



In April 2009 Girl Scout Troop #225 toured the Indianola Square in order to learn more about the history of their community. As part of a badge, the then third grade girls were to learn which building was the oldest. As they walked up and down each block they discovered that none of the buildings had a date indicating when it was built. Not to be discouraged the girls quickly decided to do something about it.

Over the summer they made a plan to research the history of the businesses of Indianola. They started by contacting the Warren County Assessors Office which keeps a website link for people to search property information. (<http://beacon.schneidercorp.com/Application.aspx?AppID=9&LayerID=35&PageTypeID=2&PageID=32>) What they found was that according to the county, almost all of the buildings were built in 1900. This seemed odd to the girls as they went around the square again looking at how different the buildings looked.

In September of 2009 the girls decided to learn more and dedicated themselves to creating historical plaques for each building for all to learn from. They applied for grant from the Warren County Philanthropic Partnership to help achieve their goal. Of eighteen grant applications received that year, they were one of eleven organizations from across Warren County to receive a grant. They received a total of \$5,000 from the WCCP which was organized to promote and enhance community based philanthropy in Warren County.*



For the next year and a half the girls and their leaders Suzanne Obermeier and Angela Sarvis worked tirelessly to discover the truth behind each business' history. Each girl personally researched part of a side of the square. Each girl accumulated 20 hours in research time with some putting in close to 100 hours looking through phone books, city directories, newspapers, scrapbooks and microfilm.

The task turned out to be more difficult than the girls ever envisioned for several reasons. The first was that the county offices were indeed incorrect in their information. Only one building on the square was actually built in 1900 which meant searching back as far as 1874 to find the first brick building construction details. Another stumbling block was that addresses did not include numbers until 1896 and several street names had also changed in the late 1800's. The final clues remain elusive as much of the west side of the square was built by one man – Mr. William Buxton, and therefore exact dates of completion for individual buildings have yet to be determined.



If you would like to learn more about the discoveries made by these ambitious young ladies, take a walk along the north and east sides of the square where most buildings now have their plaques on display. As the weather grows milder, more plaques will be mounted on these two sides.

The project is near completion but needs further financial support in order to have the plaques created at Bob's Custom Trophies. If you would like to learn more or make a contribution to the project please contact the troop by email at gstroop225@yahoo.com or call the leader, Angela Sarvis at 515-868-1167.

* The Warren County Philanthropic Partnership recently received a state award to facilitate endowment building and grant-making. The contribution to the foundation was made possible by the Iowa General Assembly. In 2004 the Iowa legislature passed several bills to encourage foundation building and community based philanthropy. Among these measures was H.F. 2032 which provided that non-gambling counties, initiating a county-wide community foundation would be eligible to receive one half of one percent of the state's gross gambling tax receipts.