

TIPPECANOE COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
LIFE & TIMES

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NEWS FROM THE OUIATENON PRESERVE

By J. Colby Bartlett, Director of the Ouiatenon Preserve, Inc.

Greetings fellow TCHA Members!

Despite the many difficulties and challenges of 2020, it has still been an exciting year for the Ouiatenon Preserve! I would like to share a couple of pieces of particularly exciting news!

At the beginning of the year, we were notified that the house and property adjoining the Preserve Overlook, to the west, would be for sale (dashed blue outline). Prior to her passing, the owner, Eileen Fix, graciously directed that the Preserve be given first chance to purchase it. TCHA and OPI had previously identified this house and property as being of significant interest. Not only would acquisition expand the Overlook property and offer access to utilities, shelter, and



equipment storage, it would also ensure that future development of the property would not adversely impact the Overlook and Preserve. A grant request from TCHA was submitted to the Roy Whistler Foundation to purchase the property. After a meeting with them to discuss the merits of the proposal, the RWF board authorized a grant to TCHA of \$142,500. This provided a majority of the funds needed to make the purchase, with the remainder coming from TCHA's restricted Ouiatenon Preserve account. Unfortunately, due to legal complications with the estate, the purchase process took many months. Eventually, we were able to finalize it on July 15th. OPI and TCHA are currently working to determine how the house and property will be best used and adapted to support operation, research and public interpretation at the Preserve. Since 2013, the Roy Whistler Foundation has played a critical role in providing funding, including that needed for the matching grant program from the Indiana Bicentennial Nature Trust to make the Preserve a reality. With this most recent grant, their total contributions to support the Ouiatenon Preserve project are approaching \$1 million! It is difficult to adequately express our profound thanks and appreciation for their generosity and support! To learn more about this great organization, their mission, and Professor Roy Whistler, please visit www.whistlerfoundation.org.

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NEWS FROM THE OUIATENON PRESERVE, CONTINUED

We saved the biggest news for last.

A few years ago, I was contacted by Dr. Vergil Noble, Supervisory Archaeologist with the National Park Service. In the 1970s, Dr. Noble completed his PhD dissertation on Ouiatenon at Michigan State University and directed several seasons of the Ouiatenon excavations. As he was beginning to prepare for retirement, he was taking care of unfinished projects and “bucket list” items, one of which was to complete an application to designate Fort Ouiatenon as a National Historic Landmark. He asked me to assist him in getting information needed to complete the application. With the recent creation of the Ouiatenon Preserve, the timing was serendipitous. With the Kickapoo and Mascouten village sites included within the Preserve, it was decided to pursue a designation for not just Fort Ouiatenon, but for nearly all of the Preserve, as an NHL -Archeological District.

National Historic Landmark status is the highest level of recognition given by the Federal government to historic sites. Eligibility requirements are very selective. The criteria are rather complicated, but in simple terms, in order to qualify, the site or structure must have significant importance to our Nation’s history and must have a very high degree of integrity (i.e. preservation, original-ness). Only 2-3% of the sites on the National Register of Historic Places qualify for this designation. While most Indiana counties have none, there are currently two NHLs in Tippecanoe County- the Tippecanoe Battlefield and Samara House. With the addition of Ouiatenon, based on a preliminary review, I believe that will give Tippecanoe County the distinction of having the fourth highest numbers of NHLs among Indiana counties.



On November 5th, Ouiatenon’s NHL application was heard before the National Park Service- National Historic Landmark Advisory Committee. Due to the COVID situation, the hearings were held by video conference and we did not have to travel to Washington D.C. Former Indiana State Archaeologist, Rick Jones, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Miami Tribe, Diane Hunter, as well as myself testified. As a part of my testimony, I read a letter of support that was sent to me by Consul General of France, Guillaume Lacroix. I’m pleased to report that the committee voted unanimously to recommend designation of the Fort Ouiatenon Archeological District as a National Historic Landmark. We were informed that we would be the first NHL in the nation to include Native American habitation sites from this period of history (18th century). It was disappointing to learn that other Native American sites from this period, had not been recognized. But if there needed to be a first, we are honored and proud that it was Ouiatenon.

We won’t pop the champagne quite yet. The application still needs to work its way through some additional hallways and offices in DC and we are unsure when it will actually land on the desk of the Secretary of the Interior to be signed. We are told it could be by the end of the year or that it may not be until early or even mid-2021. Unfortunately, NHL designation doesn’t come with any funding. However, it does come with a nice bronze plaque! The Preserve partners and stakeholders will plan a dedication ceremony and reception, to be held at some point, once the designation is made and when it is advisable to hold those sorts of events again. We will keep you updated! Feel free to contact me anytime with questions! cbartlett@ouiatenon.org

In the meantime, be well and safe, and thank you for supporting TCHA and our mission to preserve and share the incredibly rich history of Tippecanoe County!

OPERATIONS MANAGER'S REPORT

By Leslie Martin Conwell, Operations Manager

Happy holidays from your friends at TCHA! We wish you season's greetings and good health as we wind up what has been a very tumultuous 2020, not only for TCHA but for our community as well.

TCHA staff, Board of Governors, members, donors and volunteers have been stepping up during these challenging months, and because of their efforts and talents the Association is moving forward, but in some different ways than in the past. Lots of us, including yours truly, have had to stretch our minds and our experiences by learning new technology skills, embracing innovative, out of the box thinking, and reorienting to different ways of accomplishing TCHA's mission. Videos, YouTube, an enhanced website presence and Zoom presentations have helped maintain the vital connection with our membership and the community. Several volunteers are working from home, indexing records and assisting with research, as taking care of collections and facilitating researchers are an integral part of what we do. TCHA staff is actively working to collect pandemic stories in a partnership with the Tippecanoe Arts Federation. These archives will be stored at TCHA after the completion of this project!

Despite the pandemic, many projects have been completed this year. The Community Foundation of Greater Lafayette helped TCHA immensely through several grants, including the continued restoration of the Fort Ouiatenon blockhouse, security cameras for the Arganbright parking lots, and an upgraded security system at the Tippecanoe Battlefield Museum and History Store. There was also a grant received from the Roy Whistler Foundation that made possible the purchase of a property considered vital to the long range plan for the Ouiatenon Preserve. Two other grants- one from the Indiana Humanities CARES grant program and the Arts, Cultural and Destination Marketing Organization Support grant program- provided much needed operational funds. These two grants have helped meet the operational needs of TCHA.

The Association has been operating on an extremely tight budget since COVID came into play last March, and with the cancellation of the 2020 Feast of the Hunters' Moon due to COVID, TCHA has taken a major financial hit. As the main fundraiser for TCHA, the event provides over 60% of our operating income. The Feast income supports all aspects of the operation including curation of artifacts in the TCHA collection, the broad expanse of community programming to educate about local history, and preservation efforts to maintain the Association's important historical sites and facilities. While TCHA's Board of Governors had set aside a Feast rainy day fund in case of a bad weather year, no one could have possibly anticipated the scope and financial impact of the current COVID 19 situation. Every effort is being made by the TCHA Board of Governors and staff to overcome the financial challenges imposed by COVID 19 and position the Association for survival and a strong recovery once the COVID crisis has passed. We appreciate you, our members, for your support of TCHA as the Association navigates through the pandemic.

In this newsletter you can read more about the Roy Whistler Foundation grant in Colby Bartlett's article, read about the new online store being launched by the History Store at the battlefield, and get updated on the archives and collections. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and catching up with all that is going on at TCHA. The staff, board and volunteers have been working very hard to meet our mission statement and continue to serve the community despite the pandemic. Through your continued membership and donations, you help keep the Association strong. Thank you, and may 2021 bring a safe and happy New Year to you and your family!



2021 TCHA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

TCHA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**TUESDAY JANUARY 26TH,
2021 AT 6:00 PM**

The 2021 Annual Membership meeting will be conducted via Zoom video conferencing. Instructions will be provided to members in a letter mailed out in early January.

Submission of nominations for new members to serve on the TCHA Board of governors will be due Wednesday January 13th, 2021.

TCHA members will receive, via the mail, a ballot of nominees for consideration to the Board (both new and returning members). The deadline for receipt of the ballot will be Monday, January 25th, 2021. Ballots will be tallied by the TCHA Nomination Committee.

Results of the selection process will be announced at the Annual Meeting on January 26th.

INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE TCHA BOARD OF GOVERNORS?

Prospective TCHA Board members will have some or all of these skills:

- Leadership Experience- preferably with another not-for-profit or service organization.
- Familiarity with financial functioning and accounting principles related to small organizations, especially non-for-profits.
- Familiarity with marketing and social media.
- Familiarity with computers and IT support services.

If you would like more information about serving on the Board, or would like to submit your name for consideration, contact:

Pete Bill (TCHA Board President) billr@purdue.edu

Or

Quentin Robinson (TCHA Nominating Committee Chair) rqrobinson@gmail.com

TIPPECANOE BATTLEFIELD NEWS



By Rick Conwell, Battlefield Museum Manager

The 209th anniversary of the Battle of Tippecanoe was commemorated on Saturday, November 14th.

Ceremonies were low key due to weather and the ongoing viral pandemic. Dubois' Company of Spies and Guides participated and carried on their usual quality interpretation for visitors. Due to the high numbers of new coronavirus cases (over 8400 on Commemoration Saturday), the museum operated on a maximum occupancy load of 10 people. In light of the continuing exponential increase in positive cases, the decision was made to close both the Battlefield and the Arganbright Center for two weeks, until November 29th.

In happier news, TCHA is investing in new Square Point of Sale equipment and modernized and upgraded internet service. The new system will greatly reduce costs, increase capacity, improve our phone system, and replace our present system which is rapidly becoming obsolete.

As I write this, Wintek is here installing the indoor portion of the internet system and most of the Square POS system has been delivered. Watch for an online TCHA sales platform soon!



Congratulations and Best Wishes!

A special thank you to Rick Conwell for over 10 years at TCHA managing the History Store and serving as our resident expert on the Battle of Tippecanoe. Rick will retire on December 31st and we wish him all the best!

FROM THE VAULT

By Kelly Lippie, Curator of Collections

A few of the new additions to the TCHA permanent collection in 2020:



Klondike High School Class of 1965 Cords.



Quilt made by Emily Welch, 1837.



Argus camera used by Charles Frank Terry.



Wrench produced by the Headson Tools Mfg. Co., Lafayette, IN ca. 1904-1905.

Supplies Needed!

To help preserve the TCHA historic clothing and textile collection, we need the following supplies!

- Wooden clothes hangers (not plastic or wire)
- Clean, undyed muslin cloth
- Unused quilt batting

If you wish to donate these materials, contact curator@tippecanoehistory.org



We need help transforming wood hangers into archival padded hangers!

To help us clean up the clothing storage and improve the storage conditions.



“There is no objection which can be urged against woman suffrage which cannot be as consistently and logically urged against man suffrage. Suffrage is an eternal principle of human freedom, and cannot be lightly brushed aside by sentimental gush, illogical expediency, or whether ‘women want to vote or not.’ It is enough if one woman wants to vote that none be denied.”

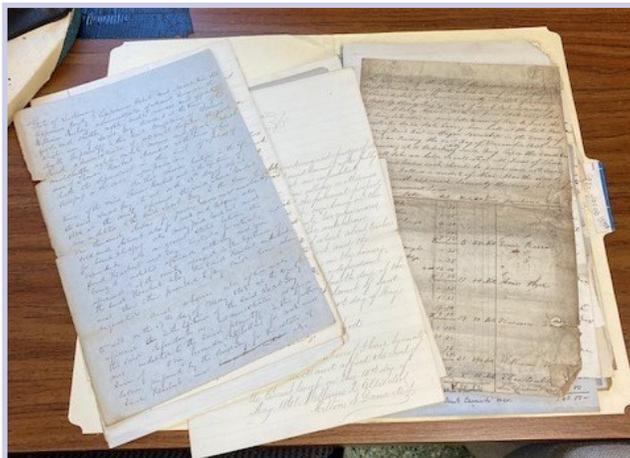
- Helen Gougar in Constitutional Rights of Women, 1895.

ALAMEDA MCCOLLOUGH RESEARCH LIBRARY

By Amy Harbor, Research Library Coordinator

Greetings from the Alameda McCollough Research Library!

One of the many projects going on in the library is a re-inventory of the thousands of estate files in our collection. If your ancestor died in Tippecanoe County and owned any real property or more than a few hundred dollars' worth of personal property, it's likely that we have an estate file. Even if there was no will, these files contain a wealth of information for genealogists. First and foremost, estate settlements nearly always list each heir of the deceased. One of the most interesting documents is an inventory of the personal effects of the deceased, listing everything he owned from household goods to farm implements and livestock and the value of each item. There is usually also a detailed accounting of the auction of these items, when needed to pay debts. There are often bills and accounts from any person or business owed money from the estate, including general stores, undertakers, friends and neighbors. If the deceased had any minor children, there is guardianship information and an accounting of every penny spent from the estate on expenses for the child until he or she reaches the age of twenty-one. When there is real estate, there may be a court proceeding to partition the property into fractional parcels for each heir, depending on their share. Sometimes these include beautiful hand-drawn maps. Estate files are absolutely one of my favorite parts of our collection. Watch our webpage for a new index of Estate Files coming soon and check it out now for our current indexes of Naturalizations, Obituaries, Divorces, and more.



<https://www.tippecanoehistory.org/research/genealogy/>



Excerpt from a letter written by O.T. Clark to his mother and sisters in Virginia in 1826. His sister, Amovanda Clark, married Ben C. Harvey and moved to Lafayette in 1834. (only spelling is corrected).

Lafayette Indiana Dec 22 1826

Dear Mother & Sisters,

I have at length fixed upon the Little Town of Lafayette on the margin of the Wabash River as the place of my future residence & whether it will be an advantageous location time alone must determine. The country is yet new & unpolished, as it came from Natures hand. The inhabitants are yet poor & struggling with the privations which attend the settlement of all new countries. Their habitations are few and far between but hope which cheers our wanderings through this wayward existence and unfolds to our view prospects of enjoyment always in the advance of our march encourages them to support their present inconveniences & so exert themselves in accelerating the period when the wide golden wheat & luxuriant corn which spring up almost at the husband-man's bidding.

From the TCHA permanent collection. Donated by Aylmer Harvey in the 1920s.

HARRY G. LESLIE & THE 1903 PURDUE TRAIN WRECK

By Dr. Pete Bill, TCHA Board President



Harry G. Leslie

As E. J. Smith made his way from his Indianapolis home to work at the Big Four Railroad switching yards on the city's west side, the cool Saturday morning air of October 31, 1903 may have hinted at some rain later in the day. However, Smith would have known that a little rain would not dampen the spirits of the hundreds of Purdue and Indiana University students already in Indianapolis for what the Indianapolis Star referred to as "the greatest Indiana game of the season" and the determinant of the best football team in the league. The newspapers had been touting the Purdue/IU match-up all week and today, at a "neutral" location of Washington Park field, the Black and Gold 11 would match against the 11 of Bloomington's Cream and Crimson. Arriving at the Big Four yards, Smith found the general yard master giving assignments to teams of engineers like himself, and conductors. His job this morning was to take coal train No. 84 up the northwestern tracks to deliver seven loaded coal cars, each weighing 80,000 pounds, to the Indianapolis north side. By the time Smith headed over to get No. 84's boiler hot and ready to drive the locomotive's drive wheels, the regular trains coming in that morning had already passed through the switch yard and with no other notification of any other traffic inbound from the Big Four Chief Dispatcher in Kankakee, Illinois, the tracks were cleared for his routine run. At about 9:50 AM Smith released the brakes on No. 84 and ponderously started pushing the coal cars off the siding onto the main tracks.

Meanwhile, engineer William Shumaker, piloting Engine 350, had his own concerns. He was southbound on the Big Four line from Lafayette, Indiana pulling a coal tender and 14 coach cars filled with the Purdue football team, their coaches and assistants, and fans totaling 950 passengers, of which 600 were students. Among the passengers was the President of Purdue University, Winthrop Stone. Engineer Shumaker's concern was that the heavy load was making Engine 350 fall behind its schedule and they were now likely to arrive 10 minutes late into Union Station on the near south side of Indianapolis. He knew there would likely be a band waiting for the arriving train as well as a huge throng of Purdue supporters all cheering as the train pulled in. It wouldn't look good to be late. A second train was 15 minutes behind him carrying an additional 550 Purdue fans and passengers, and timing was critical to ensure the trains arrived on time to avoid problems with other trains needing the tracks. As both Purdue trains were designated by dispatchers as "Specials" this meant they had the right-of-way over all other trains and a clear track into their destination. It also meant that these two trains were not on the usual schedule of traffic going in and out of Union Station. Although the Big Four Chief Dispatcher had notified the Union Station stationmaster of the two inbound specials, the word had not been communicated with the Big Four Railroad switching yard master. Consequently, Engineer Smith in his Engine 84 knew nothing about the two specials headed his direction. Meanwhile, Engineer Shumaker kept the boiler pressure up and the Purdue Special barreled on trying to make up the time.

In the first coach car, or the smoker, the Purdue team and their staff were gathering up their equipment as the outskirts of Indianapolis began to appear outside their window. Among them was the junior year varsity fullback and captain of the team, Harry G. Leslie. Leslie was popular among his class starting as a freshman at Purdue in 1900 and was elected class president for each of his years at Purdue. He held the rare honor of being the captain not only of the Purdue varsity football team but of the baseball team. However, nothing else mattered except the football game today for the "honor of Old Purdue".

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Normally a train entering the Big Four Railroad switching yards slowed to 4 mph by Indianapolis ordinance. However, the Purdue Special #1 was late. Engineer Shumaker began to slow, but the momentum of the 14 loaded coach cars kept the train moving south bound at 30 miles per hour. Engineer Smith, meanwhile, was driving his coal cars onto the main line and headed northwest near the bend in the tracks at 18th street at about 9 miles an hour.

Around the corner of the bend and but still partially obscured from Engineer Smith by the seven coal cars he was pushing and a line of box cars on the siding parallel to the main track, the Purdue Special thundered into sight. Engineer Shumaker on the Purdue Special saw the coal train emerging from around the bend in the track, threw the No. 350 engine into reverse, set the brake, and at the last minute he and the conductor jumped clear of the locomotive. Engineer Smith jammed the brakes on No. 84 and likewise leapt from the engine.



The scene of the Purdue Special train wreck on the west side of Indianapolis, October 31, 1903. The coach car to the right was the second car carrying the Purdue band and students. Amazingly, no one from this coach car died. In this scene an injured person with his head bandaged is comforted by a gentleman holding his hand. The bowler hats seen in the photo are typical of what Purdue students would have worn in 1903. One student, facing the camera at the back of the cluster, is wearing the “beanie” or “pot” type hat freshman were required to wear. At the time this photo was taken, bodies were still being removed from within and beneath the wreckage.

Passengers on the Purdue Special likely felt the train slow suddenly, but with the momentum of all the coaches pushing it forward, the No. 350 locomotive slammed into the first coal car, driving it and the locomotive under the second coal car. The sudden halt of the locomotive did not stop the remaining coaches from their forward momentum. The first coach car with the team, coaches and others struck the coal tender and, driven forward by the coach cars behind it, flew straight up into the air splitting in two and disgorging its passengers, equipment, and seats. Witnesses described seeing the car splinter into a cloud of airborne debris with pieces “no larger than a barrel stave”. As the coach car crashed to earth, only the roof and one side of the coach car remained recognizable. The second coach car, which contained the band and students, was driven into the first as it disintegrated, causing the body of the coach car to be ripped from its wheels and pushed down the embankment alongside the track. The third coach car was catapulted up and over the remains of the No. 350 locomotive and the coal cars before toppling over onto rail cars on the adjacent siding. Many of the other coach cars derailed, but thankfully remained upright. It all hap-

Harry G. Leslie was in the first coach car. Although accounts are lacking, Leslie was likely thrown clear of the coach car and landed among the mangled bodies, equipment, and debris. Workmen from a building adjacent to the tracks and neighbors from homes nearby rushed to the scene where they began extricating the living from the debris, load them into buggies that lined the adjacent street, and sending them to the local hospitals. A makeshift morgue was set up at one of the city hospitals to accommodate the dead, and it was to this morgue that Harry G. Leslie was sent, his name to be added to the 15 initially declared dead. Leslie lay there for quite some time, some accounts say hours, until a morgue attendant noticed his right arm twitching and discovered a very faint pulse. His broken body was taken to City Hospital where he would spend 38 weeks in recovery that left him with a permanent limp.

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Harry G. Leslie & the 1903 Purdue Train Wreck concludes...

Eventually the death toll was fixed at 17, of which 14 were Leslie's teammates. The Memorial Gymnasium, now called Felix Haas Hall, was built in 1909 on Purdue's campus to honor the 17 who died. The main entrance to the hall has 17 steps, one for each life lost. After his recovery from his injuries, Leslie returned to Purdue, completed his degree with the Class of 1905, and then completed his law degree at the Indiana University law school in Indianapolis in 1907. In 1908 Leslie returned to Lafayette and Purdue where he served as an assistant coach and helped raise funds for the Memorial Gymnasium. Leslie opened a law firm in Lafayette, ran for, and was elected to, various Tippecanoe County offices including County Treasurer. In 1923 Leslie was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives and served as Speaker of the House in 1925 and 1927. Leslie was the Republican nominee for Indiana governor in 1928, won the election, and began his term in 1929. During his term he oversaw the construction of what is now the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis, the establishment of the state park system, and development of historic memorials. He also raised the funds to establish the James Whitcomb Riley Hospital for Children that still exists today. In 1937, while visiting Purdue alum and benefactor George Ade in Florida, Harry G. Leslie suddenly died from heart disease. His body laid in state in the Indiana Capitol and was buried in Grand View Cemetery at the top of the hill at Grant and Salisbury Streets in West Lafayette.



Today the Columbia and South Street bridge built as part of Railroad Relocation Project bears his name as the Harry G. Leslie Memorial Bridge.

TCHA IS NOW OFFERING 5 YEAR MEMBERSHIPS AT A DISCOUNT!

When you renew your membership in 2021, you now have the option to purchase a 5-year membership and receive 10% off! Lock in your TCHA membership and make just one payment now. You won't receive a renewal notice for 5 years.

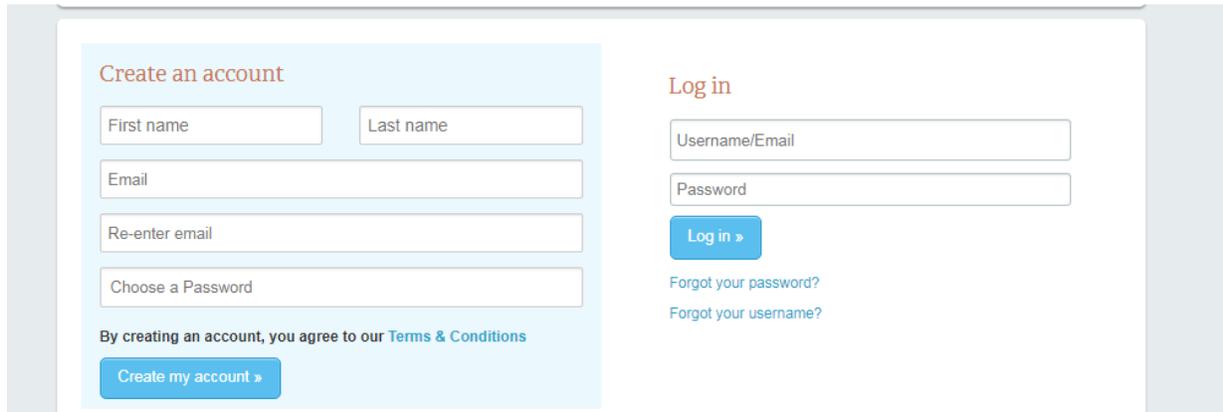
To receive this special offer, cancel your current membership when the renewal notice comes through your email from Member Planet and repurchase the 5-year option. You can also select the 5-year membership option when you receive your membership renewal notice in the mail and pay by check or credit card.

TCHA is now on Amazon Smile!

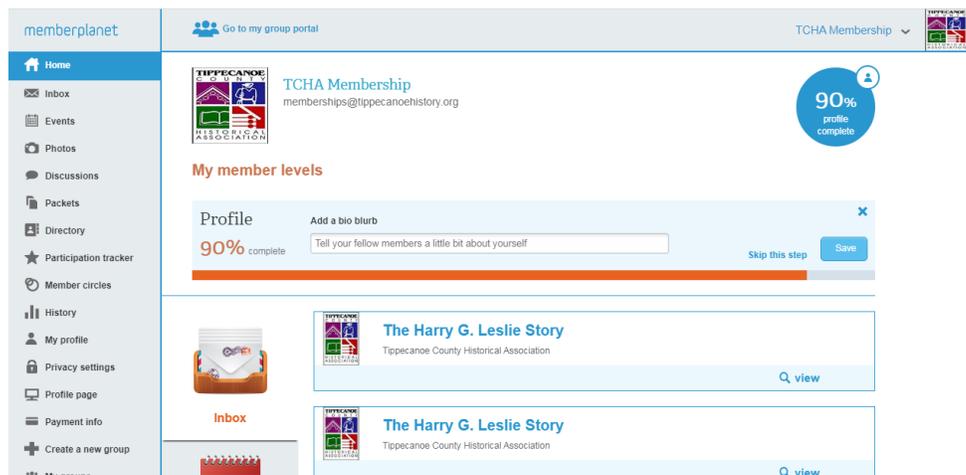
If you plan to shop on Amazon, a portion of your proceeds can go to TCHA if you shop through Amazon Smile. You *must* start off by shopping at smile.amazon.com for the proceeds to apply to TCHA, not simply Amazon.com. It has all the same products. Make sure you select TCHA from the charities under Arts and Culture (note: there is a Tippecanoe Hist. Assoc. in Tipp, Ohio listed, so make sure to select the right one!). Visit www.tippecanoehistory.org for a quick link off the main page!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

To purchase a membership online, go to the TCHA website: www.tippecanoehistory.org and find the Membership page. When you select a membership level you wish to purchase, you will find this screen, which will allow you to create an account with our online membership software, Member Planet. If you have already created an account, you can log in to access your membership profile.



When it's time to renew your membership, you can renew online and change your membership level. To change your membership level, you must first *cancel* the current membership level you have and purchase a new level. (You will also receive a renewal notice in the mail and you can renew by mail or by visiting the Tippecanoe Battlefield History Store or Arganbright Genealogy Center.)



In your TCHA Member Planet profile, you will see upcoming program news, recent emails and photographs.

If you have any questions about your TCHA membership, contact Kelly Lippie at: memberships@tippecanoehistory.org or 765-476-8411 extension 3





Tippecanoe Historical Association
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Tippecanoe County Historical Association is a private not-for-profit organization whose mission is to enrich the lives of Tippecanoe County residents and visitors by collecting, preserving, and interpreting our unique and exciting history.

FOLLOW US!



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