

## Letter from the President

On December 17 last year, about 100 people gathered in heritage Park to sing Christmas carols with their Culver community neighbors, accompanied by the Culver High School choir and band. Hot chocolate, candy and Santa Claus himself were provided by town businesses. For the Antiquarian and Historical society, this event was a fitting climax to a momentous year, a year in which we saw the people of Union Township come together on a number of occasions to celebrate the history and spirit of our community. The caroling in the park that was opened last June and dedicated to the fine people of Culver, was a dramatic statement that the community has moved past the issues that have separated us to focus on the values that hold us together. Both orally and in print the Society has been commended for being a catalyst that brings people together.

Clearly the society is a group of people that loves the community and is dedicated to preserving its wonderful heritage. Nothing else could account for the time, money and effort that they pour into our activities and projects. Last year in my letter I tried to name those who had contributed so much to the organization. This year it would take the rest of this page to make a dent in the list. Many of those names are engraved forever in the bricks and plaques in our stately Heritage Park. My favorite story concerning the park is about a small boy, walking on Main Street across from the park who said to his mother, "Look at all the people in the park looking at the ground. They must be looking for worms."

While the Park took a large portion of the society's time and effort, we were quite successful in bringing a number of other projects to fruition. Last year's projects include the designation of the Lake Maxinkuckee Historic East Shore District on the National Register of Historic Places, the completion of our CD-Rom "Stories and Traditions of Lake Maxinkuckee", our expanded newsletter, a very successful fund-raising drive, and the monthly meetings which seem to get better and more popular each year. All of this was done with volunteer workers and every one of us can be very proud of what was accomplished in the past year.

The new year, however, is a time for looking forward. A projected list of activities includes the installation of the bronze plaques at the Lake Maxinkuckee Historic District site and a ceremony at the site, and submission of a proposal to place the bungalow district in Culver on the National Register of Historic Places, the renovation and expansion of the Culver-Union Township Carnegie Library building and

expanding our publication programs.

The preservation of our library at its current location has been a goal for the Society for a number of years. The Union Township Library Board, however, felt that the preservation and expansion could not be accomplished because they were essentially landlocked on the site. When they recently asked community organizations to help them with this dilemma, the Society was the first to respond. We proposed that the Pinnacle Bank sell part of its Property to the Library and redesign the remaining commercial property to fit the requirements of the bank and other businesses. To get the ball rolling, the Historical Society, at a meeting of the Second Century Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, the Library Board the Pinnacle Bank and the Town Council, proposed that we purchase an option to buy the Pinnacle Bank property and to form a committee which would send out requests for proposals for architectural-engineering design studies of that portion of the property that would not be sold to the library. The Society's proposal was met with enthusiasm.

Consequently, we have formed what is known as the Osborn Square Committee consisting of the organizations mentioned above (with the exception of the Town Council, which will act in an advisory capacity). The Society has obtained an option on the bank property, requests for the design study proposals were sent out and seven major architectural-engineering firms are expected to submit proposals in February. The design study will be funded by members of the Osborn Square Committee. The purpose of the design study is to demonstrate to developers, or a group of investors, the financial feasibility of purchasing and developing the commercial portion of the bank property and selling a portion of the parking lot to the Library.

While the Society's interest is in preserving a historical landmark, we feel that our involvement in this project will also further the goals of the citizens of the community by bringing a first-class library to downtown Culver and furthering the redevelopment of our historic Main Street.

None of these projects would be possible without the generous support of the members of the Antiquarian and Historical Society of Culver. I know that I speak for the community when I offer by heartfelt thanks and look forward to meeting and working with you on the activities of the coming year.

*Jim Peterson*

# Lake Maxinkuckee Has Special Magic

By TOMMY HENDRICKS

Cole Porter and I spent many happy summer days at Maxinkuckee. Hundreds the turtles we netted, thousands the shiners we seined. All day we spent on or in its waters. The big time for us, of course outside the meals, came each afternoon while we were in bathing, when the big lake steamer Peerless docked. Down to meet it came all the summer colony.

It was then and is today a beautiful spot. Come motor car, motor boat, or airplane, Lake Maxinkuckee has always held for those who go there that magic something that has made it the paradise for generations of happy Hoosiers since 1836, when the first white man built a home there, and before that for untold regimes of Potawatamie and Miami Indian chiefs with names as musical as its pleasant waters -- Neesauges (Nees-wau-gee), Aubbeenaubee, Menominee.

According to Great Lakes or ocean standards, the Peerless wasn't a big steamer, but in the eyes of an 8-year-old youngster it was a wonderful creation. It took masterful maneuvering and seamanship to bring the boat to a successful landing. Much bell-ringing and whistle-tooting between Capt. Crook, the pilot, and the engineer, and backing of water and reversing of the engine were necessary procedures to complete a landing. This was particularly true when whitecaps spotted the lake and Capt. Crook would shake his head and say:

"Boys, it's a rough ocean today. You'd better not come aboard."

But usually he'd let us come aboard anyway and climb upon the "roof" of the boat at the bow near the flag-pole.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Tommy Hendricks is the father of society member and summer lake resident Cici Hollowell. Both Hendricks and Lake Maxinkuckee are mentioned in newly published "Cole Porter, A biography" by William McBrien, 460 pages, Knopf, 1998.*

As the Peerless backed away from the pier we would dive off and swim to shore.

That was the routine followed by all of us but Cole. Like us, he climbed aboard the Peerless in his dripping bathing suit, but while we scampered up to the top deck to get the most advantageous positions for our dives, Cole slipped to the stern of the boat in his wet bathing trunks, sat down on the varnished piano stool and began hammering away on the piano. For a few precious minutes Cole had everything to himself, for Capt. Crook and the engineer, Jonas, were busy getting the steamer under way, so Cole banged away without fear of interruption, for the engine blanked out most of the music, or rather, piano noise. However, when the engineer got the signal to change from reverse to forward full steam ahead, there was a moment when the engine stood silent and the propellers motionless. Then it was that Cole's pounding came clearly and unmistakably to the ears of all.

This seemed to infuriate Capt. Crook because he knew that Cole was sitting on the varnished piano stool in his wet bathing suit and was ruining the nice slick coating of that prized piece of marine furniture. Deserting the steering wheel in the bow of the boat, he'd rush after and chase Cole off his sticky perch. But no matter how fast and breathlessly the doughty caption charged, Cole always out sprinted him, cleared the boat rail in on grand circus-inspired parabolic leap, and belly-bustered smack into the water.

*We have Tommy Hendricks to thank for this delightful picture of the past. It was published in the Peru Tribune in 1977. In our next issue we will have more of the experiences of Tommy and Cole Porter at the Lake.*

## Meetings in 1998, in case you missed one!

At the Volkerts beautiful home in early summer, we heard the interesting history of that historic house, which had been the Kreuzberger's Saloon in the days when hundreds of people arrived on weekends to fill the excursion boats and promenade in the park. At the same meeting, Greg Anderson told us about the dinosaur bones found on his property and displayed some of the unique artifacts he has collected.

In June we held the impressive dedication of Heritage Park and the next meeting was at the home of Donna Edgington, who shared with us her charming recollections of growing up in Culver and happenings on the South Shore.

At the next meeting, Marcia Adams related the

fascinating history of the State Exchange Bank. It was a marvelous program.

Another interesting presentation was held at the lovely hilltop home of Jane Baxter, where Gary Lewallen unfolded a surprising narrative about the Titanic and it's Culver connection.

Our last meeting was in the hospitable Bishop and Rudith Sheridan home, an old church that was converted by the Sheridans into a pleasing and very interesting residence. Again, we heard the history of another of the old houses in our community. We have a wealth of such homes and businesses and hope to see and learn much more at future meetings. Don't miss another one.

# The Ice Harvest on Lake Maxinkuckee

The ice harvest began on Lake Maxinkuckee when the ice was the correct thickness. The ice would be clear and was advertised to be absolutely pure. Donna Edgington, descendent of the Medbourn family who owned the Maxinkuckee Ice Company, points out that they were able to break up the ice and put it in their iced tea.

In the early 1900's there were two ice houses in Culver. The North house was in the vicinity of the present Culver Cove. The South house was just south of the town limits.

When the ice was ready many farmers would come with their draft horses and plows to clear the snow. A channel was cut through the ice toward the shore and the ice house. The farmers did this as well as cut large cubes

of ice and float them through the channels to the conveyor belts which carried the ice to the ice house or to a waiting box car. From pictures of the workers it looks as if the ice blocks were moved along by using long handled paddles. Once the work had begun it continued day and night. The ice was packed with straw to preserve it until it reached customers in many surrounding cities.

The south ice house was destroyed by fire in June 1906. The fire was probably caused by a spark from the 11:52 train that ignited an ice shoot which crossed the tracks from the lake shore. It is interesting to note that burning coal was cooled down by applying water and ice. The ice did last for the summer season.



Maxinkuckee Ice Company ice house circa 1920. Charles Medbourn, pictured with hands on hips, is father of society member Donna Edgington and Marilyn Herrmann. Thanks to Donna for loan of photo.

## Meet the Board of Directors:

Last summer at the Annual Meeting, which was held at the home of Bill and Jean Welch, the new board of directors was introduced as follows:

John Cleveland	Virginia Fisher
Richard Ford	Anne Greenleaf
Jim Moore	Jo Dugger
Bob Kreutzberger, V.P. & Treas.	
Lynn Overmyer, Secretary	
Jim Peterson, President	

## CD-ROM included in Indiana Historical Society Catalog

"Stories and Traditions of Culver and Lake Maxinkuckee", The CD-ROM produced by the Antiquarian Society and released last year, will be included in the forthcoming catalog of the Indiana Historical Society (IHS). IHS, along with NIPSCO and the Marshall County Community Foundation, was a co-sponsor of the project.

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NEWSLETTER

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

*Maxinkuckee.*

## Lake Maxinkuckee Historic District Listed in the National Register of Historic Sites and Structures

The Lake Maxinkuckee Historic District East Shore is now listed in the National Register of Historic Sites and Structures. The National Register is administered in Indiana by the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Department of Natural Resources.

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

At the state level, benefits include eligibility for Hometown Indiana funds and state income tax credits.

The historic district, which comprises most of the east

shore of Lake Maxinkuckee, is significant as an intact representation of a late 19th-early 20th century lake resort, and for its architecture. Among the many turn-of-the-century lake resorts of Northern Indiana Lake Maxinkuckee is distinctive for its high degree of physical integrity.

The lake, which once had numerous hotels around its shores in addition to the cottages that remain, was a leading vacation destination in Indiana. Other areas around the lake are being studied and are potential candidates for future National Register listing.

The Culver Commercial Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1996. The district includes two blocks of Main Street in downtown Culver.

### Membership

We have about 125 members right now and hope you will all send in your \$10.00 family yearly dues to Bob Kreuzberger, P.O. Box 125, Culver, IN 46511-0125.

You can still order engraved **bricks** by contacting Lynn Overmyer at 114 East Jefferson, Culver, IN 46511, 219-842-2742.

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.

### Donations

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Summer Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Winter Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Antiquarian and Historical Society,  
P.O. Box 125, Culver, IN 46511