

# When Basketball Came to Culver

In 1891, a class of 18 students convened at the international Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) training school in Springfield, Massachusetts. A student, James Naismith, had a class assignment to invent a game to be played indoors. He was given 14 days to find an athletic distraction to keep boys occupied during New England's brutal winters. He created a game for opposing teams with nine players on a team and called it basketball. The rules have changed through the years, but the goal has been the same, to put a ball into a basket 10 feet high which later became a hoop at the original height.

The first recorded competition in Indiana was between the Crawfordsville and the Lafayette YMCAs in 1894. The majority of early games involved teams affiliated with YMCA. Teams were composed of five, seven or nine players, depending on the size of the gymnasium. In 1905, the designated size of the court allowed for teams of five players. The court was divided into three sections. There was a center section with scoring sections at each end of the court. One member of each team, called the center, remained in the center section and only took part in all the jump balls. In the scoring sections there were four players, a forward and guard from each team.

When a jump ball was called, a guard from each team would enter the center section. The guard who controlled the ball after the jump would pass it to his forward in the scoring area, and the guard would then move into that section of the court to assist in the effort of scoring.

If a score were made or the ball intercepted by the opposing team, the clock would stop and the ball would be taken back to the center section for a jump ball. In 1937, the jump ball after each goal was eliminated. A player was allowed to dribble the ball, but he could not make a shot at the basket after dribbling. A player was required to receive a passed ball before attempting to make a score.

In 1904, basketball came to Culver. The first games in town were played on the second floor of the Menser building on Main Street. Inter-scholastic games were first recorded in 1910 and played in the school auditorium, later identified as the "study hall." A game between Culver and Argos was played in front of a record crowd of 100 and won by Culver. Culver won another game, by forfeit, when Men-

tone refused to play.

During the 1913-14 season, Herman Sayger of Culver scored 113 points to set a state single game scoring record, which still stands today. He was playing at the time the court was divided in three sections which aided him in achieving such a record.

Games continued to be played in the auditorium until 1929 when the Union Township Recreation Building was erected. The new facility was the pride of Culver, as well as Marshall County. Several tournaments were held there before Plymouth built a larger building.

The local "gym" was home to all Culver games through 1968. Records show a total of 1,173 games between 1910 and 1968 with the majority in the new building. During that time, 12 men were named coaches. The best record was 28 wins and one loss; the poorest was 2 wins, 18 losses in 1967-8.

The longest-tenured coach was Paul Underwood, with an overall record of 263 wins, 136 losses. His "feeder system" was a foundation for success in the years to come. His 1943-44 team won 28 straight games before losing to LaPorte in the final game of the semi-state. His post-season games included seven sectionals and one regional championship, plus seven Marshall County titles.

The 1945-46 team, led by Roger Thews and coached by Harold (Red) Sering, won 22 and lost six. The team also lost in the semi-state to Flora. So twice in three seasons Culver came seven points short of going to state. With more than 750 schools playing basketball in Indiana, Culver advanced to the final eight twice.

In 1968, Culver Community Schools was created by the consolidation of Culver, Leiters Ford and Monterey.

In 1996, the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) changed Indiana basketball to a class system. The consolidation and the elimination of the traditional single class system changed "Hoosier Hysteria" drastically.

The combination results from 1910 through 2004 are:

**Total games: 1,922**

**Wins: 919**

**Losses: 1,003**

**Coaches: 27**

**Before consolidation:**

**Wins: 900**

**Losses: 473**

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**CULVER'S OUTSTANDING 1943-44 basketball team** ended the season with 18 wins and only one loss. From left to right in the front row are Bill Overmyer, Dale Heiser, Paul Jr. Snyder, Don Clifton and Don Milner. In the second row are Coach Paul Underwood, Roger Thews, George Andrews, Dick Hoesel, Ralph Pedersen, Don McKee and manager Dick Woolridge.

#### After consolidation:

**Wins: 219**  
**Losses: 530**  
**Coaches: 15**

Future historians may concentrate on girls basketball. Interscholastic competition started at the Culver Girls Academy in 1972-73; at Culver Community in 1973-74.

Culver is represented in the annals of Indiana basketball by the following:

Herman Sayger: All state in 1914; set single game scoring of 113 points in the 1913-14 season.

Paul Underwood, inductee in Indiana Hall of Fame in 1986.

Roger Thews, selected to the Indiana-All-Team in 1946. Named to the Silver Anniversary Team in 1971.

Patricia Babcock, career scoring leader at Culver Girls Academy, Miss Indiana Basketball in 1990.

Ralph Pedersen, inductee, Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 2001.

*Thanks to Ralph Pedersen, who shared his memories of Culver basketball, with contributions from Jo Dugger. Pedersen was a three-year letterman, captain of the team in his senior year, graduating in 1945. In 1954-57 he coached the Culver team. After graduating from high school and having served in the United States Army, he enrolled at Tulane University, where he earned a B.Ed. degree in 1952. While at Tulane, he continued in his enthusiasm for basketball, lettering*

## Culver's Coaches

Coaches in succession and number of years as coach in parenthesis at Culver:

#### From 1910-68

C.A. Grayson (6)  
 Dean Walker (4)  
 Zechiel (1)  
 Russell Burns (4)  
 Evert Hoesel (4)  
 Paul Underwood (16)  
 Harold Sering (8)  
 Waldo Sauter (1)  
 Ralph Pedersen (3)  
 Bob Gilbert (2)  
 Tom Benbrook (2)  
 Gene Crosley (7)

#### From 1969-2004

Dave Huffman (1)  
 Terry Haskell (1)  
 Len McIntire (3)  
 Ken Haas (3)  
 Gene Reese (1)  
 Jeff Swanson (2)  
 Ike Doll (3)  
 Ron Stevens (4)  
 Charles Ross (1)  
 Chuck Kitchell (4)  
 Larry Rans (4)  
 Ken DeKoninck (2)  
 Larry Lael (1)  
 Brian Disney (2)  
 Brett Berndt (4)

*for three years, and was co-captain his senior year. He was an assistant coach at his alma mater and later at the University of Missouri. He returned to Tulane as the head coach and then as associate athletic director until 1983.*

*He has been honored as an inductee in the Tulane Athletic Hall of Fame, the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame and as the Kiwanis Club Distinguished Alumnus of Culver High School.*



# The President's Report

The new year continues a period of change and challenge for Culver and Lake Maxinkuckee. Our growth and the ongoing escalation of real estate prices sometimes seem to be at odds with the traditions and culture that make our community the jewel that we cherish and work to maintain.

Change is inevitable, but we need to be sure that changes enhance the things that attracted us and those before us. I would like for people who come here 50 or 100 years from now to credit the Antiquarian Society members with the foresight and effort that continued the positive things that make this such a special place.

The leadership of this organization alone cannot be the guiding force to preserve and enhance the traditions that are important to us all. The entire membership needs to help.

## Historical Information on New Library Web Site

Jeff Kenney, program coordinator at the Culver-Union Township Public Library, has created a web site that includes many things of interest to members of the Antiquarian Society. He has put all of John Cleveland's postcard collection on the site, which can be reached by going to [www.culver.lib.in.us](http://www.culver.lib.in.us).

On the web site you will find "Culver Through the Years," which has sections about Town, Academy and Lake. The history section contains entire books and articles by Bob Hartman, Harvey Firari, Mark Roeder and others.

Most of us are acquainted with Meredith Nicholson's **The House of a Thousand Candles**. It is on this web site, with illustrations. Anyone interested in the history of the town will enjoy **Memoirs of One John**, by Edward Werner. And the history of Marshall County, by Daniel McDonald, is there, complete with table of contents, so you can pick out the sections you want to read.

Kenney has done a great service to the town by producing this web site, which, of course, has library information, including up-coming programs. He has offered to help us with an Antiquarian and Historical Society web site, an offer we cannot refuse.

If you do not have a computer at home, the library has made them available for patrons to use. They are very convenient and user-friendly. Be sure to browse "[www.culver.lib.in.us](http://www.culver.lib.in.us)."

— Agnes Bramfeld

Please give any of the officers or directors your ideas about what projects the Antiquarian Society should consider. This organization has the size and resources to help guide the future of our community, but we must do it together. Also, your thoughts regarding future meeting sites and programs are welcome. Dorothy Peterson is our program chairperson; contact her with your suggestions.

— Bob Kreuzberger

## Wanted: Old Imprint of Town of Marmont

George and Tammy Pesek, owners of the Fishbarn restaurant, have changed the name of the restaurant to the Marmont Grill. As informed members of the Antiquarian Society, you know that our town was named Union Town in 1844 and, between 1851 and 1895, was known as Marmont, named after a French general.

The Peseks are searching for a copy of the Marmont Herald, or any document with the imprint of the town of Marmont to use on their new menu. If anyone can help them in their search, please contact them, or let us know.

## Winter Storms

An excerpt from the Marshall County Historical Society Quarterly, December 2004, issue:

By Phyllis Schoonover

"January 1, 1936, once again found extreme cold weather. Culver reported a cold wave that started with heavy snows on Christmas Day and continued through almost the whole month of January. It was the most prolonged sub-zero temperatures in 24 years. It was so cold that ice harvest on Lake Maxinkuckee had to be discontinued. The channel would freeze over before the ice cakes could be floated in. The ice was approximately 15 inches thick."

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News Editor: Agnes Bramfeld  
Feature Editor: Jo Dugger  
Production Editor: Fred Karst

# Antiquarian Exhibit at Culver Library

On the ground level of the new library, you will find our two display cases filled with memorabilia of long gone days in Culver. In the case dedicated to Jim Moore, Marcia Adams and her committee have created a fascinating exhibit using unique items from merchants of Culver that many of us will remember from long ago.

On the top shelf are pictures of Main Street as it was years ago, old medicine bottles, day-books from Culver City Drugs and other drug store and grocery mementos from the past, loaned by Fred Karst for the display. The second shelf contains articles from drug stores of the past, donated by Kay Tusing, Essie McKinnis and the Rector family, and the bottom shelf has memorabilia from Gretters Food Market, and other stores, donated by Phil Gretter and Virginia Kniesly.

The John Cleveland display case contains many scenes from John's incomparable postcard collection and other pictures and mementos of the period.

The next exhibit is planned for the end of April and will feature well-known visitors to Lake Maxinkuckee, e.g. Cole Porter, Booth Tarkington and Kurt Vonnegut. Marcia would welcome anything members might have that could be used in this display. If you have something you can loan, you will be listed as a donor and your articles will be returned to you at the end of the display period. Please

check your scrapbooks and attics and contact Marcia if you find something of interest to loan. We could also use any sports memorabilia or Lake Maxinkuckee scenes and/or Indian lore or anything you have that you think is a "voice from the past."

Marcia's hard-working committee consists of E.P. Severns, Dusty Henricks, Dan Adams, Fred Karst, Jean Welsh, Bob Kreuzberger and Jim Peterson. Our thanks to all.

— Agnes Bramfeld

## YEARLY DUES \$20.00

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