

## President's fall report

For the past six years the Center for Culver History has supplied the people of Culver and surrounding areas with the very best in research, preservation and the historical narrative of this unique community. Through funding provided by the Marshall County Community Foundation and the generous support of the members of the Antiquarian and Historical Society of Culver, the Center has become a vital community asset. In the coming year we will be seeking new space for the Center. AHS views this relocation as an opportunity to enlarge our presence and to better serve the Culver Community.

Currently, AHS Board member George Duncan is heading up a new Center for Culver History Committee. The Committee is addressing the mission of the Center, its governance, and its relocation. Since we must relocate the Center by October 2013, the Committee is actively engaged in the process of finding a new location. We are currently researching locations in the town of Culver and with the assistance of our members and a supportive community, we look forward to a new and improved historical research center and museum for the community. If anyone would like to serve on the Center for Culver History Committee, please feel free to contact the museum at 842-2941 and ask for the museum extension or email us at [historyofculver@gmail.com](mailto:historyofculver@gmail.com).

Carol Saft has come on board as AHS Communication Director. Carol brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the job as well as a passion to tell the Culver story. Carol is working to update the website ([www.culverhistory.com](http://www.culverhistory.com)), posting information on our Facebook page (please "Like" AHS Culver), creating the newsletter for the Culver Citizen and working with Publications committee to ensure that the members and the general public have the latest information on AHS activities and on the history and culture of the Culver community in general. Tom Curtis and Carol are updating the membership list and are working on a new membership drive for later this year.

Recently we honored the Culver-Union Township Volunteer Fire Department, with a presentation created and given by Jeff Kenney, on the historical fires in Culver. The museum currently has exhibits celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Woodcraft Camp, the history of the Ball Cottage along with the Culver ice houses exhibit, maps of the Culver area, with some dating back to 1835, history of the Native Americans, Civil War Veterans, display of artifacts from historical schools and information on the Vandalia Railroad.

This past year, the AHS Events Committee, under the leadership of Ginny Gibson and Sherrill Fujimura, focused its program and activities on the individuals and institutions that have made our community exceptional. This summer we hosted an excellent program on the life and music of Cole Porter by Encore Vocal Arts. Then to start the fall season, members spent a day on an 1850's Marshall County farm, living a day in the life of a family in the 1800's reminding all of the participants of the farm community's significant contribution to the history and culture of this area. Plans are already being made for next summer's events.

Finally, the state of the Society is sound. Our membership is growing with the outstanding leadership of the AHS Executive Committee members; Jim Sawhook, Fred Karst, Agnes Bramfeld, Jeff Kenney, Bob Kreuzberger, and Dusty Hendricks. If you are currently a member, we encourage you to join a committee; if you have not yet become a member, you will notice on our web page ([www.culverhistory.com](http://www.culverhistory.com)) that you can now join by entering your information on line or you can come to the museum on Tuesday - Friday from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Please join the Society for another banner year in 2013.

*Jim Peterson*

President

This publication of the **Antiquarian and Historical Society of Culver** appears quarterly in these pages as part of a partnership between the AHS and the *Culver Citizen* / Pilot News Group, which also includes the monthly "Culver History Corner," also in the pages of the *Culver Citizen*.



PHOTO/JEFF KENNEY

## Thanks for firefighting service

ABOVE: Culver fire chief Mike Grover, left, accepts a plaque recognizing the department for more than 100 years of service to Culver, by AHS president Jim Peterson, right. The presentation was part of the AHS' August meeting, which was held at the fire station on Lake Shore Drive. Included in the meeting was a Power Point presentation by Jeff Kenney of the AHS on the history of fires and firefighting Culver, from the 1800s to the present, as well as an "open house" for all in attendance to tour the station and the various historical items there (one of which, the department's first hose cart, can be seen behind Grover and Peterson). Another, a very early breathing mask, can be seen BELOW, as examined by Grover and attendee Lois Curtis.



## Memories from the family farm

By Rachel Meade

In his 1910 history of Marshall County, Culver historian Daniel McDonald wrote that 75 percent of the county was currently under cultivation. These were mostly small family-run farms, averaging just 90 acres. Today, the traditional small family farm is a rarity. In Culver, as across the country, large industrial-scale farms have pushed these smaller farms out of business. The following memories from long-standing family farms in Culver are a testament to that bygone era.

### The Newman Farm

The Newman Dairy Farm is best known for having provided all the milk served at the Culver Academy from 1907 to 1957. The farm had been in the Newman family ever since its establishment southwest of Lake Maxinkuckee in the Zion neighborhood in 1898. According to their grandchild Helen Samuelson, Charles Wellington (CW) and his wife Mary Newman walked to their new home from Royal Center with a team of cattle and their children, including Helen's father, John. Along the way they stopped for the night with the Warmbrod family, where Helen's parents met for the first time. In 1913, John Newman married Lovina May Warmbrod and they settled on the family plot shortly thereafter.

For 50 years, CW and Mary's family lived and farmed on what is now the Academy golf course. The farm was eventually run in a partnership between CW's son John and grandsons Charles, Jesse, and J. Allen. Although the dairy farm was sold in 1998, a section of the original farm remains in the family, jointly owned by Helen's sons Lyle Allen and Wendell.

CW and Mary's children farmed on neighboring plots in the Zion neighborhood. The neighborhood was first settled by the Ze, a German neighborhood first settled by the Zechial family, who intermarried with the Newmans. Zion was one of several self-contained farming communities that existed about the lake from the first days of settlement through the mid-1900's. Helen's parents John and Lovina ran their farm with the help of their six children, while Claude and Jesse Dick's farms each had hired help. All the Newman farms shared resources. "The Newmans lived so close together that they used the same herd sires. You might have had to walk over to Claude's, depending on where the bull was at," said Helen.

In addition to providing milk to the Academy, Helen's family also raised chickens for Academy families. During the week, they'd receive requests for broiler chickens and then every Saturday, they'd kill and dress the chickens: "We'd chop their heads off and let them flop until they died. We'd dip them in hot water, then we'd pick the feathers off. Then we'd take them inside and cut their feet off and open them up," said Helen.

She recalled having responsibility for the chickens, while her brothers were responsible for the cows. Everyone chipped in when it came time to make hay, with the three farms combining equipment and labor. Draft horses in harnesses with steering lines were used to rake the hay. "One time it was about a quarter mile from home where I finished up raking and the horses took off on a dead run for the barn," said Helen, remembering how her brother Herbert calmed the horses and made them walk.

Helen's cousin Paul, who was born in the Zion neighborhood in May, 1910 recalled in his memoir that he began to help Helen's father make hay when he was 9 years old, receiving 10 cents for his efforts that first afternoon. "Dad always told us we were a family operation with each contributing as he or she could and all receiving food, shelter, clothing, and sometimes an ice cream sundae on a Saturday night at the Culver Drug Store.

Paul wrote that threshing was an even larger community event, as the steam engine and separator necessary for

the operation had to be borrowed from the one farm who possessed the equipment- the Hawks. Since so many people were required to thresh, 20 neighboring farms would all pitch in on a rotating schedule to help each other on threshing day. The farmer's wife would then be responsible for feeding all the workers.

The Newman family made it through the worst of the depression thanks to their contract with the Academy, but Helen recalled that nonetheless, money was always tight. Her mother went to town just once a week to buy whatever they needed, and she made a little extra money by writing the weekly column in the Culver Citizen about the goings-on in the Zion neighborhood.

Like the columns featuring news from the Rutland and Washington neighborhoods, these articles offered insight into the comings and goings of a very small pool of people. "The neighbors would call her and tell her what they'd done over the weekend," said Helen. A scan of these articles also reveals that many of the names mentioned are members of the Newman family.

The Zion articles almost always started with a comment about the previous week's church attendance, and a plea for better attendance in future.

One memorable column from 1932 opened with the following rebuke to church ditchers: "Has anyone forgotten where the Church is located? If so, inquire of someone... Had you heard that there were 15 families present Sunday? There should have been at least 20. We will be looking for you next Sunday."

The Zion Methodist Reformed Church was built in 1870. Prior to that, neighborhood churchgoers had met in the Kaley schoolhouse for informal Sunday school lessons, taught in both English and German. Helen's older siblings and cousins attended the school, but it closed in 1930, the year she was to start, so she went to school in Culver.

Members of the Newman family acted as Church Superintendents, Sunday school teachers, and caretakers for the small neighborhood church.

"My family took care of two potbelly stoves in the church for heat," recalled Helen. "We had to go start the fires in the church to heat it up on Sunday morning. Then we always dusted the seats."

Services were read in both English and German. Sunday school was every week, but sermons every other week, since the church shared the minister of Culver's Grace Church. In 1950, due to declining attendance, Zion merged with Grace.

### The Wikman Farm

Lori Wikman owns another long-standing area farm, located west of town on 16B Road. Her late husband Robert (Bob) Wikman grew up there, running it from a young age. Bob's father, a Swedish immigrant, bought the 160-acre farm for just \$4,000 after losing his real estate business in the crash of 1929. He'd planned to start his own furrier business, and he started with raccoons. "That didn't work out so well," said Lori, explaining that the venture only lasted a few months because Bob's father didn't feed the animals any meat, so they ate their babies as soon as they were born.

Shortly after he started farming, he began returning to Chicago to work at a furrier during the week. His two oldest sons, including Bob, who was just 8 years old, were left to figure out how to plow with horses. "They didn't know the first thing about farming," said Lori, explaining that a neighbor helped them at first. "Sometimes the horse would get away from them and they'd be left hanging on to the plow."

Bob attended school

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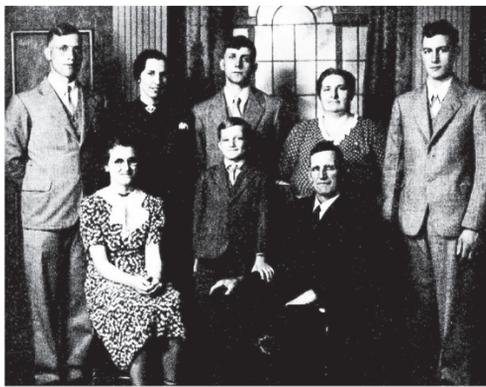


PHOTO PROVIDED

The John and May Newman Family. Back Row: Jesse Dick, Lovina Emily, Charles Gottlieb, Lovina May, John Allen. Front Row: Helen Louise, Herbert Russell, and John A.

## Free admission to Indy exhibit for AHS members

As a local history partner of the Indiana Historical Society, all AHS members will have free admission to the living history exhibit, "1920: Busted! Prohibition Enforced," from November 5 through 19.

The living history scene recreates the aftermath of a large bootlegger bust at the Indianapolis Police Headquarters in 1920. Costumed interpreters and sounds of the scene complete the experience.

See the IHS website for more information on the exhibit, as well as hours and directions: <http://www.indianahistory.org/indiana-experience/you-are-there/1920-busted-prohibition-enforced>

## Museum Update

The Center for Culver History Committee has been meeting regularly since summer and is now under the leadership of **Committee Head George Duncan**. The committee is continuing to investigate possible locations for the museum, as well as addressing governance, policy, and budgeting. In an effort to gain knowledge of best practices in the industry, the committee recently took a trip to the North Manchester Historical Society's Center for History, which won the Indiana Historical Society's 2009 award for best historical organization.

The Center for Culver History will be **open for trick-or-treating** on Halloween, with a spooky Haunted Museum. Children may enter through the office door, to the left of the Main Street library entrance and then continue on to the Children's Room for more treats.

Stay tuned for upcoming exhibits at the museum: on local historic farms, women's clubs of culver, hotels and clubhouses of Lake Maxinkuckee, and sports highlights of Culver High School. If you are interested in **helping research or fabricate exhibits, or if you have stories, artifacts, or ideas** that could be useful to our collections, please call or stop by during our hours: (Tuesday-Friday, 12-6pm & Saturday 10am-2pm).

The museum would like to thank the following volunteers: **Becky Kreuzberger, Bob Kreuzberger, and Jeanette Geiselman**. We rely upon volunteer efforts at the museum, and if you are interested in helping in any way, please contact Rachel Meade at 574-842-2941 or [historyofculver@gmail.com](mailto:historyofculver@gmail.com).

## Ice cream social

The Antiquarian and Historical Society again sponsored an ice cream social as part of the LakeMax Film Festival on Labor Day weekend. The Society would like to thank the following volunteers who manned the stand and handed out the root beer, ice cream and cake:

Jim and Dorthy Peterson for helping organize before the event; Jim Sawhook, Agnes Bramfeld, Tom Curtis, Larry and Joan Bess, Lois Curtis, Bob and Becky Kreuzberger, Fred Karst, Carol Saft, Rachel Meade, Dusty Hendricks.

Volunteers are always needed for events or to help at the museum. Please give Rachel Meade a call at 574-842-2941 to arrange for volunteering time.

# Farm from page 1

sporadically as a child, quitting after his sophomore year at Culver Community High School. “He liked farming— he didn’t like school,” said Lori.

“He liked to be outside. He said he used to sit in the classroom and watch the owl in the trees, the farmer with his tractor. But he was smart. Any place in the world, he could find it on a map. He could do any kind of math problem in his head. He learned by doing.”

Judging from the success of his farm, Bob was quite adept at figuring things out for himself. As a teenager, he built up a 35-cow dairy-herd, cleared the woods, dug ditches, and put in drainage. His father died when he was 19, leaving Bob to care for the farm and support his siblings, the youngest of which was 2. At that time the family still owed half of what they’d paid on the farm.

Over the next 35 years, Bob expanded the farm, purchasing 5 neighboring plots to reach today’s acreage of 440. When all his siblings had grown and left, he stayed behind, devoted to the land. He met Lori, a former Ancilla nun, when she came to the Wikman farm to pick up corn stalks to decorate her Lake Forest classroom. They married shortly thereafter, in 1971, raising one son, John. He currently lives in Greenwood, Indiana, with his wife and daughter.

Bob reacted to the changes in the farming industry



PHOTO PROVIDED

LEFT: The Wikman House, 1933. Bob stands with his siblings Marie and Jack on the porch of his family farmhouse. ABOVE: Lori Wikman stands on the same porch in 2012, with the addition on her right.

with flexibility. When he was in his mid thirties, and milk farming had begun to become unprofitable, he began to farm grain instead. Then in the mid-1970’s, he gave up the land for rental. “He figured out that he could get more for the land by renting than continuing to work it,” explained Lori. “That was a time when it was either get big grain bins and bigger tractors and invest or just rent.”

Bob died in 2008 and Lori continues to rent her land to a local farmer who rotates beans and corn. Another portion of the land is forest, and a final section generates income through a government set aside program for preservation of fragile land and wetlands.

Lori’s home is filled with testaments to her husband’s

lifelong passion for the land. The north end of the farmhouse remains mostly unchanged from Bob’s childhood in the 30’s, however Bob built the southern addition himself. Her screened-in porch is filled with carved wooden animals made by Bob as well as an impressive collection of Indian artifacts the couple found on their land. Lori explained that Bob witnessed an artist carving wooden sculptures at a farm progress show

and thought ‘I can do that.’

“So he came home and got out his chainsaw and a piece of wood and was sawing out a turtle. The saw slipped and he nearly cut his foot off.” Undeterred, Bob added a safety and continued carving.

The Wikman barn also bears its own mark of Bob’s love of the land: “Every night he would stand in the middle of the road and watch to see where the sun went down. He chiseled little marks on the pole barn floor where the shadow met it on each date,” said Lori. Like Bob, she has no intention of ever leaving the farm. “It’s just home,” she said.