

ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE

SEPTEMBER 2019

Cedarville Area Historical Society



Legion Gifts \$900 to Historical Society

The Cedarville American Legion Post 1224 has contributed \$900 to the work of the Cedarville Area Historical Society.

The announcement of the gift was made by Steve Myers, commander of the local Legion unit. Myers is also vice president of the board of CAHS.

The funds were the result of the Legion's two day operation of the brat stand at Cubs supermarket in Freeport. The food chain makes the stand available to local area non-profit organizations who then agree to make the stand profits available for non-profit use.

The Legion determined the \$900 was available for distribution to other non-profit organizations after the Legion had met its goal of realizing enough funds to cover the cost of restoring the wheels on the World War I artillery cannon in the Cedarville Cemetery. The military piece, which has never been fired, is an integral part of the joint Memorial Day ceremony conducted by the Legion and the Cedarville Area Historical Society.

In making the announcement, Myers commented that the Legion membership voted this first time action because of the close association over many years of the Legion and the historical society.

"The Legion and CAHS have coordinated their activities every year during the Memorial Day celebration. That includes the Mill Street parade, the cemetery program and the picnic luncheon on the grounds of the society," he said..

He added that the historical society also permits the Legion to hold its meetings in the museum building at no cost to the Legion.

Jim Bade, president of CAHS, applauded the gesture by Post 1224. "I anticipate that our close association to this organization of American military veterans will continue."

The historical society has taken advantage of the Cubs program in previous years but was unable to do so this year, according to Bade.

CAHS Rides the Ripples of History

By Jim Bade
CAHS President

A pebble thrown into a quiet pond creates an ever widening circle of ripples. The introduction of a new piece of history into our concept of the past leads to another piece that leads to another . . .

This comparison became apparent during a conversation with Cedarville's Jim and Sharon Barmore. As historical society members they were weekend hosts at the museum and — as is my usual practice — I stopped to make sure the day was going well.



Bellview Cemetery entrance

Our conversation drifted to Bellview School on Buckeye Road, the north boundary of the township. The white frame building no longer exists. The school interests me because the mother of my late wife taught there in 1918. Mary Dickson was a recent Chicago area high school graduate who moved to Cedarville where her father, Rev. John Dickson, had just become minister of the Methodist Church on Mill Street.

Jim mentioned there is now only the Bellview Cemetery and a residence at the intersection of Bellview and Buckeye roads where once also was the school, a Lutheran church and a cheese factory.

A historian cannot resist the story behind missing puzzle pieces.

I started with the cemetery because it still exists. Fortunately, Gary Price, treasurer of the Stephenson County Genealogical Society, for many years has been compiling information about individual cemeteries in Stephenson County. The Cedarville Area Historical Society has a copy of his 28 page report on Bellview and it is packed with detailed information.

With Gary's report in mind, I contacted Dennis Fryer, sexton of the cemetery. He lamented that he has some records of the cemetery, but he wishes he had more. Neither Dennis nor Gary could give an exact date for the birth of the cemetery, but both agreed the date of the first burial would be an approximate answer.

The first reliable date is November, 1843, with the burial of Hannah Ermold, 23-year-old daughter of George and Barbara Ermold. The Ermolds were a prominent family with large land holdings in the area. There are eleven Ermold burials listed in Gary's book.

As important as this information is, the

1845 burial of Sarah Canfil is in many respects more historically interesting.

The 40-year-old Sarah was the first wife of James Canfil, an Ohio transplant then living north of Red Oak who is generally credited with making bricks in the early 1850s that were used in Cedarville buildings. That might include many homes, the 1852 Evangelical Lutheran and German Reformed Church that no longer exists on Cedar street and the 1855 school building on the Second street hill. Both 270 N. Mill Street and 300 N. Mill, once the location of a brick home, claim an 1851 construction date.

The historical society has substantial evidence the brick kilns were on Canfil's property near Richland Creek.



Cedarville's 1852 Evangelical Lutheran and German Reformed Church sketch by Ronald Beam

The 1855 school was replaced in 1888 by a new school building that is now the Cedarville Museum. Although it appears the original limestone foundation was retained for the 1888 building, there are questions how much of that building is actually new. There are also questions whether the 1888 bricks came from the Canfil kilns because it is possible that operation was going out of business about that time and there were other brick makers in the area. Unfortunately, some of this is speculation because very few reliable records exist on the subject.

Besides Sarah, there are almost a dozen other Canfils buried in Bellview including James (died at age 84, 1888, from injuries received while being attacked by a bull), his second wife (also Sarah) and many children. Another son, his wife and their child are buried in the Cedarville Cemetery.

The death date of James Canfil's first wife suggests the family came to the Red Oak area earlier than previously thought, raising the question "Were bricks from Canfil used earlier than the 1850s." Again, speculation.

The Bellview school is another puzzle. It was probably built after 1837.

The 1871, 1894 and 1913 county plat books locate the school on the southeast corner of Bellview and Buckeye roads. A listing of the 1944 county schools indicates it had seven pupils that year.

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*Jane (happy) and Roger (pensive)
Goodspeed*



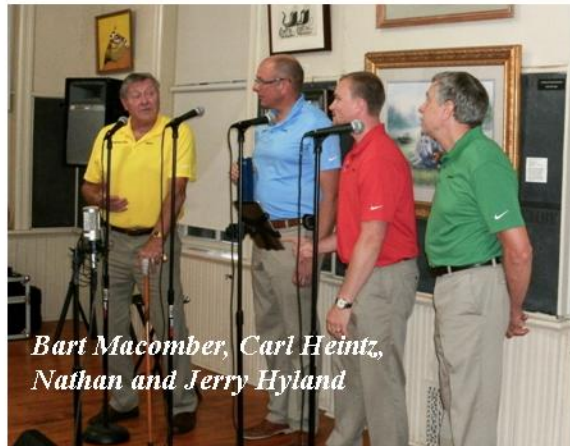
Carole Bertram, Steve Myers



*1, 2, 3, 4 Len kCummins, Lorraine Stabenow,
Ramona Kryder and Marilyn Nelson*



*Nan Mosher, first
in line for food*



*Bart Macomber, Carl Heintz,
Nathan and Jerry Hyland*



Dan and Bobbie Edler



*The name of the of the barbershop
quartet spells the atmosphere of the
August 20 Tuesday night end of the
museum summer music season!!*



*Albert Scheider, I, and
Bart Macomber, quar-
tet baritone*



Carol Meyers, hostess and food taster



*Nathan Hyland, quartet
lead, and Marilyn Nelson*



*Official photographer
Lisa Goodwin, at work*

Albert Scheider, originally from Red Oak and now Orangeville, believes it might have burned down but is not sure. Dennis Fryer believes it was vacant, then dismantled and buried on the site in the late 1960s, but he is not sure. All that is sure is that there is a vacant piece of land where the school once was before you find the Bellview Cemetery sign and entrance to the burial ground. Fryer said the cemetery acquired the school property. It's impossible to avoid the comment that if the school remains were buried there, they are in the right place.

The story of the Bellview church is a simple piece of a much more complex religious movement.

According to extensive research done by Freeport's Art Stees, a retired Lutheran minister., the Bellview church was the work of Rev. George Donnemeyer, 37, of Pennsylvania who arrived in the area in 1851 to establish Lutheran churches in northern Illinois. He was encouraged by his father-in-law, a recent settler in Stephenson County, who gave Donnemeyer 80

acres. He later also acquired a residential lot in Buena Vista.

At least one of the minister's tasks was to bring various ethnic populations together to form viable Lutheran churches. The area had several northern European groups, but German and English speaking were the largest.

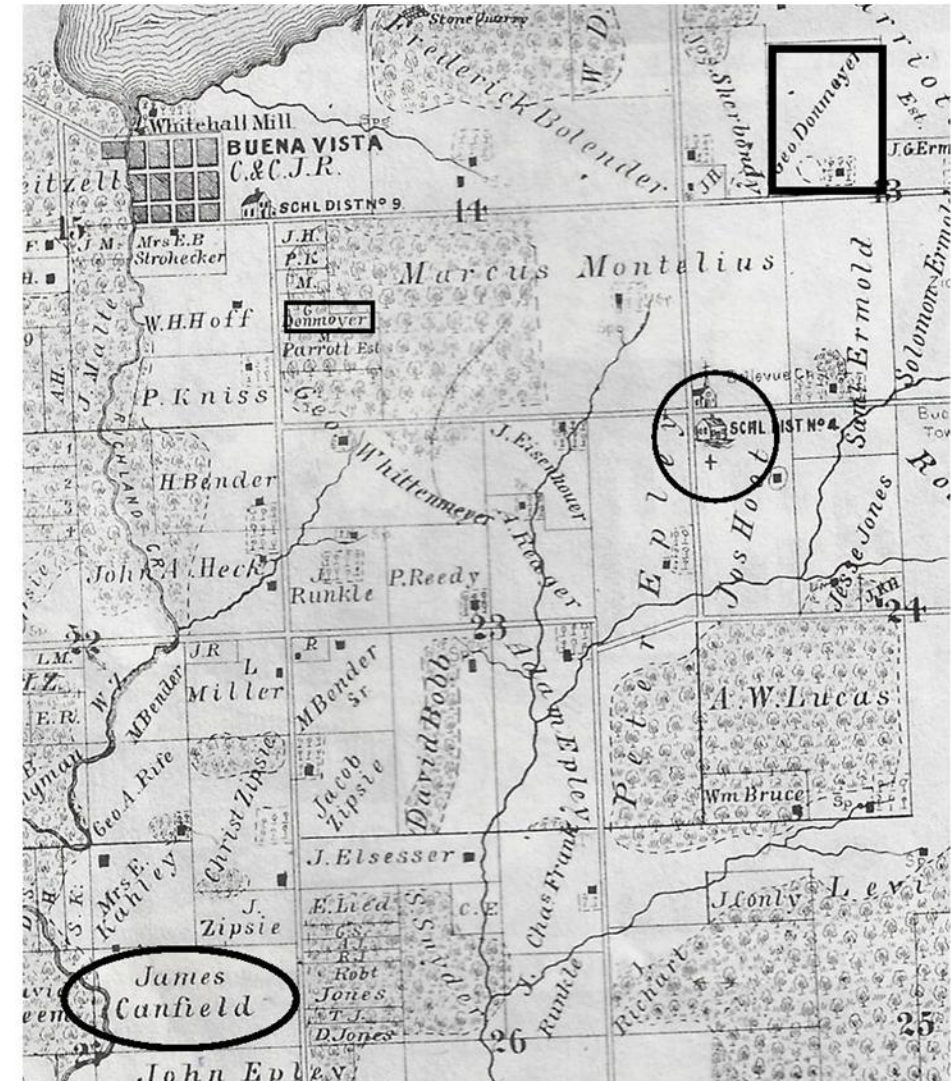
Although there is no specific date for the Bellview church, which was built on Buckeye Road across from the school, it was probably soon after Donmeyer arrived in the area. The historical society has no photo of the church, but it was probably a frame building.

According to the 1970 Stephenson County history, the church suffered a decline of membership that started in 1947 and reached a peak in 1958 when the congregation merged with the Richland Salem Church and the building was razed.

Of particular interest to people in Cedarville in the mid nineteenth century was the building in 1852 of the Evangelical Lutheran and German Reformed Church on Cedar street. With land from George Ilgen, Cedarville's first developer, it was one of the early works of Rev. Donmeyer. John Addams attended this church.

The church was brick, modern in style and with a basement. A sketch of the church by the late Ron Beam is on the previous page of this article.

Area involved in this article 1871



Turn to next page for conclusion of article

The church was also given an acre for a "burial ground" immediately west of what is now the Cedarville museum. The few bodies buried there were moved to the present cemetery on Red Oak Road prior to the twentieth century.

In 1917 the church ceased to operate and the Cedar street building was sold to the non-profit Community Christian Association to be used as a community center. After financial problems, the building in 1967 was given to the village who sold it to the present Evangelical Church. The building was demolished and the land is now part of the church's parking lot.

Rev. Donnemeyer, later operating out of Buena Vista, was responsible for many other Lutheran churches in the northern Illinois area. He died in 1887 at the age of 72.

And now we come to the cheese factory once located on the southwest corner of Bellview and Buckeye roads. It too is a problem.

People who live in the area or used to live in the area told me they remember it, but know nothing about it except maybe the last owner went back to Pennsylvania. Then the building was converted into a residence. Don Franz, CAHS board member, said he once worked with a man who lived in the house, but he died. Another person told me the widow left the area. Assuming the current resident would know nothing of value, I decided not to inquire. A mistake?

The county assessor's office did have one bit of information: It has a 1939 aerial photo showing the cheese factory at that location.

The historical society looks forward to being flooded with information from persons professing to know all about the cheese factory on Bellview and Buckeye roads.

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Also on Facebook

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Carol Meyers, Director
Don Franz, Director
Moirra Knowlton, Director
Lisa Goodwin, Director

The society is recognized as a non-profit organization by Illinois and the U.S. government and has been designated as eligible for tax deductible gifts under IRS tax code regulation 501 (c)(3).