

## THE LAKE

An excerpt from an essay by Kurt Vonnegut

NO MATTER WHERE I am, and even I have no clear idea where I am, and no matter how much trouble I may be in, I can achieve a blank and shining serenity if only I can reach the very edge of a natural body of water. The very edge of anything from a rivulet to an ocean says to me: "Now you know where you are. Now you know which way to go. You will soon be home now."

That is because I made my first mental maps of the world, when I was a little child in the summertime, on the shores of Lake Maxinkuckee, which is in northern Indiana, halfway between Chicago and Indianapolis, where we lived in the wintertime. Maxinkuckee is five miles long and two and a half miles across at its widest. Its shores are a closed loop. No matter where I was on its circumference, all I had to do was keep walking in one direction to find my way home again. What a confident Marco Polo I could be when setting out for a day's adventures!

Yes, and I ask the reader of this piece my indispensable collaborator:

"Isn't your deepest understanding of time and space and, for that matter, destiny shaped like mine by your earliest experiences with geography, by the rules you learned about how to get home again? What is it that can make you feel, no matter how mistakenly, that you are on the right track, that you will soon be safe and sound at home again?"

The closed loop of the lakeshore was certain to bring me home not only to my own family's unheated frame cottage on a bluff overlooking the lake but to four adjacent cottages teeming with close relatives. The heads of those neighboring households,

moreover, my father's generation, had also spent their childhood summertimes at Maxinkuckee, making them the almost immediate successors there to the Potawatomi Indians. They even had a tribal name for themselves, which sounded like "Epta-mayan-hoy." Sometimes my father when a grown man would call out to Maxinkuckee in general, "Epta-mayan-hoy?" And a first cousin fishing from a leaky rowboat or a sister reading a book in a hammock, or whatever, would give this reply: "Ya! Epta-mayan-hoy!" What did it mean? It was pure nonsense from childhoods. It was German meaning this: "Do abbots mow hay? Yes! Abbots mow hay!"

So what? So not very much, I guess, except that it allows me to say that after the Potawatomi came the Epta-mayan-hoys, who have vanished from Lake Maxinkuckee without a trace. It is an though they had never been there.

Am I sad? Not at all. Because everything about that lake was imprinted on my mind when it held so little and was so eager for information, it will be my lake as long as I live. I have no wish to visit it, for I have it all right here. I happened to see it last spring from about six miles up on a flight from Louisville to Chicago. It was as emotionally uninvolved as a bit of dry dust viewed under a microscope. Again: That wasn't the real Maxinkuckee down there. The real one is in my head.

The one in my head is the one I swam across, all two and a half miles of it, when I was eleven years old, with my sister, five years older than me, and my brother, nine years older than me, in a leaky rowboat near me, urging me on.

## SEPTEMBER 19 MEETING

Donna Edgington has memories of Culver and specifically the South Shore from when she was a little girl. She will share those memories, as well as hostess the next meeting, at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 19 at 286 South Shore Drive. We do conduct business at these meetings as well as enjoy the programs. You're all invited to come.

## LIBRARY UPDATE

The Culver-Union Township Library Board has not yet made a commitment to remain downtown and to restore the existing Carnegie building. However, the Library Board is negotiating with the Pinnacle Bank regarding possible acquisition of the bank building and parking lot. Once a possible acquisition could be made, the Library Board will make a decision contingent upon widespread community support and community financial commitment.

## BUY A BRICK

You can still have a memorial brick laid down in Heritage Park with any name you want to honor. Contact Lynn Overmyer for details: (219) 842-2742 or write to her at P.O. Box 189, Culver, IN 46511.

## OUR MISSION

The Culver Antiquarian and Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and maintaining the unique culture of the people who went before us.

Our new Board of Directors is a hardworking group;

Jo Dugger - Publications and Publicity

John Cleveland - Archives

Virginia Fisher - Meetings and Special Events

Anne Greenleaf - Membership

Richard Ford

Jim Moore - Library

Lynn Overmyer - Secretary

Bob Kreuzberger - Treasurer

Jim Peterson - President

## HISTORIC DISTRICT APPROVED

Lake Maxinkuckee Historic District nomination was approved by the State Review Board for Historic Preservation on April 29, and has been forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places for Review. According to Edson Beall, an historian with the National Register, there appear to be no problems with the nomination. Beall said the historic district would most likely be listed, following a period for public comment, between August 15 and August 31.

The National Register is the nation's official list of historically significant properties. National Register properties are eligible for federal grants-in-aid, and receive a degree of protection from federal projects. Listing does not prevent owners from altering their property if federal funds are not involved.

Laura Thayer

## ELECTRICITY COMES TO CULVER

March 19, 1914; The electric light gang expect to have the poles set from Plymouth to Burr Oak by Saturday night and to reach Culver by next week. If all goes well, the lights will be turned on in May.

May 28, 1914; Culver made its bow and was introduced into larger company last Thursday evening at 7:40 when the electric current from Plymouth Electric Light and Power Company's plant was flashed along the intervening 12 miles of wire and blazed forth on every street corner in town. 37 lamps in the residence district and 4 lamps in the business district glowed in the darkening sky and spent their reflexion along highway and byway.

October 1, 1914 The Vandalia depot has just been completely wired for electric lights. A number of small lights have been distributed throughout the building and one of the large lights has been placed under each shed beside the depot. These improvements add much to the comfort and convenience of the traveling public as well as improve the appearance of the station after dark.

*This has been taken from the Nostalgia column compiled by Virginia Bair for the Culver Citizen.*

# AFTER THE MAY 9, 1933 STATE EXCHANGE BANK ROBBERY

On August 4, 1933, some months after the robbery, Mr. W.O. Osborn received an extortion note from one of the robbers threatening death if he didn't bring \$20,000 in a bag to a particular location in Plymouth, Indiana. Daughter Francis Osborn Butler remembers her mother, her husband's mother and father, who were visiting from Nebraska, and herself going to Plymouth and waiting for news of the drop at a restaurant. While Will Osborn drove, Oliver Shilling was lying in the back of the car on the floor with a submachine gun. Four policemen were staked out in a house across from the alley. Osborn dropped the sack filled with fake bills beside a trash can. No one came to pick up the bag. But a lone car cruised by the site after midnight leading police to believe it was the robber who was tipped off to the stake-out.



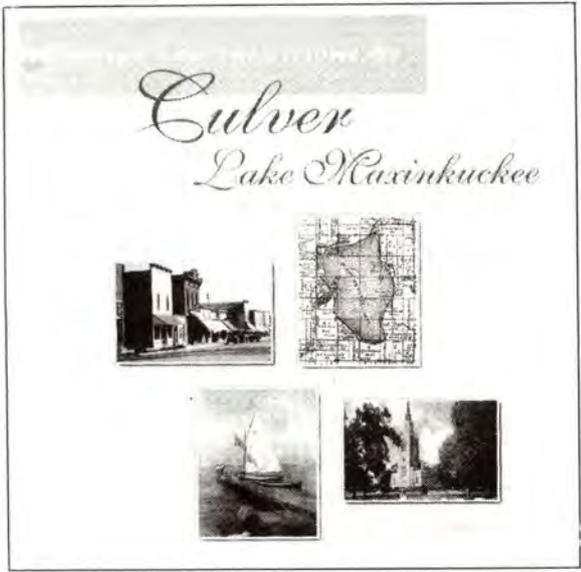
WE DEMAND TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS  
HAVE FAILED TWICE TO ROB YOUR BANK  
THE NEXT TIME WE WILL BLOW IT UP  
AND YOU TO HOUSE AND ALL YOUR DWELLING'S  
UNLESS YOU PAY THIS ATONCE THAT  
WILL PART PAY FOR OUR MAN WHO WAS  
KILLED AND WE WANT BOTHER YOU  
A GAIN OR YOUR BANK NOR KIDDNAP  
YOU. IF YOU DONT YOU HAD BETTER WATCH  
YOUR STEP.

POT THE MONEY IN A LEATHER FOLDER  
POT IT IN A PAPER BAG COME OUT TO W.  
HARRISON ST. ON NORTH MICH. ROAD GO  
THROUGH THE ALLEY BETWEEN A BIG  
RED BRICK HOUSE AND THE BIG WHITE  
HOUSE BACK OF THE RED HOUSE GARAGE  
YOU WILL MEET ONE OF US OR IF YOU  
DONT SEE ANYONE THROW IT DOWN BY  
THE GARBAGE CAN AN COME ALONE  
AND DONT TRY NO FUNNY BUISNES AND  
DONT TELL NO BOBY OF THIS LETTER  
AND DELIVER THIS WITH THE MONEY  
SAT. NITE AT 8.30 PLYMOUTH WE  
MEAN BUISNES  
WE ARE CLOSE.

THE GANG

September, 1998  
NEWSLETTER

Antiquarian and Historical Society  
P.O. Box 125  
Culver, Indiana 46511-0125



# STORIES AND TRADITIONS OF CULVER AND LAKE MAXINKUCKEE

You will find these stories and traditions of the Town, the Lake, the Academy in the CD-ROM that was released this spring. It is available at Mary's Shoppe, Fisher & Co., Bick's Flicks, and the Academy Bookstore.

## Please Pay Your 1998 Family Dues Now

The Antiquarian and Historical Society depends on your generous support to fund our many activities.

Annual dues cover the expense of meetings, the newsletter, and the directory, while additional donations make possible such activities as ice cream socials, the designation of historic districts, the CD-ROM project, publication of historic reproductions, and the development of the historic park.

Please continue your generous support. Donations in excess of \$10 dues are tax deductible. Send donations and dues to: The Antiquarian and Historical Society, P.O. Box 125, Culver, IN 46511-0125.

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