our most compelling residents didn't know how to read or write.

Monroe County Field Notes is a virtual dig to uncover stories about 19th-century landmarks and people, from 1816–1876. It's fun and free to get involved and your research will help us diversify our community's history!

How to Start / Register



Contact Christine Friesel at indianaroom@mcpl.info to join in. You can choose your own address and learn more about the people who used to live on your property or ask for (or suggest) another location you'd like to research. Field reporters should be comfortable reading cursive writing, and have a library card to access eLibrary databases. Don't have a library card? No problem, you can get one at mcpl.info/librarycard! After you register, we'll give you the coordinates and township section for the address you're researching.

What You Might Uncover



Example:

I live in Bloomington Township (sec. 36) which is in the neighborhood of where Bruster's Ice Cream is now. Using eLibrary resources from Monroe County Public Library, I found out that before the Civil War, my property was home to...

Hannah McCaw. Hannah was a Black woman who owned this land with her husband, Henry, and their children.

The story goes that...

Hannah ran the Underground Railroad with her friend, who established the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Hanna is buried in the Covenanter Cemetery at the corner of High and Hillside in Bloomington.

Use 1856 Plat Map



Once we give you the coordinates and township section of the address you're researching, you'll use the 1856 plat map of landowners to find who lived on the property. (Note: there are a few blocks surrounding the Monroe County courthouse that this approach won't work well for, but we'll coach you through it.)

Search the US Census



Next, you'll search for the landowner in the US Census. You can use HeritageQuest to search the 1850, 1860, and/or 1870 census. Our project doesn't go past 1876, but you are welcome to find out more about your characters and what happened to their land or buildings in other years as well.

Research is Fun and Collaborative



Once you have more information, you can use any of the local and family history eLibrary resources at fieldnotes.mcpl.info to help us piece together fragmented stories and facts. Need help? Just ask!

Submit Your Findings



When you've finished your research, email indianaroom@mcpl.info with the coordinates and township section we gave you, alongside a paragraph about what you found. Your findings may be used in future projects about Monroe County's history. Here's an example submission:

*Coordinates and Township: 39.12318609141971, -86.58709900992096;
Van Buren Township (Sec. 13)*

According to oral history about the Underground Railroad, Isaac Adkins was a slave catcher, following the laws of the times, working near his home on W. Leonard Springs Road, west of Monroe Hospital and north of Shirley Springs Cave or Leonard Springs Nature Park.



If you fall into your character or property history and go beyond the basics, or want to share more than a short paragraph, email Susan Dyar, Monroe County History Center Director, at director@monroehistory.org.