LeRoy Wilson’s Wild Buggy Ride . . . .

We were now ready to take a ride. We piled four or five kids into the seats and took off. Down Cherry Street we went with dust flying. When we got close to Strohm’s store on the corner of Mill and Cherry, I hollered to Bob to slow down. He said, “How?” We discovered we had no brakes. I never went around that corner onto Mill Street any faster even to this day.

This seemed like a great thing we had discovered. So we emptied a few more barns. I think we had five of those shaftless buggies cruising the streets before we were made to stop. There were many bruises and scrapes and close calls. The few autos that piled the streets did not feel safe and finally the village fathers outlawed our free wheeling buggies.

If you crave a thrill, crawl onto a shaftless buggy, sit there, look down the hill and tell someone to shove you off. Just hang on tight to your steering ropes.

As an after thought to horse and buggies: I think one of the last mule teams kept in the village belonged to Henry Taft. His barn stood on the southeast corner of the alley across from the late Jack Shuey tool shop.

On an early Spring morning, one could hear Henry swearing at his team all over Cedarville. Before the days of rototillers, the only way to plow gardens was with a team and plow. Gardens were larger than they are now. To handle a team inside a fenced garden took a lot of skill and a lot of cussing. Henry had both.

People would tell Henry, “Now I have a rhubarb bed here, an asparagus bed there. Don’t plow it out.” Of course no one told the mules where they were. That was Henry’s job.

So much for the babbling. See you next month.

Henry Taft

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Historical Society Museum to Open On Memorial Day

The Cedarville Area Historical Society will open its new museum in the 1889 Cedarville school on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30.

The event will be in conjunction with the village’s Memorial Day parade and historical society picnic. The parade starts at 10 a.m. at Mill and Second streets and finishes at the cemetery on Red Oak Road. The picnic on the old school grounds will start at 11:30 a.m.

For several months the Society has been preparing the first floor north room of the school to receive the exhibits and artifacts that are now housed in the old village jail on Cherry Street. The old school — although not completely restored — has handicapped accessible bathrooms, heating, cooling and additional lighting.

(Turn to page three)
Jean Joyce Donates Bucher, Rutter Items to Society

Jean Joyce, Freeport, recently donated several important Cedarville artifacts to the Cedarville Area Historical Society.

The first gift is an “autograph book” belonging to Dr. Samuel Rex Bucher (1827 – 1874) who had his office in his home at the northeast corner of Mill and Second streets. The brick building is still used as a residence. The comments and signatures of Bucher’s friends and associates mostly date from 1848 when possibly he was living in his hometown of Schaefferstown, Pa., and 1849 when he might have been a medical student in Philadelphia. (Sample page of book on top, left.) Tucked between pages of the book is an invitation to the 1879 marriage of Dr. and Mrs. Bucher’s daughter Ida May to Cedarville’s Dr. Smith Thompson. Dr. Thompson built a house for his bride at the northwest corner of Mill and Oak streets.

The second gift is a nineteenth century hand-made doll buggy, shown at top, right, being admired by Emily Myers, daughter of society board member Steve Myers. The buggy once belonged to Bird (Evans) Rutter (1877 – 1966), Buckeye native and wife of Harry Rutter who was a grandson of Philip Rassweiler, well-known Cedarville weaver. The Rutters for years lived at 215 Mill Street, once the home of Philip and adjacent to his weaving shop.

Empty the Cedarville Barns and Join LeRoy Wilson on a Wild Ride

By LeRoy Wilson

Last month in “Echoes” we visited Max Fox and the Bright Spot tavern in the 1930s. Now I want to share another experience we kids had during this same time period.

Many have disappeared, but some still remain. I am referring to the small barns that lined the alleys of Cedarville. At one time those barns housed the family horse and buggy. In the thirties most of the horses had disappeared and were replaced by family cars. i.e. Model As and Model Ts. What happened to all the buggies? Let’s find how a few met their demise.

In the thirties the streets of Cedarville were unpaved, save for Route 26. The streets were hard packed dusty gravel, the alleys were still muddy ruts. No curbs or gutters existed. I just want to set the stage for what follows.

So what happened to all the buggies? They would be worth a lot if they were still around. We kids suddenly discovered those unused vehicles were sitting idle in those barns. The owners didn’t want them because they were taking up valuable space. The owners needed room for their new horseless carriages.

Several of us pulled one out of a barn one day and proceeded to remove the shafts. Now we had a shaftless buggy and needed a way to steer. Bob Bratley — earlier identified as Cedarville’s marble playing whiz — came up with the idea of tying a rope to the axle inside each front wheel. When we pulled left or right, the wheels would go in the direction we wanted.

(Turn to the next page.)
1889 School Gets Water Supply

Historical Society Plans 3 Programs

The Cedarville Area Historical Society has scheduled three special evening programs for the summer of 2005. They will be held in the first floor south room of the 1889 school.

In June Dr. Gordon Dammann, Lena, president of the Civil War Medical Museum in Maryland, will speak.

The July program will feature Carole Bertram, well-known piano teacher, in a piano concert of popular music from 1890 to 1910. She will perform on the Society’s old upright piano.

Paul Fry, Cedarville, will appear in August. Mr. Fry is the author of the biography of his Aunt Mary Fry, for many years a close friend to members of Cedarville’s Jane Addams family.

Time and dates of these attendance-by-ticket-only programs will be announced in the May newsletter. All three are historical society members.

Museum to Open May 30
(From page one)

The south room of the first floor will be used for meetings and historical society programs. The second floor will be used for storage at this time.

Memorial Day details will be in the May newsletter.

Clyde C. Kaiser

The Cedarville Area Historical Society mourns the death of Clyde C. Kaiser, fondly remembered by many as “Mr. Cedarville historian.”

The 97-year-old Mr. Kaiser was a long time member and strong supporter of the work of the historical society. He participated in many of the Society’s events and he was always available for consultation on local history. The personal records he compiled are invaluable.
Cedar Cliff: The Second Addams Home

Just north of Cedarville is Cedar Cliff, once the home of John Weber Addams, his wife the former Laura Shoemaker, daughter of a Lena blacksmith, and their only child, Sarah (Sadie). Built in 1882 on limestone cliffs overlooking Cedar Creek, the house is now the home of Bret and Denise Rogers and their three children. Some of these photos, which are in the historical society archives, appear to have been taken around 1890. Weber, who suffered from mental instability, was the only son of John Addams.