

Welcome friends!

I would like to personally welcome all visitors and Spencer County residents to the Spencer County Fair. This is a special year in Spencer County along with the City of Rockport. This year we are celebrating our Bicentennial, making 2018 a year of celebration! As we all come together as one community to celebrate our Bicentennial, I would like to thank everyone for the support given to the Spencer County Fair.

The City of Rockport is proud to be a part of the 164th running of the Spencer County Fair. And we are thrilled to have the Fair back to where the fair is at home, Rockport. The City of Rockport, Indiana's most Southern City, welcomes you all!

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A brilliant life — Among many other societal contributions, in 1899, Carl H. Eigenmann (pictured here) served as president of The Indiana Academy of Science. (Eigenmann's Indiana University professor and colleague, David Starr Jordan, served as the first president of the Academy in both 1885 and 1886.) The non-profit organization still exists and dedicates itself to scientific advancement, including many Academy sponsored educational opportunities. The current president is Horia Petrache, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Interim Chair of Physics at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Visit www.indianaacademyofscience.org for more information.

by Casey Uebelhor

I.

In the year 1859 the first publicly funded schools (known then as 'free schools') opened in the South Spencer region of Spencer County.

Those schools were a surprisingly short time coming.

Horace Mann, the well-known Massachusetts Whig, was appointed the first Secretary of Education of Massachusetts in 1837 — the year the Massachusetts Board of Education (the first of its kind) was established. Mann set about initiating a system of American 'common schools', according to the ideals of the constitution, with the intention of providing education to all age-appropriate citizens.

It was a new-fangled concept. And one that Mann firmly believed would "equalize the conditions of men."

Meanwhile, Indiana had its own educational activist in Caleb Mills (also a Whig

Waves of evolution

Rockport's renowned ichthyologist

and the first faculty member of Wabash College). Mills addressed the Indiana General Assembly regarding the matter of 'free schools' in 1846 in a series of six papers (now referenced as *Educational Matters*) signing anonymously, "One of the People."

Over the next half-decade, educators and activists worked tirelessly with (and within) the Indiana General Assembly to design and debate educational reform. A new Indiana state constitution was coming. It arrived in 1851.

Shortly thereafter, the General Assembly answered issues of educational insecurity with legislation, passing the Indiana Free School Law of 1852. The law established the first State Board of Education and a common school fund. It also appointed a Superintendent of Public Instruction (a post that Mills would be elected to hold in 1854).

Most relevant to this story, the innovative new law led to the establishment of Rockport High School, and in 1882, that 'free school' would graduate a young German immigrant — one of the most successful scientists to have ever lived and worked in Indiana.

His name was Carl H. Eigenmann.

II.

Let us linger a moment upon the date of 1859 (first mentioned at the beginning of this piece in reference to the opening of Spencer County 'free schools').

Something monumental happened in 1859 that would influence not only Eigenmann's future, but also the future of science itself. In fact, the event would alter the entire psychology — and the very *definition* — of the human race.

On November 24, 1859, a book was published with a first run of 1,250 copies. It was a modest-looking hardback set in the regular green cloth and gold lettering of the publisher. After 20 years of consideration (most likely fearing personal ruination, public backlash, outright denial and private illness), the au-

“Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people may be engaged in.”

— Abraham Lincoln

thor had finally been persuaded to publish.

The book's spine simply read, *On the Origin of Species*, and below that appeared the author's surname, *Darwin*. But the title page read more completely, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, By Charles Darwin, M.A.

Darwin would report that the publisher, John Murray, London, would sell all 1,250 copies (less the 30-some copies used by Murray for review) on the first day of sale. Another 3,000 copies would be hastily printed in early

January 1860. By mid January the book was being read in the United States, having been speedily pushed to press by Appleton's, New York.

With the book's publication, western society en masse was introduced to the most significant scientific theory since Copernicus's 16th century model of heliocentrism — *The Theory of Evolution* — and for the first time, humankind was charged with considering itself as not a separate entity from the animal kingdom, but an interrelated part of it.

The Origin of Species (as it is now referenced) outlined two key points. First, Darwin theorized that all life on Earth is connected, related. Secondly, the book detailed the argument for natural selection — the concept that certain traits are favored in natural environments over others and that this favor leads to the modification of heritable traits in populations.

Those realizations, scientifically described, influenced *everything*. The Theory of Evolution was like a massive detonation, generating tremor upon tremor of scientific discovery. Art, government, religion and every discipline of science exploded in its wake, and the aftermath of advancement due to Darwin's single publication has not subsided.

(Continued on page 3)