

CHERRY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER -- JUNE, 2009

On May 3 several of us traveled to Freeport to visit the Stephenson County Historical Society museum. First we ate at a local restaurant. Their museum is a lovely, Victorian home. Ed Finch, their executive director, guided us through the two story home. It was built in 1857, has fourteen rooms, and is on three acres of land. It was truly lovely from the largest piano that we had ever seen with its rich carvings to the ornate chandeliers.

We have sold all of our 150 calendars that we purchased in November. The cemetery work will begin again as soon as the ground dries out a bit. Your donations are always appreciated.

On May 15th and 16th we held a bake sale (all homemade) at our museum. We made a profit of \$184.00. We are going to assemble a patriotic float for the July 4th C.V. parade. Pee Wee has asked some past servicemen of W.W. 2 to the present to ride on the float. There will be two graves with white crosses, plus helmets over guns on the graves.

The following have passed away since the last newsletter:

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|---------------------------------------|----|-------------|
| Kevin Small | 48 | February 23 |
| Lenore T. Fisher (Mrs. Dale) | 94 | March 21 |
| Robert Horn (Frank Horn's brother) | 73 | March 21 |

Marilyn Poulton is looking for any information regarding Mary Patterson who died at the home of Sarah and Thomas Poulton on April 6, 1897. She isn't listed in our Cherry Valley burials. If anyone has a story to share about their childhood memories in C. V., and if anyone has any questions regarding C. V. folks, please send them to me and I will include them in the newsletter.

FIRES IN C. V. HISTORY: BAD BLAZE AT CHERRY VALLEY

Taken from the Rockford Daily Register-Gazette in January (year unknown) Overheated stove pipe causes fire at C. K. Luhman's Mill this morning.

Cherry Valley residents were startled by the hurried clanging of the church bell this morning which betokened fire in the neighborhood. The blaze proved to be in C. K. Luhman's Mill, at the west end of the foot bridge. The fire was discovered about 6 o'clock and it meant a cold morning's work for the bucket brigade.

The line was hastily formed to the river and the water passed up as quickly as possible. After some hard work, the blaze was effectually checked. The fire originated by an overheated stove pipe passing through a wooden partition. The damage will be slight although one wall was badly burned through.

1869 -- A fire destroyed most of the business district on the south side of State St. It was soon rebuilt of brick which was made in a kiln on the west side of the river, south of the railroad.

These following articles were written by Esther Marie Knudsen in "An Illustrated History of Cherry Valley" in 1949.

"Cherry Valley has had more than its share of disastrous fires. Robert Wooster, who was 78 years old, recalls what was probably the first one in our village. It completely destroyed the old cheese factory which was located by the depot.

One night early residents were horrified to discover that the interior was a raging furnace. It was feared that the entire village would be destroyed. Belvidere and Rockford fire trucks were summoned but they could do little without water.

Efforts to save the building were quickly abandoned, and attention was centered upon the surrounding structures. Neighbors came running with rag carpets which they had ripped from their floors. These were dipped in tubs of water and spread them over the roof of the adjacent depot. They were successful in confining the flames to the cheese factory.

Down through the years there have been many disastrous fires. The widely known Commercial Hotel burned in 1898. Among the other outstanding conflagrations were Pike's Broom Shop, the two elevators, John Carlson's Shoe Shop, and the saloon which was located where the bank building now stands.

One of the big fires was the store operated by John and Cornelius Jordan. Charlie Culver's grocery also burned as did Charlie Maguire's house and barn, the Boyer Home, and the foundry.

Despite the number of fires which have swept through Cherry Valley, its people have always rallied with stout hearts, cleared away the ruins, and built anew.

On January 5, 1928 Cherry Valley had one of its most costly fires. Loss was estimated at \$150,000. The fire started in the C. B. Culver general store and spread to the W. C. North grocery, and the Gordon Bros. general store. A brick fire wall stopped the flames from the dry goods store of Mrs. Harry Burke. However her stock was badly damaged by smoke and water. A shop on the rear of the Ray Lee Hardware store was burned off."

There is much information regarding Cherry Valley Fire Protection District beginning on page 277 of Our Memories Are Warm.

Your newsletter reporter,

Beverly (Oberg) Scholz, 6645 Fincham Dr. Apt. #3, Rockford, IL 61108

Pioneer.30@live.com

THE WEDDING OF THE FLOWERS by JACQUELINE LETCHWORTH

At the wedding of the flowers
The guests arrive in PHILOX.
The place was in the garden,
The time was FOUR-CLOCK.

The OLD-MAID and the BACHELOR'S BUTTON
Were going to be wed,
And I never was so startled
As when the flowers left their bed.

The OLD-MAID wore her BRIDAL WREATH
On a wig of MAIDENHAIR,
With LADY'S SLIPPERS on her feet,
My! How the flowers did stare.

But all dressed up in JOSEPH'S COAT
With a TURK'S-CAP on his head,
The BACHELOR'S BUTTON was a sight
For one about to wed.

VIOLET with her BABY'S BREATH
And eyes of CORNFLOWER blue,
Was chosen maid of honor
Instead of BLACK-EYED Sue.

While WEDDING BELLS rang softly
ROSE sang FORGET-ME-NOT.
Then the WILLOW started weeping
Right there on the spot.

While JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT read the vows
SWEET WILLIAM held the ring,
But the best man, JOHNNY-JUMP-UP,
Shook like everything.

The bridesmaids were the DAISIES
All dressed in QUEEN ANNE'S LACE,
But the SUNFLOWERS shone so brightly
They had to shade their face.

Now if anyone should wonder
How the flowers left the sod,
It was PRINCE'S-FEATHER'S magic
He waved his GOLDENROD.