

THE GIBSONVILLE MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 11 NO. 1&2 ~ WINTER / SPRING 2022

Gibsonville's Evolving Downtown (2019 – 2021)

The last few years have been an exceptionally active time of transition for Gibsonville's commercial business district. Many businesses closed and buildings changed hands. Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964) were one of the largest generations in US history and are now retiring. Like the rest of the US, Gibsonville is seeing a generational shift. Via life changes, retirements, and deaths, this shift was underway even before Covid. The virus further pushed this trend to its current extent. Looking at 2019 – 2021 real estate sales, approximately 531,284 SF sold in Gibsonville's 741,029 SF downtown. This is a sale of 71% of our commercial business district. Putting this number in perspective and excluding Minneola Mill – which is by itself 59% of our downtown – this is the sale of 30% of buildings in our downtown. Effectively 1 in 3 buildings changed ownership in the last three years. Whether through life changes or forced decisions by once in a lifetime Covid, the last few years have been a remaking of Gibsonville's commercial identity.

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Redevelopment of Minneola Mill

Gibsonville was put on the map by millwright Berry Davidson and his many industrial enterprises. This began with Minneola Mill in 1886, an original anchor that in many ways built this town. This approx. 440,000 SF property sits on 34 acres and is a mixed use, multi-tenant, industrial focused project. Even today Minneola Mill is a character defining asset; it composes 59% of downtown Gibsonville's 741K SF central business district.

Like many well positioned mill properties, this site is being redeveloped. This has been an endeavor and labor of love by Three Floors of Vision (a partnership of Richard Angino, Sean Dowell, Josh Lipsky, and Wellsley Robinson). Since 2016 and through this group's dogged efforts, Minneola Mill has been an active discussion with NC's State Historic Preservation Office. For the last five+ years, the removal of a façade wall has been a literal barricade that stood in the way of Gibsonville's core historic asset from being considered for National Register status. In 2019, Three Floors of Vision had an initial victory. Minneola Mill's Cloth Warehouse was included on the National Register

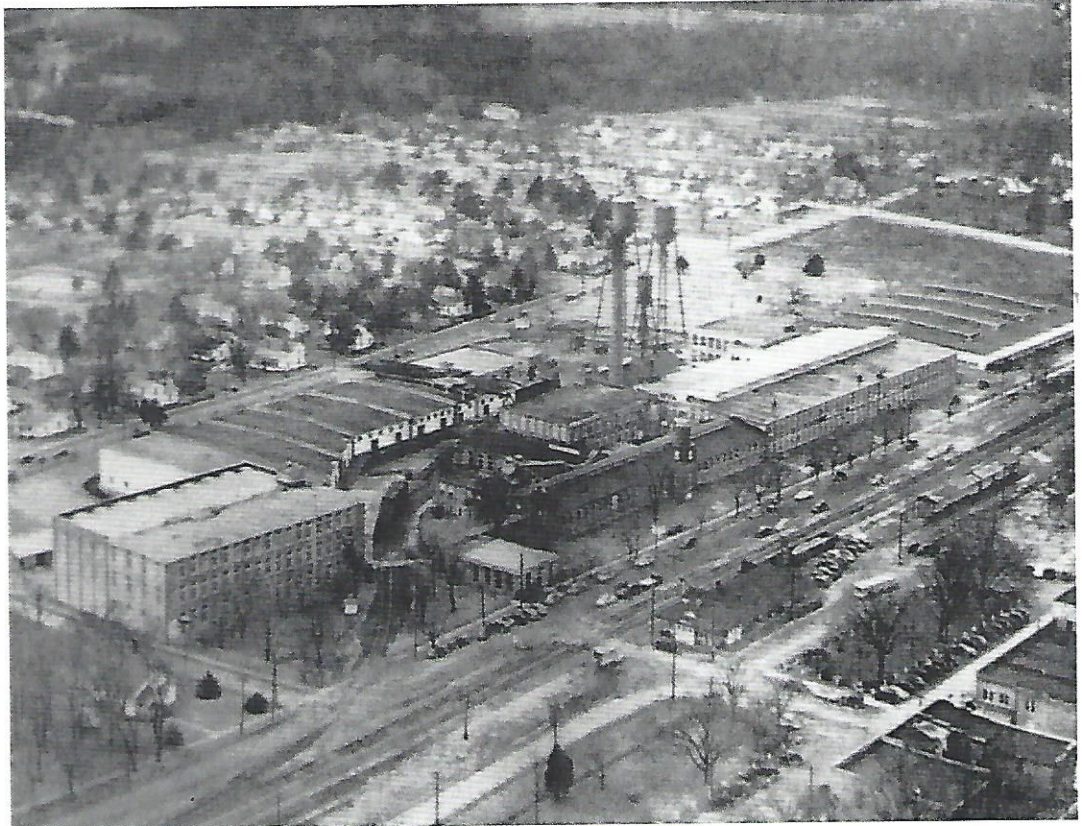
Redevelopment of Minneola Mill

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of Historic Places. This three-story building is approx. 57,000 SF, was built between 1907 – 1953, and is a limited portion of this larger property. Following historic approval and in Sept 2019, Gibsonville's only downtown three story building was purchased by this development group. Since purchase, Three Floors of Vision has used this building for their own storage uses as well as third party leasing.

Within the last year, multiple meaningful efforts were further accomplished:

A Sizable Grant: With the generous assistance of elected officials and the town, this property will receive a grant of \$750,000. This money is a) earmarked for the removal of this façade wall and stabilization of the area behind it and b) removes a significant obstacle that long delayed historic entitlement of Minneola Mill.



Minneola Mill circa 1950

Study List Acceptance: This historic building overall was put on NC's State Historic Preservation Office "Study List." This is the state's preapproval that NC would support property historic nomination to federal authorities. This significant Minneola Mill entitlement has been pursued since 2016.

Purchase of Property: Three Floors of Vision purchased Minneola Mill overall in late 2021. Long term development plans are currently being evaluated, entitled, and financed. That said, this property will continue to operate as it does today until historic entitlements are achieved.

Rezoning: In early 2022, this property was rezoned. Over the majority of this property, heavy industry uses were phased out. This was replaced with a more downtown compatible mixed use zoning.

While Minneola Mill's redevelopment will still require multiple years of state and federal historic approvals, the above grant and this newly acquired entitlements are significant benchmarks.

Once historic tax credits are approved, this property has the opportunity to redevelop in a similar way as other nearby downtown historic properties. Similar local examples include Burlington's May Hosiery, Graham's Oneida Mill, Greensboro's Revolution Mills, Mebane's Whites Furniture, and Saxapahaw's Rivermill, among others. These impactful, infill redevelopments preserved their community's history, improved old buildings to a best and highest use, spurred an improved tax base, created surrounding area growth, and enriched their area overall. In this same way, historic redevelopment of Minneola Mill preserves Gibsonville's past and positively changes the course of town's future.

A Chronicle of Recent Business Leaders

In our prior newsletters, we outlined the history of Mayors (V9. N2.), Town Mangers and long-term town staff. (V10. N1.), as well as Gibsonville's history for the last 150 years (V10. N2). In this newsletter, we celebrate short histories of business and civic leaders. The individuals below are outlined in alphabetical order. While Gibsonville has had many influential private citizens, below covers a) those with over a decade of activity and b) others that are or were recently active in Gibsonville. This history is written to honor and thank those who have made decade+ long contributions to our community.

- **Boone at Boone's Furniture Store:** Originally when G. E. Jordan constructed his three-story building, this was for Gibsonville Hardware Company. Turner Hezekiah Boone (Sept 9, 1878 – July 12, 1937) worked for Gibsonville Hardware Company initially. When he decided to start his own business, he started Boone's Furniture Store in what is today the Toasty Kettlyst building at 106 West Main Street and 111 Lewis Street. This building was constructed between 1915 and 1925. Later his children became involved with the business. Sons John Sidney Boone Sr (August 31, 1916 – May 1, 1988) and Willis "Keith" Boone (Sept 15, 1922 – Dec. 25, 1994) worked in the family business. As did Keith's daughter Julie Boone who married Joel Isley, the current owners of Boone's Furniture Store. This property was sold to Sherries on Main in 2007 (and sold again to the Toasty Kettlyst in 2020). After this 2007 sale, the Boone Furniture Store business moved to Highway 70 on land owned by the Boone family and where it is still located today. Boone's Furniture Store is one of Gibsonville's longest running business with 80+ years at a single downtown location.



Dr. Julius Vance Dick (1876 – 1941) was an early town doctor. He built his 515 Church Street house in 1912 and had his business adjacent the town greens. In 2021, the GMHSI displayed his buggy at the Gibsonville Cultural Festival. For more historical details, see newsletter V6. N2.

- **Jack Bradford, Bobbie Jean Underwood King, & Kostas Hatzipangiotou at Pete's Grill:** In the 1950's, Mr. Jack Bradford purchased the bus station at 139 Piedmont Avenue and opened Pete's restaurant. From 1949 until it closed its original Gibsonville location, Pete's Grill and Hursey's Bar-B-Q were neighbors. When Mr. Bradford passed away in the mid 1990's, he willed this business to long time staff member and friend Bobbie Jean Underwood King (Sept 25, 1935 – April 10, 2009). Mrs. King later sold Pete's Grill to Kostas Hatzipangiotou, the business' current owner. In business now for 70+ years at the same location, Pete's Grill is still a popular breakfast and lunch diner.

- **Davidson – Long at Engineered Plastics:** In 1947, the Davidson and Long families started Engineered Plastics. This custom plastic fabricator services a worldwide client base from its headquarters at 212 Chase Street, Gibsonville. In March 2021, this business was sold. For 74 years, the Davidson - Long family owned this Gibsonville based company. For more information, see www.engplas.com. In 2014, Vincent and Eleanor (Davidson) Long made the largest donation to the GMHSI in our organization's history. We continue to be appreciative for their generosity.

A Chronicle of Recent Business Leaders

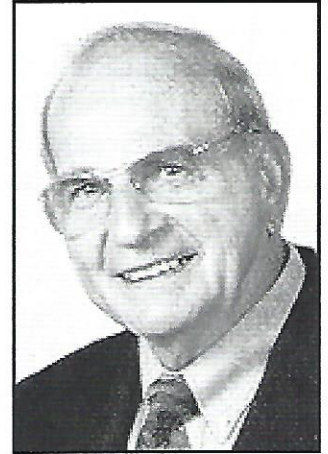
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- *Lindley at Lindley Laboratories & Minneola Mill:* Upon closure of Cone Mills operations in 1988, J. Thomas "Tom" Lindley Sr and sons Tom Jr and Clarke Lindley purchased the-then vacant 440K SF Minneola Mill in downtown Gibsonville. They converted this large single tenant warehouse into a multi-tenant property anchored by their own Lindley Laboratories business. While Gibsonville lamented losing a major employer, the Lindley family brought their own significant 150K SF contributions and also were able to ultimately lease this facility to many different businesses. This was done with the goal of bringing back as many jobs as were lost. Being community minded, the Lindley family also actively contributed space on a gratis basis to non-profits, churches, police and fire organizations, as well as to other community groups. While Lindley Laboratories closed in 2019, the Lindley family continued to own and operate Minneola Mill as an investment. In 2021, the Lindley family sold Minneola Mill.
- *Litten at Wades Jewelers:* Wade Litten stated Wade's Jewelers in 1947. This business was originally located at 107 Lewis Street (1947 – 1961), moved to neighboring 100 West Main Street (1961 – 1999), and has since been at their current 101 East Main Street location. This multi-generational, family business had anchored downtown Gibsonville for 75 years. For more details, see www.wadesjewelers.net. It is also notable that besides owning Wades Jewelers, the Littens also own multiple other downtown properties and generously allow gratis use of their Eugene Street land behind downtown for public parking.
- *Luigi 'Lui' & Tiffany Haynes Lattrero at Reno's Pizza:* Lui & Tiffany have owned and run Reno's Pizza at 119 East Main Street since 2008. In recent years, Lui has taken full control of this business. For 13 years, Reno's has been Gibsonville's local Italian restaurant. For more details, see www.eatrenospizza.com or their facebook page at Reno's Pizza & Italian Restaurant.
- *Lil and Lori Lacassagne at The Burke Manor Inn:* Owners of the Burke Manor Inn & Pavilion since 2011, Lil and Lori are active members of our business community and the Gibsonville Merchants Association (GMA). They are the current owners of the historic J. W. & P. T. Burke homestead at 303 Burke Street. Having moved their successful French restaurant from the Triangle, they have brought Gibsonville a French flair and a four star touch. For more info, see www.burkemanor.com.
- *Jack Rook at Jack's Bar-B-Q:* Edward Jackson 'Jack' Rook Sr (Aug 17, 1928 – Dec 31, 2003) and Helen Barnhardt Rook were married in 1950 and worked together at Helen's family business, Barnhardt's Salad Company. In 1966, Jack started working at Henry Rogers' barbeque restaurant, Henry's Barbeque. A year later, Jack purchased this business and renamed it. This restaurant was originally located at 216 West Main Street. Mr. Rook later purchased the current and better located building at 213 West Main Street, which is where this business is today. Jack's Bar-B-Q serves lunch and dinner. It is also more than Barbeque. In fact, Jack's Barbeque was one of Our State Magazines Top 30 Hot Dog Joints in 2016. This long-established Gibsonville business is under second generation ownership, with third generation staff, and has been a Gibsonville staple for 55 years.
- *Todd & wife Michelle Smith at Gibsonville Pharmacy:* Gibsonville has a tradition of independent pharmacists: John H Walker (Gibsonville's first druggist), Lee A Wharton (50+ years of service to Gibsonville and second owner of Gibsonville Drug Company), and David and Suzanne Hix (third

A Chronicle of Recent Business Leaders

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owners of Gibsonville Drug Company, previously located at 235 Main Street). Gibsonville Pharmacy continues this tradition under the ownership of the Smiths. For more information, see www.gibsonvillepharmacy.com



Bobby Summers

- *Bobby Summers (1932 – 2018) & wife Peggy Summers at Gibsonville Garden Railroad:* Proprietor of train store Bobby's Hobbies prior located at 113 Lewis Street and other downtown gaming businesses, Mr. Summers created the Gibsonville Garden Railroad in 1996. Bobby Summers passion for trains make this feature a part of Gibsonville's identity. At Mr. Summer's passing in 2018, the GGRR was taken over by Neil Bromilow.
- *Jeff and wife Edith Younger at Kimbers Restaurant:* Jeff Younger has long association with the 230 West Main Street building. In 1973, he and his father Herman Younger purchased the Red & White Grocery Store business active at this property. This business was active through the 1970's. From 1980 - 1981, Jeff converted this location to a clothing store. On March 4th 1982, he and his wife Edith started Kimbers Restaurant. Named after their daughter Kimberly and opened on her birthday, this restaurant operated for 39 years. Due to its success and long standing, Jeff purchased this building in 2004. Recently this couple retired. In 2021, they sold this business and real estate. While under new ownership, this restaurant continues to operate as Kimbers.
- *Dolly (Murrell) Gunnell at Lighting Etc.* Learning the construction trade from residential builder B.W. Murrell Construction, Dolly opened her lighting store in 1986. Ten years later in 1996, she purchased her building. Lighting Etc offers a wide array of fixtures. A visit to her store will get you expert advice, access to select in stock inventory, catalogues of other available options, and service with purpose. Per a recent interview with the GMHSI, Dolly "offers service... and lighting fixtures too." Her ability to operate at the same location for 35 years is proof of this. For more information, see www.lightingetcnc.com.
- *Others:* We recognize we did not include information on Artley Violins, Apple's Engine Rebuilding, Happy Garden Chinese Restaurant, Eddie's Automotive, Just for You, or Walker & Bullard PA. While these businesses have been in Gibsonville 10+ years, we did not have sufficient information on these groups to include them in above.

The GMHSI is today compiling a longer, comprehensive list of Gibsonville's business leaders. Should you have information you would like to added to our histories, please reach out to us at info@gmhsi.org. As keepers of the town's history, we welcome new additions, information, and stories. When completed, full information will be available under the Detailed Histories tab of our website.

GMHSI Calendars (2021 – 2022) & Postcards

To commemorate Gibsonville's 150th Anniversary, the GMHSI is offering a 18-month calendar. This July 2021 – December 2022 calendar includes historic photographs and is available for \$15. In 2021, the GMHSI also made available a series of collectable postcards. These highlight Gibsonville's unique character with both historic reprints and current photographs. These postcards are available for \$2 each. Both of these publications are available for sale in downtown at The Gilded Bean Coffee Shop, Just For You, or Gibsonville Antiques & Collectibles.

Gibsonville Development (1920 – Approximately 1955)

Gibsonville Development Corporation (GDC) was formed in May 20, 1920 for “Insurance, Loans, Real Estate, and Lumber”. This was the partnership of D. M. Davidson (president), J.W. Burke (vice president), A. B. Owens (secretary), and P. L. Kivett (assistant secretary). Gibsonville Development Company was town leadership investing in and improving their own community. This group developed Gibsonville’s infrastructure including the local dump, water systems, and telephone company. The GDC built and owned many of our downtown buildings and also developed vacant land into residential housing. These individuals were an active, integral part of the town’s growth.

- *Davidson Family:* Mr. Berry Davidson (1831 – 1915) built the original sections of Minneloa Mill in downtown Gibsonville (1887) and Haiwatha Mill at 138 Eugene Street (1893). He transformed the town from a small crossroads community to a thriving textile center. Civic-minded, Mr. Davidson served as Mayor of Gibsonville from 1907 – 1911. His son, Dwight Merrimon “D. M.” Davidson (1886 – 1973) carried on his father’s legacy, continuing the family’s prosperous businesses and also serving as Gibsonville Mayor (1913 – 1933). For more details, see GMHSI Newsletter V8. N1 or V9. N2. D.M’s Davidson daughter Eleanor Davidson married Vincent Long. In 1947, the Davidson and Long families started Engineered Plastics. For the last 128 years, the Davidson family has maintained Gibsonville business interests.



D.M. Davidson



J.W. Burke

- *J. W. (1879 – 1968) & wife Etta “P. T.” Burke (1879 – 1961):* J.W. was owner of Burke’s Department & Grocery Store (early 1900’s), one of the organizers and a member of the Board for Gibsonville’s first bank called the Bank of Gibsonville (1907), a member of the GDC, an owner of the Ben Franklin store in downtown Gibsonville and Eden (1930’s), owner of a car lot, as well as one of the owners of Carolina Steel in Greensboro, among other business ventures. Civically, Mr. Burke was a Gibsonville Alderman, Guilford County Commissioner (1930 – 1942), and trustee for the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia. Mrs. Burke was bookkeeper for these businesses and had her own active, statewide influence in the development of the PTA. See GMHSI newsletter V7. N2. for additional details.

- *Arlie Bentley “A.B.” Owen (Sept 3, 1882 – May 1, 1958) and wife Sara “Pearl” (Huffman) Owen (Sept 20, 1893 – November 30, 1981):* Mr. A.B. Owen was the GDC owner active primarily in insurance and real estate. In May 1949, The Daily Times News of Burlington reports A.B. as “one of the largest property owners in town, as he owned all the buildings in the main block of the business district.” Today the town’s central business district occupies much of that area, from Reno’s at 119 East Main Street to the Gilded Bean Coffee Shop at 111 East Main Street. To support our towns growth, the Owen family generously allowed the town to use vacant property free of charge for the town dump from the 1920s – 1950s and also multiple other properties for deep wells sites that provided water to the Gibsonville community. A.B. was an active part of the creation of Gibsonville’s original utilities services. He was manager of Gibsonville Hosiery Mill (1917 – 1949) and a president of the Bank of Gibsonville. With his brother Frank, A.B. donated land for a VFW location in 1947. Around 1955, Wallace Owen took over this father’s business and Gibsonville



A.B. Owen

Gibsonville Development

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Development Corporation became Gibsonville Insurance Company. Per a recent GMHSI interview with Wallace's wife Mabel Owen, the GDC built a new real estate development every year the company made a profit. When the GDC disbanded, A.B. kept the downtown real estate assets. Per his 1958 obituary, A.B. also served as a) an Alderman for 43 years -- half as many years as the town was old at the time of his death -- and b) the Town's first treasurer. The Owen family continues to make its mark on local real estate. Gibsonville did not grow from 1921 - 1957 until Wallace Owen annexed outskirts land areas, expanding town limits. Owen Park subdivision is today named after this family. Also surrounding land continues to be sold by A.B. Owen's descendants for residential development.

- *Pearlee Lasiter "P.L." Kivette (April 24, 1891 – Jan 25, 1952):* P.L. Kivette was a brick mason who met his wife Anne Tickle (Feb 19, 1883 – May 28, 1977) in Winston Salem, where she was a hat maker for the Reynolds family. Once married and in 1915, Mrs. Kivette brought her husband home to Gibsonville. While P.L. was a late addition to the GDC, he made his own unique contributions. P.L. actively ran the GDC lumber yard as well as the Rock Creek Dairy – which at the time was the largest dairy in NC --. He was also a building contractor and developed multiple neighborhoods for the GDC. In 1942, P.L. had a stroke and was bed ridden until he passed ten years later. After the GDC was dissolved, PL maintained the land for the Rock Creek Dairy. This was sold in the 1950's by his daughters and later developed into Rock Creek Center, the Triad region's largest industrial park. His daughters Florence Olga Childress (Sept 7, 1917 – Oct 29, 1999) and Camille Kivette (April 27, 1920 – October 2, 2010) were local personalities, generous members of our community, and also graduates and supporters of Elon University. The Kivette sisters were a part of many civic organizations, clubs, and maintained the towns greens at their own cost.



P.L. Kivette

The GDC had a comprehensive business model. They would sell you the land for your home, the lumber and other materials to build your home, or this home itself. Once you lived in Gibsonville, they would provide you with physical goods like coal, general goods, groceries, vehicles, etc. They also provided banking services, insurance, utility services; phone services, and so forth. If you didn't work for Cone Mills or another area employer, you might have even worked at a GDC owned business. All in all, the Gibsonville Development Company offered needed services from cradle to grave. As much as they made Gibsonville, Gibsonville rewarded them in kind. Each member of the GDC became enriched due to their local commercial endeavors. Without them, Gibsonville would not be what it is today.

Recent Notable Donations

The GMHSI has recently received multiple notable donations. These include donation of: a) a large group of photographs and Burke family related documents from Elise "Tootie" Burke, a GMHSI Emeritus, b) a donation of a 1932 scrapbook by Mrs. J. H. Joyner and the Whitsett Club found in Paso Robles, California by Maggie White, and c) a donation of Kimbers historic information from Neil Bromilow. We would like to thank all individuals whom have donated to the GMSHI. This includes both those in this newsletter and also those others we didn't have additional newsletter room to thank.

Closure of Our Museum at 219 East Main Street

Since 2008 and for over a decade, the Gibsonville Museum & Historical Society Inc (GMHSI) occupied publicly available space. Unfortunately, the museum space at 219 East Main Street is now permanently closed. Due to a technicality in state law, an ABC store cannot lease space to others in a property an ABC Board owns. While disappointed, changing state ABC laws for our specific situation was more than we could reasonably hope to achieve. That said, the GMHSI is grateful to the ABC Board for the donated use of museum space over the last few years. Looking to the future, we are in search of a new location.

In the meanwhile, we request and welcome community assistance in this task. Assistance can be offered in many ways: a one time donation, annual membership, purchase of items for sale (calendars, postcards, ornaments), adding the GMSHI as your chosen non-profit on Amazon Smile, including the historical society in your will, or in any other way you see fit. To make suggestions, donations, or for more information, see www.ghmsi.org or contact us via email at info@gmhsi.org.

While this is a change in chapter, it is not the end of our story. Until we have a physical location again, the GMHSI will continue to be locally active. On a 24/7 basis, we offer detailed historical information via our website. Where we are able to secure space, we create longer term exhibits. For example, we recently had an exhibit to honor the Town's 150th Anniversary exhibit at the Gibsonville library. For special events, the GMHSI will participate and educate about town history. This can be by set up of a table at downtown events or Mrs. Gibson's Travelling Trunk for classrooms presentation. Should you have a locations or event in which the GMSHI can participate, please let us know. All in all, we have been active for 13+ years and will continue to do so.

Board of Directors Openings

Like Gibsonville itself, the Gibsonville Museum & Historical Society grows and changes. To that end, we invite you to become a more active part of our organization. The GMSHI has celebrated and contributed to Gibsonville history since 2007. Today, we are looking for new Board of Directors (BoD) members to lead us into the future. While in search of individuals with specific skills like grant writing or social media expertise, all candidates will be considered. Being a BoD member will require participation in a once-a-month meeting and also activity on specifically chosen tasks. As we celebrate and save our communities history, we look forward to your unique contributions to this worthy goal. If you have questions about or are interested in becoming a Board of Directors member, please reach out to us at info@gmhsi.org.

Gibsonville Museum and Historical Society Inc.

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