

Cedarville's Quest for Togetherness

(From page 7)

December 1923. With the help of a \$2,500 bank loan the next year a permanent stage was built, the basement was excavated and a kitchen was installed for the use of the class and the public.

Starting in 1924 and continuing for several years, a minstrel show was presented under the direction of Jack Wagner, owner of the Cedarville-Freepport bus line. He also painted a large muslin stage curtain, a romantic scene of a rising moon, woodland and a lake. Costumes and all the trimmings were rented for the first show. By most accounts it was a dramatic success, but a financial failure and the Methodist Church Knights of Honor Sunday School Class sustained a \$300 loss.

Today, these productions — based on perceived racial humor and stereotypes — would be castigated by most persons. But in the mid-1920's these shows were acceptable with few murmurs of dissent.

Social attitudes have changed since 1924, but names have not. Again, older Cedarville residents of today will recognize many of the names in the minstrel play-bills.

Usually the music was directed by Elfrieda Zimmerman or Clint Fink or both. The performers were: "Doc" Thompson,

"Ziggie" Gushart, "Peggie" (actually Glen) Bear, Merl Kaiser, Fred Fink, Paul Kaiser, Ray Bollman, Cliff Schrach, Josephine Haldeman-Julius, Clyde Kaiser, Kathryne Folgate, Edna Kryder, Rose Hoffman and on and on.

The audiences apparently had short memories because two successive shows had programs and performers that were virtually the same.

For twenty years after the late 1920's there is little information about this building other than the fact that in the middle 1940's it was turned into a tea room operated by Loraine Fry and then a restaurant known as Kraft Foods. This last enterprise was abandoned and the building was used for three Sundays in 1948 as temporary quarters for the Evangelical Church which had lost its home at 70 Harrison Street in a December 1947 fire. Sadly, the temporary quarters were just that with the building burning down after the third religious service.

Cedarville's quest for a place to express "togetherness" was again fulfilled when the 1889 school, now the Cedarville Museum, was acquired in the late 1960's by the village to be used for community purposes. That move, however, proved to be temporary because shortly thereafter the new Jane Addams School on Washington Street became available, hopefully for a long, long time.

ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE MARCH 2009

Cedarville Area Historical Society



Society to Restore Second Floor Room

Work is expected to begin within a month on restoration of the second floor north room of the Cedarville Museum. When completed, the room will be used primarily for programs available to society members and the general public.

The society board has voted to name the new room the LeRoy Wilson Theatre in honor of Mr. Wilson, a very strong supporter of the historical society's programs, who died earlier this year. Memorial funds given in his name will be used to start the project.

When finished, the room will have new heating and air conditioning, new electrical service and lighting, repaired and repainted walls and ceiling, new storm windows, restored floors and insulation where possible. It is anticipated the walls will be lined with the original blackboards that remain. In addition the room will boast a multi-media projector and, as a temporary measure, a closed

circuit electronic system that will allow the society to broadcast programs to a first floor screen for the convenience of
(Turn to page two)

Historical Society Buys Printer for Large Photos

Thanks to a grant from Kent Bank the historical society purchased a printer capable of producing at a reasonable cost 13 by 19 inch black and white or color prints for exhibits. Previously the largest photograph possible was 8 by 10 inches.

The society will make this service available to other county museums and to members who want to preserve family photographs in a larger format.

For information e-mail the society at info@cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org or call 815-563-4485 or write to P.O. Box.336, Cedarville, Il. 61013

***Our website: www.cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org
Our e-mail: info@cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org***



William (Bill) Emo, 74, a long-time member of the Cedarville Area Historical Society and the Cedarville American Legion, died at his home February 14. Bill served in the military during the Korean Conflict and later was an engineer with Micro Switch before his retirement. Mr. Emo was the unseen musician who played "taps" at the annual Cedarville Memorial Day ceremony. He is survived by his wife, "Dottie", of Cedarville, two daughters, three sons and eleven grandchildren.

Second floor room

(from page one)

physically handicapped persons. Funds will be sought later for a method to move handicapped persons to the second floor.

Opening the second floor room will permit the use of the entire first floor for museum exhibits.

Private Research Help Available Via Society

Looking for information about your family's history or a Stephenson County historical event? The Cedarville Area Historical Society might be able to help you.

The society has contacts with local researchers who will dig into available historical material and provide you with information at a reasonable cost.

Contact the society by the phone number or e-mail address listed in the box below.

Cedarville Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 336
Cedarville, IL 61013
Phone 815-563-4202
Web site:
www.cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org
E-mail:
info@cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org

Jim Bade, President
Narcissa Engle, Vice President
Galen Bertram, Treasurer
Denise Rogers, Secretary
Steve Myers, Director
Mary Reed, Director
Gina Cole, Director
Ruth Smith, Director
Neal Scheider, Director

The historical society is recognized as a non-profit organization by Illinois and the U.S. government and as such has been designated as eligible to receive tax deductible gifts under the IRS tax code regulation 501 (c) (3).



The former Lutheran and Reformed Church on Cedar Street after it became the Community House and the belfry had been removed.

School Class which in 1920 bought the old Presbyterian Church, a frame building, on Oak and North Cedar streets.

The board of the Christian Association considered buying the then-abandoned Knights of the Globe hall, offered at \$800, but elected to go with the \$150 price tag on the church property.

Over the next fifty plus years this building — generally known as the Cedarville Community House — hosted dinners, organization meetings, plays, basketball games, a rifle club, roller skating and various other activities. The main sources of income to pay for the increasing number of improvements were memberships, rent and fund raisers. The management even went so far as to remove the belfry in 1925 and sell the bell for \$120 to a Methodist church in Durand.

But all the money-raising activity was not enough and in 1967 the building was sold for one dollar to the village. The

village leased the structure to another organization, but by the fall of 1969 the building was back in the hands of the village. In 1972 the village sold the building for \$2,500 to the Emanuel Evangelical Church which razed it for parking lot space.

Now going back to 1920 when the Methodist group bought a former Presbyterian Church:

The twenty four member class of young men and the teacher wanted to use the building for social and community purposes. At first it was used for class meetings, but the first recorded activity was an oyster supper for members on December 31, 1920.

Gradually improvements were made, making the place useable for community meetings including those of the Cedarville Women's Club and the Cedarville Home Bureau. A play was presented in
(Turn to page 8)

Cedarville's Quest for Togetherness . .

(From page 5)

"Adults, 25 cents; children under 15 years, 15 cents; family tickets, 75 cents when all who are to be admitted on this ticket enter at one time and no boy is over 16 years or girl over 18 years; old maids over 30 years in bunches of six or more, 15 cents each; old bachelors over 30 years coming alone, 55 cents; babies free."

For reasons yet to be learned, the fraternal order and its insurance program apparently collapsed. The date is not known, but it's possible the insurance benefits of the order were adversely affected by the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906, an event that brought disaster to many financial institutions of that time with investments in that city.

Regardless of the exact date, the fraternal order ceased to exist in Cedarville, the Globe hall eventually became vacant and about 1917 was offered for sale for \$800. One interested buyer considered it, but then turned to another property.

A private investor took control of the building about a year later and the site became the generating plant for the first electric lighting company of Cedarville. The building housed a large gasoline engine and generator which furnished the village with part-time electricity for a few years until the arrival of public util-

ity transmission lines from Freeport. The short-lived private company was organized by Homer Ash, father of the late Mary Ellyn Mau of McConnell.

The fraternal order of the Knights of the Globe passed into history with barely a murmur. Its physical Cedarville manifestation suffered a fate that was no less unnoticed..

From life as a proud symbol of one man's dream, the brick building with its ornate tower deteriorated over the years of neglect and finally was dismantled and the bricks sold to make way for a house to be built on the double lot in 1950.

Dr. William W. Krape, who lives on through Freeport's Krape Park, didn't witness this final blow to his dream. He died in 1926 in Florida at the age of 79.

With the pre-World War I death of the Knights of the Globe, the village lost the place that for twenty years had answered the need and place for "togetherness."

But it wasn't long before two new benefactors and two new meeting places emerged within a few years of each other. The first angel was the Cedarville Community Christian Association which in 1917 purchased the former Lutheran and Reformed Church on the east side of Cedar Street. The second was the Methodist Church Knights of Honor Sunday

The Depression Had Its Own Plan

With all of today's arguments about the government's economic stimulus plan and our personal financial problems, it is interesting to look back to a similar situation during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Leafing through notes compiled by the late Cedarville historian Clyde Kaiser, a historical society researcher found his comments on the Townsend Club. Anyone remember that?

Clyde's notes:

"The stock market crash of 1929, followed by the Great Depression of the early 1930's, created financial problems of great proportions to a majority of the nation's people. Cedarville residents were afflicted by the hard times by unemployment, losses through closed banks and the dwindling of family savings.

"It is no wonder that the Townsend Plan found a number of adherents among the elderly of the area and an organization was effected for regular meetings and discussions. The Townsend Plan was an old-age pension plan originated in 1934 by Francis F. Townsend, a physician of Long Beach, Ca.

"The plan proposed that all United States citizens sixty years of age or older be paid \$200 per month, funds to be provided by a transaction or turnover tax in

the amount of two per cent. The pensioner had to be unemployed and not be an habitual criminal. Also, the full amount of the pension had to be spent within thirty days.

"The Cedarville Club met regularly at the Cedarville Community House on Cedar Street. A business meeting, followed by a social time, was the usual agenda. There was a lively interest in the club.

"As with all proposed social changes, there were opponents. Opponents thought it impossible to succeed because people 60 years of age, so-called old people, could not possibly spend the \$200 monthly benefit within a period of thirty days. Also, people would not tolerate the payment of a two per cent transaction tax.

"The Social Security Act of the New Deal and sales taxes came soon. The Townsend Club of Cedarville gradually disappeared."

So ended the notes of Clyde Kaiser.

REMEMBER!
*Memorial Day
Monday, May 25
Museum Opens
Saturday, May 2*

Cedarville's Quest for Togetherness Continues Despite Many Setbacks

*By Jim Bade, president
Cedarville Area Historical Society*

Even a village as small as Cedarville needs a place where the residents can gather to socialize or to express themselves intellectually, culturally or physically.

Although the verifiable record is sketchy, there is no question that shortly after the first permanent settlers moved into Buckeye Township in 1837, the people would gather in homes for church services or for simple companionship. This form of "joining together" was adequate at the time, but as the decades passed, there developed a need for a more complex social model and a common place where that model could be practiced.

Skip ahead to the 1890's when we have one of the first verifiable community-wide efforts to realize that model.

The Knights of the Globe is barely remembered as a fraternal order, but its former Cedarville location on Harrison Street — known as Globe Hall — was a popular people place during the decade on both sides of 1900.

The fraternal order, founded in 1889 by Freeport dentist Dr. William W. Krape, namesake of Krape Park, established a number of local lodges. The Cedarville organization was known as the Col. Holden N. Putman Garrison No. 15 and about 1893 it acquired the former Evangelical Church building at 135 Harrison Street, vacant because of a congregation



This photograph on a card postmarked in 1919 is the only visual record in the historical society archives of the Knights of the Globe Hall, a former Evangelical Church at 135 Harrison Street in Cedarville.



Reportedly a scene from an unnamed 1906 production staged in the Knights of the Globe Hall

split. Col. Putman of Freeport was killed during the Civil War while commanding an Illinois volunteer infantry regiment.

With its headquarters in Freeport, the order — with Dr. Krape as Supreme Captain General — hoped to become international. Key words in the organization were "obedience, honesty, loyalty." It advocated "free thought, free speech, free conscience." Its motto was "justice and liberty for all." Dues were no more than \$3; U.S. army veterans came in free.

Members were privileged to take advantage of life insurance by joining the Knights of the Globe Mutual Benefit Association of Freeport, Il., which was quoted as "the cheapest, most perfect and best protected life insurance association in existence."

No records of membership in the Cedarville lodge have been found, but it must be assumed that for its brief period of existence, it must have been flourishing in order to maintain the building and its various activities. Village oral history

speaks of plays and other large gatherings, but we have little documentation of these events.

We do have a photograph, shown above, that purports to be the rehearsal of a 1906 play performed at the hall, but we do not have the playbill naming the play with a date and location to support that claim. However, in the society's archives there is an April 6, 1907, playbill that firmly establishes public performances at that time.

The 1907 play was "All That Glitters Is Not Gold." Older, longtime Cedarville residents will recognize many of the cast members: Arthur Lenz, Ralph Strager, Earl Smith, Roy Cromley, Fred Thompson, Merville Fink, Grace Richart, Olive Barber and Jessie Reamer. Music was furnished by the Cedar Cliff Orchestra, probably directed by Clint Fink.

The admission policy was obviously written with tongue in cheek:

(Turn to page 6)