

# **ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE APRIL 2014**

***Cedarville Area Historical Society***



## *Museum Doors Open Saturday May 3*

The Cedarville Museum will open Saturday afternoon, May 3, for the six month 2014 season.

The first floor will feature a dozen exhibits including a new four by eight foot panel of photos spotlighting the Cedarville Volunteer Fire Department prepared with the help of Mari and Darrel Heck. Darrel is assistant chief of the fire fighters.

Also new is the expansion of the Jane Addams family exhibit which now includes the entire south room.

Other exhibits, all located in the north room, include Cedarville's participation in the Civil War; the origin of the early settlers in Buckeye Township; clothing worn by nineteenth and early twentieth century Cedarville area residents; Addams family burials in the Cedarville Cemetery; arrowheads and spear points found in Stephenson County; and trivets used as stands for early pressing irons.

On the second floor is the Cedarville

Historical Society's gallery of original art work portraying the history of the village. Almost two dozen paintings by local artists are included. A booklet with information about each work is available.

The gallery room, also known as the LeRoy Wilson Theater, is also used for the society's Tuesday evening programs. The second floor is easily reached by visitors who are physically handicapped by using the museum's one button elevator.

Admission to the museum is free for historical society members. Non-members will pay \$3.

## **Free Friday Night Movie List Coming**

The eight June and July free Friday night outdoor movies at the museum will be published in the May issue of the newsletter, according to Sue and Steve Myers, event directors. Plan to attend the shows and enjoy the refreshments.

# Those Old Yellowed Envelopes Hold Surprises

By Jim Bade  
President, CAHS

I have started the tedious task of re-inventorying the artifact, photo and document collection of the historical society. It's time consuming but necessary if the society is to know what is available for exhibits and research and where it is located.

Several inventories were completed in the past, but many new items have been added to the collection that might not have been recorded and I suspect some were removed because they were not in our field of interest. This work will also give us the opportunity to record our holdings in a searchable computer program rather than on 3 by 5 index cards, the cumbersome system that has been used up to now.

During my first day of box opening, I was amazed to discover in one envelope historically important information unknown to me and in three other envelopes information that smacked of strangeness or fascinating minutia.

I start with the first envelope.

The basic story of the mid nineteenth century brick building on Cedar Street that was shared by the Evangelical Church and the German Reformed Church is well known by most Cedarville residents who hark back to the 1960s or earlier. This was where the Adams family worshiped. Built in the early 1850s, the building was sold in 1916 to the Community Christian Association after the two congregations were dissolved. The CCA was a membership organization dedicated to social and sports activities. The CCA was a successful operation until the 1960s when poor financial health forced the sale of the building and the

two lots it occupied to the village which then sold the property to the Emmanuel Evangelical Church. The building was demolished and the lots are now part of the EEC parking lot.

It was the abstract pertaining to the two lots that attracted my attention. When George Ilgen, Cedar-



*The building on Cedar Street when it was no longer a church*

ville's first residential developer, sold the lots to the churches in 1851, he also included one acre for a "burial ground" to be located west of what is now 290 Mill Street. The legal description puts the cemetery west of the Cedarville Museum and indeed a small cemetery was there for many years, but the bodies were removed prior to 1900. There is no record of the number of persons buried there, but about a dozen were moved to the Cedarville Cemetery on Red Oak Road. Some people believe not all of the bodies were dug up, but that's another story that is usually resurrected near October 31. Interestingly, this acre was not included in the 1916 church sale. The village acquired the land in 1981 as abandoned property and the public works building now occupies part of the acre.

In envelope two I found an undated, typed, short paragraph on yellowed paper. It was a petition to the village board signed in pencil by 42 (I counted them) men and women who presumably were residents of

Cedarville. It was written before 1919 because one of the signatories was Reuben Sigfried who died that year. In its entirety the petition reads:

*"To the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Cedarville. We, the undersigned, residents of the Village of Cedarville, County of Stephenson and State of Illinois, do hereby petition your Honorable Body to pass an ordinance to perpetually protect all squirrels within the corporate limits of said Village."*

I do not know whether the trustees acted on this request and I hesitate to ask the village clerk to search the records for the answer. However, if you want to know whether one of your ancestors signed this unusual petition, please contact me. Current observation leads me to believe the squirrels did not need any protection.

The document in envelope three is also short and apparently was written in 1887.

*"We the undersigned agree to pay the sum set opposite our names for the purpose of buying a horse to replace the one that died for E. C. Harris, Cedarville, Ills., Jun 7, 1887."*

Following the promise are eleven signatures with pledges ranging from twenty five cents to five dollars and totaling \$15.25. Four pledges are marked paid. I wonder what a horse cost in 1887? I wonder if all the pledges were paid? I wonder if Mr. E. C. Harris got a new horse? I wonder what caused the death of his horse?

Finally the fourth envelope. It contained an 1890 warranty deed transferring a lot on Cherry Street from members of the John Wright family to the village of Cedarville. The 26 foot lot cost the village \$25 with the proceeds to be divided among six Wright family members. I wonder what \$4.17 would



*Once the Cedarville village hall and jail, the building on the \$25 lot is now preserved by the Cedarville Area Historical Society.*

buy in 1890? The lot became the site of the first village hall and two cell jail. The building still stands and is owned by the Cedarville Area Historical Society, but the jail cells were removed years ago.

I guess history is just a bowl of mixed candy.

**Cedarville Area Historical Society**  
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*Carol Meyers, director*  
*Don Franz, 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).

## Time to Choose Your Society Programs

Tickets are now available for the historical society's 2014 Tuesday evening programs at the museum. Choose from the list below or make it easy and attend all of them. All programs start at 7 p.m.

On May 13 Dr. Edward Finch, retiring executive director of the Stephenson County Historical society and Museum will speak on the early industrialists of Stephenson County — W. T. Rawleigh, Daniel Stover and the Henneys of Cedarville.

On June 17 Joe Ginger, president of the Stephenson County Genealogical Society will straighten out a lot of people who want to learn their family's history when he presents "Genealogy for Dummies."

Steve Cole, Freeport historian and genealogist, on July 15 will play the role of Frederick Douglass, pre-Civil War abolitionist, writer and lecturer, and explain Douglass's relationship to Freeport and describe his visits to the city.

The history series concludes with the August 19 appearance of Steve Simpson, earth science instructor at Highland Community College, who will explore the pre-history of Stephenson County.

Three special music programs on September 9 and 30 and October 14 will mark the return of Carl Cole of Rockford who will play popular songs of American composers on the Cedarville Museum's 1906 upright piano



*Eddward  
Finch*



*Joe  
Ginger*



*Steve  
Cole*



*Steve  
Simpson*



*Carl  
Cole*

## TICKET ORDER

		Number of <u>Tickets</u>
Tuesday, May 13, Edward Finch "Early Stephenson County Industrialists"	\$7	_____
Tuesday, June 17, Joe Ginger "Genealogy for Dummies"	\$7	_____
Tuesday, July 15, Steven Cole "Freeport and Frederick Douglass"	\$7	_____
Tuesday, August 19, Steven Simpson "Stephenson County before Man"	\$7	_____
Single ticket for all four programs above	\$24	_____
Tuesday, Sept. 9, 30, Oct. 14, Carl Cole Popular songs by American composers on the museum's 1906 upright piano Single ticket <b>only</b> for the three performances. Seating limited to 40 persons on first floor.	\$22	_____
TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED	\$	_____

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone or E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Make payment to Cedarville Area Historical Society, P. O. Box 336,  
Cedarville, IL 61013. For more information call Jim Bade, 815-563-4485 or  
e-mail [bonniebade@comcast.net](mailto:bonniebade@comcast.net).

## The Cedarville Thespians: Part Two

*(In the March newsletter, former Cedarville resident Peggy Schoonhoven began the story of her 15 years with the Cedarville Players, an active troop of theater enthusiasts in the village. Her story continues. Editor)*

One of my favorite plays came along in March of 1950. Called "Three Fingers in the Door", it was a mystery/comedy. It seemed perfect for both Chris Bertram and me so that meant extra rehearsals during the week. *(In the previous article, Peggy commented that she and Bertram were a good team in another play and they often put in extra rehearsal time.)*

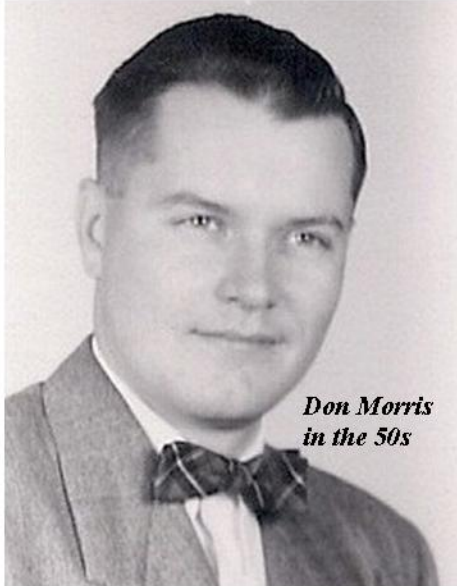
This was a play where I was on stage during most of the production and hardly had time to catch my breath. The setting was in the living room of a dilapidated mansion. I wore black vintage style



*Peggy Schoonhoven in 2011*

clothes and had to powder my hair to make me look old and gray. Sorry to say I don't remember the plot, but I must have been the villain.

In the fall of 1950 we did a musical called "The Darkies Jamboree." The show included a male quartet from Freeport High School featuring Don Morris, Jerry Studebaker, Ronnie Carr and Don Dame. *(Don Morris was a Cedarville*



*Don Morris  
in the 50s*

*teacher and principal in the 1950s. Ed.)*

George Geisburger tap danced to "Moonlight Saving Time" and "Anchors Away." I sang with a women's quintet and still have a vivid memory of forget-

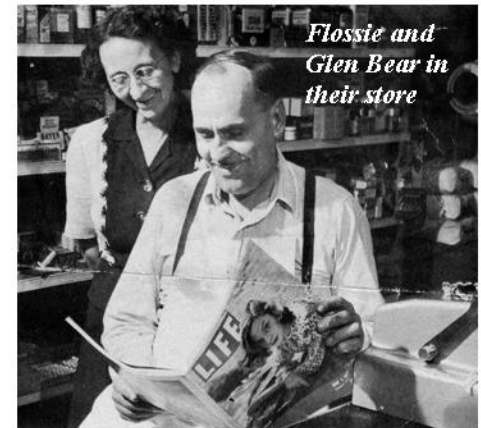
ting the words of the last verse which I was to sing solo. My mind said "hum", the other girls joined in and we finished with the chorus. I don't think the audience knew the difference, but I was mortified and relived the incident for a long time afterward.

I really don't know why I agreed to direct a play in March 1951, but I did. Rehearsals began for "Meet My Wives" and with them came all the stress and frustration that accompanies the responsibility for the details of producing a good play. All went well, but at that point in my life I decided I was better at acting than directing so that became my first and last experience as a director.

My last appearance on the Cedarville stage was in a gay nineties review in January 1952. There were forty people in the cast and many of us were in costumes from the 1890s. In those days I was singing with a quartet directed by Kay Frank. I also did "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" as a solo. Even my dear mom was in costume and dancing in a chorus line for the opening of the show that night. What fun!

According to information in the archives of the Cedarville Area Historical Society, early minstrel shows, plays and musicals date back to 1907 and had a resurgence in the 1920s. In reading over some of the material, I found my stepfather, Glen Bear, was very active in the *(1920s)* productions. His nickname at that time was Peggy Bear, which became very confus-

ing for my mother since my birth name was Peggy. As time passed, my mother, relatives and friends never used his nickname and that solved the problem.



*Flossie and  
Glen Bear in  
their store*

Since he was a quiet sort of man, it was hard for me to picture him singing and dancing. I soon learned he was a good musician when I heard him play his trombone and sing in the church choir with me.

As a final recap to my story, let it be known that those theatrical years of my twenty years in Cedarville are some of the most memorable and I shall always treasure them. Thanks to the Cedarville Players — many of them are gone now — for all the great memories you gave me and all the funds we were able to raise for the repair of the Community House. We also did some other fund raisers for worthwhile projects. Now, at the age of 88, I can still "Take a walk back in my mind" and it always makes me smile.

## *Welton to Head County Historical Society*

Lena resident Sharon Welton has been named executive director of the Stephenson County Historical Society and Museum. She assumed the position March 30, replacing retiring director Edward Finch.

The appointment was announced by Connie Sorn, historical society president.

“Ms. Welton, who most recently was the executive director of the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies in Mt. Carroll, Il., brings considerable expertise to the historical society,” Sorn said.

The press release announcing the appointment said that Welton “has six years of non-profit directorship experience, experience in programming, arboretum and master gardening, budget and financial planning, artifact collections care and exhibit design, as well as a commitment to the local community and to its history.”

Welton has been a member of the Lena Area Historical Society since 1988 serving in a variety of capacities including as project director for the 2006 museum expansion and has served on the board of directors of the Stephenson County Historical Society since 2010, according to the announcement.

In commenting on the choice of Welton,



*Sharon Welton*

Society President Sorn said “After a thorough search, the board of directors believes that Sharon will be a wonderful new director. Her museum background, collections and arboretum expertise and passion for Stephenson County history will serve to expand our programming and exhibits and will assist us in our mission of preserving and promoting Stephenson County history.

“She will work closely with the Freeport Park District, owner of the museum complex, to insure that the museum continues to be one of the premier attractions in our area.”