

CHERRY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER, 2010

I'm sure you are shocked, as we were, to learn of Pee Wee's death. There were 900 at Fitzgerald Funeral Home for visitation the night previous to his funeral. I have never seen our church so full for a funeral the next day. Such a tribute to him who loved people. He was such a happy, outgoing little guy. And always so positive. He was always busy during his ten years of retirement helping others. He was very active in the C. V. Methodist Church and our community. He loved interviewing the veterans from several wars. He was our president for several years. He would get excited when anyone would join our society, and when anyone gave us something from their past. Talking to people was his favorite past time. It was enjoyable to know him - a special guy. We miss him greatly.

Lyle Wilt, our vice president, is in charge of our meetings now. Our next election isn't until December, 2011. We held an ice cream social in Bauman Park in the pavilion on July 11th. The weather was perfect. We would have liked to have seen more folks come.

Part of the old jail is situated in our museum after a ride in the July 4th parade. This was Pee Wee's last project for our museum. The following article was written by Esther Marie Knudsen in "An Illustrated History of Cherry Valley" in 1949:

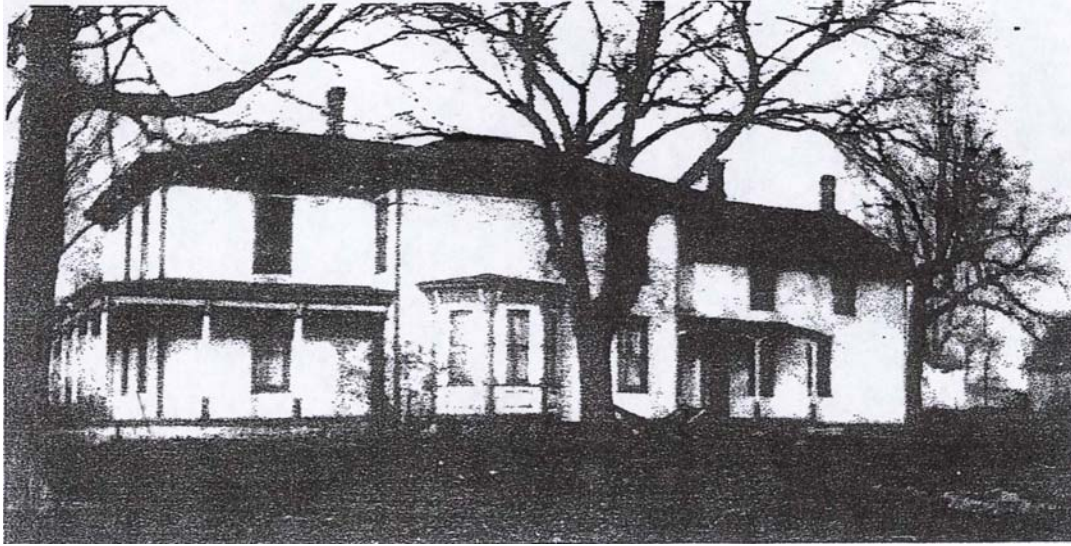
The Keeper of the Jail -- Forrest Houghton, Village Marshal. Did you know that Cherry Valley has a jail? And occasionally someone is shut up behind those bars. Unlike other neighboring communities, your marshal and his assistant do not set a speed trap to catch careless motorists.

Instead, they keep watch and give warnings to offenders. However, if someone tries to get smart or take advantage of their kindness, he soon finds out that the law has teeth. Not long ago one young man learned that when the padlock was snapped shut, there was no way to get out until bond was arranged.

The jail has a two cell steel cage with two bunks in each cell. This was purchased shortly after the new village hall was erected in 1899. Prior to its' purchase, the criminals were housed in a homemade wooden cage made of two by sixes spiked together. This was located in the rear of the village hall.

The following have died since our last newsletter:

Jeanette (Robert) Ronnenburg		earlier this year
Candice M. Kencke (Richard E.) Anderson	61	June 13 th
Ronald 'Pee Wee' Hollembeak	71	July 30 th
Jack Houghton	79	July 3 st
Gail M. 'Steve' Henry	94	Aug. 14 th



BROOM CORN FARM (LATE 1800'S) Cherry Valley

“John Brown operated a broom corn farm on what is now 4464 River Road in Cherry Valley. He purchased 960 acres of land and grew corn to make brooms. This business operated from possibly between 1860 to 1895. There were many seasonal workers. The barn (perhaps the largest in Winnebago County at the time) was used to dry corn before it was made into brooms. The corn would be dried in the barn (like tobacco) previous to being sent to broom factories. The barn burned down in 2009.

The home had sixteen rooms, sets on a hill, and is on the curve in the country on River Road just two miles from the village of Cherry Valley. It was built in 1860. The original barn was built soon after 1860. The reason for so many rooms, it was like a factory and the hired men lived in the rooms on the second floor. They would receive their meals from the pantry through a window to the outside.

John Brown was born October 11, 1832 in Damascus, Williams, Ohio. He died January 17, 1907 in Floyd, Iowa. He married Mary Chesak (sister to Martin Chesak). Their son, Leon, was born in 1888. Leon was young when Mary died.

Anna Peterson was married to Gust Peterson. They had three sons: Clarence, Fred, and Harold. Gust died. She began employment as a housekeeper for John Brown. Anna later became Mrs. Brown and Leon was raised with the Peterson boys. Leon never fully regained his health follow his injuries during W. W. 1. He died in 1939 from tuberculosis. A few years later, the family moved into town in Cherry Valley where the boys were active in baseball and basketball.

Fred graduated in 1915. This was the last class to be able to go for the three year high school program in Cherry Valley. Fred married Vera Brandt. They had three children: Wesley, Fred Jr., and Doris.

Clarence married Elsie Spencer. They had one son, Robert, who lived in Cherry Valley with his mother. Harold married Mary Peterson (she didn't even get to change her name). They raised a family of six: Jean, Gladys, Donald, Bernita, Pricilla, and Sandra."

Cherry Valley 1908 Broom Shop: One of the busiest little industries located in Cherry Valley is the broom factory of G. F. Cramer who hires from three to four employees. They turned out about 100 dozen brooms each month and sell their products as far west as Galena. Seven different types of brooms are made here, of general use and the heavy barn broom. These range in price from \$2.50 to \$4.00 per dozen. The broom corn for the manufacture of these lines is purchased at Chicago. Mrs. Cramer orders about a ton at a time. Not long ago; however, more broom straw was raised near Cherry Valley than was necessary for home consumption. At present a very small amount is grown in Cherry Valley.

Few people realize the labor expended in the manufacture of a good serviceable broom. First, the broom corn is put through a sizing machine and assorted according to size and quality, and is then thoroughly wetted and put in a bleaching house where it is smoked by burning brimstone. This process is used to soften the straw. From the bleaching house the corn goes into a cylindrical scraping machine where it is cleansed and scraped. The corn then passes to the broom winding machine where it is tied to the stick. The broom is sewed, pressed, and clipped after which it is ready for the market. The output of this factory is as great as that of any other broom concern this side of Chicago.

This broom factory was located on North Cherry Street on the east side, across from the Everson's Grocery. George Cramer was mentioned as early as 1877 and as late as 1925.

Broom makers were John Brown, James P. Sayre, and Hugh Mackey, Broom makers had faded from Cherry Valley by 1936."

All the above in quotations were taken from Our Memories Are Warm book which was published in 1976. Folks, these books make excellent Christmas gifts. There are 374 pages in this book. We sell them for \$50.

The following two paragraphs were found on the internet under Farming Methods and Practices: In the 19th century seventy-five percent of the population of the United States lived in rural America. In the era of horse drawn equipment, the usual method of harvesting corn was to pick it by hand. Two horses pulled a wagon with a high bang board on one side which deflected the ears of corn thrown by the shucker. The shucker never looked at the wagon and a good team would stay in position at the verbal command of the worker. Each shucker had his own style and favorite hook, peg, or finger stall. A good man could load 100 bushels a day.

Many farms would have hired men to help in the harvest. The hired men would live with farmers and their families, and be paid by the bushel. An announcement in the 1925 Monitor newspaper said that corn pickers would be receiving five cents a bushel that year.

According to Tim Kehoe (uncle to John Larson), the Irish did the hoeing on the John Brown farm. The adults received \$1.00 a day and the kids received fifty cents a day. In a one mile long field, it took one-half a day from one end of the field and on-half a day to come back. Tim Kehoe was one of the kids who received fifty cents.

According to a plat map dated 1908 that we have in our museum, it shows that 103,44 acres were still in John Brown's name. And Martin Chesak owned 103,00 acres.

In 1895 Martin and Anna Chesak (my grandparents) purchased land from John Brown and lived on this farm until 1911. Then William and Lillian Page (Winton Page's folks) lived on this farm. In 1936 Leonard and Grace Nyman (my cousins) moved here until 1966. Jerry and Mary Nyman Lofquist (my cousins) moved to the farm in 1967. They are living here at present. Much of the original farm land has been sold over the years.

Some of our men from the Historical Society are working at the cemetery. We need more helpers. We had another bake sale on September 17th and 18th, and made a profit of \$199. If you have some favorite little stories about Cherry Valley, and wouldn't mind my printing them in a newsletter, I would appreciate receiving them.

Your Newsletter Reporter,

Beverly (Oberg) Scholz, 6645 Fincham Dr., Apt. #307, Rockford, IL 61108

815-227-1545 pioneer.30@live.com