

## Finding Indiana: Our Search for Place

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When students were asked to describe Indiana, the usual stereotypes emerged – “flat,” “full of corn,” “boring.” But after the *Crossroads of America* seminar, new words were used – “diverse,” “culturally rich,” “ever changing.”

Working to create bridges between scholars and citizens, fourteen students traversed the cultural landscapes collecting objects, images and stories of the people, places and events shaping the Hoosier heartland.

Five teams of three students each researched two differing natural regions of Indiana, evolving local knowledge as they involved themselves in their unique environments.

Part architectural, cultural, and sociological history, this project reveals the way all of us as human beings transform the places in which we find ourselves into places in which we live.

When student teams were not traveling, they spent long hours at the *Virginia Ball Center for Creative Inquiry* designing, modeling and eventually building the interactive exhibit: *Finding Indiana: Our Search for Place*.

The exhibit was first showcased at the *Minnetrista Cultural Center*, our community partner, and then traveled to the communities of our state that were formative in its realization.

Made of Indiana’s state tree, the yellow poplar, the exhibit is a scaffolding for our discoveries, while the fabric story telling pavilion is an interactive place for viewers to share their own stories of Indiana.

Our project allowed viewers to rearrange the things they already knew and find ways to be engaged in things they were discovering, but for us, as one student aptly put it, “our semester was a study in being human.”

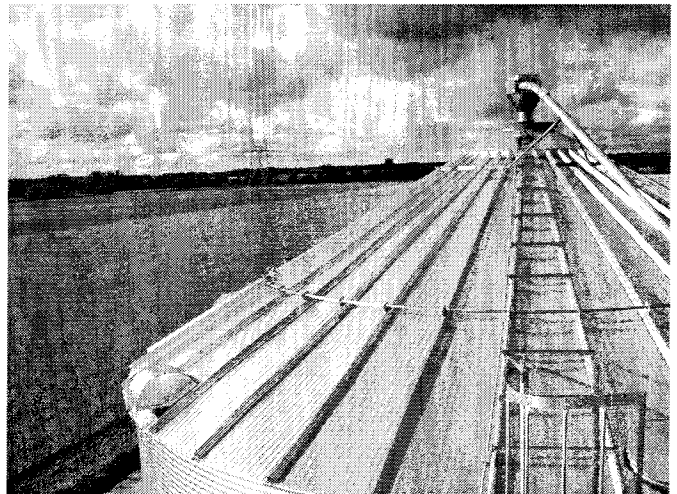


Fig. 1. Agrarian landscape of the Central Till Plain Region of Indiana.



Fig. 2. Crossing the third longest railroad trestle in the United States.

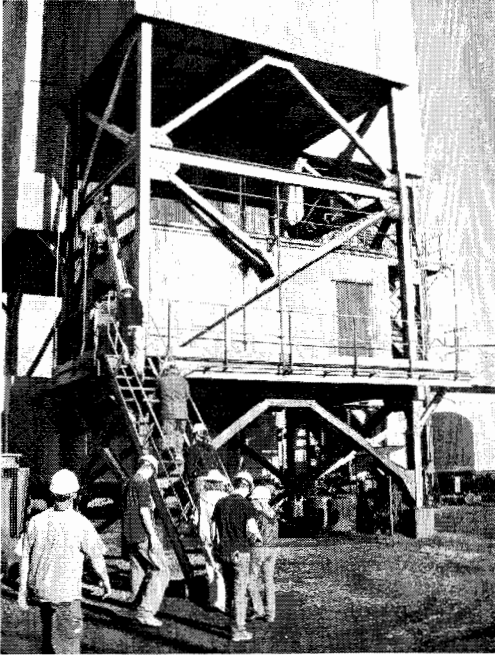


Fig. 3. Students tour Black Beauty Coal Mine in South-western Indiana.



Fig. 4. Students pose for photo at Clinty Falls State Park.



Fig. 5. Pam and Dave Modeling.



Fig. 6. Addey Collaging.



Fig. 7. Jamie and Dave presenting.



Fig. 8. Interaction with Minnetrisca.



Fig. 10. Charity hangs story-telling pavillion.



Fig. 9. Dave and Bobby rip poplar.



Fig. 11. Jamie works in wood shop.



Fig. 12. Charity and Juan layout exhibit panel.

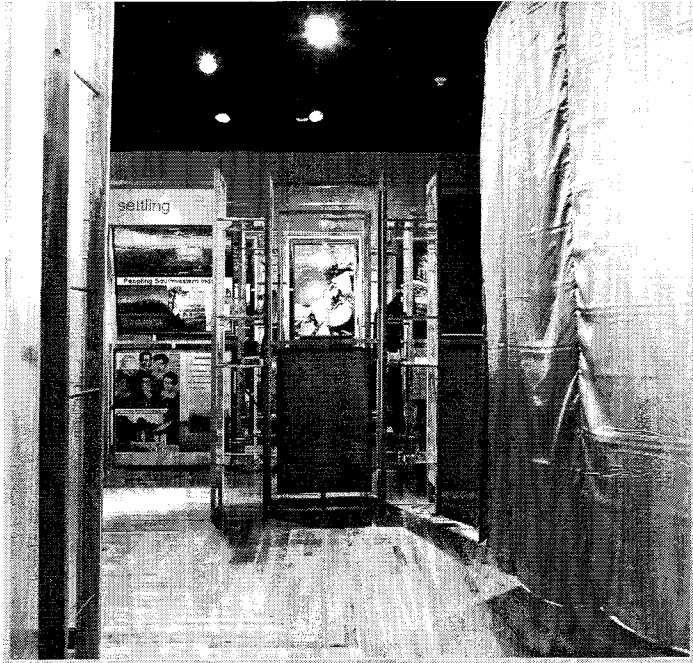


Fig. 13. Entering the exhibit Finding Indiana Our Search 1 or Place.

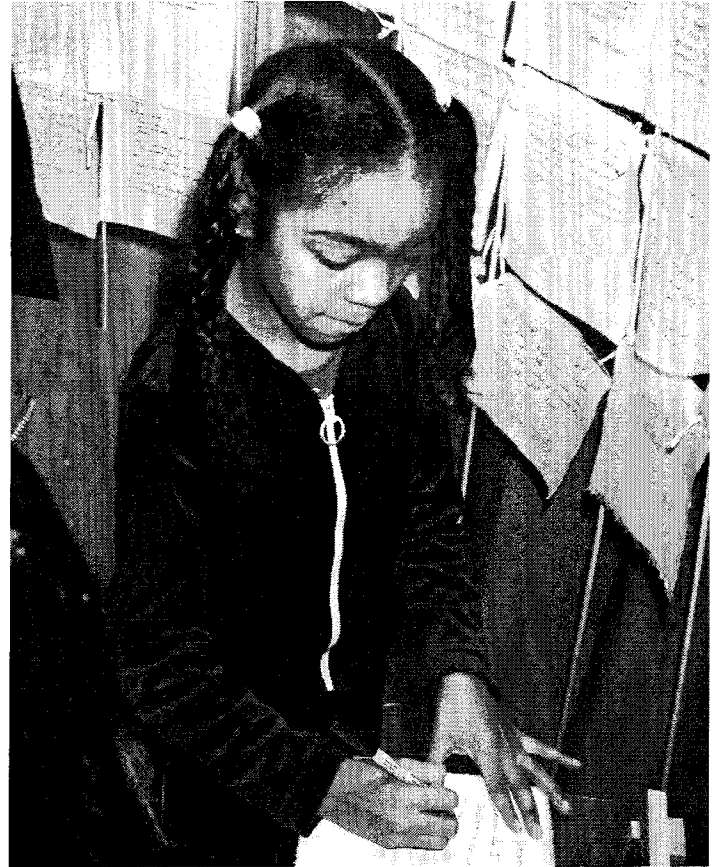


Fig. 15. A young girl leaves her story behind.



Fig. 14. Portal frame of Settling the Land Pavillion.

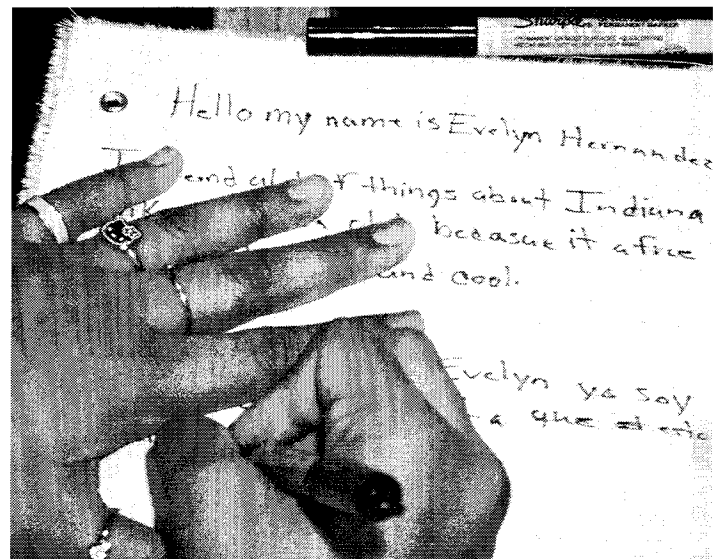


Fig. 16. A muslin fabric piece is woven into the tapestry of collective memories of Indiana.