Markers, Memorials and Murals

Markers, memorials and murals are tangible reminders of our collective history. Whether to commemorate a community, state or national hero or event, they help us connect to the past. Because they are found in community spaces, such as churches and schools, parks, public squares and cemeteries, present and future generations learn the values of past generations and lessons of history.

These history reminders take on many forms, large and small, elaborately decorative or simple in design. Some designs incorporate sculpture or 3 dimensional objects. Most include a brief written overview of the subject that includes the who, what, where, when and why significant. All markers, memorials and murals are constructed of materials that will endure the outside elements or placed in protective environments.

The deeds of war veterans and battles sites are frequent subjects of markers, memorials or murals. Many United States citizens would recognize the outline of the Vietnam Memorial. Hoosiers would know the War Memorial and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Indianapolis. Locally a large obelisk marks the site of the Battle of Tippecanoe. Its wide base holds a statue of William Henry Harrison and bronze plaques identify the participants of the battle. A mural in the Courthouse depicts the Battle of Tippecanoe. Two cannons from the Civil War rest on the Courthouse lawn and the names of Tippecanoe County war victims killed in action fill memorial plaques on the stone entrances to Memorial Island in Columbian Park.

There is no marker, memorial or mural in Tippecanoe County acknowledging the role of Lafayette's African-American community during the Civil War and Reconstruction. The A.M.E. Church recruited at least 20 men from Lafayette's small black population to serve in the 28th United States Colored Troops. The soldiers participated in the famous battle of the "crater" in the siege of Petersburg, Virginia. Some gave their lives on the battlefield or subsumed to disease. One soldier, Thomas Brown, suffered psychologically from his war experience for the rest of his life. After the war, the A.M.E. Church sheltered newly emancipated slaves from the South. The small congregation also established the only school in the community to teach African-American children and adults.

Your task is to create a set of markers, a memorial or mural that acknowledges the men of Lafayette in the United States Colored Troops. (Almost 100 Hoosiers were represented in the 54th Massachusetts). Your design should fit naturally in the environment. Select a site such as the A.M.E. Church, the Lincoln Center, the Courthouse lawn, Memorial Island in Columbian Park, Greenbush Cemetery or Indiana Veterans Home. Your inscriptions must be historically correct and incorporate a lesson from history.