

ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE

JANUARY 2017

Cedarville Area Historical Society



Society Again Partners with College

This spring the Cedarville Area Historical Society will again partner with Highland Community College in an in-depth look at the history of Cedarville through some of its institutions and people.

The March and April programs will be held in the Cedarville Museum on four Tuesday evenings. Enrollment will be limited to thirty persons.

The four sessions of one hour each will be team taught by Andy Dvorak, history instructor at the college, and Jim Bade, president of the historical society. Both will participate in all sessions.

The programs will be at 7:30 p.m. on March 14, March 28, April 11 and April 25. Although scheduled to be one hour, they will be longer if needed to cover the material.

Session one: The coming of the railroad to Freeport in the 1850s and its extension into Buckeye Township several years later. Scioto Mills, Red Oak and Buena Vista will be included.

Session two: The John Addams family from its arrival in Cedarville in 1844 until the 1881 death of Addams.

Session three: The John Addams family after 1881 to present time.

Session four: Cedarville and the United States entry into World War I a century ago.

Attendees will receive printed information relative to the first session's subject 10 days before the first class. Printed information about the other sessions will be distributed at the end of the preceding class.

The cost to enroll is expected to be \$35 plus \$10 for the printed material, a total of \$45, the same as last year.

Although the programs will be held in the museum and many historical society members are expected to be among those who enroll, the sessions are open to the public.

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**Sixteenth Annual
Chili-Soup-
Sandwich-Dessert**

**LUNCH and
ANNUAL MEETING**

**Sunday, February 5
11 A.M. to 1 P.M.**

**Jane Addams
Community Center
430 W. Washington
Cedarville**

**Adults \$6; Children
Under 12 \$2
Pay at the door**

**Cedarville Area
Historical Society**

**History Classes
(From page 1)**

The classes will be in the museum's second floor meeting room. An elevator is available for those who are physically handicapped.

Free refreshments will be served after each class.

"If you are interested in attending," Bade said, "contact me at 815-563-4485 or bonniebade@comcast.net. The historical society was very pleased that our first joint venture with the college drew twenty students. We expect more this coming spring."

Dvorak has taught history and political science at Highland for 21 years. He earned degrees from Marshalltown Community College, Iowa State University, the University of Iowa and a doctor's degree in history from Illinois State University.

Bade earned a journalism degree from Northwestern University with a minor in history. He is a former weekly and daily newspaper editor and public relations director of Kendall College, the Evanston Chamber of Commerce, WFLD-TV in Chicago and the Chicago Heart Association. He was also executive director of the State Street Council in Chicago. He has been president of CAHS 16 years.



Kathleen Glaze, Moira Knowlton, Narcissa Engle wrestle with dining table.

**Last Minute Preparations
For Museum Holiday Party**



Jim Barmore moves unneeded items from second floor north room to south room storage.



Narcissa and Carol Meyers stock shelves of new mini kitchen.



Above: Sharon Barmore adjusts covering for dining table.



Right: Galen Bertram in last minute installation of mini-kitchen wall paneling.



Lighted stairway to museum by Wendy Gilpin



Carol Meyers, Sharon Barmore, Rose Binns and Moria Knowlton inaugurate the mini-kitchen



Dining was a family affair for the Ryans. From the left: Dana, Arielle, Arik and Jay



A candy cane gets Santa a hug from Bonnie Bade

The very, very cold weather did not stop the more than fifty hardy souls who attended the annual Christmas party.



Society vice president Narcissa Engle was really pleased with the new museum mini kitchen.



Lisa Goodwin finds Santa's a real lady's man



Santa's helper (and wife) Vicki Franz takes a short rest.



Santa and Carole Bertram in a swinging Christmas duet



Ruth and Duane Smith and Harlan Corrie were fascinated by Bob Eckert's story. (Bob, turn around so we can see your face.)



Ladona and Merle Wardlow, right, assure Santa they have been good

Elfreda: Cedarville Queen of the Keyboard

By Jim Bade, president
Cedarville Area Historical Society

I first heard about Elfreda Zimmerman on the day sixteen years ago when my wife and I moved to Cedarville. Elfreda, I discovered, was the village's legendary piano teacher who taught dozens, perhaps hundreds of children, the secrets of those black and white keys before she died in 1985 at the age of 88.

I forgot my first Cedarville history lesson only to re-encounter it a month ago when I was asked to do research on her family. I learned she was not only a beloved keyboard teacher, but a performer, wife, mother and active in village affairs. But her life's story was scattered and in bits and pieces.

Perhaps a little late, but, Elfreda, here is your public recognition told through records, brief newspaper articles and memories of three students.

Born in 1897 in the Scioto Mills area as Elfreda Lillian, she was the only daughter of six children of Charles H. and Matilda (Meyers) Bennett. Twenty years later she married Harold Zimmerman, 23. They apparently moved to Cedarville early in their marriage. The couple had three daughters: Jean, Patricia and Karen. Harold died in 1961.

The first indication of her future life that I was able to find was in the May 24, 1917, issue of the Freeport Journal Standard. One sentence: "Miss Elfreda Bennett will sing" (*at Cedarville's Evangelical Church on Sunday night.*) That was six months before her marriage to Harold. The United States had voted the month before to enter World War I and Rev. James McGowan was scheduled to preach that night on "National Judgment." No mention about an accompanist.

It's hard to determine when Elfreda started offer-



Elfreda in
July 1964

ing piano lessons, but probably as early as 1924. In that year she was recognized as an excellent musician and piano player when she helped stage a two night minstrel show at Cedarville's Knights of Honor Temple, formerly the Presbyterian Church building.

The minstrel show format apparently was still in vogue in Cedarville in 1948 when two February nights were sold out. The Freeport newspaper review reported that "Mrs. Harold Zimmerman played a prelude of piano selections and accompanied each specialty."

Talent obviously ran in the family. Karen, Elfreda's 16-year-old daughter was a smash in that show with her renditions of "Slap Her Down Again, Paw", "Mountain Gal" and "Feudin' and A-fightin'."

Freeport High
School graduation
photo of Karen
Zimmerman



Some old timers believe Elfreda's teaching career might have begun even earlier than 1924. They point out that one dollar dances (*ladies admitted free*) were common by 1921 on the second floor of Strohm's store on the northeast corner of Mill and Cherry streets. Reportedly Elfreda was a member of a group that played there.

Regardless of the date she began teaching, I became interested in what her students thought of her so I asked a few of them.

Marilyn Allen was four years old in 1944 when she had her first lesson with Elfreda. Living in Freeport at that time, her parents drove her to Cedarville.

"I really enjoyed those lessons and liked her very much," Marilyn said. She continued: "When I was told, at the age of five, that I would be playing at a recital in Cedarville, it had to be explained to me.

"The night of the recital my parents and my aunts accompanied me to Cedarville and when we walked into what I think was called the community center (*former Reformed Church on Cedar Street*) the excitement suddenly turned to fear."

"The place was filled with people. At some point, I took my place on stage at the giant piano and played my piece and was delighted when I received applause. Then all was well and all were happy," Marilyn concluded.

CAHS treasurer Galen Bertram said he and his sister Karen took lessons from Elfreda.

"Mrs. Zimmerman (we never called any teacher by their first name in those days) was a wonderful person. She loved to visit with her students and especially for my sister, she was both a teacher and friend. She only charged 75 cents per lesson", he said.

"When you would arrive, you had to look at

the Siamese cat that was lying on the couch and staring at you. Probably felt like you were invading its turf. Mrs. Zimmerman while teaching always had rings on all of her fingers. She loved kind of gaudy jewelry. She was also very proud of a pair of alligator shoes and matching purse, not sure why.

"As I remember, you got to take a small candy bar after every lesson. Also, if you did well, you got a star pasted on the music that you played. She held a piano recital for her students at the old community center each year.



"At Christmas, we always got a piece of music with a Christmas sticker on it for a present," Bertram added.

Bertram said his sister remembered that Elfreda played with a big band in Chicago during World War II and her daughter Jean would sing. That's possible, but I couldn't confirm it.

There is no firm date when Elfreda Zimmerman ended her teaching career, but it is possible ill health was the reason because her death notice states she died September 19, 1985, "at Freeport Manor Nursing Home after an extended illness." She is buried in Grandview Cemetery, south of Cedarville.

I would welcome comments about Elfreda from other former students.

Society Salutes Museum Volunteers

As the Cedarville Area Historical Society enters 2017, the board of directors wants to salute the almost three dozen members of the society who volunteered to assist visitors to the Cedarville Museum during the May through October 2016 season.

Here are the hosts, each one having served in the same capacity for many years. They know about the exhibits and the season's special events. The museum was open from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays during the season. Admission was free to historical society members and \$3 to non-members over 12.

The volunteers were:

Bobbie and Dan Edler, Narcissa Engle, Lisa and Pat Goodwin, Tait Weigel, Delbert Scheider, Ladona Wardlow, Ruth and Duane Smith'

Also, Paul Fry, Judy and Harlan Corrie, Moira Knowlton, Ruth Wardlow, the late Mary Reed, Ramona Kryder, Rose Binns;

Also, Dale and Kelly Prieue, Sharon and Jim Barmore, Don and Ingrid Heilman, Jane and Roger Goodspeed, Dave and Karen Macomber;

Also, Kathleen and Steve Glaze, Carole and Galen Bertram, Don and Vickie Franz, Bill and Shirley Pick, Janice and Art Leverington;

Also, Robert and Miriam Schlueter, Jim Bade, Carol Meyers, Neal Scheider and Frank Rutter.

Narcissa Engle, vice president of the historical society, for many years has been responsible for enlisting the services of the hosts.

Cedarville Area Historical Society
P. O. Box 336, Cedarville, IL 61013
Phone: 815-563-4202

Web site:
www.cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org
E-mail
info@cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org
Also on Facebook

Jim Bade, President
Narcissa Engle, Vice President
Galen Bertram, Treasurer
Sharon Barmore, Secretary
Steve Myers, Director
Dale Prieue, Director
Carol Meyers, Director
Don Franz, Director
Moira Knowlton, 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).