

# Harrison County Community Foundation

## Leora Brown School Fund

The Leora Brown School Fund was created as a designated fund within the Harrison County Community Foundation in 2001. The Fund was created to support the Leora Brown School (formerly the 1891 Corydon Colored School), one of the oldest-standing elementary/secondary schools in Harrison County and in fact in Indiana. The school is listed on the Indiana Register of Historic Places. The school was renamed for Leora Brown Farrow, a former student and teacher at the Corydon Colored School. She graduated from this school in 1923 and after studying at Miss Blaker's Teachers College in Indianapolis, returned to teach at the Corydon Colored School in 1924. She taught there until the school was closed as a segregated facility in 1950, or longer than any other teacher. Leora Brown died in 1987 at the age of 82.

Leora Brown was born November 24, 1904 in Corydon to George Alfred Brown and Lula Mitchem Brown, both of whom were descendents of families who settled in Harrison County during its early history. The Mitchems settled in Harrison County in 1814 as a part of an unusual enclave who relocated to this area from Virginia and North Carolina. The Browns relocated to Harrison County from Kentucky about 1866, or after the Civil War. Alfred Brown, George Brown's father, escaped slavery in Meade County, Kentucky, with the aid of the Underground Railroad.

In 1987, Leora Brown's niece, Maxine F. Brown, purchased the school and donated it to a newly-formed not-for-profit organization that she organized, the Leora Brown School, Inc. Initial funding for rehabilitating the building was provided by Miss Brown, along with contributions from many interested citizens, foundations, and corporations. The Hometown Indiana Grant program, a part of the Build Indiana Fund, provided \$25,000 that was immediately released by allowing the new non-profit to use the \$25,000 that Maxine Brown had paid for the building as the local match.

The Brown School currently functions as a cultural/educational center and hosts many events such as weddings, parties, college classes, art exhibits, music recitals and much more. Thus, the school functions as both a historical site and a cultural/educational center. The building has enriched tourism in Harrison County as both students and adults are attracted to the facility. Recently, the Leora Brown School worked to preserve the Carter House, which was also built about 1891. The Carter House, the home of Leonard Carter, an African-American Civil War veteran, which was moved to a lot adjacent to the Brown School, will be rehabilitated as a companion project to the Brown School. The addition of this historic site will enrich the interpretation of the history of African Americans in Harrison County.

The citizens of Harrison County place a great value on the history of their community. Preserving the rich history of Harrison County is an important part of the mission of the Harrison County Community Foundation.

