

CHERRY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER JULY, 2011

At our April 3rd meeting, we interviewed Gaylon Garth Mace (86), and his daughter Connie Dowling. He attended C. V. Elementary School for eight years & never missed a day. Connie wrote a children's book this year about Gaylon's experiences in school. We enjoyed both of them. Also, several of Gaylon's family came. We had twenty-two at our meeting which made us happy.

On May 3rd five of us gave informative talks to three of the fifth grade classes from C. V. School. There were 81 children plus teachers. They have children in 3 third grades, 3 fourth grades, & 3 fifth grades attending school. Quite different from when we were in C. V. School.

On May 18th at C. V. School there was a musical play about the Adventures of Gaylon Garth. The 3 fifth graders acted, sang, & danced. They did a great job. Four hundred attended the play.

June 5th several of us went on our spring trip to the Lincoln-Tallman House in Janesville, WI. It was a Italian villa-style mansion of twenty-six rooms, & was built between 1855 & 1857. It contained 80 % of it's original furnishings. Abraham Lincoln spent two nights there in 1859 as he was on a campaign speaking tour in Beloit. After the speech some gentlemen took him up to Janesville.

Since the last newsletter the following have passed away:

Donn T. "Duke" White 54 Dec. 23., 2010
Lowell Batty 92 April 11th
Shirley Szeluga 86 (Patty Campbell's sister) May 8th
J. Robert "Bob" Carlson 86 June 6th.
Constance Murphy 55 June 19th (husband Timothy)

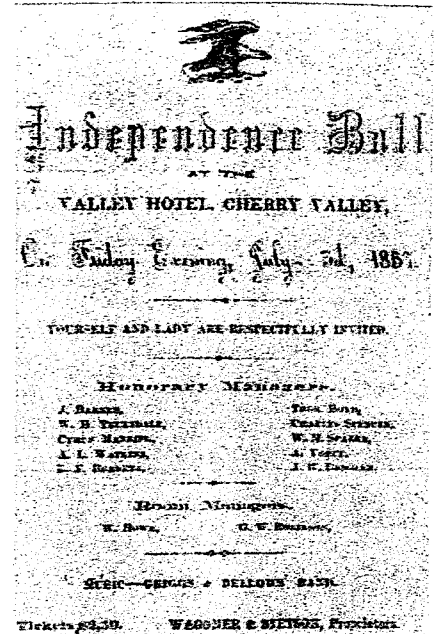
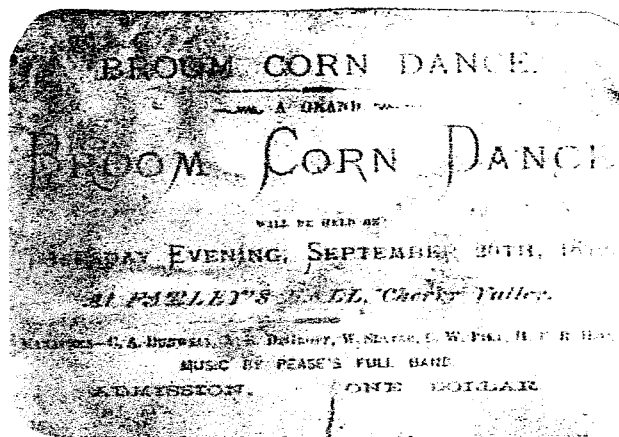
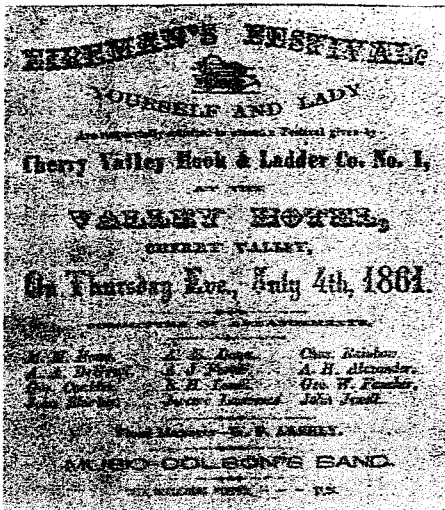
There was some question as to whether we had a documentation regarding whether Josephine Slater had given the clock to the village. The answer is "yes", dated 1924.

One of our members (Sam Knighton) gave me the following information to add to a previous article about the doctors of C. V. "Dr. David J. Hussey (circa 1870) completed his medical degree at the Chicago School of Medicine in 1868. He became a physician in Cherry Valley, Illinois, where he was also appointed town supervisor and principal of the high school. He later moved his medical practice to Chicago. In 1881 he moved to Washington, DC to work in the Pension Bureau & was one of the many physicians who unsuccessfully tried to save President Garfield's life after he had been shot by an assassin."

SOCIAL LIFE IN CHERRY VALLEY OVER THE YEARS

"The Valley Hotel existed in 1857. It stood on the location of the present fire station. It was a very tall, stone structure. One of C. V.'s citizens has several dance invitations which date from 1857 to 1902 from this hotel. In 1873, Mr. Hawks was the proprietor of the Valley House. We are assuming this was the same as the Valley Hotel. In 1877 Mr. L. W. Doty was the proprietor.

The earliest of the above invitations was for the Independence Ball held at the Valley Hotel on July 3, 1857. The music was by the Griggs and Bellows' Band. The cost of a ticket for a gentleman and his lady was \$2.50.



The Fireman's Dance which we enjoy today is not a new thing in our community. On July 4, 1861 Cherry Valley Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 held a Fireman's Festival. This makes us wonder if Cherry Valley actually did have a hook and ladder company. In this time when we were seeing our days of fastest growth and boom, perhaps the community was able to support such a venture.

Other establishments in existence in our early days are as follows: Brownell's Hall in 1865, Brownell's New Hall in October, 1865, Howe's Hall in 1867, and 1868, Farley's Hall from 1869 through 1872, McKee's Hall from 1875 through 1879, Sanborn's Hall from 1882 through 1902, Adams Restaurant in 1886, and Woodman Hall in 1926. The present hall owned by the Village, but still known as the Legion Hall, was once known as Oberg's Hall in the 1920's

In 1867, Lincoln's Birthday Party was given by the Grand Army of the Republic at Howe's Hall on February 12, 1867. The proceeds of this were given to the relief of needy soldiers and their families. "Military men are requested to appear in uniform. No one will pass the guards without invitation tickets."

In January and February of 1875 the Cherry Valley Dancing Association held Masquerade Balls. Costumes were advertised to rent by Mrs. Holzchuh of Freeport. The tickets to dance cost \$1.00. Supper was extra, and it cost spectators fifty cents each.

Other dances were held in honor of New Years, Washington's Birthday, the Harvest Dance, Social Dance, Christmas Balls, Broom Corn Dance, and Thanksgiving Ball. Needless to say, our early citizens thoroughly enjoyed their social time together.

The property of the Rodney Stacy family at 120 North Ulster was once known as Washington Park. This was a favorite gathering place in the early 1900's and depending on your point of view, was either a very fun place or a very sinful nuisance. The interurban brought people from miles around. A 1908 article in the Rockford Republic describes it as follows:

"This park was beautified by Professor Kirby Fosgate about twelve years ago, and was first called Berlin. It is now owned by the Free Methodist Camp Meeting Association, but is leased by the interurban railway. It comprises of about four acres and on its premises are to be found swings, tables, and a large dancing pavilion. Dances have been held here by Rockford clubs about three times a week thus far this season."

The above information in quotations was taken from Our Memories Are Warm book. Circa 1869 Cherry Valley had a one hundred piece band, organized by Frankie Post's father.

C. V. School provided the following entertainment. "A program named School Entertainment, Circa 1896 was performed February 23. There were recitations, a flag drill, a class in a country school with their first Normal Teacher, etc."

"A comedy was performed in Swatek & Johnson's Hall on February 10, 1917. Some of the characters were Ralph & Raymond Aten, Mabel Nelson, Harry Conklin, Gladys Clifford, Jesse Knighton, Irene Gnakow, & Ellis Sheley. The admission was ten & fifteen cents." We have two very interesting posters in our museum about these plays.

Many folks enjoyed playing croquet & pitching horseshoes years ago. When William & Kathryn Oberg operated the confectionery store in the 1920's to 1940's, the senior gentlemen, at two card tables, would play cribbage. They had a great time.

"The first C. V. Homecoming began October 1, 1927. C. V. two churches, South Guilford Grange, & members of every organization in C. V. joined in the big celebration. Merchants were asked to contribute \$10, if they could. Mrs. Charlotte Gannon was named secretary of the homecoming committee & George Kezar, who was the beloved mail carrier for thirty years, was named treasurer. Herbert Leaman, previously master of the South Guilford Grange, was general chairman.

Congressman Henry Rathbone & Congressman John T. Buckbee were the speakers. The festivities opened with a parade headed by the Kirkland band at 10 am. At 11 am there was a baseball game, & a bounteous dinner was served at noon by women of the two churches.

The program opened at 2pm with an address of welcome by Mayor C. J. Hyland & a greeting to visitors by former mayor, Mrs. Josephine Slater. Postmaster Arthur L. Johnson introduced the congressmen.

The Kirkland band played again in the evening & the boy scouts conducted a candlelight service. Thus began a series of homecomings which has become a tradition. It is estimated that during the years more than 50,000 persons have attended C. V's 22 annual homecomings. The last one was in 1949."

The information in quotes was taken from An Illustrated History of C. V. by Esther Marie Knudsen. I'm sure many of our members have fond memories of the homecomings. I wrote about the Homecomings in the newsletter of September, 2008. These Homecomings provided much enjoyable entertainment.

In recent years there is a festival called C. V. Valley Days which is held in Bauman Park. This three day festival in August brings a great number of folks from all over, as does the fireworks on July 4th.

The Methodist Church's women's association provided much of the church's funding during the darkest days of the depression and war by holding chicken dinners. (a quote from member Frank Whitehand). St. Rita's Church held ham, chicken, and corned beef and cabbage dinners over the years. The Methodist Church holds dinners today on the third Saturday of each month (excluding the summer months). The men of the church cook the meal & take care of the clean up.

My dad, William Clarence Oberg, was in charge of the Oberg Hall (above the confectionary store). Some of the ladies in town didn't think he was a very nice man because he allowed dancing!!

In the 1930's & 1940's the free shows shown on the back of the Town Hall brought many people with their blankets & lawn chairs to the Village Green. Good wholesome entertainment. They ended September 8, 1952. Baseball teams played in the early 1900's. Jack Taylor was in charge of the baseball team in the 1940's & 1950's. Many enjoyed those games both playing in them & attending them. There were donkey basketball games in the school gymnasium which were so much fun to watch. Also, many other basketball games over the years. These were held in the early 1920's in Oberg's Hall. C. V. has always had parades, & still does today.

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