

CHERRY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER Jan-Feb 2014

Brrr! For our readers that are far from home, let me tell 'ya, it's been a brutal winter here! We are on record for the 6<sup>th</sup> coldest, snowiest winter, with plenty of time left to rise in the ranks. Schools have already closed 5 days for wind chills up to thirty below. It's taking extra effort to find a place just to shovel the snow to! Navigating the walking path around the lake at Bauman Park takes some real dedication. The Christmas shopping's long done, and yardwork is months away. So I hope you're cozy and warm enjoying the snow white beauty surrounding (or trying to bury) us.

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The following have passed away since our last newsletter:

Dale Carl Huerpe, 69	Nov 27th
Willard Owen "Bill" Gorsuch, 78	Dec 6th
Norman "Lee" Flanders, 70	Dec 5th
Stephen Keriz, SR., 85	Dec 27, 2013
John T. Schou, 78	Dec 28, 2013
Joseph P. (Joey) Falzone II, 68	Jan 7th
Jeffrey Franklin "Jeff" Beil, 60	Jan 11th

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### Cherry Valley's First Fire Truck

After the disastrous fire on January 5, 1928 that destroyed half of downtown Cherry Valley, the residents acted on the need for some protection. In 1927 a chemical engine was ordered by then Mayor Charles Hyland. First Chief Dell Garrett drove the new 1927 Chevy apparatus home from South Bend Indiana on a cold April day. Being that there was no windshield to protect the driver from the elements that must have been a freezing journey!

With the purchase of the new truck, CV became a pioneer in volunteer fire fighting in Winnebago County. The engine carried two 50 gallon tanks containing a water and soda solution. When men were ready to battle the flames, a bottle of muriatic acid was spilled into the tank by pulling a trigger mechanism. The ensuing chemical reaction created pressure for the hose that could 'put the water through the side of a house'. As soon as the first tank emptied a bucket brigade set to work refilling it, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> tank was discharged. Ironically, its first call to action was to the Mayors home to put out a chimney fire.

An addition was built on to the original Village Town Hall (now our museum) to house the fire truck. The doors in the back of the building indicate where it was once parked underneath the Museum.

Cherry Valley's equipment was a huge asset in fighting fires. They were called to assist Rockford and Belvidere, and successfully conquered fires that their departments were unable to defeat.

Eventually this pioneer chemical engine gave way to more modern trucks, but not before saving thousands of dollars of property.

The photo of the fire truck was taken on what is now the baseball diamond. The 4<sup>th</sup> person from left, front row is Homer Green. I would like to be able to fill in all the names, if anyone can help. The information for this article was from an old page of the Ken Rock Herald –story by Ben Epperhart of CV.

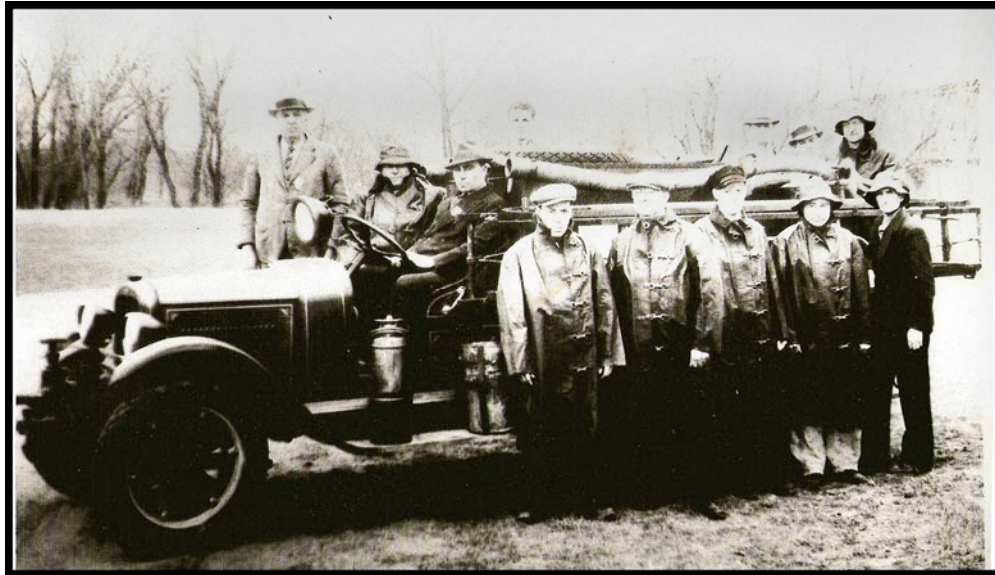


Photo provided by Craig Wilt, with the original residing at the CV Fire Station.



North side of State Street prior to January 5, 1928.

Photo donated by Sam Knighton



Same side of street following the fire. Three stores totally destroyed, and a 4<sup>th</sup> badly damaged.  
Photo taken by Kathryn Chesak Oberg, donated by Beverly Oberg Scholz

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### School Day Memories ..by Lyle Wilt

My first day at Cherry Valley School was a very short one, when it was time for recess I went home because I thought school was over.

The next year (same teacher-Agnes Schamberger), Bob Diebold and I had heard the older boys talking about throwing spit balls. We had to try it, but were caught and had to stay after school. The teacher brought us a cigar box and some newspapers and told us to fill it with spit balls. After two or three there was no more 'spit' and that's as far as we got. The teacher let us go home and we never tried to throw another one,

There were ten grades (155 students) in five rooms, with the high school teacher doing double duty as the principal. We learned a lot more than just what was in the books. Like how to mix and play with kids in a wide range of grades and ages. Some classes had 40 students and for the most part everyone was well behaved. The teachers in the 3<sup>rd</sup> thru the 8<sup>th</sup> were home grown, that is, they grew up in Cherry Valley, which meant they were well acquainted with your parents. So you could not 'get away' with anything!

Lunch was an hour because a lot of kids went home to eat. That left plenty of time for games for anyone eating at school. For soft ball, we had kids from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade playing in the same game as the high school kids. We sometimes played 'work up'. Every time there was an out you moved up a position. If you caught a fly ball, you got to go to bat and the boy who was out took your place in the field. In the off season we played a lot of tag. There were a lot of boys faster than me, but that didn't stop me from trying to catch one off guard, sometimes I was lucky and tagged him.

Another game we called 'Pom Pom Pull Away'. Three or so started as 'it' or a tagger and you had to run across the school yard without being tagged. If you hesitated too long on one side the tagger would stand back about 30 feet and give you a count of three to head for a safe spot on the other side before he or she would try to tag you. When you were tagged, you became one of the taggers. Toward the end there were so many that were "it" getting across the field without being tagged was almost impossible.

One of the best was Fox and Geese. We made a big circle in the snow with six or eight arms in a spoke fashion around the circle. One person starts as the fox and once you were tagged, you joined them. It did not take to long before everybody was a fox. The only safe spot was the center and only three were allowed at a time in the safe zone. A fourth person entering meant the first one had to leave. Once you were tagged then you would help get the others.

I remember watching Mrs. Gannon and Pansy Rowley showing the girls how to jump rope. Mrs. Gannon was in her sixties; both were really good at it. The girls and younger boys played 'Mother May I?' and 'Red Light, Green Light'.

A buddy and I would go swimming at noon in September behind where the log cabin is now. There was a ten minute warning bell before classes started at 1:00 PM. When that bell sounded we had ten minutes to get dressed and pedal our bikes back to school, sometimes eating our lunches on the way.

There was no gym until the last part of my ninth grade year, so with no computers, I-Pads, or Smart Phones, it was play outside or sit at a desk. School had a basketball hoop nailed to a tree, and the baseball we played with had lots of tape holding it together. We played a lot of Marbles and Mumbly Peg. That's played with a jackknife and tossed off your elbow, toe of your shoe or the back of your hand. It had to land with a certain blade point stuck in the ground. Most knives had three blades, and almost every boy beyond third grade carried a pocket knife.

Another game popular with the older boys was 'Track the Rabbit'. One boy was elected to be the rabbit. Given a piece of chalk and a few minutes head start, every time he changed direction, an arrow was drawn on the side walk. He had to stay between the river and the greenhouse. When he finally 'took to a burrow', he put a circle on the sidewalk with an 'x' in it and hid within 50 feet of the circle.



### Candlelight by Dorothy Sheldon

Tonight I shall set my candle high,  
That it's eager light may pour  
A radiant, quivering, golden beam  
A path unto my door,

A shining path through the dark and snow,  
And those who see it's light,  
Although I never know their names  
Will be my friends tonight.

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Thank you to the Cherry Valley Village Hall for their wonderful support and assistance.  
And to CV Methodist Church Nurture and Need group for their sponsorship.  
Please let our sponsors know you saw their advertisement in the newsletter, we appreciate them!  
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H h h h h h

Editor.... Pam Jeske ([golfnsew@aol.com](mailto:golfnsew@aol.com))

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