

ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE MARCH 2012

Cedarville Area Historical Society



Historical Society Member Gives \$20,000 To Install Museum Lift for Handicapped

A member of the Cedarville Area Historical Society who wishes to remain anonymous has given the society \$20,000 toward the expected \$26,000 cost of installing an elevator that would transport physically handicapped museum visitors between the first and second floors.

The society board at its January meeting authorized the use of \$5,000, including \$1,500 pledged from another member, toward the project. Since that meeting, another member has pledged an additional \$1,500.

The board will take up the matter at a March 15 meeting.

Museum exhibits are on the first floor; the second floor houses the program room, art gallery and research library. The board has long felt that improving access to the second floor would enable more people to take full advantage of the museum's facilities and programs.

In making the \$20,000 gift, the donor said he was happy to do something for the people of Cedarville who have shown so much interest in preserving and presenting the history of the area.

Several months ago the board asked for proposals from three Illinois companies. They will be considered at the March meeting. All proposals envision the lift being located in the northwest corner of the first floor south room with entry from the north room where an interior door currently exists. The unit would travel to the northwest corner of the second floor south room and the door would open in the north room which is now the LeRoy Wilson Theater and art gallery..

Some interior physical changes will have to be made to accommodate the lift, but it is expected that many of them can be made by society volunteers.

The lift is similar to those used by some churches in the area.

Ben Confer, CAHS Member, Dies at 90

(Benjamin C. Confer, 90, former resident of Cedarville and a member of the Cedarville Area Historical Society, died January 16, in Medford, Or. Following are comments made to the editor of the newsletter by Joyce, his wife of almost 69 years. Her comments are printed in their entirety because they poignantly reflect on life in Cedarville during Ben's early adult life.)

"Ben loved the time he lived in Cedarville. World War II had ended, he was back in the normal daily routine and on Sunday he was active in the Cedarville Evangelical Church as Sunday School superintendent. He opened the service, read announcements, introduced music with Mary Lou (Bear) Wooten at the piano and then turned the service over to the pastor. Later he would teach a Sunday School class.

"During the week there were volley ball games. On Saturday night there was square dancing in the community house or in the summer on the street in front of Bear's store with the caller and his music standing atop a wagon. If the weather was HOT and the asphalt street sticky, people would sprinkle soap chips on the black top so they could dance.

"Ben and his neighbor Gene Reed, also spent many hours shooting baskets on the cement apron in front of the garage. In the winter they would turn on the lights and shovel off the snow even when it



Benjamin C. Confer

was so cold the ball would not bounce.

"Ben was very patriotic and interested in veterans affairs. He and Leo Mordick established the American Legion post in Cedarville and he was the commander for two years. He was also active in the county American Legion. His membership card states '60' active years.

"In 1964 Ben and I moved the family to San Luis Obispo, Ca. In 2000 we moved to the Monterey area to be near family. The next move was to the Rogue Valley Manor in Medford, Or. Ben liked to travel, but he always had fond memories of Cedarville. That was HOME"
(Ben's grandfather George was one of 3 men who in 1911 installed the slate blackboards in the second floor rooms of the 1889 school that is now the museum.)

Dammanns Announce Two Historical Tours

Karen and Gordon Dammann, Lena tour operators, this month announced two 2012 tours to historical sites in the United States.

On Saturday, June 23, there will be a bus tour to the Civil War Museum, Kenosha, Wi. Their son Doug, who presented a Civil War program at the Cedarville Museum last year, is director of the museum.

The all day bus tour, including transportation from Lena, museum entrance and dinner on the return trip, costs \$60 with \$5 going to the historical society associated with each tour participant.

The Dammann's annual bus tour to eastern U.S. historic sites will be October 11 through 18. The \$1,300 cost covers transportation from Lena, 7 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 7 dinners, entrance to all museums and attractions with guides, double occupancy in non-smoking rooms and a pre trip party.

The trip will include visits to the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Md., Baltimore Inner Harbor, Harpers Ferry, Antietam, the Shenandoah Valley, the Flight #93 memorial, Ft. McHenry, Sharpsburg, Md., and the B & O Railroad Museum.

For more information on either trip, contact Karen Dammann at 815-369-4094.

Organizations or individuals looking for a location to hold an event, class or meeting should contact Jim Bade, 815-563-4485 for possible use of a room in the Cedarville Museum

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Also on Facebook

Jim Bade, President
Narcissa Engle, Vice President
Galen Bertram, Treasurer
Sharon Barmore, Secretary
Dale Priewe, Director
Steve Myers, Director
Carol Meyers, Director
Diane Hagemann, Director
Diane Tepper, Director

The historical society is recognized as a non-profit organization by Illinois and the U. S. government and as such has been designated as eligible to receive tax deductible gifts under the IRS tax code regulation 503 (c) (3).



Above from left: Bonnie Bade, Judy Corrie and Carol Meyers (director of the lunch volunteers) make the sandwiches. Below: Narcissa Engle, left, (organizer of the dessert providers) explains the dozens of sweet things that were available.



Mary Reed, Sue Myers, Wendy Gilpin (l to r) don't mind doing the dishes.



Photos by Emily Myers

That's Norman and Janet Kaiser of Scioto Mills enjoying one of the many choices at the luncheon.



Some of the 115 who enjoyed the 11 am to 1 pm lunch. Each table was decorated by Diane Hagemann.



From left: Judy Corrie, Sharon Barmore, Sandy Scitutto set up the four soup and chili servers

115 Enjoy Society Lunch

Good weather, good friends and the promise of good food brought out 115 to enjoy the eleventh annual Super Bowl Sunday lunch and annual meeting of the Cedarville Area Historical Society. It was a great time thanks to the work of the many Society volunteers.



Bonnie Bade, left, talks with Bill and Carolyn Angle while they review historical society publications.



From left that's Harlan Corrie, Duane Smith, Ruth Smith, Jean Joyce and Paul Fry. Steve Myers has his back to the camera.



Above are members of the Prieve family, Lena, selling home made pies for the Lena Live Wires 4-H club. Their father, Dale, is a member of the historical society board of directors.



Jim Bade, CAHS president, chats with luncheon guest.

Clyde Kaiser: Cedarville in the 30s

(At a 1980 monthly meeting of Cedarville's Top of the Hill Club, a diverse group of what was then called "senior citizens", the late Clyde Kaiser, village historian, relived HIS 1930s. Editor)

Fifty years ago — or a few more years beyond:

There was no natural gas line to supply us with heat for our home. Most homes were heated by coal furnaces and on winter mornings dark coal smoke rose from the village chimneys. The coal storage bins were either a bin in the house basement or from an outside coal shed. The coal had usually been purchased from the Meyers Brothers coal yard at Sciota or Red Oak or from Hillmar's or Zartman's or Patterson's in Freeport. It was usually Illinois soft coal from southern Illinois and cost \$5 or \$6 per ton.

There was no Cedarville water system to supply us with water in abundance at the turn of the faucet. (A central water supply did not come until the late 1940s.)

The village homes had their own wells with an outside pump which was hand operated. Some homes did not have their own wells but shared with their neighbors. Some were drilled wells, others were shallow and hand dug. Few wells had tested water and various degrees of contamination could be found. There was at least one open well with a

wooden frame with a wooden windlass and a bucket which was lowered and brought up by rope and windlass filled with water. (It was located at the Anna Sills residence, in front of the house and close to the sidewalk.) *(On Stephenson Street north of Washington Street: Editor)* The cistern pump supplied the soft water from rain water caught from the roof of the house. This shallow water pump often was in the kitchen. Water supply was dependent on rainfall.

The outhouse or privy was a common sight, usually screened in the summer and fall by a thick planting of hollyhock and located near the alley where it was easy prey at Halloween time for a handy turnover.

The barns that lined both sides of the alley housed the driving horse or team and sometimes a cow. The animal was taken to an out-of-town pasture at night and in the morning during late spring, summer and early fall by a boy who was paid at most 25 cents per week. However, the barns were gradually disappearing and being replaced by garages to house the increasing number of cars.

The ice box was literally a box with a compartment that held a chunk of ice. As the size of that chunk diminished so did its cooling power. The ice was usually bought at Strohm's ice house located by the store at the northeast corner of



*Clyde Kaiser
and his wife,
Kathryn Folgate
Kaiser*

Cherry and Mill streets. By the 1930s some persons with autos and who worked in Freeport would get "artificial" ice made by ammonia refrigeration process at the Balles ice house just north of the Van Buren bridge in Freeport, but this was more costly.

As of this date (1980), the ice box is a collectors item. Anyone under the age of 40 cannot imagine a house without its refrigerator and deep freeze, ice cubes and food storage for unlimited periods of time. The ice harvest on the frozen creek with its cutting, loading and packing in the ice house with sawdust is almost unbelievable to young folks of 1980.

Radio was in its infancy. In 1930 AC radios with built in speakers were just becoming available, quickly replacing the wet cell battery operated head phone sets. Television was still twenty years in the future for the average household.

Early radio was a wonder. It almost required an engineer to handle the knobs and the dials. Broadcasting stations were usually 100 watt power. Atmospheric conditions determined the quality of reception: Late night programs often came from distant places while nearby stations might not be received. Locally, a station from Shreveport, La., with a Col. Henderson was picked up quite often. His nightly tirade against chain stores (chain stores were just appearing and were considered dangerous to the economy and sellers of inferior products) found many sympathetic listeners.

The WLS Barn Dance was popular. The song "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More" was a hit and everyone who had a buck or two bought a ukulele. Dance bands such as Coon Sander's Orchestra, Wayne King, Ted Weems and Art Kassel were heard from the Aragon and Trianon ballrooms. WLW, Cincinnati, had "Moon River Time at 11:45 p.m. and this program is still on in 1980.

Sports became alive and the world series came into households. Announcer Graham McNamee made an exciting and breath taking rapid fire description. Floyd Gibbons was a popular news announcer and Gabriel Heater came on each evening with his opening line, "There's good news to-night." Later, H. V. Kaltenborn became an evening household visitor via radio. In the 1930s the listening audience of radio were introduced to the comedy team of Freeman

(Turn the page)

and Gosden who appeared as Sam and Henry on WGN, Chicago. This team evolved into the characters of "Amos and Andy" who rose to national notoriety. This series first was a fifteen minute show, five nights a week. Its listening audience exceeded any previously broadcast or stage production. To illustrate: When Amos and his wife Rugsy were expecting their first child, two million letters were received from listeners suggesting a name. When Madame Queen, Andy's girl friend brought a breach of promise suit against Andy, the events were so tense and yet so hilarious that a Freeport theater, the Lindo, according to the projectionist there, followed the pattern of many theatres and shut down the feature picture for fifteen minutes and piped in radio's Amos and Andy. Otherwise, it was feared attendance would suffer.

In later years radio brought on Fibber McGee and Molly, Edgar Bergen and his dummy Charlie McCarthy, Mortimer Snerd, the Green Hornet, the Lone Ranger and many others. Audiences of the 1980s are rehearsing these classics over radio again because many were recorded and preserved.

A new highway was being built from the Wisconsin state line through Cedarville to Freeport. The bridge across Cedar Creek by the bluffs was being built in 1927. The pavement was laid through Cedarville in 1926. Now in 1980, the 1927 bridge is being replaced by a longer, wider and more modern structure.



Construction of 1927 bridge over Cedar Creek. Black and white photo taken by Merton M. Memler, engineer in charge.

The 1930 era is remembered well by those who are in the 60 year or older age bracket. It was the time of the Great Depression too. Young people of today say "Why didn't you have money during the Depression?" To answer that just talk to the people in their sixties. They'll talk of unemployment, bank failures, bread lines and empty pocketbooks. Social Security was still in the future and President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was still a dream.

Today (1980: *Editor*), it is transistors, space travel, moonwalks, computers, TV and other wonders. Tomorrow — well — you guess it!