

CHERRY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
Spring 2017



"The day the Lord created hope was probably the same day he created Spring."--*Bernard Williams*



The following have passed away since our last newsletter:

Calvin S. Lensing	59	Mar 2017
Sydney Ann (Bursell) Fosse	74	Mar 2017
Betty Lou (Stemwedel) Horsley	88	April 2017



A Farmer's Recollections

Excerpt from the Fox Family History, written by Charles Fox when he was 85. He was always a farmer, hence it is written from a farmer's standpoint.

The history of this locality I gathered from my father who came here when he was eleven years old and lived here all the rest of his life. He died in 1900 at the age of sixty-nine. And from my grandmother Fox, who raised her eleven children here and died in 1889 at the age of eighty-seven.

The winter of 1842 (Rockford) was known as the "hard winter". The first snow fell 11/7 and the last one on 3/10. Much suffering resulted from the intense cold and the loss of many cattle occurred. The settler's homes were poor and open. Many of them without a tree or shrub to protect them from the wind. There were no storm doors or windows. Every kitchen had a tea kettle. At first they were cast iron, and later they had a copper bottom. The first kitchen stoves were made of cast iron. Then stoves were built with a warming closet above the stove with a smoke pipe running through it. Next they were made with a water reservoir at the back of the stove for dishwashing water.

The snow averaged 30" and drifted to a height even with the fences. It fell before the ground was frozen and froze a crust so hard that it bore horses and cattle. About the month of March every year all the kids had to take sulphur and molasses. Some wore safetida around their necks to ward off germs. It stunk. No self respected germ would go near it.

My generation was raised on salt pork, potatoes, and canned goods in the cellar. But we had good home made bread and biscuits. Now and then a chicken, and all the milk and eggs we wanted. There was a meat wagon which came twice a week from Fairdale, and later Cherry Valley in the fall.

My father said 1893, 1894 and 1895 were really hard times. There was no work for thousands of men. The government gave no relief then. You begged or starved. Tramps came along. They would sleep in straw piles or hay stacks and beg for food. If you gave one a handout, they would mark your gate post or tree, and ere long another would be there to beg.

Before fences were built, you traveled straight across the fields. Before Flora Township was surveyed, a Mr. Griggs (first settler in Cherry Valley) settled as a squatter on property near the Flora Township Hall. He and his sons plowed a furrow for a boundary line with a team of oxen. The first fences were rail and some sod, then board. The boards were from white pine and cost \$16 per thousand. Next came Osage fences (from trees full of thorns). Then came barb wire made mostly in DeKalb.

In the 1900's horses were still used for drawing street cars. Many Swedish people came to the area in the early days for jobs. The farm hands were all good workers. They made \$16 to \$20 a month. Most every home had a hired girl. They got \$2 a week and they earned it.

There were a great amount of hogs raised. The hog killing time came in the spring and fall. 1916 was an era when nothing was wasted. Perhaps a few might remember the motto of the Swift Company packing plant. "Everything is used but the squeal". Every farmer raised poultry. The old hens and young roosters were shipped to Chicago in crates that would hold about 24 birds. Those commissions farms in Chicago would sell the birds and send back the empty coop. Before egg crates were made, they packed eggs in a receptacle of oats, so they wouldn't break in transit. There was always some chicken stealing going on.

A little after 1850 the first railroad was put through to Cherry Valley from Fort Dearborn (now Chicago). It was called the Chicago & Galena Railroad. Later it was built through Rockford, Freeport, Dubuque and westward. The railroads drew grain elevators, grocery stores, saloons, a hotel, blacksmith shop, and a hardware store. In grain elevators they used a blind horse. It could never see when the boss was looking.

At first the electric railroad was built from Belvidere to Rockford through Cherry Valley. Later it was extended to Janesville, WI and east to Elgin. Until automobiles came, this road did a thriving business. After autos came, it was torn up. In Belvidere one grist mill was called Big Thunder and the other one Little Thunder. There was also a grist mill at Cherry Valley. All were run by water power.

Al Aten in the late 1800's got a postal route out of Cherry Valley which came on the road one mile west of Irene. He delivered his route for 23 years. For most of his career he used a horse drawn rig, later getting a high wheel, hard rubber tire, chain driven automobile – very noisy. He got hit on dead man's curve from the Illinois Central Railroad train. It didn't hurt him much, and they blamed the engineer of the train. He should of heard him coming.

About 1897 William Lee was considering building a grain elevator and putting his son, Henry in to run it in Irene. He had another son Thomas Lee running the one in Cherry Valley.

At that time, as it should be now, the church was the social center of the community. No telephones, television, radios, a newspaper once a week, and poor mail service in those days. When I was a youngster, father and I would go to Cherry Valley, Belvidere, of Fielding to do our trading and stop and exchange news on the road coming back from town. About 1894 Rev. L. H. Brown, a minister of the Baptist Church of Cherry Valley (1984 to 1910) alternated with Methodist Episcopal. This continued until about 1910 when Rev. Brown quit his services and the Methodist Episcopal took over. Sunday school was well attended. Every year there was a picnic held mostly by the Kishwaukee River.

When I left Illinois in 1922, none of the homes in our neighborhood had high line electricity. No gas stoves either, so fuel for the homes was wood, coal, cobs and coke. (Coke is a hard gray fuel. It bears the same relation to coal as charcoal does to wood.) Longer corn cobs made a very hot heat in a short time. Coal would get the kettles black on the bottom, so lots of wood used in the stoves.



Byron Historical Society Group Outing

Sunday May 21st after church, one of our members has arranged a visit to the Byron Historical Society. They are not normally open on Sunday, so this will be a private tour. Any are welcome to join us for lunch at the Sunrise Restaurant in Byron, and an afternoon checking out the Byron HS collection. If you'd like more details, leave a phone message at the Historical Society #815-332-5200 or contact someone at either of the email addresses listed at the end of every newsletter. We'd enjoy company!

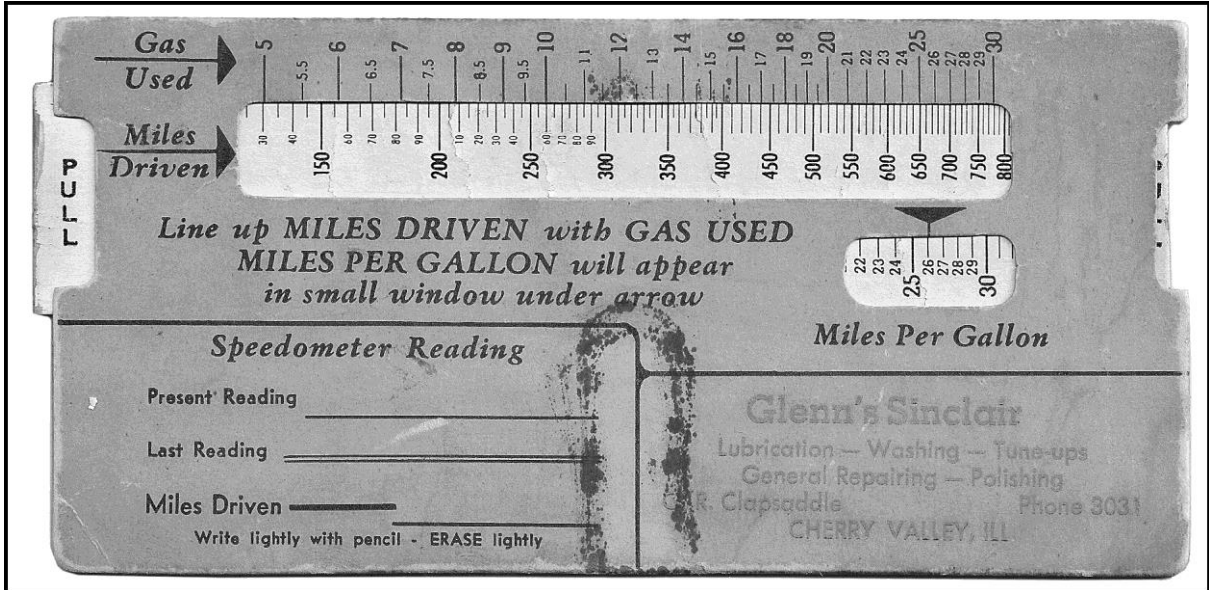



CV Gas Station Memorabilia

This 'Miles Driven/Gas Used' calculator was sent in by William Yunek. He recently discovered it while going through boxes preparing for a move. The Sinclair gas station was at the east end of town,

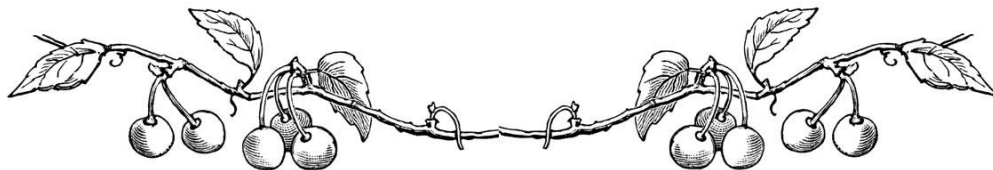
across the road from Enders Greenhouse. Jack Taylor ran it for years. Then Glenn Clapsaddle took over maybe in the early 50s. He married Shirley Baxter. Jack Taylor and Eddy Schellinberg later opened up a tavern just west of Offies' tavern.

Perhaps you remember using something similar to keep track of your mileage? The back side had charts for recording lubrication records and mileage notes. This handy little slide system was given out to aid customers in keeping track of their car care. It's approximately 60-70 years old!






Does anyone know who the 5th from the left is? From left to right stand Roy Cleveland, Clark Gable, Roger Everson, Charlie Robinson, ??????, and Frank Whitehand. Anyone have stories from the days of the Lions Club Corn Boil to share?



Editor.... Pam Jeske (golfnsew@aol.com)

Please feel free to drop a line, add some content, share some stories either to my e-mail, the Historical Society's e-mail (cv.historical86@frontier.com)

Or stop by, leave a note ...have a chat with a member!



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Thank you to the Cherry Valley Village Hall for their wonderful support and assistance.
Please let our sponsors know you saw their advertisement in the newsletter, we appreciate them!

Cherry Valley Area Men's Club

Lifelong Cherry Valley resident Terry Murphy had always wanted to form a men's club in Cherry Valley with the purpose of helping Cherry Valley area kids and the community in general. In 2011 he put his ideas into action and the Cherry Valley Area Men's Club was established. We are a small non for profit organization that raises money through various events, company sponsors and membership dues. The club donates to various community needs and offers five \$500 scholarships per year towards continuing education. The club meets at 6:30 p.m. the third Monday of every month. Check us out on Facebook "Cherry Valley Men's Association" for meeting locations.

What the Cherry Valley Area Men's club has done?

1. Petitioned and got the speed limit reduced from 55 mph to 45 mph on Harrison (Bypass 20) and Mill Road.
2. Established an educational scholarship program
3. Donated uniforms and equipment for the 4th and 5th grade boys and girls basketball teams at Cherry Valley School
4. Donated Cheerleading uniforms for the 4th and 5th grade Cherry 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 over 2500 Frisbees for the Cherry Valley 4th of July parade 2012 thru 2016.
10. Sponsored the Oscar Meyer Weiner Mobile at the 2012 4th of July parade.
11. CVAMA annually sponsors the Cherry Valley Family Night Ice skating at Carlson Ice Arena.
12. Sponsored Cherry Valley 4th and 5th grade basketball players to youth basketball clinics.
13. Mini Golf and silent auction sponsor 2017 Cherry Valley Public Library fundraiser.
14. Sponsoring Wild Time Animal Education Show Cherry Valley Public Library 2017
15. Donated a defibrillator to the Cherry Valley Police department.

If you would like to donate to the club please send your donation to:

Cherry Valley Area Men's Club
1343 Temple Circle
Rockford, Il 61108