

CHERRY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
Winter 2017



Life is unpredictable, it changes with the seasons.
Even your coldest winter, happens with the best of reasons.
And though it feels eternal, like all you'll ever do is freeze,
I promise spring is coming, and with it brand new leaves.
~e.h



The following have passed away since our last newsletter, and deaths recently learned:

Margaret Byers	90	Mar. 2015
Janet E. Hildebrand	91	Dec 2015
Bradley Mitchell	60	Sept 2016
L. Joy Quincer	84	Jan 2017
Jane E. LaGrande	98	Jan 2017
Ross Popham	70	Feb 2017



Memories from an Old Crow

The Kishwaukee River is the logical reason for the development of Cherry Valley. In 1835 Joseph Griggs and family settled here and developed a Grist Mill to grind grain for the area farm land. Soon he and family provided a ferry across the river and development went on from there. The necessary dam was built. My memories were of a cement dam in the far east area beyond our farm land, where the river meandered south, and a small stream received the water controlled by the dam. The grist mill used huge French Buhr mill stones until at least 1935. (French Buhr stones were considered the best— and they were expensive. The French quarried them in smallish lumps from beds of softer stone, shaped them to fit together, and bound them with heavy iron bands into the thick disk shape of all millstones. Others stones were shipped from domestic quarries: granite and, sandstone being highly regarded. The better the stones, the less they had to be picked and trimmed to keep them sharp. -excerpted from "The Grist Mill-fulling Mill Complex" from the Collections at Historic Bethlehem, PA.) The Mill Race, as it's still called, boarded our farm on the east. When I was about 6 my dad carried me into the mill to see the great stone wheels in action.

The Dam area created a wonderful swimming hole and a pavilion was built on the hill north of the river area. A shed type building on the rivers edge was used to change into clothes to enjoy the water. In spring of 1951, my sister had a party in the pavilion for her senior classmates from east high school. Soon after the Rockford Swedish Society purchased it and used the area for their many get togethers.

The first Cherry Valley Homecoming was in October 1927, with the blessings and hard work of all those in and around our village. It grew from a one day event to a two day celebration. For years after, this WAS our get together each fall with prominent people to address our group, a band, and bounteous food. Many folks came back yearly!

We had a Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, as well as many little booths where we could take our chances to win a prize. In those days, the prizes seemed more valuable than the few dines and quarters it cost us. Our small town enjoyed everything right here in our park.

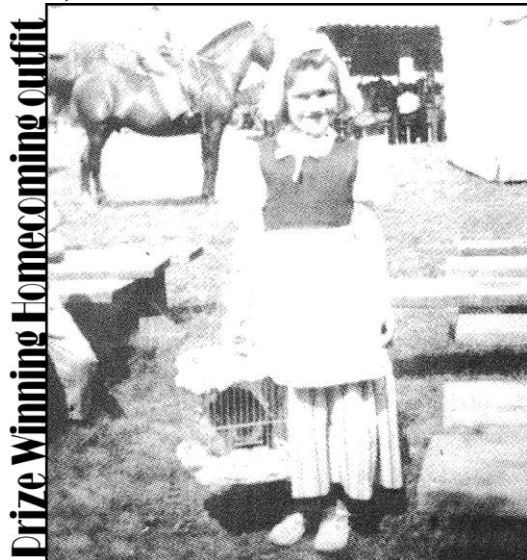
Cherry Valley Park was only half the size it is now. The parade from the Cherry Valley School to the Park gave everyone a chance to strut their stuff. Bikes, costumes, whatever we had. I'm from Dutch ancestors and my mom made me a Dutch costume when I was 8 or 9. I carried two ducks, 3 lbs each, in a bird cage! I won \$5.00 and was thrilled! This was our big village event for years, until Cherry Valley Days began at the end of our school years.

We did also have movies in the park, shown on the lower level at the back of our Town Hall. Some brought chairs, but most just had blankets and sat on the ground to watch the show. In the winter we could skate on the pond our town fathers provided for us. I'd walk from my farm home to Cherry Valley, put on my skates, and stay as long as I could. Often one of my classmates would walk me home as far as the 'scary wet swamp' in the Mill Race on the edge of Mill Road. I'd have to walk the rest of the way past that and the cemetery alone to get home.

In 1955, as I graduated from East Senior High, I-90 was being built through our farm. Mill road received a very tall bridge over the road and the dam was destroyed. The parts and pieces were dumped in the head of the mill race. At that same time the "Kish" was straightened to run much faster past Cherry Valley, wiping out some homes along the sides. Changing the course and speed of the river may have played a part in the water problems in the areas that are still populated along the Kishwaukee River. In 1962 the Harrison Avenue road became the new highway to Belvidere, giving the village the safety and peacefulness of no longer being the way east as it had been for generations.

The very large brick school was built in 1869. There were 3 stories up over a full basement, as I remember. (The old part of the school consisted of 6 classrooms. The north section had 2 classrooms, one on the 1st floor, one on the second floor, and an attic on the 3rd floor. The south section had 4 classrooms, 2 on the first floor, 2 on the second, and an auditorium on the third floor.) Needless to say I didn't go to 1st grade until 1942-43. Strange what we remember...I got my first kiss on that first day of school. There were still grades 1-12, so there were many big kids at recess. We had 2 grades to a room. Our 1st grade class filled our half the room. There were 13 of us by the time we graduated 8th grade. Pansy Rowley and Gertrude Wilson taught for many years before and after me. The teachers and principals there helped shape our lives. In small towns the school was also the main part of social life. Everyone came to our events. The village had a Catholic church as well as a Methodist church, both well attended. Everyone came to school games and events especially basketball!

The local music teacher put on a student concert in our great gym. After 1946 grade 9 was bused to Lincoln and 10-12 to East High Schools. Much later this changed when Guilford was built and became Cherry Valley's designated school. After 1954 the old red brick building was taken down in two stages and replaced with the present building. And by the time my 3 kids were in school, they were sent to Rockford to attend the upper grades. When we voted to become part of that the Rockford School District, the local school board was dissolved, and control of our children's education was taken out of local hands.



Prize Winning Homecoming outfit



Cherry Valley Cemetery Association

The Cherry Valley Cemetery is privately owned and the Cherry Valley Association oversees the care and maintenance of the property. Over time our funds are dwindling, as there are no more plots to be sold. The cemetery association relies on donations and interest derived from a "Care Fund" certificate of deposit. By law we cannot use the "Care Fund" and can only use the interest from the fund. Each year our working capital shrinks and is eaten away by inflation and maintenance of the cemetery.

We know there are several plots within the cemetery that are not used. Over time families and children move away for various reasons (work, school, marriage, etc.), but their family history is here in Cherry Valley. Sometimes loved ones are cremated and buried together leaving one plot unused or not needed. Do you, your parents or grandparents own a cemetery plot you do not intend to use? This could be donated to the cemetery association. We would like to hear from anyone who may have this situation.

The Cherry Valley Cemetery Association works hard to maintain the cemetery grounds and would like to continue this for many years. We are asking for your help either through donations and/or helping us locate anyone who may own a plot in the cemetery, which may not be needed. Please consider donating to the Cherry Valley Cemetery Association as a charitable donation.

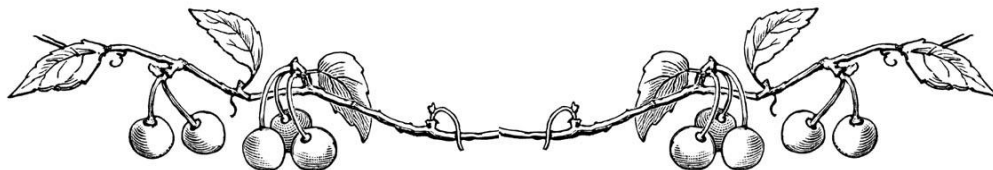
Contact: Cherry Valley Cemetery Association
David White – saultydogg@aol.com
Dave Ward – dave.c.ward@comcast.net
Donna Riha – donnariha@juno.com

Respectfully,
Cherry Valley Cemetery Association



Last months newsletter mentioned a few of our local veterans. Mike Wilt pointed out that Leonard B. Keller was the recipient of our nation's highest honor...the Congressional Medal of Honor. "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." You can read more about the events that lead up to him being awarded this prestigious medal here...

www.cmohs.org/recipient-detail/3326/keller-leonard-b.php



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)

Cherry Valley Historical Society, Box 266, Cherry Valley, IL 61016

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



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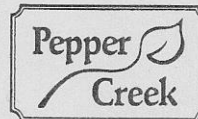
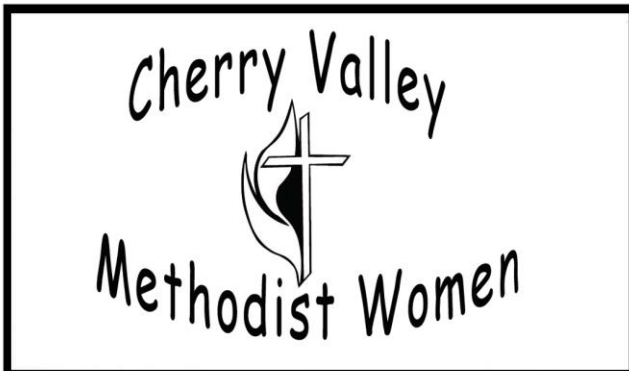
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Thank you to the Cherry Valley Village Hall for their wonderful support and assistance.
Please let our sponsors know you saw their advertisement in the newsletter, we appreciate them!

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