



## REWARDS OF MERIT

by Lexie Schroeder Kobb

These charming little cards were given to students by their teachers. Most are only two or three inches by four or five inches. They were meant to be a reward for good behavior or for excellence in a student's studies. The idea was used by teachers for generations but was most popular during the 1800's.

Many early rewards of merit are hand painted artwork on paper by the teacher. These handmade rewards of merit are extremely rare today, but considered an excellent example of early American folk art. Later, rewards of merit were printed in one color on paper and hand-colored by the teacher. Then, later still, with the rise of the Victorian era came advancements in printing technology which allowed such tokens to be made both lovely and inexpensively. The brightly printed lithographs of the mid to late nineteenth century were

popular among students and teachers alike. It is interesting that the use of these cards can be followed over the decades to show the progress in printmaking techniques over time.

Sometimes reward of merit cards can be mistaken for friendship cards or calling cards which were often exchanged among adults as introductions and reminders of social connection.

Early rewards often included bible verses or popular sayings that stress obedience to parents, teachers or God. The cards might also reinforce the virtues of study, hard work or determination. Illustrations on the rewards were not just decorative; they were sometimes symbolic as well.

The lovely little curiosities that are featured with this article are part of HLCM's collection.



Reward of Merit card to Nancy Blough from J. P. Histetler (HLCM collection: 2008-22/14)



Reward of Merit card to Tilda Potters from J. Newman (HLCM collection: 2004-7/33)



Reward to Merit card, 1866 (HLCM collection: 2008-25/14)

# Museum Calendar

September 2014 – May 2015

## Fire Fighting, Mishawaka

See a collection of objects related to Mishawaka's fire fighting history, including an 1865 hand-pulled chemical fire truck, fire extinguisher from the 1909, firefighter's uniform from 1918 and photos of our local firefighters at work from 1868 through today.

November 25, 2014 – May, 2015

## St. Joseph County Learning: A Portrait of Students from the Late 1800's to the Early 1900's

The exhibit features photographs from the Museum's collection of local area students.

November 25 – December 20, 2014

## Here Comes Santa Claus

A variety of Santas from the Museum's collection, donated by Dr. Doris Speicher and others will be showcased in our Kaleidoscope Hallway.

November 25 – December 20, 2014

## Let it Snow, Let it Snow

The Museum becomes a winter wonderland. Over 1,000 Christmas lights and several holiday vignettes will delight visitors as you walk through the model streetscape of Mishawaka. Visitors will also enjoy a Victorian Christmas in miniature in the Guske Dollhouse.

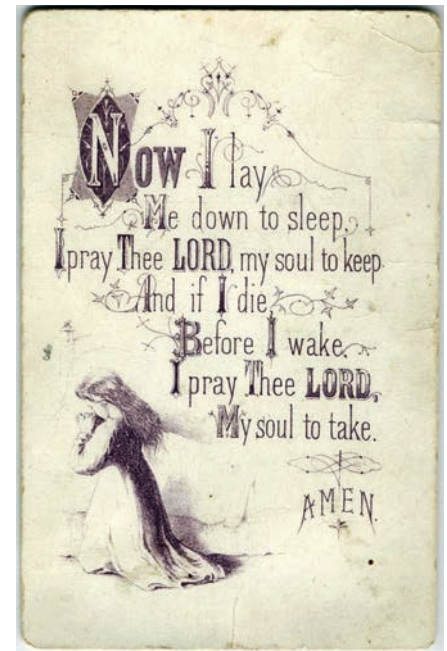
## Stay Tuned!

Coming soon, after 2 years and countless hours of volunteer work, the Museum's Clothing Store re-open! Stay tuned for more news...

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*Reward of Merit card from John W. West, March 1, 1878 (HLCM collection: 2008-15/14)*



*Reward of Merit card to Nancy L. Blough from Nancy K. Starook, 1876 (HLCM collection: 2008-16/14)*



*Reward of Merit card to Nancy Blough from J. W. Wert (HLCM collection: 2008-19/14)*

## Early Mishawaka School History *by Betty Berger Hans*



*Battell School c.1889, First and Second Grade Classes, Teacher: Miss Lydia Brinsmaid, Superintendent: Byron J. Bogue (HLCM collection: 1954-1/33)*

Below are selections from the book, “Early Mishawaka School History” by Betty Berger Hans, former Leader of Hannah Lindahl Children’s Museum. Her series of Mishawaka history books can be purchased from the HLCM gift shop.

**1834** – The first school in Mishawaka, a subscription school, was a small frame building with a stove in the middle of the room. Benches were placed around the stove for the younger children. The older pupils had desks attached to the outer walls and sat with their backs to everyone else. This building was also used as a meetinghouse and was located one block west of Main Street on the north side of the street. Miss Sheldon of White Pigeon, Michigan was the first teacher. She taught in a private residence before the building was erected.

**1837**– George C. Merrifield opened a select school in the Methodist Episcopal Church located on Main Street. Advanced classes were in regular studies, algebra, geometry, natural philosophy and Latin.

**1839** – A regular school building, a low frame, one-room building was built at the southwest corner of Union Street and Fourth Street. There was no regular street there at the time. The school was taught by

George C. Merrifield for several years. The school closed in 1946.

**1840-1845** – A “little red brick” building was the first public schoolhouse, a select school, built on the north side of the Saint Joseph River. It stood on the west side of North Main Street. It was surrounded by Battell Woods and was near no house.

**1869** – A brick building known as the High School was erected on the one-half block on the west side of Hill Street between First and Second Streets. Four large classrooms on the first floor and two large classrooms and the superintended office were on the second floor. The third floor was unfinished. The basement had the heating plant, and rooms for the janitor and his family to live. At this time the school year was seven months of free school.

**1874** – The school term was lengthened to nine months.

**1876** – The opening of school was delayed one week because of a scarlet fever epidemic.

**1877** – Hitching posts for horses were planted on the east side of the High School.

**1878** – This year saw the first graduation class of Mishawaka High School.

**1894** – A sewer system and plumbing was installed in the schools.

**1896** – The School Board voted against allowing football to be played on school grounds. Also, no smoking of cigarettes was allowed while attending school. Offenders were to be punished by whipping if necessary.

**1901** – There were 8 teachers at the High School, 8 teachers at Battell School, 4 teachers at Bingham School, 1 teacher at the Orphan’s Home, High School enrollment was 74 and total school enrollment was 800.

**1902** – The School Board passed a ruling that “Married women are not to be employed as teachers.”

**1903** – A room in the High School was wired for electric lights when night school was organized with classes in penmanship and mechanical drawing.

**1905** – Bell telephones were installed in all schools.

**1916** – A 40-week school year was established.

**1918** – All schools closed in October due to influenza.

**1924** – A new high school building was erected at 1200 Lincoln Way East, and the old building at Lincoln Way West was called Main Junior High School with kindergarten and elementary classes.

This “new” high school building has been added onto numerous times and is the central entrance to our Mishawaka High School today. It was the envy of many a city when it was first built and is an entirely unique and beautiful building today.

### Museum Advisory Board 2014–15

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#### Museum hours:

Tues. – Fri. 9 AM to noon & 1 PM to 4 PM,  
(closed whenever school is not in session in SCM)

**Admission charges:** \$1.00 – Children ages 2 – 4  
\$2.00 – Seniors ages 62+ & students ages 5 – 17  
\$3.00 – Adults  
Free Admission for Museum Members



## 2014 – 2015 Artifactors

### Hall of Fame 15+ Years

Atef M. Tawadros D. D. S  
Bryan Chiropractic Center  
Garden Patch Market  
Gary's Barber/Style Shop  
Interiors, Inc.  
JPD Controls, Inc.  
Magrames Motor Sales  
Michiana Accounting Service  
Weber Electric, Inc.  
Woodcox Cleaning & Restorations

### 11 – 14 Years

1st Source Bank  
Dr. Brian D. Eberhart  
Hard Surface Fabrications, Inc.  
KeyBank  
Schindler, Olson & Currey  
Teachers Credit Union

### 6 – 10 Years

George A Mighion DDS PC  
Magrane Pet Medical Center  
Princess City Dental

### 1 – 5 Years

Hinges & Handles, Inc.  
IP Solutions, Inc.  
Nipsco  
Professional Permits & Municipal  
Solutions

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your support!**



*The mission of the Hannah Lindahl Children's Museum  
is to provide a collection of unique artifacts that encourages families to  
explore, learn, and enjoy the history of the Mishawaka area.*

