

Happy Holidays!

Christmases Past Remembered

Many of us with a penchant for the nostalgic – which presumably includes many reading this newsletter – find an extra warm wistfulness in remembering Christmases past...sometimes even if we didn't live them.

Culver may be most remembered as a “summer” town, a resort area whose most beloved traditions revolve around warm temperatures and water-based recreation. But the Culver area is not without its longstanding winter-time charms, be they specifically holiday-related or otherwise; be they still existent today (Culver Academies' annual Christmas Vespers service, a staple at the Memorial Chapel for over half a century, or the annual Lions Club children's Christmas party), or little more than long-held memories (sledding down Liberty Street, or “Liberty Hill”).

What follows is an admittedly random walk down the snowy sidewalks of Culver's yesteryears, glancing at Yuletide life around Culver near the turn of the century, during the Great Depression, around the halfway mark of the 20th century, with a few other years here and there. Perhaps our readers will add their own holiday memories of Culver Christmases Past.

The Dec. 28, 1905, Culver Citizen had only a smattering of Culver news, but included was praise of the Christmas services at the M.E. Church, Reformed Church and Evangelical Church (all of which still function under different names today: respectively, the Wesley United Methodist Church, though in 1905 it was located at Main and Washington, site of today's Culver Public Library's north addition, Grace United Church of Christ on Plymouth Street and Emmanuel United Methodist Church on S. Main Street). The prominent Kline brothers and their families met at the Frank Kline home in Delong, where Santa visited a-jingling as well.

From the Dec. 23, 1915, “The Week in Culver” column in the Citizen: Are you going to put that lighted candle in the window at 6 o'clock Christmas Eve?

And...the lake froze completely over Sunday night. Skating is good near the shore. J. Saine

and Sons should be added to the list of merchants that will chose all day Christmas. From the same issue: The M.E. Sunday school will present a Christmas cantata tonight. Mitchell & Stabenow Clothiers (today's Fisher & Co.) advertised “Gifts for Him” in that issue as well, including furnishings, dress gloves (\$1-\$2 per pair), night robes, suspenders (25-50 cents), handkerchiefs, underwear (50 cents to \$1.50), and Xmas hosiery (25 cents and up), to name a few. Hand's Grocery reminded readers that “fine china makes excellent Christmas gifts” and insisted the store's Christmas candy was “the purest you can buy.”

Not to be outdone, Tinker & Halliwell's Uptown Restaurant billed itself “Culver's Candy Corner,” boasting the “finest holiday confectionery.” Slatery's Drug Store was, simply, “The Christmas Center,” and carried, we're told, “the largest and most varied stock of attractive holiday goods in this section.”

Christmas in Culver that year, we read in the Dec. 30 edition, was, “in point of weather, the kind we read about and the kind we say we used to have when we were kids. The ground was covered with a four-inch blanket of new-fallen snow” and “there was sleighing for those who had runners and cared to indulge in this joyous mode of locomotion.”

We learn, too, that the ice on the lake was four inches thick, Culver's stores will not close on New Year's Day and that W.E. Hand was host Christmas Day to a complimentary turkey dinner for his employees, relatives and their families at Hayes' restaurant; 28 were served. To put it all into historical perspective, quietly and without fanfare the public library was moved into the brand new Carnegie building on Main Street from its temporary home across the street.

We learn in the Dec. 17, 1930 Culver Citizen that the town Christmas tree in those days was located on the corner of Main and Jefferson Streets (We don't learn which corner!), with the Chamber providing the tree, NIPSCO the electricity, the town trustees the labor (This undoubtedly means the town's employees.), and John M. Millner the “novel decoration” atop the tree. Also noted in the Citizen, two pine trees in “Memorial Plaza” make a “striking” scene, lighted as they are with colored lamps. “Memorial Plaza,” of course, isn't a familiar term to

most of us in Culver today. However, the article also mentions the Boy Scout log cabin being in the background, and that cabin was located on the east side of School Street (today Sharon Coffey's home). Coffey recalls, during her childhood, a totem pole positioned where the telephone building is today. It seems likely the open area around that pole made up Memorial Plaza, which in 1930 was Culver's newest community gathering place noted in the Dec. 24 paper.

The school Christmas concert took place Dec. 22 that year and was stacked with the sort of traditional Christmas carols one won't hear in today's more secularized public schools, "Silent Night," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "Joy to the World." The list goes on. Postmaster Clyde L. Shively urged residents to mail Christmas cards and packages early, and it was announced that all the stores in Culver would stay open late each night until Christmas, in hopes shoppers would purchase their Christmas needs locally. And where, in 1930, might the average Culverite shop for that perfect gift?

J.F. Weiss of the Culver Cash Hardware had a list of ideas and noted any purchase of a Malleable Steel Range earned one a free set of cooking utensils. Kreuzberger's Park (the large brick former hotel just west of today's town park) offered the best whiskies, brandies, cordials, wines, beer and fine cigars. Slattey's Drug Store offered "Christmas Novelties." The Surprise ("Culver's Big Double Store," Phone 25) boasted "Culver's Monster Bargain sale" on everything from men's suits ranging from \$4.69 to \$9.19 in price, to shoes to dry goods, to toys, to more listed items than we've space for here. There was still a need, as of Dec. 17, for more toys and clothes for the needy dur-

ing the Depression-era Christmas. Dr. C.G. Mackey coordinated the effort along with Culver's American Legion Post.

Christmas Eve, 1930, brought a gala celebration following the candlelight service at the M.E. Church. The American Legionnaires, Campfire Girls and Boy and Cub Scouts hosted a children's party in the high school gymnasium (today's elementary school gymnasium) and adjourned to the scout cabin. Afterwards, the community Christmas celebration – songs, presentations and the like – was held outdoors at Memorial Plaza. All who had flashlights were required to bring them.

Culver's first Cub Scout pack, under the direction of E.R. Corwin, was chartered that week with 22 boys.

The 1937 holiday season brought the Citizen editors a chance to poke a little good-natured fun at well-known figures – mostly businessmen – in Culver via a set of fictional "unclaimed letters" to Santa, including this one, allegedly from W.O. Osborn, well-known (and busy!) banker at the State Exchange Bank. "Dear Mr. Claus – Won't you please bring me a lot of things this Christmas so that I will have something to keep me busy. I find time hanging heavy on my hands and if you don't help me out I'll have to start a couple more banks just to pass away the time."

This tongue-in-cheek missive, supposedly from the ever talkative Otto Stabenow (of Mitchell & Stabenow clothiers on Main Street) toyed with Stabenow's propensity to chat: "Dear Santa – I wish you would bring me something that would develop my speech. I am so bashful that I seldom say a word and I don't want to be a shrinking violet any more. And while you are at it, Santa, I wish you would impress

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Hitching up a horse to a sleigh was a familiar sight in the Culver-Lake Maxinkuckee area during Christmases past. Enjoying the snow is a small dog, a part of this rural tableau still familiar today.

upon my partner, John Mitchell, that he shouldn't be so noisy and rowdy. It is hard on my delicate system."

"It's Mid-Century 'Christmastime at Maxinkuckee," said the Citizen headline in the Dec. 20, 1950, issue. The text of that article follows:

"It is a Christmas in which several local servicemen will be away from their old home town, and so for the sake of the record and particularly for their benefit, we would like to describe Christmas at Culver ala 1950.

"Winter, which blew in with a storm at Thanksgiving time, has tenaciously hung on in this vicinity and it appears that the usual hope for a white Christmas will be fulfilled. The kids have already been cavorting with their sleds on good old Liberty Hill. If the temperature continues as it is, ice skating should be in vogue as the bay and outer edges of Maxinkuckee already have a nice coating. Improvised shacks already dot Lost Lake as the fishermen are trying their luck. State highway workmen and town street maintenance men headed by Leo Warren have had their hands full in keeping thoroughfares open.

"The State Exchange Bank, the Post Office and all local merchants report there has been a rather heavy rush of business. Bank officials explain that the flow of money has been as heavy or heavier than that of past years. The stoppage of mail brought on by the rail strike last week brought on no stoppage of anxiety here as it did other places.

"For a while it appeared that cadets at the Academy might have to delay departure for their annual Christmas furlough. Fortunately they were able to leave on schedule here on Saturday.

"...The Christmas season here had its usual and splendid opening a couple of weeks ago with the presentation of the candlelight carol services at the Academy. On the Saturday afternoon before, Santa Claus was host to scores of youngsters at the public library.

"Tonight, judges appointed by the sponsoring Lions Club will judge the home decorations throughout the township and winners in the competition will be awarded a generous total of \$75.

"The descriptions of the current season would not be complete if we failed to mention the usual wintertime interest in the local basketball team. Winners over Plymouth and Winamac, in competition last week, the Culver quintet met Knox last evening and tomorrow they will engage Washington of South Bend.

"Sunday schools and churches are enthusiastically contributing fine programs in this year's festive season. While it really isn't a true Christmas for many with sons and brothers in the service and others anticipating a call to the service, everything will be done to keep the home fires burning until such a time as everyone can again participate in a true season dedicated to Him who said, 'Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.'"

The same issue features Yuletide greetings in the form of advertisements from Miller's Dairy, Taylor's Ben Franklin, the Grill, Culver City Drug Store, Culver City



SANTA ARRIVES

SATURDAY, DEC. 10
AT CULVER LIBRARY
2 P.M.

The jolly old St. Nick tells us he will come into Culver on the fire truck to meet all the boys and girls! There will be treats for everyone! Santa's helpers will be there, too. Come and see him.

Culver-Union Township Chamber of Commerce

The arrival of Santa on a fire truck has long been a feature of the Christmas season in Culver, illustrated in a vintage Chamber of Commerce ad in the Culver Citizen.

Grain & Coal Co., E. Thoner & Sons Chevrolet, Culver News Agency, A.R. McKesson, Lake Shore Recreation, Rector's Pharmacy, the Culver Café, the Lakeview Tavern and the Culver Citizen Press.

An entire article could probably be written about wintertime recreation around Culver in days past, including sledding. As mentioned previously, Liberty Hill was for decades the top spot for young sledders (apparently Lake Shore Drive was actually closed to allow Culver's youth to coast down Liberty Street). This was certainly going on in the 1920s and '30s, and evident here in 1950. John Houghton recalls his mother's mentioning sledding there. But he recalls only "Devil's Backbone" at the Academy golf course by the early 1960s. Can any readers with sharp memories clear up what happened to "good ole' Liberty Hill" in the years in between?

The Dec. 7, 1960, Citizen reported on a holiday event that had by then become an annual ritual: Santa's arrival on the back of a Culver fire truck (Santa in those days was given plenty of aid by fire chief Dave Burns); the jolly old elf landed on the library lawn and spent some time, then, with Culver's youngsters inside the library auditorium, today's AHS museum, the Center for Culver History.

The Dec. 19, 1960, Citizen informed readers Assistant Culver Postmaster Harold Fitterling said volume of Christmas mail in Culver was about the same as the last year, with approximately 120,000 letters and cards handled.

The same issue reported Santa arriving Dec. 23 to award prizes in Mr. T's bicycle contest, with young Carl Cultice winning first prize, a boy's bicycle. The second prize camera went to Brent Lindvall, and third prize - a watch - went to David Zehner. Winner of the girl's bicycle was Sharon Tousley, Susan Coby won the camera and Amy Hughes the girl's watch. Santa gave candy to all the children in the Culver Rexall Drug Store, added the Citizen. This surely would have been an early year for Ron Tusing's drug store, then on Main Street, preceding its move to Academy Road in the mid-1970s.

- Jeff Kenney

Museum Project Moves Forward

Plans for the Center for Culver History are moving ahead in several areas despite slower than expected progress in the fund drive, partly as a result of the economic crisis that has affected the entire nation.

The museum project has benefitted from the contributions of more than 40 donors, according to our treasurer, Agnes Bramfeld. Donations ranged upward from \$20.00.

The largest amount of money the society has received for the project is still the \$40,000 grant that was awarded last year by the Marshall County Community Foundation.

All donations are appreciated and will help to create the kind of museum the Antiquarian Society is hoping for, to tell the story of Culver, Lake Maxinkuckee, the Culver Academies and the qualities that make this corner of Indiana unique.

The society is continuing to ask for donations and looking into the possibilities of applying for additional grants.

The lower level of the Carnegie Library building in downtown Culver has been renovated by the Antiquarian and Historical Society, transforming it into a museum environment. Although the museum is not officially open, some of the plans and artifacts can already be seen by visitors.

People frequently drop in during the hours when the library is open to look at the artifacts or ask about our hopes for the museum.

One segment of the Center for Culver History, the historical and genealogical research area, is already complete and in regular use by the public.

During the last few months, library patrons have been assisted by AHS board member Chris Landskron, who has been helping with the research area and museum project every week, usually on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

In addition, the society has obtained the assistance of Amanda Miller, who had previously served as an intern at the library, to write story lines to be used in the development of the museum and the acquisition of artifacts. Miller is working part time on the project, as she continues her studies at Ball State University.

Thinking of Jo Dugger

You all know Jo Dugger as our talented and untiring feature editor for the newsletter.

Jo has been very, very tired and, as we go to press, she and Dick are at the Mayo Clinic to find out why this is so. We are all worried about her and hope and pray that she will soon be well.

We have Jo to thank for the success of our past issues and look forward to having her enthusiastic help with the next edition.

Antiquarian & Historical Society of Culver Winter 2008-9 Newsletter
 News Editor: Agnes Bramfeld
 Feature Editor: Jo Dugger
 Production Editor: Fred Karst

The society hosts Saturday morning times when the public is encouraged to drop in to talk about the museum and to view an audio-visual presentation that was prepared earlier this year by a committee headed by Marcia Adams.

A group of five museum theme coordinators recently was named to work with Miller in each of five areas, building upon an outline that had been prepared by the Museum Committee. The five coordinators and the areas of their responsibility are:

1. Lake Maxinkuckee, Marcia Adams.
2. Town of Culver, Latham Lawson.
3. Culver Academies, Jeff Kenney.
4. Rural Union Township, John Benedict.
5. Pre-History, including geology and Native Americans, Fred Karst.

The coordinators will help to direct the story told in each section of the museum in a way that will assure accuracy and attract the attention of visitors.

The Museum Committee has also been working with museum consultant Ted Swigon, who has created drawings and models that will be displayed as work continues to develop the museum. The visual materials depict the proposed layout of the finished museum. Although Swigon works out of Chicago, he is a resident of Indiana, living near Michigan City.

According to the plan, visitors will step into a model of a steamboat as they enter the museum, just as visitors a century ago boarded steamboats to reach their lodgings after arriving in Culver (or, earlier, Marmont) by train.

In recent months, the museum has also received donations of a number of artifacts, including a bell from one of the great boats that plied the lake, the Maxinkuckee.

Other recent donations include the school bell from the Washington School, and various signs that once were used by local businesses.

The Museum Committee has also acquired a copy of a painting that includes an excellent portrait of Potawatomi Chief Nees-wau-gee, through the cooperation of the Wisconsin Historical Society, which owns the original. Nees-wau-gee lived on the East Shore near the location of the former Bigley Orchard and represented his people in negotiations with the American government. He left Indiana voluntarily in 1838.

The Museum Committee plans to disseminate appeals for artifacts for which there is a specific need in future issues of the newsletter as well as in local news media.

Currently, we are pleased to have on display a Culver Academies exhibit loaned by Fred Lintner and have plans to open a display on the community's role in wartime sometime during the coming year.

— Fred Karst

Your Help Is Needed Now

Please read this! We have an emergency situation in the Antiquarian and Historical Society. When we have a big job, like stuffing envelopes, the volunteers cheerfully come, and we get the job done.

But right now we desperately need regular help in many departments.

Museum: We would like to have the museum section of the library open on Saturday mornings from 10 to 12. People do stop in to see what's going on, and we can't leave the doors open if no one is there. There's not much in the museum yet, so you don't need any training to just be the host or hostess. There are some things for sale: maps,

Local Veterans Recall Their Experiences of World War II Service

Three of the community's World War II veterans, Charlie Bernhardt, Gene Riester and Dick Fisher have been interviewed on video tape about their overseas duty. One section of the museum will be devoted to the history of the town and will include wartime experiences.

Although the veterans' stories are fascinating, their simple, matter-of-fact narration and strong appearance of self-possession are most striking.

If you know of any other veterans who would be interested, please let us know.

A WAVE or WAAC would be great. (For you youngsters, those were the women's service groups.)

We could also use some World War II memorabilia or artifacts, uniforms, pictures, posters or the stars that families displayed in their front windows to honor their servicemen (A gold star was sadly displayed for one who had been killed in the line of duty.)

We would like to see any other wartime memorabilia (e.g. ration books) you might give or loan to the museum.

— Agnes Bramfeld

New Marcia Adams Book Set on Lake Maxinkuckee

Adventures of Alexia, a Lake Maxinkuckee Girl is the endearing story of a young girl in 1885 who travels by train from Indianapolis to Lake Maxinkuckee. She visits her grandparents, who live on a nearby farm and have a summer cottage on the lake.

Besides the comfortable, day-to-day activities of the families involved, there is enough historical detail and local color to interest everyone. Young people will understand and enjoy it also.

For information about the book, write: mpabooks, P.O. Box 298, Culver, IN 46511 or go to: www.mpabooks-maxinkuckee.com.

— Agnes Bramfeld

notepaper, our beautiful painting of the lake, etc. Please consider maybe one Saturday morning a month, or more.

Shipping Department: We hope to have Antiquarian notepaper for sale, mostly in stores and in the museum, but if orders come in the mail, we could use someone who is willing to put the package in an envelope, address and mail. The maps are in mailing tubes already but would need to be addressed and mailed also. This is not a big job but would be a great help to our present mailer, who is also doing two other jobs.

Membership: We have a wonderful software system. Past Perfect, which helps us keep track of members and which actually prints lists, sends e-mail notices to everyone with an e-mail address, prints mailing labels, sends thank you letters to donors, etc. It's an interesting job and would entail almost nothing right now, but in the summer, when dues come in, there is a busy spell. So a part-time resident could do it. The software is only on the computer in the museum office at the library, so the work must be done there. You will have help, and I think, if you like working with a computer, you'll love this. Contact Agnes Bramfeld, 842-2477, or agramax@aol.com.

Newsletter: We really need help with the Newsletter. Surely some of you have some news, or an interesting story to tell, a suggestion or even a criticism. Wouldn't you like to be published? The next newsletter will go out sometime in the late spring, and we would like it to be the best ever. By then, Jo Dugger, our feature editor, should be strong and healthy, and we will need lots of input for that happy issue. Contact Agnes Bramfeld, as above.

We would also like to know who can come and help with one-time jobs, like addressing and stuffing envelopes. If you might be available on occasion, let Patty Stallings know, at 842-2118.

— Agnes Bramfeld

Memorial Brick Orders Being Taken for Spring

You can have a memorial brick installed in Heritage Park next spring. To order a single (\$50) or a double (\$100) call Charlotte Hahn at 842-3267.

DESERVING OF THANKS

Kurt Lucas is the man who installs our bricks in Heritage Park. He also replaces and moves them, as per requests, and all without a complaint. Better yet, he has never sent us a bill, and we shower him with thanks and appreciation! Good man, Kurt!

— Agnes Bramfeld

**WINTER, 2008-9
NEWSLETTER**

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

Ice Cream Social

We would like to thank the people who helped serve ice cream, cake and root beer at the ice cream social during the first annual Lake Maxinkuckee Film Festival at the Culver Town Park on Aug. 30. Helping were:

Bob and Ginger Budzius
Fred and Linda Lane
Bruce and Phyllis Munroe
David and Mary Baker
Creighton and Linda Hippenhammer
Jim and Judy Sawhooook
Jim and Charlotte Hahn
Bob and Becky Kreuzberger
Lois Curtis
Jim and Dorothy Peterson
Marcia Adams
Fred and Susie Wurster
Fred Karst
Carol Saft

Also thanks to the Severnses and Ellerts for the Coca Cola and root beer, Osborn's Minimart for ice, Mike Wilcox for the tent, the Maxinkuckee Yacht Club for tables, and Art and Pat Birk and the Lions for the use of the depot. Gladies and the Culver Academies helped us deal for the ice cream and cake.

— **Dusty Henricks**

Fred Lintner Collection on Display at Library

The display in the large glass case outside the Center for Culver History museum on the ground floor of the Culver-Union Township Public Library now contains some interesting exhibits from Fred Lintner's collection of Culver clocks and other memorabilia.

One of them is a clock sold by the Southern Calendar Clock Co., a company owned by the Culver brothers in the 1880s. It is a centennial clock, patented July 4, 1876, and, as the name indicates, it includes a calendar on the time-telling face.

"The calendars were perpetual. They took leap year and irregular month lengths into account," said Lintner.

The centennial clocks sold for \$22.50 to \$35 apiece, a lot of money for that time.

Also on display is a Culver Military Academy dairy bottle, from the school's own, in-house dairy, which operated for a short time after 1911, making this bottle extremely rare. There are several beautiful plates in the display and lots of other unusual Academy artifacts.

As it is a temporary exhibit, make sure that you go in to see it soon.

— **Agnes Bramfeld**