

CHERRY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER April, 2013

The future of the Cherry Valley Historical Society and museum depends on the members getting involved. It only takes a few hours once or twice a month. We need input from the membership to preserve, protect, and grow. It would be a shame if all the work and artifacts collected were to be lost or transferred to some other place. The present active members are getting old. Written by Lyle Wilt, President.

Eileen (Hyland) Doig passed away on February 17th. The family listed our society as a memorial. Since then we have received an abundance of money in her honor. We are so appreciative of this kindness and generosity. She was such a special lady, and will be missed by many folks.

This will be my last newsletter. We need someone to volunteer to continue with it. I have enjoyed being involved with the society for fourteen years. We especially need someone who knows Cherry Valley history and is knowledgeable about the computer. If you have any questions in the future about us, please contact Lyle Wilt (815-332-4239) or John Larson (815-247-8549).

The dues for this year were due in January, 2013. To date many haven't paid. We would greatly appreciate it if you would send in your dues of \$10.

The following have passed away since our last newsletter:

Donna (Newman) Celner (Mrs. Stanley)	80	January 17 th
Jane Doig	97	January 27 th
Charles E. 'Ed' Hyland	85	January 30 th
Mark W. Brandebury	51	January 30 th
Eileen (Hyland) Doig	89	February 17 th
Clifford Bowling	80	March 9 th
Selma B. Miller (Barb Anderson's mother)	96	March 11 th
Gaylon Garth Mace	87	March 22 nd
Lillian Verhagen	75	March 24 th
Melbourne (Mel) Summers (wife-Marrilyn Yunek)	81	March 25 th



This is the J.P. Jones house which was located north of Charles Street Road on the farm where Cherry Vale was built. It was torn down in 1972. It was pictured in an atlas of WI County which was printed in the 1870's. At that time it had a cupola on the peak of the west wing. The cupola was removed about 1930 due to roof leaks. Mr. Jones' wife died in the mid 1870's and he married Mary Kate Conklin. He died in the mid 1880's and Kate married the hired man, Fred Wheeler.

Mrs. Mary Kate [Conklin] Jones

Spring-Time

By Mary Kate Jones

1891

Spring is with us once again
With all its spring time flowers
And merry music of the birds
From all the leafy bowers
Gently the showers come down from heaven
Softly the south winds blow
Brightly the sun shines after the rain
Making the whole earth glow
Robin Red Breast, with his dear little wife
Is busily building a nest
Where soon will appear five specked eggs
Under the mother birds downy breast
The orchard is laden with blossoms
As pure and as white as the snow
Giving promise of rosy-cheeked apples
For some boys and girls that I know
Over the brown earth Spring has spread
Her beautiful carpet of green
And here and there bright colors
Are skillfully woven in
The forest has donned her summer dress
And looks fresh and bright and young
And seems to sing with all things else
"Spring has come, oh! Spring has come"
The trickling brook in the mossy dell
Is quietly singing her song
As she waters the grasses on either side
And
Murmuring, "hurries along"
I am loosed from the grasp of ice and snow
And I feel so happy and free
I'm cheered by the sight of birds and flowers
And the drowsy hum of the bee
The farmer meekly whistles
As he goes to the field with his plow
For he can see nothing but brightness
As he looks at the future now
Our hearts feel young and happy
In the spring-time of the year
For all nature is resurrected
Our bodies and minds to cheer

Joshua Conklin was born in New York about 1808, occupation as a wheel wright, widower, and father of *George Conklin* of Cherry Valley, Illinois.

1880 Federal Census for Cherry Valley lists the following:

George & Amanda Conklin, Children: Kate [Mary Kate], George, Charles, Maynard, Asa. Joshua, the father of George was living with his son's family at the age of 72.

Mary Katherine [Kate] Conklin was born 4 August 1860 in Cherry Valley, Illinois and died on 29 March 1912, death by strychnine poisoning.

Mary Kate Conklin was a teacher in Cherry Valley. The poem 'Spring-Time' was published via a paper in 1891.

Mary Kate married J.P. Jones who was born on 13 Jan. 1823 and died 17 Jan 1894.

John P. Jones [JP Jones] was a prominent lawyer of Rockford, Winnebago County, Illinois. Born in Chester, Warren County, New York, son of Lindall J.W. Jones of Rensselaer County, New York. He moved to Belvidere, Boone County, Illinois and bought 600 acre farm, which became known as the Newburg Farm, which was originally owned by Benjamin Hoyt. Hoyt purchased the property from Col. Mahlon Sayers. The township of Newburg was close to Cherry Valley and JP married as his second wife, Mary Kate Conklin. They had one son, Martin Townsend Jones, who became a wealthy Winnebago County Citizen.

Mary Kate [Conklin] Jones married 2nd Fred Wheeler.

They lived in Guilford Township, Winnebago County, Illinois in the 1900 census and 1910 census.

This marriage would come to a tragic end. Fred Wheeler would stand trial for the death of his wife.

The autopsy would show she was poisoned, and a prescription drug; a doctored pill found would show it had contained the poison that killed her. Her husband would be arrested for murder and it would also shown that he had been spending time with another women in Rockford.

Listed in the Chicago newspaper, it read:

Rockford—Mrs. Fred Wheeler, whose husband is on trial, charged with having poisoned her, committed suicide, is the conclusion of the defense which began the presentation of its evidence. Two clairvoyants to whom it is said Mrs. Wheeler confided her intention to kill herself, have been summoned to testify.

Rockford—Doctors who performed an autopsy on the body of Mrs. Fred Wheeler, whose husband is on trial charged with murdering her, testified that in their opinion the woman's death was caused by strychnine poisoning.

{Please watch for a new book in the Cherry Valley Museum with the family history of; Conklin, Jones and Wheeler family, and Mary Kate's murder}

Information provided by: Gloria Peck, from the family scrapbook of *Mr. Spencer*. We are very grateful to Gloria and her family for their contribution of Cherry Valley History to the museum.

Research and article by Judy Seiler Slocum

FRED WHEELER ARRESTED ON CHARGE OF WIFE MURDER

DEPENDANT SAYS EXPECTED ARREST

CLAIMS INNOCENCE, HOWEVER.
AFFINITY IS REVEALED.

CORONER GOT OUT WARRANT

Paper Served by Deputy Dreyenwoiz
at Midnight—Annette Bostrom,
Woman in Case—Wife
Read Letters.

Fred Wheeler was arrested at midnight by Deputy Sheriff John Dreyenwoiz on a state warrant sworn out by Coroner M. H. McAllister, charging him with the murder of his wife, Kate Wheeler, on Friday night, March 29, at his home in Guilford township.

Wheeler has been under surveillance since the postmortem failed to reveal any cause of death and it was his determination to leave the county and possibly the state that prompted his arrest late last night. Coroner McAllister has been at work on the case almost continually since last Saturday, working night and day in an effort to add to the damaging evidence presented by the analysis of a small portion of the membrane of the stomach which revealed sufficient strychnine to have caused death.

State's Attorney North and Coroner McAllister were in close touch with the situation and were kept informed as to the movements of Wheeler, who was in Rockford yesterday and announced to friends he was getting ready to leave. This decision on the part of Wheeler, who it is not believed thought he was suspected, caused his apprehension last night. The trip to the Wheeler home was made by Tom Roberts in his Marmon car. Coroner McAllister and aides left Rockford at 10:45 o'clock and were back in Rockford at 12:30 o'clock with the defendant.

Wheeler was in bed but responded to the knock of Deputy Dreyenwoiz and Coroner McAllister. The warrant was read to Wheeler, who expressed a perfect willingness to return with the authorities.

Wheeler informed the officers he had been expecting a visitation from them although he knew absolutely nothing of the cause of death. On the return trip, Wheeler kept his own counsel but at the jail was interviewed.

Coroner McAllister asked Wheeler if he knew the cause of his wife's death after they reached the jail. Wheeler replied in the negative and was then pressed for an answer as to why he expected to be arrested. His answer was that his wife's people hinted there was likely to be further trouble. He declared he did not know the cause of death until Coroner McAllister informed him at the jail this morning.

Wheeler Had Affinity.

Notice had reached the authorities that Wheeler had been paying attention to another woman and he was quizzed along this line. He replied he had and said the woman was Annette Bostrom, who resided at 1345 Charles street and who is now in Moline. She is a widow, her husband being dead. He made a statement regarding her. He declared his acquaintance with her dated back a year. She was employed as a clerk in an East State street store and in a Seventh street confectionery. He admitted having met her on the streets repeatedly and also being entertained at her home. He supplied the family with eggs, his last visit being two weeks ago. Asked who paid for the eggs, he said Mrs. Carlson, mother of Mrs. Bostrom. He was then asked if he received letters from Mrs. Bostrom. He replied he did, the last last week. He declared he answered the first.

Wheeler declared he left the letters lying on the table and that his wife read them. He urged her to read them and sat back to see her discomfiture. When she asked for an explanation, he asked her to read them and that would explain matters. Wheeler declared he often picked up women about town and took them for a ride. He intended to ship horses last Saturday and said that his wife was going with him. She had not been to Chicago in years according to him.

Wheeler declared he received letters at the C. P. Miller barn, 316 East State street in the rear. This prevented his wife intercepting them. Mrs. Wheeler learned of this and wrote a note to Mr. Miller asking that the next letter be sent to her. The letter was dated March 18, but never delivered. Wheeler turned it over to the coroner last night. The letter asked Mr. Miller to send her the next letter from Moline, explaining it was a very grave matter. Wheeler signed the statement.

Inquired for Medicine.

After the coroner had appropriated the medicine, Wheeler made many inquiries for it, but those in the household could not explain its absence. This is considered an indication of guilt.

Wheeler denied any knowledge of the poison in the Caps but will be sweated today in an effort to throw further light on the death of Mrs. Kate Wheeler.

In the meantime the search for circumstantial evidence will be continued.

Was Preparing to Leave.

The arrest of Wheeler was prompted by the finding of strychnine in large quantities in one of the five capsules remaining in the box. The authorities had intended probing farther into the means by which the poison came to be in the medicine before laying the arm of the law on Wheeler.

This effort was frustrated by Wheeler, who was in Rockford yesterday to inform friends he intended leaving for Chicago. When Coroner McAllister heard this he and State's Attorney North started the machinery moving. Wheeler came to town in the forenoon and had dined here. In the afternoon he looked after some busi-

ness matters and provided himself with a bankroll from his account in a local financial institution. He left Rockford on the 6 o'clock car and intended continuing his journey east this morning.

Left Evidence Around.

If Wheeler is proven guilty of the crime charged to him, the old saying of "murder will out" will be verified again. This will result largely from his leaving the capsules loaded with poison lying loosely around. Of course, it has not been shown he substituted the strychnine for the medicine placed there by the druggist, but developments are expected that will clear away the present doubt as to how the poison came to be there.

The pharmacist, who prepared the capsules is confident the poison was placed in the medicine after it left the drug store. The strychnine bottle on the prescription case is far removed from the ingredients entering the prescription of Dr. Andrus and could not possibly have been used by mistake. The pharmacist in question is a man of years of experience and claims there was absolutely no chance of a mistake.

Poison in Large Quantities.

The stomach being lacking in contents, it was necessary for Coroner McAllister to have the membrane of the stomach analyzed. A small piece of the membrane was delivered to Mr. Norris for the test and this, small as it was, revealed sufficient poison to have caused death.

The question then presented was how was the poison administered. The box of capsules with one missing offered a possible solution, so Mr. Norris was authorized by Coroner McAllister to pick one at random for a test. The result confirmed the suspicions of the coroner that the poison had been administered in the medicine.

The other capsules have not been molested and with the stomach will be sent to experts in Chicago for analysis. The findings of the experts it is expected will substantiate the tests of Mr. Norris.

Appears Exceedingly Nervous.
Wheeler presented an exceedingly nervous appearance when he appeared at the inquest Saturday morning. His face was drawn and to all appearance he had spent a restless night. Friends declare he is of a nervous temperament and they did not pay much attention to his actions Saturday, although those unacquainted with him observed he acted strangely.

Died Late Friday Night.
Mrs. Wheeler's death occurred at home in Gullford township near Cherry Valley line about 11:15 o'clock Friday night, March 29, according to the statement of the husband, Fred Wheeler, at the coroner's investigation last Saturday morning. Mr. Wheeler's version of the death is so tragic and pictured himself in the role of acceding to the pleas of his dying wife to remain with her and not to leave her for even a moment to summon medical assistance from Cherry Valley a few minutes distant. Wheeler detailed how he labored for his wife, seeking to comfort her, dispel the pains and cramps which convulsed her arms and legs, declared he first applied cold water and later hot water and that he held one hand until the skin was raw by his violent massage. This sole treatment was ineffectual according to the sworn statement of the husband and it was not until she collapsed, that he was able to leave her and call Dr. Klontz. Mrs. Wheeler was by that time beyond medical aid, death having resulted sometime before Dr. Klontz arrived.

Sent Word to Stepson.
After summoning Dr. Klontz, Mr. Wheeler asked the physician to notify his stepson Jones of the desperate condition of his mother and have him come to the homestead. This delayed the physician somewhat. In his testimony before the coroner's jury, Mr. Wheeler likened the death struggle of his wife to attacks which she had in the past and which he himself had been witnessed by her relatives. Sisters and brothers of the deceased admitted Mrs. Wheeler had been subject to attacks of hysteria, which manifested themselves somewhat in the manner described by the husband.

Night Robe Was Rent.

Fred Wheeler exhibited his night-shirt, which was torn in two places. He said the tears were made by his wife in restraining him from leaving her. The husband, with tears in his eyes, recounted the deathbed scene in which he worked over his wife until the perspiration was pouring off his face and he was most exhausted.

In Rockford on Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler were in Rockford together on Friday although they returned home at different times. According to the husband's version, Mrs. Wheeler alighted in East State street to consult Dr. S. C. Andrus regarding an affection of the heart. Mr. Wheeler had some business with C. W. Ferguson so continued to the West Side. He declares he waited in the law office until he saw his wife coming when he joined her on the walk. According to his account of the afternoon, they attended the Orpheum together. After the show, he suggested his wife drop down to South Rockford for a visit with her sister, Mrs. Nellie McNair.

This was agreeable to the wife, who suggested her husband drop into an east side drug store and pay a small bill she had there and also get the prescription given by Dr. Andrus. This Mr. Wheeler claims he did in time to take the 5 o'clock car home.

Mrs. Wheeler visited her sister and had supper there, leaving on the 7 o'clock car for home. At that time she appeared in perfect health and the message five hours later that she had died suddenly came as a shock of great force.

Were Alone in Home.

Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler were alone in their home Friday night. Mrs. Wheeler's brother, Maynard, who had spent considerable time of late with his sister, being away for a day or two.

According to Wheeler his wife reached the house about 7:30 o'clock. He said he was eating supper at the time and that they talked together until he retired shortly before 8 o'clock. His version is that he went to bed first and was followed by his wife fifteen minutes later. Mr. Wheeler testified before the coroner's jury that his wife awakened him about 9:45 o'clock, when she complained of a severe headache. He pictured her as having her hands to her head. He got the camphor bottle and this afforded temporary relief. Later the

cramps appeared and grew worse as time wore on until her strength was exhausted and death relieved her of her pain and distress.

Mr. Wheeler impressed it on the jury that he did not touch the medicine, leaving it on the table in the original package. He was unprepared to state whether she had taken any or not after returning home.

They were willing to accept the husband's theory that Mrs. Wheeler had collapsed following an attack of hysteria and even in the face of developments all the family was not ready to concede the death might have resulted from unnatural causes.

Objected to Autopsy.

Wheeler held out against an autopsy at first, but was persuaded it was the only thing left under the circumstances. Dr. Andrus declared there was nothing from his examination of the day previous that offered any cause of the sudden death, expressed surprise at her sudden passing. Mr. Wheeler suggested Dr. Woodard had seen his wife in an attic years ago, but Dr. Woodard could not recall the circumstance.

Sisters and brothers of the vic were assembled at the home and agreed an autopsy alone offered a solution of mystery and seeing their determination, Wheeler agreed to it.

No Natural Cause Found.

Dr. Woodard and Klontz of Cherry Valley were summoned by Coroner McAllister to conduct the postmortem on the body of Mrs. Wheeler. They made a careful examination but found all the organs normal and with no apparent cause for the sudden death. Eighty-four gallstones were removed but this was not considered sufficient ground for the death of the excruciating pains Wheeler declared he had suffered.

The failure of the postmortem to reveal the cause of death necessitated a search further and the stomach was removed for analysis. There was no fluid in the stomach and practically no solid matter, this indicating the woman had suffered from starvation.

Married Life Not Happy.

Friends of Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler understood their life was not a happy one, the traits and habits of the husband not appealing to the wife, who was a woman highly regarded by those who knew her and who was a martyr for years. The understanding around Cherry Valley is that the young of the ways was at hand and Mrs. Wheeler was preparing to leave her Jones homestead, which was the property of his wife during her life.

This separation is said to have been scheduled for this week, as the couple had an engagement with a local attorney for Monday, the purpose of which is said to have been a settlement of their property interests.

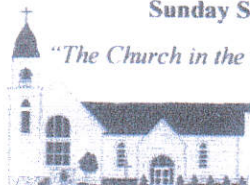
Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler were married about thirteen years and had no children.

Mrs. Wheeler was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Conklin, of whom she had passed away, and Cherry Valley was her birthplace. She was about 52 years of age and is survived by the husband, a son, two sisters and four brothers. The sisters are Mrs. Nellie McNair of Rockford and Mrs. Belle Kezar of Cherry Valley. The brothers are George Maynard Conklin of Cherry Valley, Fred Conklin, city editor of the Videre Republican, and Charles Conklin of Chicago. The deceased was first mated to J. P. Jones, a well-known farmer who died a number of years ago.

Cherry Valley United Methodist Church

112 S. Cherry Street, Cherry Valley, Illinois 61016

Worship Service: Sun 10 am
Sunday School: 8:45 am to 9:45 am



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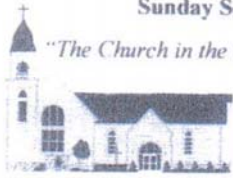
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