

CHERRY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
2020 Third Quarter



"Fall has always been my favorite season. The time when everything bursts with its last beauty, as if nature had been saving up all year for the grand finale."



The following have passed away since our last newsletter:

Betty Everson (Mrs. Roger)	92	June
Gerald Lofquist	83	July
Jane L. (Batty) Neff	78	July



Dumpit by Dort Swenson Otto

Learning that a need existed for skilled artisans, and that they could earn as much as \$20 a month, promoted the exodus from rural Swedish communities and cities alike. Chicago in the 1850's became the distribution point for the western migration. The Chicago Union train came only as far as Rockford. Swedish heritage would soon become the norm in Rockford. (Senior News, Vol. 107, Rockford, IL)

Anna Johnson and Aron Swenson came to live only a block apart in 1892. They married and had 11 children, eventually settling on a farm along the Kishwaukee River southeast of Rockford. These were my grandparents. Their son Eksil Waldemar married Mildred Hope Bailey in 1929. Eck, as he was called, had a creative mind, and liked nothing more than a challenge. On the farm was a limestone hill, where he experimented with ideas on how to pulverize the limestone more efficiently. (Quarries were often called "Dummers". He tried spreading the lime on his fields, and neighbors thought he'd gone mad, but higher yields made them believers. They wanted limestone too. Soon his chicken coop gave way to a machine shop, and he began to prosper with his quarry business. Eksil and Hope had me...Dorothy Mae the same day as the Dione Quintuplets were born. Dort quickly became my nickname.

Eskil was approached by the Sanitary District in 1935 to see if he could solve their clogging and cleaning issues, by developing a specialized pulverizer. He didn't let them down, and his Trituator was patented in 1938. He later sold the patent to Chain Belt Company who sold them to the U.S. Government. They later equipped every submarine in the Navy with the Trituator during WWII. Prior to this, waste disposal played an important part in detecting submarines. His parents' farm shared in the success, and money went toward a building a bungalow in Cherry Valley. I can remember visiting the new house in Cherry Valley about 5 miles from the farm. This would become the house of their dreams with indoor bathrooms, and 2 bedrooms. The price was \$3,500.

So in 1937 we moved to the top of the hill in the little town of Cherry Valley. Rt. 5 ambled past our house, west of Rockford and east of Belvidere. Occasionally transients came to our door

hungry, and Mom never turned any away. Mom's violin was always a part of my growing up years. She could have been a concert violinist, often playing for groups and church.

Because Cherry Valley had no kindergarten, I began school in first grade in 1940. The school was SOOO big! Each day a lucky student was chosen to ring the hand bell for classes to begin. Up the long double staircase were the classrooms of the High School 10th, 11th, and 12th grades and the library. I had never seen so many books! I credit my grammar skills to my early Valley teachers.

In our little home in the Valley, my father began working on a new invention. A raised truck body that was capable of spreading cinders or sand onto roads for ice control. The Strang brothers, who owned a blacksmith shop 15 mi. south of Cherry Valley, did the metal fabrication for him. And thus a revolutionary way to DUMPIT was established -Patented in 1943. Elgin, IL was his first sale.



Pearl Harbor was attacked, and we joined WWII. Father bought war bonds and Mom dragged me to Dr. Klontz' office in Cherry Valley where women met to fold bandages. Soon Grandma Swenson's front window had three stars in it, as her sons(my uncles) Floyd and Ollie, and grandson Glen all deployed. Thankfully, all also returned.

Eck was one of the founders of C.V. Homecomings. For one weekend in September, the village green behind the Town Hall became the exciting site for carnival games and rides. My father was President of the school board or a member of it all the years I attended there. He supported the renovation program to tear off the top story and add on a basketball court/auditorium. When I was in third grade the war raged on. Spam was sent as a staple to American troops. Back in the valley, others grimaced, but I liked it. The news of FDR's death came on April 12, 1945 while we girls were playing softball at Buckbee County School, about 5 miles west of CV. Truman now acting President. He was determined to save American lives and made the most difficult decision to order the Atomic Bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Aug. 6, 1945. A second bomb followed on Aug. 9th at Nagasaki. Threatened with oblivion, Japan surrendered on August 14th. Uncle Floyd returned from the war to

NEVER speak of it again. He gave me a small aluminum heart fashioned out of the fuselage of a Japanese plane shot down.

In 9th grade, we were bused to Lincoln Middle School, and then to East High School. A new boy was riding that bus. His name was Dick Otto. He asked me to go to the free show with him. Movies were shown on the back of the Town Hall on the village green every Wednesday evening. Later, when my father realized things were getting serious between the two of us, he talked to Dick about working for him; Dick accepted.

Eventually the Swenson Self-Feeding Material Spreader grew to a near monopoly in the Midwestern markets. Many State Highway Departments, cities and counties were endorsing the safety and ease of operation. Life was optimistic.

We married in the Cherry Valley Methodist Church in 1953. As a wedding gift, my father gave us the deed to the Old Center County Schoolhouse on Perryville Rd. He purchased it at auction with plans to turn it into a home. While Dick and his father were working on the school re-construction, they knocked over a kerosene filled heater. Flames spread quickly while he ran to the nearest farm (Mickey and Marilyn Williams) to call the C.V. Fire Department. The attempt to save the building was futile. We lived with Daddy in the C.V. bungalow while plans were made and carried out to build our home anew.

More inventions and patents followed in 1967, '68, and '70. Eck nearly bought some farmland just west of Cherry Valley, but decided the \$400 an acre was too high, and let it slip by. One day we learned that a big new shopping mall was planned for that same farm, with a rumored purchase price of \$10,000+ per acre! The little town of Cherry Valley gained a giant windfall from Sales Tax generated.

Most of 1970-71 was spent in exhaustion fighting the landfill proposed for section 27 of Cherry Valley Township, near our father's farm. Meetings, research, door to door campaigning, lawyers and fundraisers BECAME our lives along with most of the farmers in section 27. We won a brief reprieve, but 10 years later Rockford accomplished its' goal.

Spreaders are needed for more than roads; Eck designed them for tar and gravel to be used on flat top roofs. Leaf suction machines, Road Rollers, and lawn rollers for garden tractors are some of my father's inventions. With his business expanding into Canada, he purchased land and built a factory in Glenco, Ontario, to escape the high tariffs. Shipping became worldwide.

Eksil Waldemar passed away in 1978. All total, 17 of his inventions earned machinery patents.

A life of Worthiness and Humanity had made a difference on earth.

This is but an excerpt from "Dumpit"-a full length book written by Dort Swenson chronicling her family's history. It was thoughtfully donated to the Historical Society by William Yunek.



Cherry Valley Cityscape 1976

View looking northwest from bell tower of Cherry Valley Methodist Church.



Terry Murphy, a lifelong Cherry Valley resident had always envisioned organizing a non for profit organization with a group of Cherry Valley area men with the goal of helping Cherry Valley area children and the community in general. In 2011 he put his ideas into action and the Cherry Valley Area Men's Association was established. Sadly Terry passed away in 2017 but his vision and goals are the driving force of our organization. We are a small organization that raises money through various events, company sponsors and membership dues. We donate to various community needs and offer five \$500 scholarships per year towards continuing education.

Cherry Valley Area Men's Association is a Nonprofit 501 (C)(3) organization Fed ID # 90-0674903

Events Cherry Valley Area Men's Association has sponsored or contributed to:

1. Petitioned and got the speed limit reduced from 55 mph to 45 mph on Harrison (Bypass 20) and Mill Road intersection.
2. Established an educational scholarship program donating five \$500 scholarships every year.
3. Donated uniforms and equipment for the 4th and 5th grade boys and girls basketball teams at C. V. School
4. Donated cheerleading uniforms for the 4th and 5th grade Cherry Valley School Spirit squad.
5. CVAMA members assist with the yearly food and paper shredding drive at Village Hall.
6. Raised funds for uniforms for the Goldie B. Floberg special athletes.
7. CVAMA worked with the Winnebago County Forest Preserve to design, produce and install rules of the river signs at six county forest preserves.
8. Donated to the 2011 and 2012 downtown Cherry Valley Christmas lights
9. Donated and passed out over 4,000 Frisbees at the Cherry Valley 4th of July parade 2012 thru 2018.
10. Sponsored the Oscar Meyer Weiner Mobile at the 2012 4th of July parade.
11. Sponsor the Cherry Valley Family Night Ice skating at Carlson Ice Arena 2016-2018
12. Sponsored Cherry Valley 4th and 5th grade basketball players to youth basketball clinics.
13. Mini Golf and silent auction sponsor 2017, 2018 Cherry Valley Public Library fundraiser.
14. Sponsored Wild Life Exhibit and Educational Show Cherry Valley Public Library 2017
15. Donated a defibrillator to the Cherry Valley Police Department.
16. Sponsor the Cherry Valley Bounce Night at the Gymnastics Academy South for 2017 and 2018.
17. Contributed fishing poles and tackle boxes to the Cherry Valley Library that can be used with a library card.
18. Sponsor the Cherry Valley Library tour at the Burpee Museum 2018
19. Sponsor Cherry Valley Library Furry and Friends Petting Zoo 2018

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Thank you to the Cherry Valley Village Hall for their wonderful support and assistance.



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Please feel free to drop a line, add some content, share some stories either to my e-mail,

The Historical Society's e-mail (cvhs.1899@gmail.com)

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