

ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE

February 2021

Cedarville Area Historical Society



The Museum is temporarily closed due to the Coronavirus outbreak. We will email and post on Facebook with updates.

Museum Updates

Annual Luncheon Cancelled

Due to dangerous, frigid temperatures, the board decided to cancel the “drive up and carry out” version of the annual luncheon. In order to provide our members the information that we normally pass out at the annual meeting, we will be including a copy of the annual financial report and an update for board member elections.

The following is submitted:

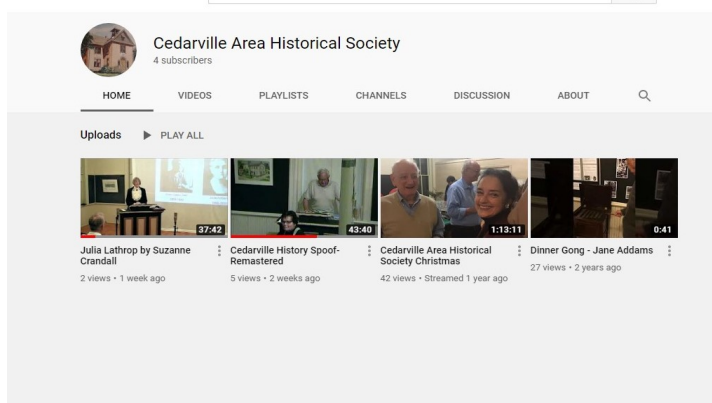
Ballot for 2021 Board Members

As a member of the Cedarville Area Historical Society, I have been given a copy of the annual financial report for the year 2020. The document meets with my approval.

I also approve of the election of Lisa Goodwin, Moira Knowlton and Steve Myers as members of the Society's board of directors for a three year term beginning February 7, 2021. They currently serve as directors.

If you are a member and **do not** agree with the statements above, please email the CAHS at info@cedarvilleareahistoricalociety.org stating so.

Programs Available on YouTube



In order to brighten your winter, CAHS is making available many programs from the last 17 years on YouTube. Our latest addition, “Battle of Antietam” by Gordon Dammann presented on May 14, 2013.

Please go to Youtube and search “Cedarville Area Historical Society” to find us.

“Like” our page at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtNjKA5hA5R5ZSVO2bEGfBA> to get automatic upload updates.

A Cedarville History Mystery Has Been Solved

Part 1 of 2

By Jim Bade
President Emeritus

A Cedarville history mystery has been solved thanks to Sherry Maves, columnist for the Freeport Journal Standard.

Displayed for several years in the museum's second floor art gallery is a wonderful acrylic painting by a hitherto unknown artist. Thanks to Sherry's knowledge and keen eye the artist has been identified as the late Lois Ruth Fink Duray, going by the artist name of "Wyka."



Born in Cedarville on August 26, 1921, to Oscar and Nellie Fink, Lois was near the tail end of a large family that numbered nine or ten children, according to various records. That does not include any children or stepchildren of her father's short marriage to a previously married woman who died in 1896, at the age of 35.

Several versions of Lois's life agree on three things: One, she apparently did not plan on being an artist. She accidentally grew into the role. Two, she had at least five, maybe six husbands. Three, she was a talented, bright, charming and outgoing person.

Little is known of her early life in the village other than the family in the 1920s and most of the 1930s lived in a two story small brick house on the southeast corner of Harrison and Cherry streets across from the general store that was owned for 26 years by Glen and Flossie Bear and then by Jesse Purdue.

Marilyn Allen of Freeport, a niece of Lois, in a



"This was the Josh Fink family home in the 20s and 30s. The attachment to the left was built in the 60s by Ruth Garr and her husband."

(Description written in 1997 by the late LeRoy Wilson, whose older sister Marcette was an eighth grade graduate with Lois Fink. The house is on the southeast corner of Cherry and Harrison Streets, Cedarville. It is probable that LeRoy Wilson was familiar with the house because of his sister's relationship to Lois. Josh Fink was the brother of Oscar Fink, father of Lois Fink. Photo taken by Paul Kryder in 1997.)

memo said "My mother (the former Evelyn Fink) always told me they were the poorest family in Cedarville and that she and her brothers and sisters were teased and taunted because of their lack of money and the clothes they had to wear. She also told me often of the crowded sleeping in beds that had three or four children in one bed. The girls slept in one room and the boys slept in another."

Lois Wyka Painting - "Childhood Home Cedarville"



Cedarville in the 1920s was not the village of the 750 residents it is today. The population was about 250, some from families that had many branches such as the Finks, Kryders and Franks, the others of a more diverse back-

ground . A few had moved from farm to city life. The village provided soldiers and sailors for World War I and presumably suffered from the worldwide devastating Spanish Flu, although there is no reliable information of its impact on the local population. There is also no indication at least in the local press that the people flew wildly into what is now called "The Roaring Twenties." Walking and horse and buggy were still the choices of getting around rather than an often unreliable car.

Oscar, Lois's father, was born in 1860, and was twenty four years older than his second wife and Lois's mother, the former Nellie Dwyer, a local girl. At one time he was a farmer or delivered mail to the rural areas by horse and buggy. Perhaps his most responsible job was as a rug weaver. His skill was even lauded in a 1905 article in the Freeport Standard newspaper.

Better known in Cedarville was Oscar's younger brother Clinton, a blacksmith by trade and perhaps the best musician in the village over a 60 year period. He is given credit as the organizer and leader of the Cedar Cliff Band and was a premier member of the Freeport Concert Band. Ironically, the two men both died in 1946.



1936 eighth grade graduation class, Cedarville School: Front row left to right: Lois Fink, Delmer Meyers, Russell Korth, Ferne Lutz. Back row left to right: Marcette Wilson, Dorothy Miller, Paul Bertram, Ruth Bertram, Betty Fransen.

Lois attended Cedarville School and was among the students who sang in the Cedarville Ceme-

tery on the 1935 day when Jane Addams was buried. Lois also appears in a 1936 photo of the nine member eighth grade graduating class. Her classmates were Delmer Meyers, Russell Korth, Ferne Lutz, Marcette Wilson, Dorothy Miller, Paul Bertram, Ruth Bertram and Betty Fransen, familiar names even today.



Michael Dwyer, Cedarville school custodian and once owner of house at SW corner of Cedarville Rd. and Adams St. Possibly 1910 photo. Lived 1857—1943. Maternal grandfather of Cedarville artist Lois Fink (Wyka) Duray.

Interestingly, Michael Dwyer, Lois's maternal grandfather, reportedly was a custodian at Cedarville School, possibly when she was a student. After eighth grade graduation It is not known whether Lois enrolled in Cedarville's two year high school program or later attended school in Freeport.

Continued in next issue...

Cedarville Area Historical Society
1212 S. Stewart Ave, Freeport IL 61032

Postage

Return Service Requested

Museum Hours (Temporarily Closed)

April –October

Saturday 1-4PM

Sunday 1-4PM

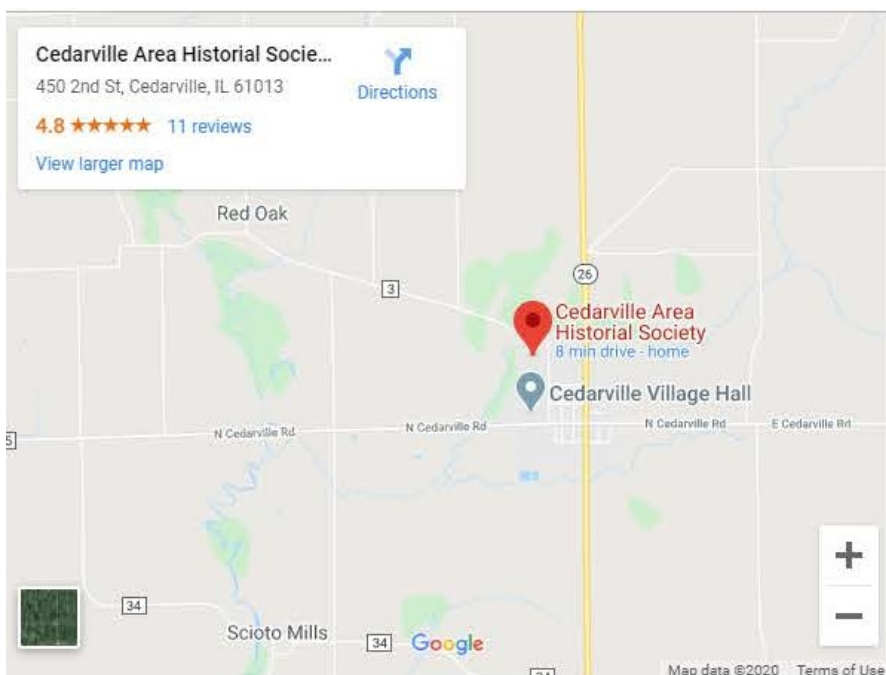
Or by appointment by calling

815-990-0417 or 815-847-9127

We Want Your Stories

Email us your stories or antidotes about Cedarville or the Cedarville area. We will present them in following newsletters. Email

***If you have not renewed your membership, please do so.
We need your support. Thank you.***



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The society is recognized as a non-profit organization by Illinois and the U.S. government