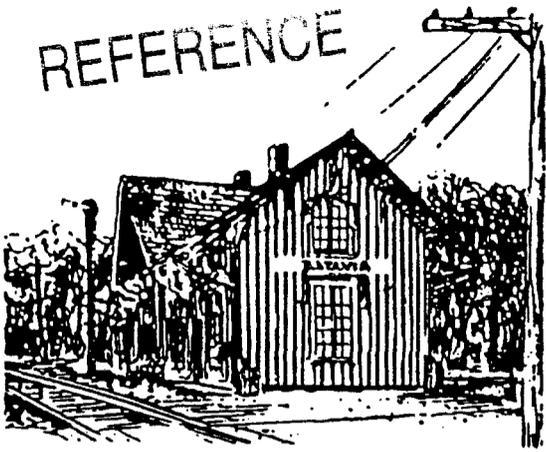


REFERENCE



The Batavia Historian

(Batavia Historical Society)

P.O. <Bo~14

<Batavia, Illinois 60510

01. 37 No.3

Jul 1996

The Fox River Sanitarium

by Marilyn Robinson

Do you know this building?



Fox RIVER SANITARIUM • • • BATAVIA, ILL.

In 1926 when Bessie Hirschberg worked in a cigar factory in Chicago, she found facilities for caring for the tubercular poor were inadequate. Hirschberg began collecting pennies from the poor and formed the Chicago Consumptive Aid Society. Her husband saw an ad in the newspaper offering river-front land for sale in Batavia. When \$150,000 was raised, the Society took possession of the land, and the Fox River Sanitarium was built in the early 1930s.

Batavia was chosen because it was far enough from Chicago to escape the city's noises, but close enough that patients could be near loved ones and be comforted by frequent visits. A Chicago and North Western commuter train ran along the river and visitors from Chicago could get to the hospital by train.

The Fox River Sanitarium was a pioneer in TB care. It was directed along the lines of a modern hospital with sunny rooms, wards, solarium, modern operating rooms, sterilizing equipment, X-ray facilities, and a dental facility so fine that it was said patients lost all

fear of going to the dentist.

Most patients in the sanitarium were those who were in advanced stages of the disease. They were all from Chicago, mostly of the Jewish faith, and stayed for prolonged periods. Usually there were about 50 patients in the hospital at anyone time.

In 1940 the hospital treated 128 patients. In that year the Society raised and gave to the hospital \$65,275 of which \$50,000 was used to run the hospital and treat patients.

Nurses worked for 32 cents an hour, 10 hours a day, and did all types of work. A private duty nurse worked 20 hours a day and slept in the room with the patient.

The sanitarium was a town unto itself. There were out buildings around the hospital, and it had its own wells and sewage disposal plant. There were cement walks leading from one building to another, and the grounds were beautifully landscaped.

All food served in the hospital was prepared in adherence to Jewish culinary laws. Nearly all food not grown on the property was donated through the Society in Chicago and brought to Batavia by train.

The hospital was built on land previously owned by Hamilton Browne. Mr. and Mrs. Browne lived in a very large white house there. The first patients at

the sanitarium who were mobile stayed in the house. It stood in the clump of trees still near the Michealsen Center. The old, curving driveway to the house is visible just south of the intersection of Fabyan Parkway and Batavia Avenue.

Jeff Schielke remembers when the house was razed in 1974. He recalls it as a two or three-story Victorian that was neglected and badly overgrown. The house and the sanitarium were both neglected after the hospital closed for people were afraid the buildings were contaminated. Even when the hospital was in operation, local citizens pretty much ignored it, according to Jeff.

The Society soon built a long wooden building for bed patients, with rooms on either side of a long hallway, all opening onto a porch so that patients could be outdoors in all weather an aid in curing tuberculosis. The cornerstone for the permanent building was laid in 1926.

The hospital closed in 1958 or 59. The Holmstad purchased the land in the early 70's for its campus. Schielke visited the hospital in '74' after Holmstad took possession. He recalls that all the equipment and supplies were still in place. The beds were made, and white sheets covered the examining tables. "It was as though everyone just left, locked the doors and never came back," he said.

Continued on p. 2

Museum Doings

by Director Carla Hill

The museum has been a beehive of activity over the last few months. The Windmillers Trade Fair was a tremendous success and I am still receiving letters of congratulations from some of the participants.

We have now moved the water tower in place and it will be painted this summer. We have also scheduled the painting and repair of the Depot, Caboose, Coffin Bank and the Gazebo. They are showing a lot of wear and need to be refurbished.

The current exhibit, "Blades In The Sky", from Texas Tech University, will remain at the museum until August 1. We were extremely pleased to have Tex Burdick, who is the focal point of the exhibit, here for the Windmillers Trade Fair.

Perhaps some of you have noticed the new sign in front of the museum. We have placed it there temporarily until the work on Houston Street begins next spring.

We will be adding several new items to our sales area at the museum. Many of these items are a direct result of the Windmillers Trade Fair and will make nice additions to our gift section.

We are looking forward to the Windmill City Fest and the annual Museum Volunteer Trip. If anyone is interested in volunteering at the museum, you can contact either Kathy Fairbairn (406-9041) or myself at (879-5235).

I hope you are having a great Summer!

Fox River Sanitarium

Continued from p. 1

The building today is Holmstad's Colonial House at 831 North Batavia Avenue.

*This article is condensed from **Batavia Places and the People Who Called Them Home** by Marilyn Robinson. This copyrighted material is used by permission of the author who reserves all other rights. A copy of Robinson's book can be obtained at the Depot Museum.*

Batavia Windmillers Trade Fair Makes History

by Francine McGuire-Popeck

The 8th International Windmillers Trade Fair, held in Batavia between June 12-15th, attracted 324 registered attendees, almost double the highest attendance figure from any of the previous Fairs that were held in other cities. The Fair was indeed "international" with representation from South Africa, the Netherlands, and Canada. In addition, thanks to excellent media coverage, the Fair was well attended by the general public, drawing hundreds of residents from Batavia, other Fox Valley and surrounding suburbs, Chicago, and Downstate Illinois.

The Windmillers Trade Fair Committee, consisting of Bob Popeck, President, and Francine Popeck, Secretary, of the Historical Society Board, Carla Hill, Curator of the Depot Museum, and Donna Dallesase, Director of the Batavia Chamber of Commerce, extend our thanks to the many Batavians who helped make this event so successful. Special appreciation is given to the many Historical Society members who staffed the Depot Museum, which had extended hours during the days of the Trade Fair, the temporary Windmill Museum, our Arts and Crafts booth, and the many special events held during the Fair, including the "old timer" talk sessions held at the former windmill factories.

A consistent compliment was paid to our townspeople by all who attended the Fair. They found Batavia to be full of extremely friendly people who also take great pride in their town and its history. Ken and Sharen O'Brock from Ohio wrote us: "We wanted you to know how much we appreciate ... the beautiful display of windmills, river walk, welcome signs, clean city, friendly folks and your hospitality. (These) made for one of the biggest and best yet trade

fairs. Our special "THANKS" to all the volunteers who helped ... "

Thanks also to those members who donated windmill-related items to the Society and those who loaned us items for display at the temporary Windmill Museum. Many visitors thought that this museum was a permanent one and, believe me, by the time it was set up we wished it could be. The old Appleton Windmill Manufacturing factory, now City Hall, was an ideal setting for the museum as it is centrally located, at street and eye level, and still "authentic" in its pre-renovated condition. Windmills have long been an important part of our town's history and identity. The Trade Fair exhibited that our windmill heritage is a draw for visitors as well. It may behoove us to explore the possibility of a separate museum like space to house windmill-related items and other large items in the Society's collection.

The Trade Fair Committee also thanks the Historical Society Board for agreeing to fund the videotape coverage of the Trade Fair. Close to 20 reels of videotape were shot during the event. This will be a wonderful addition to our archives. Once funds have been raised to create an edited 20-minute videotape of this footage, there could be numerous avenues for use of this video: 1) As an educational tool at our schools, 2) To promote Batavia tourism, and 3) To market copies to those who attended the Trade Fair.

As Marilyn Robinson commented to me, "It's nice to see a Trade Fair that draws people who are interested in history, not in making money." Imagine ... tourists coming to Batavia because of our history. It happened at a Trade Fair held this past June what can we do to introduce more people to our proud history?

More on the Newton Memorials

by James Hanson

Sin/Editor' Note: In "The Newton Memorials" in the last issue, Jim Hanson wrote about the Newton Monument in the West Batavia Cemetery, the Newton Observatory at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania, and the Newtons' involvement in the building of the present Batavia United Methodist Church. Some readers were undoubtedly curious about the connection between the Newtons and Allegheny College, and Jim now fills us in on the background.

The relationship of the Newton Monument and the Newtons is easy to understand considering Don Carlos Newton's service in the Civil War. It is also apparent the Newtons were actively interested and active in the Methodist Church. But why a gift to a small college in western Pennsylvania? A little history and a few assumptions may help to explain.

Allegheny College, founded in 1815, was a well respected school affiliated with the Methodist Church. It was located about 150 miles from Batavia, NY, where Levi Newton, D.C.

Newton's father, operated a wagon factory. Around 1850 (available references vary as to exact date) D.C. Newton attended Allegheny College for one year. After his father's factory was destroyed by fire in April, 1854, Levi decided to move to Kane County to rebuild. The entire family including D.C., who had married the previous year, came to Batavia in September, 1854, and Levi and his son entered into a partnership to build wagons. This eventually became the Newton Wagon Co., one of Batavia's leading industries in the late 1800s.

In 1878 Don Carlos and his wife, Mary, built and lived in the house on the northwest corner of Batavia Avenue and Wilson Street that today is an office building. They had three or four children (again references vary), all of whom died before reaching the age of six. When Mary Newton's niece died in 1892, Mary raised her two year old son, Carl Newton More. In 1902 Mary gave the public library the use of the Levi Newton home, which stood at what today is the middle of West Wilson Street between the Newton House and Gammon Corner. When

the city determined it needed to extend Wilson Street west and tear down the Levi Newton home, the D.C. Newton home was purchased and served as the library until the present one was built.

Even though D.C. Newton attended Allegheny for only one year, it seems logical to assume he had maintained an interest in it. The school's Methodist affiliation would certainly have also influenced a decision to give it support. In the early 1900s the college's president, William Crawford, visited Batavia one or more times. As he was noted for greatly increasing enrollments, faculty and facilities at Allegh-

eny, these visits may have been part of trips to encourage enrollments and donations.

Carl More may have attended the college after graduation from high school in 1907, which would relate to his great-aunt's support for the school.

As noted in the article on the Newton memorials in the last issue, information regarding Allegheny College and the Newton Observatory was researched by the late Tom Mair and was given to Jim Hanson several years ago.

Willis L. Grimes and Batavia's New Post Office-1896

by Marilyn Robinson

In June 1896, a model post office was opened in Batavia under the direction of Postmaster Willis L. Grimes. It was advertised as modern, convenient and substantial and was located in the vanNortwick Building on Wilson Street. This building contains the school administration offices along with other businesses today.

The building was a solid brick and stone structure with substantial space where mail would be comparatively safe from fire and with special vaults and appropriate fixtures.

William M. and John S. vanNortwick leased the space to the government for a period of five years. They allowed the government to use their fixtures and office equipment.

When a postal inspector came to examine the new office, he accepted it and complimented the city on having a postmaster who demonstrated such enterprise as to work for this public improvement.

The business of the post office was very large for a city of Batavia's size. In 1895 the receipts of the office amounted to \$13,000, the largest ever recorded. This spoke well for the business interests of Batavia, her manufacturers and businessmen.

Mr. Grimes had a greater goal. He wished FREE DELIVERY for Batavia. Had the postal service not run out of money, the service would have been already in Batavia. (It did come later in the year, and Mr. Grimes asked all citizens to furnish a container for the carrier to put the mail in.)

Postmaster Grimes had an able corps of assistants. Deputy Charles Grimes, Otto Konrad and Miss Mamie Feeney were courteous, accommodating and proficient.

Willis L. Grimes was born in Batavia August 20, 1854. He received his education at the East Side Public School. At 16, he found employment with the C.B.&Q. RR as weigh master and assistant ticket agent for a year and a half at East Batavia. He was later transferred to the West Side, and afterwards he was agent at South Ottawa and LaGrange.

He left the railroad in 1875 and became a clerk until March 1886 with the exception of three years while he engaged in farming.

June 1, 1881, he was married to Annie E. Shaw. They had three daughters, Reba, Ellie Madge, and Florence.

From an early age, he took a great interest in politics and was a staunch Democrat like his father. For the past few years, he had been the cashier in the vanNortwick Bank. He had been Postmaster of Batavia since 1886, having been appointed by President Cleveland.

Herbert T. Windsor and the Batavia National Bank

by Elliott Lundberg

Herbert T. Windsor, builder of the first electric railway in the west, the Chicago, Harvard, and Geneva Lake Railroad, moved to Batavia about 1912 and built a magnificent home -the 26-room house at 717 N. Batavia Avenue that now houses the Holy Heart of Mary Novitiate. Soon after, he was elected a director of the Batavia National Bank, becoming President in 1918 and Chairman of the Board in 1958, a position he held until his death in 1964.

The son of a Congregational minister from England who came to serve as a missionary to the Indians, Windsor was born in Sycamore, Illinois, on December 9, 1868. There was obvious talent in the family: his only brother, H.H. Windsor, was the founder and owner of Popular Mechanics magazine.

When I came to work at the Batavia National Bank in 1947, Windsor was still the President. Walter R. Johnson was Vice President, and Ernest R. Nelson was the Cashier. There were four women employees, Ruth Freedlund, Gladys Noren, Eleanor Issei, and Doris Perna so I, as the fourth male, evened the ratio.

Windsor was then 79. Although no longer active in the daily operations, he had a desk in the directors' room and came to the bank daily. He kept busy with various jobs, one of which was preparing tax returns, mainly for farmers, early each year. A duty he performed daily involved walking to the First National Bank of Batavia, which was then located at 4 W. Wilson Street, to exchange checks. At about 10 each morning, the First National Bank would call to advise the total of Batavia National Bank checks they had paid the previous day and in the morning. The bank with the lower total would issue a check for the difference in totals -- the Batavia clearing house -- which provided for a fast collection of checks.

The delivery of currency and coin from the Federal Reserve Bank was not yet being provided by armored trucks. Each Thursday morning, the weekly delivery of currency and coin was by U.S. mail; it had to be picked up at the Post Office. So, each Thursday morning when Windsor walked

to first National Bank to exchange checks, he would also stop at the Post Office and pick up the currency. Because the coin was too heavy for him to carry, it was picked up later by car.

Into his eighties, H.T. Windsor -- a short man -- could be seen each Thursday, carrying the very visible Federal Reserve Bank bag, usually containing from \$15,000 to \$30,000, over the bridge

to the Batavia National Bank.

For some reason Windsor purported not to understand, Chief of Police Russel A. Clark, better known as "Ruck," thought that a man in his eighties walking from Island Av-

enue over the bridge to River Street with a bag clearly full of cash was not the kind of thing the Batavia Police needed. So Ruck suggested that he escort H.T. Windsor on his weekly journey, a suggestion that Windsor promptly vetoed. After Ruck appealed to Walter R. Johnson, then the President of the bank, Windsor grudgingly agreed to accept an escort -- which he still claimed was unnecessary.

The next Thursday the police were advised when Windsor was to be at the Post Office. When he arrived and got the bag of currency, Ruck Clark was not there, so Windsor walked across the bridge unattended. Soon Ruck, who had been out on a call, arrived at the bank, wondering what had happened. Windsor said he would not wait; if the police wanted to escort him, they would have to be there on time. That ended the escort idea. Fortunately he continued carrying the currency across the bridge without incident until the armored car service to the bank was initiated -- probably satisfying him that there had never been a need for an escort." ..•

In the last months of his life when he could no longer come to the bank, his wife would pick up work for him to do at home. In 1964, at the age of 93 years and 8 months. Herbert T. Windsor died. Walter Johnson, his

successor, retired from the bank at the age of 75 and lived to be 94 years and 7 months. Ernest Nelson, Vice President at the time of the ill fated escort service, retired at the age of 75 and lived to be 94 years and 1 month.

The Batavia National Bank is now the First Chicago Bank of Batavia.

Bits of This and That

Normally the copies of each newsletter mailed to members include a quarterly treasurer's report and the secretary's summary of the minutes of meetings held since the last issue. Because of the pressures of time (the treasurer/editor is trying to get material to the printer before leaving on vacation and the secretary has been tied up with the Windmillers Trade Fair) and space constraints, we are not including those reports in this mailing. We will, however, catch up on these important matters in the next issue.

October 6 may seem a long way off, but mark your calendar. That is when the Batavia ACCESS Heritage Committee will hold its always popular cemetery walk. This year will feature the West Side Cemetery.

The May-June 1996 issue of *American Heritage* magazine favorably reviewed *How the Other Half Lived: A People's Guide to American Historical Sites* by Philip Burnham. The author, who grew up in Batavia, is the son of member Ruth Burnham. Copies are available at Robin's Book Shop in Geneva.

Although arrangements are still in progress, Patty Will, our vice-president and program chairman, says that an outstanding program is in the works for the September general meeting. Members will be notified by post card regarding date, time and place well in advance of the meeting.



1896 Holy Cross Cornerstone Opened-What Was In It?

by William Wood

Editor's Note: In connection with the recent dedication of the former Holy Cross Church as the Batavia Park District's Eastside Community Center, officials of the Park District eagerly looked forward to the opening of the church's hundred year-old cornerstone. Bill Wood tells us what they expected to find and what they did find.

The recent opening of the cornerstone of the former Holy Cross Church and the retrieval of the box sealed there in 1896 provided both information and mystery.

Roberta Campbell, late writer and journalist, wrote a series of articles in the *Batavia Chronicle* during the Batavia Sesquicentennial year of 1983. In the November 4th issue she told of finding an article in the *Batavia Herald* of August 6th, 1896, reporting on the "impressive ceremonies of laying the cornerstone for the Holy Cross Church."

"A box, hermetically sealed, was deposited in the cornerstone. It contained several U.S. coins, antiquated foreign coins, a copy of each of the local papers, a church paper of the Diocese and the written parchment all covered with stars and stripes."

When the box, in poor condition, was opened only one local paper was found, the *Batavia Weekly News* of Thursday, July 30, 1896, the competitor to the *Batavia Herald*. The Chicago Archdiocesan newspaper, *The New World*, Saturday, August 1, 1896, selling for five cents was also included. The newspapers are in somewhat fragile condition, damaged by moisture. They reflect the news of the day, with importance given to the upcoming nomination of William Jennings Bryan to run against William McKinley for President of the United States.

Five coins were found, all in good condition. Two one cent pieces were included; one Canadian for 1884 and one U.S. for the year of 1846. A United States three cent piece of 1843, slightly smaller than the current dime, is in fairly good shape, rather worn. An 1877 5 ore Swedish coin

has the words "Brodrafolken Val" encircling the edge. To date we have a loose translation of "Well thought of Sister Nation." The remaining coin, dated 1815, is copper and the size of our seldom seen half-dollar. One side carries the words (in descending order) HALF PENNY TOKEN. Encircling the edge of the coin are the words "Pure Copper Preferable To Paper." The reverse side has a threemasted sailing ship and the words "Trade and Navigation."

Missing, along with the *Batavia Herald*, is the parchment. To again quote the *Batavia Herald*, "The parchment, which is genuine and written in India ink, contained the following words:

"In the name of the ever adorable Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen. Be it known by these presents, that on the first Sunday of August, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-six (1896) in the eighteenth (18th) year of the gracious reign of the Supreme Pontiff Leo XIII, 262nd Successor of St. Peter; Patrick A. Feehan, Archbishop of Chicago; Grover Cleveland, President of the United States; John P. Altgeld, Governor of the State of Illinois, in the presence of a large concourse of laity and clergy, under the invocation of Almighty God and special patronage of the Holy Cross which title this Church shall bear, in testimony of a gracious redemption and under the protection of the Constitution of these United States, the sacred pledge and guarantee of our religious liberty, was laid this day the Corner Stone of the Church. Attest: Geo. Rathz, Pastor, N.J. Mooney, Chancellor."

The Park District's innovative and tasteful adaptation of the former Holy Cross Church to its new use as the East Side Community Center is an outstanding example of recycling a historic building for a new use. The Center provides much-needed recreational and meeting facilities while saving the beautiful Gothic structure for future generations of Batavians.

Society Loses Two Prominent Members

The Society and the community at large have recently lost two members closely associated with Batavia's history, Thomas Mair and Arthur Swanson.

Tom Mair, a descendant of early Batavia settlers, served for a period as city attorney. A member of the group of Batavia historians known as the "Senility Club," he was the author of a fascinating book, *Batavia Revisited*, which may be purchased at the depot museum. It is fitting that his son, Tim Mair, is now serving as a director of the Society.

Art Swanson was Batavia's mayor during the years in which the ground-work was laid for what is today our Government Center and the River Wai-Witfih's family, he was a major donor to the effort that has led to the installation of historic windmills in the downtown area. His death unfortunately prevented him from participating in the recent Windmill Trade Fair, an event to which he had looked forward with eager anticipation.

Does Your Newsletter Have a Red Dot?

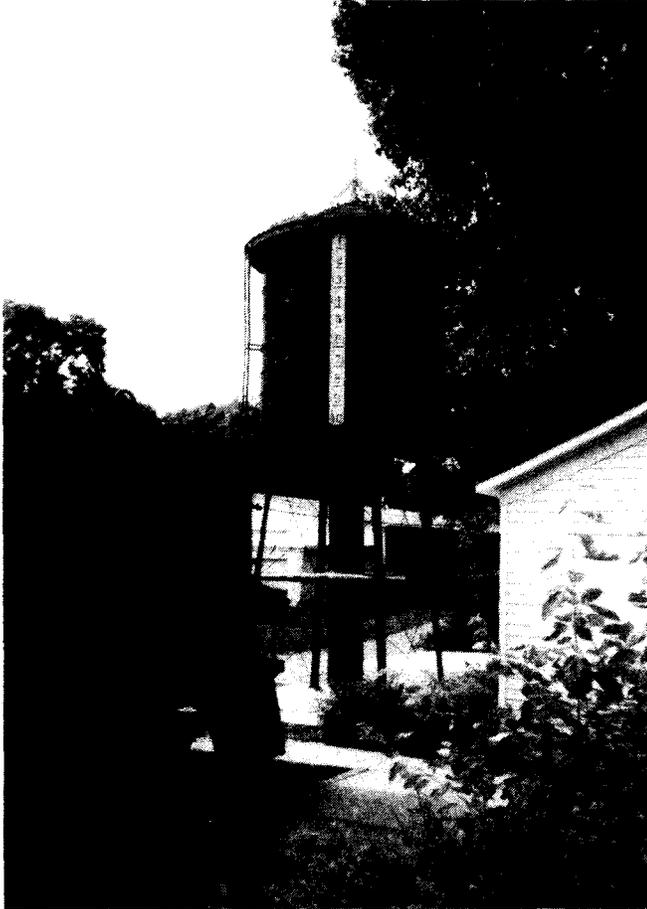
If so, this will be your last newsletter unless we hear from you.

According to our records, you have not paid dues for any year after 1994. As reported in our last issue, we want to make sure that our newsletters and other notices are properly addressed and go to persons with a continuing interest in the activities of the Society. Because our mailing list presently includes the names of persons who have not paid dues or with whom we have had no other contact for several years, the Board has adopted a policy of retaining on its mailing list only those persons who have paid dues for the current year or the year immediately past and any other person who indicates, in writing, that he or she wishes to continue receiving the Society's mailings.

All Tanked Up

by Robert Popeck

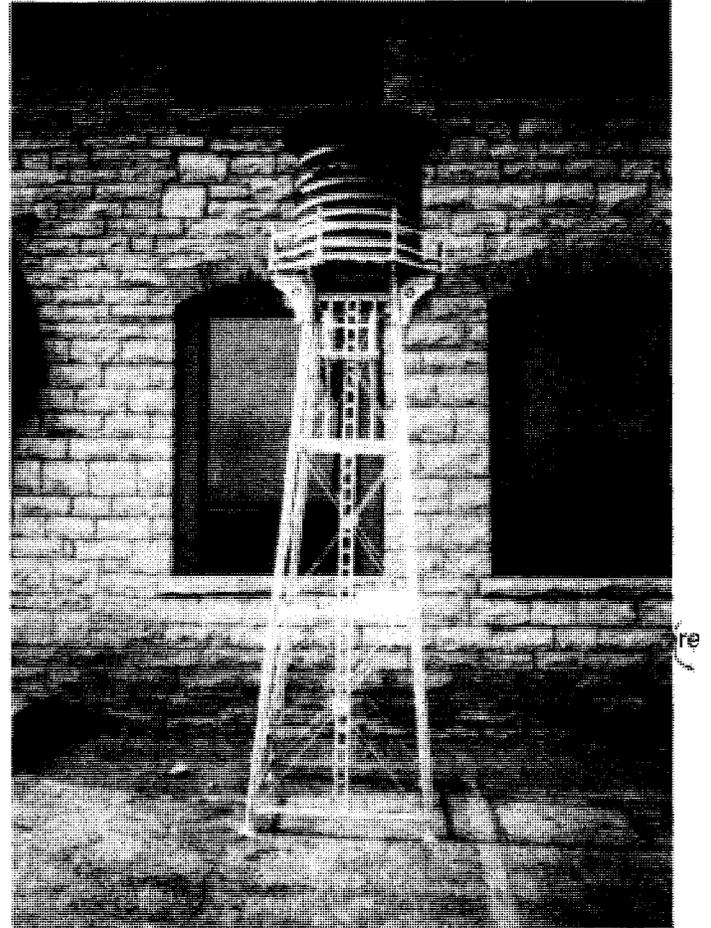
Not in the sense that you normally hear the phrase. What I am referring to are the two historic storage tanks that generous donors have given us.



The large tank, built by the U.S. Wind Engine and Pump Company in November 1936, was donated by the Tom Alexander family of Sugar Grove. This 10-foot tank, which sat on one of their farms west of Elburn, stands approximately 27 feet high upon its iron tower. The tank, along with the tower, was moved to Batavia last fall and recently received a new roof. The photograph shows it in its permanent site beside the Coffin Bank. Note the finial on the roof, which was recreated from pictures in old catalogs. The original top will be on display in the museum along with the iron indicator weight, which traveled up and down the measuring guide to show the amount of water in the tank.

The small water tank was donated by the Harold Maves family in memory of Harold's late wife, Crystal. We have not been able to confirm its original use: it is too large to serve as a salesman's sample or to be considered a miniature or yard model. We are told that the tank, which was given to Crystal's father by the president of the Challenge Company, may have been included in the large windmill display at the 1893 Columbian World Exposition in Chicago, along with other Challenge products. This tank, or one like it, appeared in a 1900 agriculture show in Phila-

delphia. For many years, it sat beside Crystal's family home on Cleveland Avenue. It has received a new roof, and the tower has been given a coat of paint. Its permanent home has not yet been selected.



A Tour of Our Historic Central District

This issue includes, as an insert, a map and a description of the route that the Batavia Trolley will follow in showing riders the historic buildings and other sights in our downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Because of unexpected mechanical difficulties, the inauguration of trolley service has been delayed. The problems may have been solved by the time you read this; if so, be sure to take a ride. Otherwise, you can use the map and the conductor's script for a self-guided driving or walking tour. And we suggest saving the insert for future use when you are entertaining out-of-town visitors.

Our Membership Keeps Growing!

Since the first of the year we have added a number of new Society members. We welcome the following persons (all from Batavia unless otherwise noted) who took out annual individual or family memberships through the middle of June:

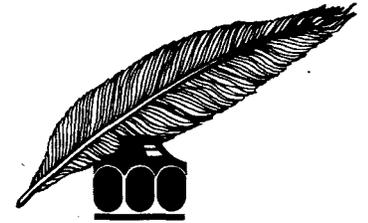
Pat Bass (Burnet, Texas)
 Alan and Grace Blotch Val
 and Christine Brahm
 Wayne Clements (Saline,
 Michigan)
 John Gamble Family
 Mr. and Mrs. Philip Giles
 Alexander Hall (St. Louis Park,
 Minnesota)
 Andrew Hall (Des Moines, Iowa)
 Thomas D. Hall
 Bruce and Lisa Hohmann
 Phillip Huyser Family
 Mark Johnston (Cedar Rapids,
 Iowa)
 Jennifer Jones (Atlanta, Georgia)
 Kathryn Klose
 Gail Minella
 George Mohn (St. Charles)
 Ars. J.B. Moran
 Mr. and Mrs. James R. Nass, Jr.
 Larry and Janet Overstreet
 Paul and Bonnie Petrenko
 Mrs. M.F. See (Plainfield)
 Nick Seidel

Mr. and Mrs. D. Jack Smith
 Pierce W. Smith (Geneva) Mr.
 and Mrs. Marian Tevis Marcia
 Sperry Tutz (Geneva) Wayne
 and Betty Warden Donald and
 Corliss Weaver Walter L.
 Weiss

In addition, the following persons
 (from Batavia unless otherwise noted)
 have become Life Members:
 Nancy L. Hubbard Greg
 and Paula Issei Joe and
 Addie Marconi Arlene
 Nick
 Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Miller III
 Jerry Rundle (San Diego,
 California)
 Kent Shodeen (Geneva, Illinois)
 Dennis Swanson
 Richard L. Swanson (San Antonio,
 Texas)
 Wayne Swanson
 E. Louise (Rundle) Tregellas (Lenore,
 Idaho)

In recent months, several persons
 have given memberships to their chil-
 dren or friends who no longer live in
 Batavia. This is a thoughtful, and inex-
 pensive, way to help these persons
 maintain old ties. You might want to
 consider doing this for someone you
 know.

More Stories Always Welcome



As you can see in this issue, we are beginning to get more contributors to the *Historian*. And already we have some volunteers lined up for the next couple of issues -- but we always need more. An editor's greatest fear is coming up against the deadline for an issue and not having enough good stories to fill the pages. That would be particularly unfortunate here in Batavia where many more good stories lie untold than we could ever print. We look forward to the day when we will thank people for good stories while warning them that there is such a backlog that theirs will not be used until two or three issues down the road.

The best stories are those with names -- names of old-time Batavians to awaken the memories of our older readers and to acquaint the younger ones with people who helped build Batavia. We have one of these that will appear in a future issue, but there are never enough. Another thing we can always use is a good picture -- of a special happening or of an evocative street scene, for example.

And don't think that a contribution has to relate to someone or something 75 or 100 years ago. Hard as it is for some of us to realize (or admit), anything before 1950 -- even later -- is now history!

Let us hear from you. Call Bill Hall at 879-2033, or write him at 345 N. Batavia Avenue.

B~\ .TAYIA, IJ .• L~, THURSDA.Y"l\IAX 14, ,18S:16.



THE DANDY STEEL MILL when furnished with Graphite 8 M lubricating boxes WILL atx FOR 2~ yE.U1 ~ WIRNOTR OIL and therefore REQUIRES NO ATTENTIONH WHATEYER. These ~illaare fumis'lt~1 Galva-nized or not, just as ordered. THE DA.XDY ~illrii~U 4-CORXEHED STEEL TOWER ia~sTRmm, EST, MOST SUBSTA."TIAL 'and)IOST ABIJOLUtIdLY STOR~[PROOF To'n:n made. Mill and Tower SE~T OUT ON 30 DA. Y.i TEST TRIAL and if not satisfactory to the p .rrchaser can be returned CO us and WE WILL P s: Y FREIGIT BOTU ,... A. Ys.

We also make a full line of Power Wm4 Mills for tunnng machinery of a;l kinds and can fu\Disn any size wanted ••• " e also make 0. full and complete line Of T A.XKS, rt~IP ST A."DS ("LIXDER5, ORI~DER5, 5Itt:LEns, SAWS, ~tC..

In addition to this will say we make 10, SIZES and kinds of 'windmills. being more than &n1 other four concerns in the business.

Challeni~ Wind Mill and F(~~d IUIU Co., Batavia Ill ..

Batavia Historical Society Membership 1996

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Dues Structure:

- Individual \$5.00
- Joint/Family \$10.00
- Junior \$1.00
- Classroom \$5.00
- Life (each) \$75.00
- Life (family) \$125.00
- Business or Institution \$10.00
- Business or Institution Life \$100.00

Prompt payment of dues is appreciated!

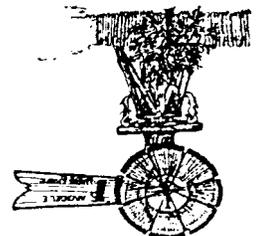
Mail to:
Treasurer
Batavia Historical Society
P.O. Box 14 Batavia,
Illinois 60510

This membership is being given as a gift

If you would like to give a membership as a gift, send the above information and dues to the Society and indicate in the box above that it is to be a gift. The gift membership card will be mailed to you so that you may enclose it with a personal card or note.

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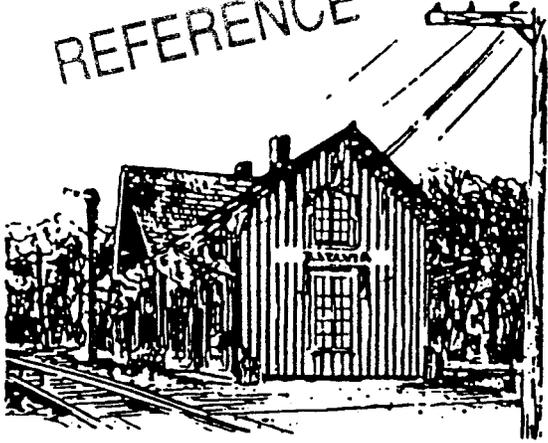
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Batavia Historical Society

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April, 1996

Batavia and The Civil War

by Eric Nelson

From the bombardment of Fort Sumter in April 1861 to Lee's Surrender to Grant in 1865, approximately 600,000 people lost their lives in the Civil War. Among that number are 32 Batavians. The census of 1860 shows the population of Batavia was 1,621, and yet, throughout the war, Batavia provided 309 soldiers for the Union Army. Even more amazing was just

how far those soldiers spread out during the war. Other than the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861, there is virtually no major battle of the war that did not

have at least one Batavian present.

My interest in military history and the Civil War, in particular, has been a life long fascination. It was early in 1990 that I first started looking at the Batavia Civil War veterans. Initially my goal was to pinpoint where they had served. After a small amount of research, I was amazed to discover just how much of the war Batavians had seen. I had expected to find Batavians in the Western Theater at battles such as Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Atlanta. I was surprised to find Batavia soldiers fighting at Antietam, Gettysburg and Petersburg. My goal then became to identify the name, rank, service date, unit and places served of all the Batavia Civil War veterans.



I started my journey with a copy of the names on the Newton Civil War Monument (see "The Newton Memorials" in this issue) in the West Batavia cemetery. At that time I was living in Austin, Texas, which is the home of the University of Texas, as well as the Texas State Archives. These two sources helped me compile a list with some of the basic information on the veterans. I also found veterans whose names were not included on the Newton Monument. Two trips to Springfield and the Illinois State Archives, as well as the Illinois State Historical Library added information in my search. Telephone calls to the Maryland, Wisconsin and New York State Archives aided in the search for veterans who served in regiments from other states.

While I was home on Christmas leave in 1991, Bill Wood gave me access to the records in the Depot Museum. Following a trip to the National Archives in the fall of 1993, I felt the list of 309 names was virtually complete. I say virtually because there are still twelve soldiers included on the list for whom I have not positively confirmed Batavia citizenship. I limited the list to include only those soldiers who lived in Batavia prior to their service in the Union Army. Although all twelve soldiers' names are on the Newton Monument, I have not yet been able to prove they lived in Batavia prior to their time in service.

The results of my research have been very interesting. Batavians

served in 29 different regiments. Most were Illinois infantry regiments. Batavia men served in three Illinois cavalry regiments, most notably the 8th Illinois Cavalry Regiment which trained at Camp Kane in St. Charles and served in the eastern battlefields throughout the war. Batavians serving with the artillery, with one exception, served in Battery B, 1st Illinois Light Artillery. Theodore Wood was

Continued on p. 2

Our Society Wins an Award!

On behalf of the Board, Marilyn Robinson nominated our Society to receive an Illinois State Historical Society award for our historic windmill preservation project. Her submission, with a color photograph on its cover, described the project and included newspaper stories from this area. On March 20, 1996, we received a letter stating: "After reviewing the nomination, the Award Committee recommends that the Batavia Historical Society receive an Award of Superior Achievement in the category of Special Projects."

The Illinois Society will make the presentation of the award during the Annual Meeting Awards Ceremony on April 27. Representatives of our Society will attend.

Batavia and the Civil War

Continued from p. 1

commissioned a lieutenant near the end of the war with the 5th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery. Batavians fought in the ranks of the 29th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment during the Battle of Petersburg. Two Batavians served in other states' regiments. Franklin Crandon was with the 1st Maryland Cavalry Regiment, while William Brown fought as a member of the 123rd New York Infantry Regiment.

Batavians served in every rank from private to colonel. Dentist Edgar Swain was the highest ranking Batavian. He finished the war as a colonel and commander of the 42nd Illinois Infantry Regiment. The 46 year old surveyor Adin Mann was the only lieutenant colonel from Batavia. Two men served as majors, while six made captain and eight were lieutenants. Charles Bucher, served first in the ranks of the 124th Illinois and then became a surgeon with the 72nd Illinois Infantry Regiment, where he saw service at the battles of Nashville, Spring Hill and Franklin, Tennessee in late 1864. In the enlisted ranks 27 men served as sergeants, 35 were corporals, 13 musicians and the rest served as privates.

As was common during the Civil War, men joined the army and served together throughout the war. Company B of the 124th Illinois was organized by Adin Mann and 79 Batavians served in its ranks. Company I, 42nd Illinois had 30 Batavians as well as most of the regimental band members. Company O, 52nd Illinois had 37 Batavians, while 55 men served with Company B, of the 141st Illinois. Finally, 22 Batavians served in Company F, 156th Illinois Infantry. This was the final regiment Illinois sent to the Union Army. Families also joined and fought together. Five Manns were in the army, four Prindles, four Woods, three Wolcotts, three Balls, three Burtons and three Kenyons. The Kenyons, the Manns, the Prindles and the Hammonds all had fathers and sons that served in the same regiments together.

Batavia soldiers had about a ten percent mortality rate in the Union Army. As was typical for both armies of the war, most Batavians died from disease rather than battle. Typhoid fever, chronic diarrhea, kidney dis-

ease and measles were some of the ailments Batavia soldiers succumbed to that today aren't quite so deadly. Combat deaths did occur as well. Jacob Price and Thomas Andrews were killed at Shiloh. Thirty one year old Oscar Cooley was killed at Vicksburg. Charles Burnell and Clement Bradley were killed at Chickamauga. Jesse Dawson and George Young were killed in action in Mississippi. John Brown was killed in Virginia in 1862, and James Watts and Jordan Stewart were killed in the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, Virginia in July 1864. On November 22, 1863 Sidney Barlacorn died in Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. The strangest of the Batavia casualties was Peter Victor who was captured October 16, 1863. The following morning he was found dead in a gully stripped of his clothes. At the time of Victor's death his regiment was in an area surrounded by Confederates. It was thought he wandered too far from his comrades and was picked up and murdered by rebel troops.

Batavia soldiers were typical of Civil War soldiers of both sides in another aspect. .. desertion. Eight Batavians deserted their regiments. Somehow this fact surprised me when I came across it; however, with 309 soldiers serving it would have been unusual not to have some desertions. Most desertions occurred early in a soldier's military career, probably right after he realized what he had gotten himself into. Interestingly, most of the men who deserted are not included in the list of names on the Newton Civil War Monument.

As my research and results progressed, my interest level continued to rise so much - so that the idea of a book about Batavia and the Civil War started to take hold. The crux of the book is the history of Batavia soldiers who fought in the Civil War. During the winter of 1993 I started chapter one and completed it approximately one year later. The chapter tackles the start of the war and the recruitment of the troops. Unfortunately my work schedule and graduate school demands of late have not permitted me to finish the second chapter. However, I have not given up and I hope in the not too distant future to complete this project.

In the meantime my research is not complete. I'm still looking for proof of Batavia citizenship or residency prior to military service for the following soldiers:

- Charles Stevens (enlistment September 11, 1861)
- Franklin S. Hanks (enlistment August 11, 1862)
- Benjamin Stephens (enlistment July 24, 1861)
- William H. Bennett (enlistment August 15, 1861)
- Emory Caskey (enlistment August 15, 1862)
- Charles W. Cook (enlistment August 11, 1862)
- Joseph E. Merrill (enlistment July 29, 1862)
- Beverly Hammond (enlistment February 25, 1864)
- Henry Harmon (enlistment August 15, 1861)
- Thomas James (enlistment December 17, 1861; a T.R. James voted in the Batavia town meeting on April 5, 1864, and signed to receive Charles James' bounty on February 27, 1865; however I think this may be Thomas' father.)
- George C. Wood (enlistment March 1862)
- Thomas O'Connor (enlistment August 11, 1862)

I'm convinced that in the attics of Batavia there are still old letters from the Civil War. I would like to get copies of any letter written to or by a Batavia soldier, and I know the Depot Museum would also like to add copies to its archives. I would like to thank two people who have helped me thus far in my research. Dr. Rodney Ross happily loaned me his notes on the 124th Illinois, as well as putting me in touch with key people at the National Archives. I also need to thank Bill Wood, who has always helped me with whatever I have asked, whether it was sending information to me in Texas or Alaska; giving me complete access to the Depot Museum's records and archives; editing chapter one; or taking me to lunch with the rest of the senility club whenever I am back in Batavia.

Editor's Note: The author, a son of Stephen and Anita Nelson of Batavia, is a captain in the Air Force presently stationed in Anchorage, Alaska.



by Robert Popeck

In less than 70 days the 8th International Windmillers Trade Fair will commence in our fair city.

From New Mexico to Canada, several hundred windmill enthusiasts gather each year to swap windmills, information and stories. From farmers and ranchers to business and professional people, both young and old make up the rising number of collectors who get together, with great anticipation, for this annual event.

In June of 1995 representatives from the City, Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce and Park District visited the fair in Alberta, Canada, to promote our city and its windmill history. Our efforts were rewarded:

Batavia was selected to host the 8th Windmillers Trade Fair to be held June 2, 13, 14 and 15, 1996.

The 1996 show will be highlighted by our shining past. Windmills manufactured in Batavia played an important role in the settlement and development of civilization on the frontiers of our country. Although we will follow some of the ideas from past trade fairs, we will also honor those in Batavia who built these windmills. Special tours are being arranged for the visiting windmillers to go inside the walls of the factories where this history took place. To hear the whole talk is not too hard to imagine. We are inviting former employees still living in Batavia to join us in the places they once worked and share their love and labor with our visitors.

To continue on this historic theme the present owners of the home where Daniel Halladay once lived will open it to our guests. Halladay, who received the first U.S. patent on the self-regulating windmill in 1854, moved to Batavia in 1863 to start the U.S. Wind Engine & Pump Co.

The committee is planning a special museum within the City Hall dedicated to rare windmill-related artifacts -from private collections, loaned both by local residents and by others

Windmillers Trade Fair Is Just Around the Corner

throughout the country. Our Depot Museum will be open throughout the event, allowing our visitors even more time to learn about our history. Along with our former employees of the windmill era will be the great-nephew of Daniel Halladay. He will be bringing several family heirlooms to share with us.

T. Lindsay Baker from Baylor University in Texas will be present. Dr. Baker has written several books on windmills and the lives of windmillers; one, entitled *Blades in the Sky*, highlights the exciting lives of those who put up the windmills for a living. This book features B.H. "Tex" Burdick of El Paso, Texas, who has accepted our invitation to share his life experiences at the banquet on Friday evening. Mr. Burdick, now 95, and his wife wrote, "To visit the old Challenge factory and meet and shake hands with some of the old boys who designed, assembled and shipped old Model 27 Challenges would be a great pleasure."

How many will be coming and from where is difficult to answer at this time. We have sent out over 500 registra-

tion packets, and are still getting requests. We do know that the attendance will include representatives from many western states as well as the Midwest and the East Coast. Our friends from Canada will be joining us, and I understand that someone from the Netherlands hopes to attend. To top that, just recently I received a call from a man in Cape Town, South Africa, who is seriously considering coming.

Because of space limitations, the banquet will be by invitation only. There is plenty of space, however, for anyone to join us at the other planned events. For more information, call our Windmillers Hot Line, 879-5916, or contact any committee member: Bob Popeck, president; Francine Popeck, vice-president; Donna Dallesasse, secretary; and Carla Hill, program and events chairperson.

Editor's Note: As we were going to press, Bob Popeck called to say that they certainly will be able to use volunteer help with the fair. You should read "will be able to use volunteer help" to mean "will need volunteer help." Please call him or Carla Hill

You Are Invited: Please Come In **A Preview of Batavia's June 15 Housewalk**

by Carole Dunn

It is fitting that the housewalk to benefit the Chamber of Commerce Build-out Fund is scheduled for the day that the Windmillers Trade Fair (described in story on this page) ends. We hope that our visitors will take advantage of the opportunity to see the houses on the walk, some of which were lived in by Batavians during the city's windmill building days. Here are some of the homes that will be open.

430 Main Street

When the City of Batavia considered tearing down the old stone house on Main Street, John and Sandra Wilcox came to the rescue, purchasing it in

1983 and spending the next three years in restoration - before selling it to Bob and Kristi Ellis. Kristi is the Wilcoxes' daughter.

Built by the year 1855 of native Batavia limestone, this house has many of its original doors, windows and interior brick walls still intact. The ownership trail begins in 1855 when the property passed hands from DK Town to Addison Wells for \$445. Town, a physician, arrived in Batavia in 1839. He later became one of the incorporators of the West Batavia Cemetery Association, a director of the First National Bank and one of three owners

Continued on p. 4

Batavia Housewalk

Continued from p. 3

of a box car manufacturing plant. From Wells, the stone house was sold to Hendrick Miller and in 1887 sold to Charles Adams. Sold again in 1887 to a party by the name of LaVallay, it next went to John and Mary Sheehan whose family maintained ownership until 1983. The current owners would appreciate photographs or information anyone might have about the house.

362 N. Water Street

Where old industrial Batavia gives way to picturesque residential Batavia sits Waterford on the Fox, including the riverfront townhome of Dr. Robert E and Gerri Lee. Just a stone's throw from Batavia's restored Depot Museum and within sight of the skating pond that was the subject of John Falter's *Saturday Evening Post* magazine cover in 1958, the town homes hug the west bank on a property previously home to factories and forges - to name a few: Gardner Products, T.N.T. Industries, Watlow Batavia, Inc., Rogers Galvanizing Co., C&F Forge and the James Seaverns Co.

The Lees have lived in the award-winning town homes since June 1992 - "the first to buy and the first to move in," says Gerri. Their home has been decorated by their son Bill, an interior designer in St. Louis, Missouri.

1255 Woodland Avenue

The ideal empty-nester home for Nelson and June McRoberts was found in Batavia at the southern-most end of Woodland Avenue, where this quiet lane blends into the woods. It is near the river and close to a small town. Wood, water, small town - three qualities very important to the McRoberts. This ideal place, built in 1957, follows the Bauhaus school of architecture and was designed by a minor architect under Walter Gropius in the international style. This school of architecture (1919-1933) declared "that the artist and craftsman were inseparable, and craftsmanship was the main source of creative design."

June McRoberts, herself an interior designer, has decorated the home with family pieces mixed with objects gathered during their travels. June, the artist, and Nelson, the craftsman, are keeping the tradition alive.

Other Houses and Attractions

Other houses on the housewalk include the home of Janine and Mike Callahan at 1121 Davey Drive and the home of Sue and Don Olson at 348 N. Jefferson.

Current women's fashions will be modeled at Ms. Donali in Gammon Corners. Designed by John Mills Van Osdel, famous architect of the Second Presbyterian Church, City Hall

and Palmer House in Chicago, this award-winning restoration of a Queen Anne home was built in 1885 and is now owned by Joe and Addie Marconi.

Villa Batavia, 1430 S. Batavia Avenue, will host a garden tea. Richard Palmer and Fran Steiner now operate this beautiful property, probably built between 1841 and 1845, as a bed and breakfast.

The Newton Memorials

by James Hanson

A familiar sight to Batavians is the Newton Monument in the West Batavia Cemetery which honors those from Batavia who served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Many, however, may not know how and why it came into existence some 50 years after the war ended.

Mary Prindle Newton, the widow of Don Carlos Newton (1832-1893), bequeathed \$10,000 for the erection of this memorial when she died in 1-13, n8:-ing.Charle~ More, Albro ~rindle and EH. Wolcott to carry out this provision In her Will. The memonal was erected in 1918 and formally dedicated on Memorial Day, May 30, 1919.

D.C. Newton assisted in raising a company to serve in the Union Army in 1861 and was elected a lieutenant of Co. D, 52nd Regiment, Illinois Infantry. He was later promoted to captain and served until December, 186-. He participated in many major battles including those at Shiloh, Connth, Chattanooga, Atlanta, and in Sherman's "March to the Sea" and capture of Savannah. Following the war, Batavia had an active GAR. organization in which Mr. Newton was involved.

Few Batavians are aware that Mrs. Newton also provided funds for another memorial to her late husband. In 1901 an observatory, named the Newton Observatory, at Allegheny College in Meadville, PA was dedicate? ~s the resu~t of a gift of \$10,000 from Mary Newton. The college had In ItS possession a telescope but no appropriate facility for its placement and use until it received this gift. In 1910 she established a \$5,000 endowment fund for the maintenance of the observatory which is still in use at the college.

The present Methodist Church on Batavia Ave. was a gift from D.C. Newton and his brother-in-law, Rev. EH. Gammon. They had it built similar to a design of a church that the Newtons had seen in France. The church cost \$35,000 and was dedicated in 1888. References are found that indicate Mr. Newton thought of this as a memorial to his father, Levi Newton. An organ which had been given by Mary Newton and Mrs. Gammon to the previous Methodist Church was installed in the new edifice. In her will, Mary Newt.on provided for a trust to be established with \$10,000 to ~e used for maintaining the church building. Mary Newton also was givng money to Dakota Wesleyan University at the time of her death in 1913.

Note: Intormation in this article reqarding Allegheny College and the Newton Observatory was researched by Tom Mair and given to me several years ~go. ~e had received an old, undated newspaper clipping about the gift, which whetted his interest just as his notes caused me to delve into Mary Newton's probate records, old newspapers and the Society's archives for more details about her philanthropy.

What's New at the Museum?

by Carla Hill, Curator

The Museum re-opened on Monday, March 4, for the 1996 season. Chris Winter and I have done a lot of reorganizing upstairs as well as some general cleaning and repairing throughout the museum.

We expect this to be an exciting year with the Windmill Trade Fair, which will take place in June, and the exhibit, "Blades in the Sky," which will arrive from Texas Tech University in April and will stay at the museum until the first of August. This exhibit features the Challenge 27 windmill and Tex Burdick, who installed them in the Southwest. Burdick will be coming to Batavia for the Windmill Trade Fair and will be the featured speaker at the banquet.

National Volunteer Week will be April 15-21. We will be honoring our museum volunteers with a thank you and a small gift of appreciation. The museum is fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers who help in a variety of ways. They are truly appreciated.

We have received many donations in kind in the last few months, including:

- Many, many items from Batavia's banking history, given by Ray Bristow. Ray has also been responsible for the delivery of many items from Lydia Jean Stafney's home.
- The Millett Family History from Marlene Barnes.
- Eight wonderful glass milk bottles from some of Batavia's dairies, given by the Aurora Historical Society. *
- A stone hammer used in the Barker Stone Quarry by Charles Henze. His great-granddaughter, Alice Wagner Bastian, donated the hammer to the Geneva Historical Society in 1969, before the existence of the Depot Museum. Geneva gave it to us in an exchange that returned old photographs, books, and memorabilia to their Geneva origins.*
- A silver bank from Jane Elwood.

This is only a sampling of the artifacts that we receive. We are always looking for anything that directly relates



Tim Zetang of the Geneva Historical Society reviews exchanged items with Carla Hill of the Depot Museum.

to Batavia, especially photographs. We will be happy to copy photographs and return them to the owners.

Make sure that you get a chance to come down and visit us.

* As part of a cooperative effort, many museums transfer items in their collections that belong in other museums and historical societies.

Spring General Meeting

May 19, 1996 - 3:00 p.m., Batavia Civic Center Bartholomew Room

All members and friends are cordially invited to attend our annual Spring general meeting. With the upcoming Windmills Trade Fair to be held in June, our presentation will focus on Batavia's historic windmill factories.

Presenting Windmills Past and Present will be our own local historian Marilyn Robinson with contributions by Bob Po peck. We also ask anyone who may have worked in any of the factories to share their memories with us. Refreshments will be served. Hope to see many of you there!

The *Historian* Needs You!

As you have probably noticed in the last issue and in this one, we are blessed with some extremely able writers -- ones who know Batavia history and love to tell it. They undoubtedly have many more stories to tell, and we expect to continue hearing from them. But we don't want to go to the same wells too often -- and even the deepest ones can go dry.

That's where you, our members and other readers, come in. As we wrote in the last issue, "contributions to the newsletter will be received with open arms. ... We need your help and support if the newsletter is to make the vital contribution that it should." The response to our plea was "underwhelming": we heard from no one!

Maybe we were a little disappointed, but we weren't really surprised. This is an idea that needs nurturing. You readers are busy. Perhaps some of you think the stories you might tell aren't all that interesting. And maybe you dislike writing -- or feel that your writing skills are not up to par. Please, though, don't let any of those thoughts deter you. Whenever a group of old-time Batavians, and some not so old, get together and begin to reminisce, they tell tales that many people would like to hear. These reminiscences mustn't be lost. Send them to Bill Hall, 345 N. Batavia Avenue, or call him at 879-2033. If you think your story isn't in good enough form to print, he'll see that it gets edited. And if you don't want to write it down at all, he'll listen or get someone else to, and see that it gets written up.

Let's see that these parts of our history -- big events, little happenings, funny stories, even sad remembrances -- don't get lost. Share them with others.

I Remember Holidays on the Farm (Part 2 of 3)

A couple of issues back, *The Batavia Historian* published the first installment of Helen Anderson's reminiscences of holidays as she was growing up on the George and Della Bartelt family farm, Warrentville Road, Batavia Township. In that installment, she covered New Year's Day, Ground Hog Day, Valentine's Day, Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays and then got into the preparations for Easter. Now her narrative resumes with Easter breakfast.

by Helen Bartelt Anderson

Easter breakfast was also traditional. Each year we had a contest to see who could eat the most soft-boiled eggs. Fred, a slightly retarded man who lived with us and helped with chores, could easily put away a dozen or more. He was the undisputed winner for all time.

Summer vacation usually started on Memorial Day. Some years we had a picnic. It was a time to take off long underwear. A time to take off shoes and stockings and go barefoot. I remember one year Mama took us to town to see the parade. We lived outside the Batavia school district, so we were not invited to march in the parade with the other school children. I remember going to an ice cream parlor after the parade for ice cream cones. Ideal Confectionery was owned by Gus Kapinas.

July 4th -- One spring Papa was plowing in a field quite some distance from our house. He turned up a couple of huge rocks. Not saying a word to anyone, he went out to the field before daylight on the 4th, put a stick of dynamite between the two rocks, lit the fuse and quickly ran out of the way. The blast must have awakened everyone for miles around. That was his way of celebrating. No doubt cultivating corn took up the rest of his day.

Mama celebrated the Fourth by cooking a delicious dinner of ham that had been smoked in the smokehouse, then packed in salt brine in big twenty-three gallon crocks. Mama tried to have new potatoes, cooked in their skins, and fresh peas from the garden. Some years, when there was a late spring, the gardens were also

late. Cherries were nearly always ripe by the Fourth, so we would have fresh cherry pie.

Labor Day was made a national holiday in 1894, so it was still a fairly new holiday when we were growing up. It did not in any way affect farmers. Labor Day was a big day for farm children because it marked the beginning of school the following day.

Like most children, I started school with new dresses. Mama's cousin, Oma, would make two gingham dresses for me each year. One dress could be worn for a week or more without laundering because I wore coverall aprons over the dresses. These aprons were made of dark calico, were sleeveless, slipped over the head and tied at the sides.

Roger probably had new clothes, too. Boys wore denim bib overalls and high-top shoes. Boys often had trousers made from their father's worn ones, especially in winter. When it was really cold, boys wore a pair of made-over pants with their bib overalls over the top.

Halloween was great fun. There was usually a party at school. We bobbed for apples, tried to take a bite out of an apple tied on a string and tried to pin the tail on a black cat while we were blindfolded. Our schoolroom was real spooky with bats, black cats and witches everywhere. We carved pumpkins and learned the poem, "The Goblins'll Get You If You Don't Watch Out."

Mama and Papa belonged to the Farmers' Community Club. One year they had a Masquerade party on Halloween, at the home of Wilton and Elsie Lehman. As Papa drove our Model T into their driveway a man with

blackened face jumped in front of the car, waving his arms and yelling. I screamed and cried louder and longer than anyone. I spent the rest of the evening on Mama's lap.

One year Papa made costumes for all four of us of Catalpa leaves. I do not remember if we won a prize. Farmers had fun, too, in spite of long days of very hard work.

Life on the farm was and is controlled by seasons and weather. In the late fall farmers checked the ears of corn to see if they were ripe enough and dry enough to be picked. If there was still moisture in the ears, the picking would have to wait until the corn was ready. Then the husking season would begin. Farmers wore heavy canvas gloves with husking pegs strapped over the mitts to rip open the corn husks. Even though these heavy gloves were worn the farmer's hands would be chapped and sore. Every night they would rub an ointment into them.

Each ear of corn was picked and tossed into a box wagon that had bang boards on one side, to prevent the ears from landing in the field. Two faithful horses pulled the wagon, walking slowly up and down the rows. The husker could pretty well keep up with the horses.

Thanksgiving Day was the deadline when all husking should be finished. Sometimes weather conditions prevented this from happening. If all went well, Thanksgiving would be celebrated by a traditional dinner, probably at Aunt Kate's and Uncle Mike's in West Chicago. Because Mama lived with them for many years before she married Papa, they were like Grandma and Grandpa to Roger and me.

At school we made pictures of corn shocks and pumpkins. We colored and cut out pictures of turkeys although we did not have roast turkey for Thanksgiving because turkeys were not raised on the farm. Our teacher read stories to us about the Pilgrims and the Indians. We learned the poem, "Over the River and Through the Woods to Grandma's House We Go."

Editor's Note: In a coming issue, we shall pick up the remainder of Helen Anderson's story as she described the joys of a Midwestern farm Christmas in the earlier days of the 20th century.

News Bits .. Short But Important

The Board approved Landmark Status applications for three houses. The plaque for Jim and Carol Auer's house, 123 S. Jefferson, will bear the date of 1860; that for Paul and Bonnie Petrenko's house (the old Dickinson House) at 404 N. Washington will be dated 1892; and the one for Danny and LuAnn Bombard's house (the former home of Daniel Halladay of windmill fame) at 432 Main will be dated 1858.

• • •

The Frame House has offered to sell prints of Bonnie Christensen's rendition of our gazebo. The price of a print is \$80, and purchasers who wish to have their prints framed will receive a 10% discount from the normal cost of framing.

• • •

Tom and Ann Alexander of Sugar Grove have donated a U.S. Wind Engine & Pump Co. water tank, and

Batavian Harold Maves has donated a 1 DO-plus year old display-sized Challenge water tank and tower. These are being prepared for display and will be featured, with pictures, in a forthcoming issue.

• • •

Citing Bill Wood's article in our January 1996 issue, the *Chicago Tribune* of March 24 described, with some relish, the 1869 shenanigans of some of early Batavians that, in the local news media, overshadowed Mark Twain's visit here.

• • •

It may not be Batavia history, but it is about history -- Illinois history -- and it is directed by a Batavian, one of our members. On August 2, 3 and 4, Lee Moorehead will lead his annual Lincoln seminar in Springfield. What may well be the best program yet will include

addresses by Dr. Mark E. Neely, Jr., renowned Lincoln scholar, author and professor, and Dr. John Y. Simon, professor and executive director and managing editor of the Ulysses S. Grant Association. For more detailed information, call Lee at 708-879-8441.

• • •

At the February' opening of his new Ice House restaurant on North River Street, Kent Shodeen presented the Society with a donation of \$1 ,000. The restaurant walls feature many photographs of old-time Batavia that the Society made available.

• • •

Marilyn Robinson and other volunteers have completed an index of pre-1860 through 1960 probate records. Any genealogists or others who wish to examine the index should make an appointment through the museum.

Updating Our Mailing List

We want to make sure that our newsletters and other notices are properly addressed and go to persons with a continuing interest in the activities of the Society. To accomplish this, our mailing list needs updating; it includes 'ie names of persons who have not paid dues or with whom we have had no other contact for several years. The Board has accordingly adopted a policy of retaining on its mailing list only those persons who have paid dues for the current year or the year immediately past **and** any other person who indicates that he or she wishes to continue receiving the Society's mailings.

If you have not paid dues for 1995 and/or 1996 and wish to remain on the Society's mailing list, you should either --

- Fill in the form on the other side of this page and send in your dues for 1996 (no catch-up for earlier missing years required)

OR

- Complete and mail the form at the bottom of this page.

If you do not know the status of your dues, you can call the Treasurer, Bill Hall, at 879-2033 after April 25.

Batavia Historical Society
P.O. Box 14
Batavia, Illinois 60510

Although I have not paid dues for 1995 and/or 1996 and am not doing so that this time, I wish to have my name kept on the mailing list.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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BATAVIA, ILLINOIS

The Batavia Historian

(Batavia Historica Society)

P.O. #30-14

Batavia, Illinois 60510

Vol. 37, No.1

January, 1996

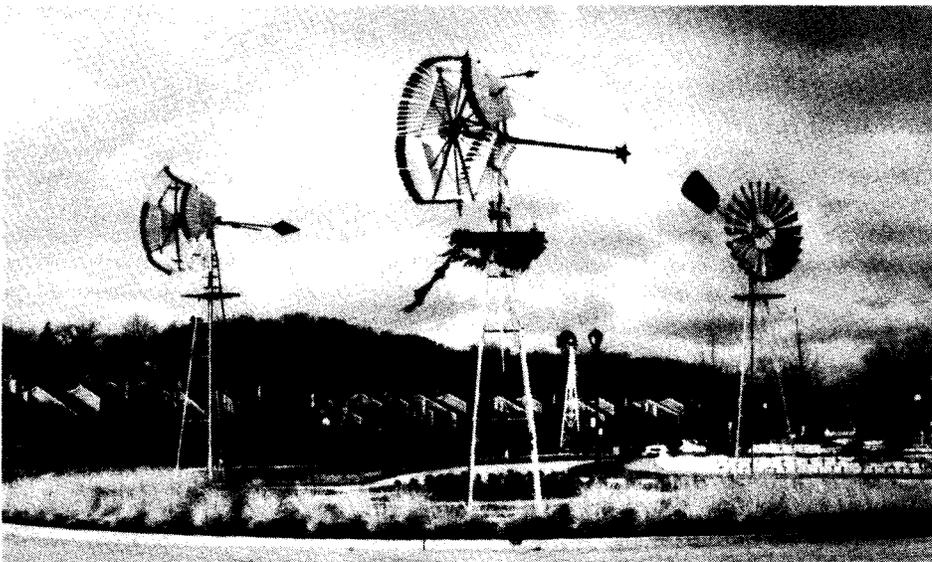
Slowly They Reappear

By Robert Popeck

As slowly as the windmills disappeared from our community, they are making a reappearance in our downtown.

Even the small group of people who do not think we should have windmills in our downtown cannot dampen my spirits to carry on this wonderful historic project. Seeing the windmills rise and noting the favorable looks and words of encouragement from young and old alike make it all worthwhile.

Continued on p. 2



What's New with the Newsletter?

The Batavia Historian is back -- and will stay! That is the big news.

Some of you reminded us that we had fallen down always in getting out timely newsletters the last year or so, and we are truly sorry. Recognizing the newsletter's importance in carrying out the Society's mission and in keeping our members informed and involved, your officers and directors are taking steps to see that issues will be mailed out at least quarterly. Bill Hall has agreed to help Bob Popeck in seeing that this gets done. Future issues, we hope, will improve, but our main desire for this one is to initiate prompt communication -- and learn what you want.

A number of the Society's members

and other readers of the newsletter are not content Batavia residents, and we shall try to

keep this in mind in what we include. Besides the sought-after reminiscences and anecdotes involving residents, places and events from our city's past, the newsletter will feature exciting developments regarding such places as the ice skating pond, which enjoys such a special place in the memories of old-time Batavians. We shall also focus on such current activities of the Society as its role in the installation of windmills in the Riverwalk, its ongoing involvement in the Depot Museum, its work on old court records, and what takes place at its meetings. Although not

always exciting, perhaps, we shall also include minutes of Board meetings so that everyone is apprised of what your officers and directors are doing and planning.

Contributions to the newsletter will be received with open arms: just send them to Bob Popeck at the City Hall or to Bill Hall at 345 N. Batavia Avenue. Or, if you know something that would make a good story but do not feel like writing it yourself, call Bill at 879-2033 and he will see that it gets written up. Either Bob or Bill will also welcome any suggestions you may have regarding future newsletters. We need your help and support if the newsletter is to make the vital contribution that it should.

Thanks go first to those who have so generously donated funds to this project. Without their generosity, this undertaking would not have been possible. Another group whom I now call friends consists of those windmill collectors throughout the country who heard my appeal for bringing this part of our heritage back to Batavia. Their

extra effort to locate the windmills as quickly as they did made the dream come true faster than even the most optimistic of us expected. Last, but far from least, are the members of my volunteer corps of local windmill

enthusiasts, who have given many hours to restore

and erect the most extraordinary display of historic artifacts in the area.

Because the photo on page 1 can show only a limited view of our proud display, I want to acquaint you with what is now on exhibit in and around the Riverwalk and the Municipal Building. Our windmill court fittingly stands adjacent to the old Appleton factory (now the City Hall and Police Department), displaying an outstanding example from each of the three major windmill companies -- the Appleton, Challenge, and U.S. Wind Engine and Pump companies.

To the north of this court along the west bank of the pond, standing tall on its 32-foot tower, is a Challenge "27." This windmill will actually be a working display of what a windmill did. School children and others will be able to watch the windmill lift water from its well beneath the tower and fill the pond; the overflow will slowly cascade down to the river over the limestone spillway. Toward the east is our 10foot Challenge "OK," most appropriately placed just a stone's throw from where it was built about 1885.

We have several more mills yet to be erected. The one I especially want to point out is our big red Model "E" built by the Wind Engine and Pump Company. This mill left Batavia long

ago for Colorado, where it was utilized over many years on a large ranch to pump water for cattle and horses. Finally it was abandoned and in dire need of T.L.C. to restore it. That came from a family in Lamar, Colorado, whose members love windmills; this mill was so special to them that they restored it to tip-top condition and dis-

played it on the main street of Lamar. We were able to purchase it and bring it home to Batavia where it will be placed in a prominent position next to the City Hall.

The love shown by that family who restored this special windmill is also demonstrated by another family,

this one from Batavia. Art and Marian Swanson and their sons, Wayne and Dennis, decided to finance the purchase of this mill because of Art's many years of service with the U.S. Wind Engine and Pump Company. Their contribution was large enough to help acquire the rare "Halladay Vaneless" mill, as well, that now stands within our windmill court.

"Thank you" is not enough for us to say about the Swanson family's wonderful gift. I do know that this spring, when the Model "E" is erected, Art Swanson will be there to see it take its first breath of Batavia wind. And I'll make a little wager that, if we listen really hard, we will hear it say, "I am home!"

Lincoln Dinner Reminder

On Sunday evening, February 4, the Heritage Committee of ACCESS will hold its Eighth Annual Lincoln Dinner Theater, featuring a dramatic presentation by the *With Lincoln Productions* of Chicago, at the Lincoln Inn. Don't miss this always popular occasion. Tickets, which include dinner, gratuity and theater, can be purchased for \$17 at the Batavia Park District office or by calling Lee Moorehead at 879-8441.

In the early evening hours of January 26, 1869,

Samuel Clemens/

Mark Twain began a

letter to Livy, his soon-to-be wife. Date-lined "Batavia, Illinois," he finished it in the early morning hours of the 27th after delivering a lecture to a Batavia audience, site and topic still unknown. In his wildest dreams he surely could not have envisioned that on January 18, 1996, Jeffery D. Schielke, Mayor of Batavia, would be reviewing "The Mark Twain Papers: Mark Twain's Letters, Volume 3, 1869" in which his letter is reproduced.

In preparing publicity for Mayor Schielke's presentation, Mark Johnson, Batavia reporter for the *Aurora Beacon-News*, researched the February 4, 1869, edition of the *Beacon* and found that his 1869 counterpart had mentioned Twain's lecture, but only as a footnote to more vital news of the day. As a newspaperman, Twain would be understanding that news of his lecture would be overshadowed by a "disgraceful occurrence" in which "one of a self-constituted Vigilance committee came to grief."

Barney Vermilyer, the planned recipient of a coat of tar and feathers declined the honor. After the committee ransacked his home on North Washington Ave. and tracked him to the cellar, Vermilyer fired three shots, injuring the leader, Bill Noakes, who resided on North Van Buren Street. "Upon the fall of their valiant leader, the rest of the group made a hasty charge away from there that made Sheridan's celebrated ride seem slow in comparison. They stood not upon the order of their going but went as though the devil was after them." The Batavia correspondent, known only as "Ben," had a way with words bequeathed to his 1996 successor. Ben added that the matter was turned over to the grand jury, which did not bode well for Noakes as "mob law and vigilance committees are decidedly unpopular just now." **a** . It was reported that Twain's lecture. was a "success pecuniarily and otherwise."

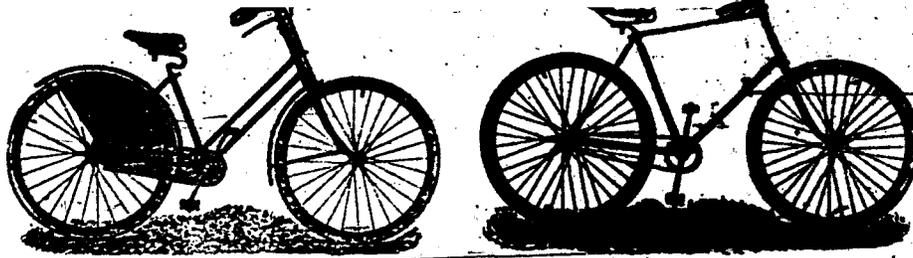
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1896 in Review

By Marilyn Robinson

A.J. Anderson; Bicycle Repairer.

~:J Batavia Ave.; Back III Old Stand.



Bicycle Repairer. Find it to their interest to call at A~J. ANDERSON'S, 5:J, Batavia Ave., Buck's old stand, and look-over his fine stock of WHEELS and get PRICES.

BICYCLE REPAIRING a Specialty.

Some new businesses opened during 1896. P.G. Pearson had a very fine greenhouse with 6,000 feet of ground under cultivation or glass opposite the West Side cemetery. W.O. Jones opened a hardware business in the Walt Block. Fred Ries opened a manufactory to make sun bonnets and aprons, employing 100 women to sew the garments -- many of which went to Chicago for sale.

A century ago Batavia was a thriving industrial town third in size only to Elgin and Aurora. Politically, it was a Republican stronghold. As such, it was demanding a county officer. Frank E. George had been a good county supervisor, so in the primary election with the support of Geneva Republicans, George was chosen to run for

County Recorder. He had been educated in Batavia and was a successful grocery store owner with his father, Frank K. George.

In October there was a huge political demonstration in downtown Batavia sponsored by the Swedish-American

Republicans from Batavia, Aurora, and Geneva. The rally included bands and a torchlight parade and helped elect Mr. George and President William McKinley. Of the 1110 local votes cast in November, McKinley received 856 votes, and the Democrat, William Jennings Bryan, 203.

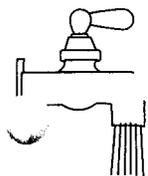
In February, the Knights of Pythias Lodge was initiated. It would meet in the GAR Hall until its own building was secured. The Rebekah Lodge of the Lodge of Odd Fellows was initiated in November.

The cornerstone of the Holy Cross Church on Wilson Street was laid August 2.

Dr. Annie Spencer came to practice medicine after leaving her practice in New York. Her specialty was women's diseases.

Public utilities were coming into their own. Telephone companies were begging the city to let them run poles and lines to furnish service to the city.

Piped water was new. The U.S.W.E. & P. Co. applied to the city for water to supply their boilers and for drinking purposes in their factory.



M.M. Kinne & Co. wanted water for basin purposes in its store. Firemen asked the city to have water run to their residences free of charge while they were employed by the city. Aldermen felt a need to extend the water mains. A fire hydrant was placed at Main and Lincoln Streets.

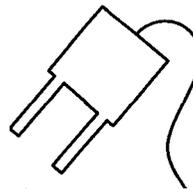
Miss Ella Beach applied to the city for electric lights in her residence on Walnut Street.

Homeowners along the north side of Houston Street petitioned the city for concrete sidewalks from Lincoln to Jackson Street. The other side wanted its walk to reach Harrison Street.

The finest drinking fountains in Kane County for livestock and people were placed on Batavia Avenue. They supplied drinkers with pure, cool water from the rocks 1300 feet below. The fountains cost \$100. The money came from cash that had been raised several years earlier for a 4th of July celebration that never took place.

The city spent \$16,577.62 during 1895 and received \$17,183.94, leaving a balance in the city treasury of \$606.02 to start 1896.

Instead of unsightly vehicles, their were bad barns. Dr. J.C. Augustine, health officer, reported that Ben Borg's cow barn was very offensive to the neighborhood, and police officers were told to notify Mr. Borg to clean and keep clean his barn.



The Batavia Road Bicycle Race (to Aurora and back) was covered in 32 minutes, a new speed record.

The Aurora, Batavia and Geneva Electric Street Railway was opened October 24. The half-hour ride between Aurora and Batavia was one of the prettiest in the state, running along the beautiful Fox River. The fare was 10 cents. The ride ran each hour. In Batavia the cars ended near the Revere House on South Batavia Avenue, but they would soon run to Geneva as the railway company had permission to lay tracks to the north edge of Batavia.

Nine students graduated from East Batavia High School and five from West Batavia High School.

A major debate all year concerned whether city saloons should remain open. In December, the No-license supporters seemed to win. The council refused to renew the licenses of the city's 6 saloons. Arguments for keeping them open were that they put \$6,000 into the city treasury in license fees and an additional \$500 for electricity and water. This was a serious loss to the city coffers and might not bring about the morality and sobriety that the No-license people hoped. It would vacate 6 store buildings and throw 20 people out of employment. It would cripple business and drive it to neighboring cities that still had licensed saloons. With drink so accessible, the closing of the saloons would not keep local drunkards from drinking.

Our Growing Membership



New Life for Ice Skating Pond

Batavia's ice skating pond, known in recent years as the Depot Pond, has long enjoyed a special place in the hearts of our people. Indeed, the painting of the pond filled with skaters, which appeared on the cover of the January 11, 1958, *Saturday Evening Post*, has been one of our claims to fame. As many of you know, the original painting now hangs in the Depot Museum, and long-time residents enjoy pointing out themselves, their families, and their friends in the large, lively group shown skating.

In recent years, however, the banks of the pond had deteriorated, and freezing had been hampered by salty run-off from storm sewers. It was fitting, therefore, that the Riverwalk Committee gave a high priority to the renovation of the pond -- and especially since the Riverwalk itself will ultimately overlook the pond. The initial work, scheduled for completion in the fall of 1995, was to consist of a six-foot wall of stone bricks surrounding the pond and a new sluice gate controlling the flow of storm water into the pond.

Timely completion of the work was frustrated by four failures of the temporary dams at the north end, required to drain the pond so that the wall could be built. Finally, however, volunteers and a construction crew have been able to complete the wall, and hopeful skaters are now only awaiting weather that will create the necessary six-inch layer of ice. In the meanwhile, all of us can all enjoy the attractive appearance of the new wall.

Next spring, the Riverwalk Committee will complete work on the pond, with the installation of the electrical and plumbing work for the warming house and fountain at the entry court. A landmark will not only have been saved, it will have been improved.

Members are the lifeblood of our organization. It is not a matter of collecting dues (although we do welcome those); rather, it is a matter of having people who are interested in Batavia's history and want to preserve it for future generations. For those who wish, we offer a variety of activities such as volunteering as a museum docent or helping with the project on court records, and many people enjoy these opportunities to meet others and to learn more about Batavia's history. We always welcome people, however, whose only interest lies in attending our meetings and other functions.

Although we are growing, we need a broader membership, particularly among the younger people in our community. Those with young families may not be able to participate actively in all the Society's activities, but we should get them interested and involved, to the extent they can be, at an early stage. Gifts of memberships to friends and relatives is a good, and relatively inexpensive way, to increase our rolls; it is easier for many people to give a membership than it is to ask someone to join. And then, of course, those who make the gifts should follow up by inviting these new members and others to join them in attending Society functions. If we do a good job and are lucky, those we invite may get "hooked" on our program and become lifelong members.

During 1995, the Society welcomed the following new members (all from Batavia unless otherwise indicated):

Richard Anderson family (Oswego)
Kerry F. Bailey family (reinstated)
Barbara M. Brown (St. Charles)
Randa Duncan
Susan Dwiggin
Susan Farr
Charles Gillenwater William
and Ellen Hamilton
John and Heather Hamilton-Dryden

John Heath (Aurora) Ruth
Luettich Henrichs James
and Mary Lundin
Howard Miner and Jeane Roberts
Nancy Prichard
W. T. Springborn
Donna Videtech
Jennifer L. Warta
Ed and Nancy Weiss (Aurora)

In addition, the following persons (most of whom were already members) have become Life Members:

Richard and Lois Benson
Marvin and Carole Dunn
Barbara Hall

Ruth Hamper
Marilyn Robinson

During 1995, the Society unfortunately lost members through death. Some of these had given devoted service to the Society and other organizations in Batavia over many years and will be sorely missed. Our losses included:

Elizabeth (Peg) Bond
Warren Hubbard
Martha May Lundberg

Grace R. Oregon
Agnes Perrow

There may be some deaths of which we are unaware, especially among those members who no longer live in this area. If any reader knows of other deaths during the last year, please let us know and we shall report them in the next newsletter.

Marilyn Robinson: Citizen of the Year and Again an Author

Marilyn Robinson, the Society's retiring vice president -- and still a YJ2ri. active board member -- was much in the news at the close of 1995.

The Batavia Chamber of Commerce honored her as the 1995 Citizen of the Year at its December 8 annual awards dinner. As reported in *The Batavia Republican*:

"(Marilyn) Robinson, a former business industrial teacher and chairman of applied arts at Batavia High School, retired from teaching in 1988. However, she has been anything but inactive since her retirement. Robinson has worked hard for the Batavia Foundation for Educational Excellence and the Batavia Historical Society and is a published author. She also has contributed columns to the *Windmill Herald* newspaper."

Marilyn strongly believes that "everybody needs to know where they came from. People can't have a sense of how things currently are without understanding the past." She certainly has put that philosophy in practice in her work for the community and in her writing. Batavia is richer because she is here - and contributes.

Although we know that she will not receive this same award again, we know that she will continue meriting it. Congratulations, Marilyn, and thanks!

Then, as if recognition as Citizen of the Year was not enough for one month,



Book Signing at Depot Museum

Marilyn's most recent book, *Batavia Places and the People Who Called Them Home*, arrived from the printer in early December. A number of people had reserved copies in advance; for those who were present at the December 12 museum volunteer luncheon, Marilyn signed "hot off the press" copies. The Society arranged a formal signing at the Depot Museum on the afternoon of December 17. Many people braved the frigid weather, bought cop-

ies for Marilyn to sign, and enjoyed visiting with her and others while indulging in Christmas cookies and coffee.

Copies of this book are available at the Batavia Park District office. They can also be obtained at Town House Books in St. Charles or directly from Marilyn at 1418 Clybourne Street, Batavia 60510. The cost of the book is \$24.95. If it must be mailed rather than delivered or picked up locally, please add \$3.00 for first-class postage.

~4t **Justum: Our Society's Center**

When we asked Carla Hill, the Depot Museum curator, to write about the annual volunteer luncheon, we received a bonus -- an offer "to write a museum oriented article any time." Needless to say, we accept the offer, and you will be finding stories about the museum as a regular feature in future newsletters.

The museum lies at the heart of the Society's activities. Five afternoons each week, March through November, volunteers staff the museum. Even these volunteers, often old-time Batavians who have filled this role for many years, are always finding out something new about our history.

Carla creates exciting new special exhibits several times a year. And visitors, many of them newcomers or school children, are always asking questions that require consultation or research for answers.

Carla described the recent volunteer luncheon in the following words:

"On Tuesday, December 12, the Depot Museum volunteers came together for the annual Christmas luncheon. A delicious lunch was provided by Reuland's Catering in Aurora, and magician, Matthew Scherer, and pianist, David Kellen, provided the entertainment.

The museum is very fortunate to

have 70 volunteers who are the real life and character of the museum. Without volunteers the museum could not function.

May Lundberg was one of those dedicated volunteers who for many years took on the arduous task of scheduling the museum volunteers. She unfailingly made the monthly calls, prepared the schedules and made sure that they were ready to be sent. She will be sadly missed.

I look forward to a great 1996 season beginning on Monday, March 4th!"

New volunteers are always welcome; just call May Lundberg's successor, Kathy Fairbairn (406-9041), or

Continued on page 6

, 1'995 Annual Meeting and Christmas Dinner

By Francine McGuire-Popeck

The Society's Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for its members to conduct business in a warm and friendly atmosphere surrounded by good friends, homemade food, lively round-table discussion, and enjoyable entertainment. Our December 3, 1995, meeting held all of the right ingredients.

Members gather early to add their potluck entrees to long buffet tables and talk with friends while arranging their own place settings. The tableware members choose to bring ranges from picnic style to fancy china. Some members even bring Christmas plates and cups to go along with the seasonal table decorations provided by the committee that organizes and prepares for the evening.

During the business meeting, the Nominating Committee submitted names to fill available positions for officers and the board. The members approved the following slate:

- Vice President: Patricia Will (formerly Recording Secretary)
- Recording Secretary: Francine McGuire-Popeck
- Corresponding Secretary: Georgene Kauth
- Historian: William J. Wood
- Directors: Marilyn Robinson (formerly Vice President), Carole Dunn, Timothy Mair

The Museum

continued from page 5

Carla Hill (879-5235). No experience or even long-time residence in Batavia is required. Serving is fun, lets you meet people, and acquaints -- or reacquaints -- you with various aspects of Batavia's history and traditions. It takes only two hours a month, and schedules, drawn up monthly, accommodate volunteers' travel or other personal commitments.

And, even if you don't feel that you can volunteer, be sure to visit the museum regularly. Surprisingly, even some active Society members occasionally admit they haven't visited the museum for months, even years. They are missing a lot!

The terms of Robert Popeck, President; William D. Hall, Treasurer; and Ray Anderson, Director, did not expire; they continue to hold those positions.

The business meeting was preceded by lively entertainment from The Batavia Faculty Jazz Ensemble, under the directorship of Michael Stiers. Mr. Stiers added an informative historical notation before each of the songs played by the band; this supplemented our enjoyment of the great jazz tunes with an educational note. The band ended its performance with a Christmas carol sing-along that helped give the holiday season an early start for many of us.

Some Great Gift Suggestions!

Your Society has some wonderful items for sale, items that anyone would treasure for years to come.

We know. We're late and missed the Christmas Season. But there are always other occasions; Valentine's Day, Easter, and maybe a birthday are coming up. Perhaps you can even treat yourself to a gift of lasting value.

Late last year, the Society obtained -- and is the sole source for -- a beautiful print: *Gazebo on the Pond*. This 28 by 22 inch color print, from a painting by Geneva artist Bonnie Christensen, would make a lovely adornment for the home or office of any Batavian, or anyone who once called Batavia home and cherishes memories of the old ice skating pond. The print sells for \$80; for a person who may be looking for something really special, the original is also available -- for \$1-,600.

Our well-known author, Marilyn Robinson, has just published a new book, *Batavia Places and the People Who Called Them Home*. This book includes both updated items that originally appeared in the *Windmill Herald* over the last few years and some new material. There are also other books for sale by authors Robinson, Roberta Campbell and Thomas Mair.

These items are all for sale at the Batavia Park District office, 327 W. Wilson, or at the Depot Museum after it reopens on March 4.

County Records Project

By Marilyn Robinson

The County Records Project at the Campana Building continues. The combined societies have been working for nearly three years.

The probate records are all sorted, and in Batavia they have been boxed and indexed and are ready for researchers to use. Make an appointment with Carla Hill to see and use the records if you are doing family or historical research.

The court records are coming along slowly. We do see the pile shrinking, and there is no more filming to do. Batavia has many boxes of these records at the museum, but they are not yet indexed. I am working on them. Some are on my computer, but most are not. My lengthy illness last winter and other projects caused me to get far behind.

We work every Thursday on the second floor of the Campana Building. Volunteers are always welcome, whether they stay for whole afternoon or for just a couple of hours. Batavia's shift is from 12:30 to 3:30, but you won't be turned away if you prefer to work in the mornings. The task is simple, and there's always several to show you what to do.

Come in the front door of the building, follow the sign to the metal stairway. At the top of the first flight, turn left to the double doors across from the ladies room. It will be closed just because it makes it warmer in our workroom. You can't miss us from there.

Our members who frequently work at the project include Kathy Fairbairn, Evelyn Noreen, Marilyn Robinson, William Hall, and Elliott Lundberg. Others come infrequently, but all are always welcome. Some non-member Batavians are regulars, so we have lots of fun.

Change in Dues Structures

Until this year, the Society's dues structure had remained unchanged for a number of years. During 1995, the Board of Directors voted to make changes, effective from the end of that year, as follows:

	Before	After
Individuals and families -		
Single	\$ 3	\$ 5
Family	5	10
Junior	1	1
Classroom	5	5
Single life	50	75
Family life	N.A.	125
Institutions and businesses -		
Annual	10	10
Life	100	100

Questions have been raised about the reasons for change, especially since the General Fund that receives the dues has had a substantial excess of receipts over disbursements in recent years.

As noted in the Treasurer's Comments on Financial Operations elsewhere in this newsletter, interest on investments constitutes the major part of the receipts in the General Fund. Approximately three-quarters of the investments that produce this interest, however, actually relate to the Special Projects Fund. It has been suggested, as a means of preserving the Special Projects Fund for future major projects and even as a matter of equity, that consideration be given to allocating the applicable interest on these investments to the Special Projects Fund. If that had been done for the fiscal year 1995, the General Fund would have shown only a slight excess of receipts over disbursements for the year -- an excess likely to disappear shortly with inflation and other factors. Even if no change were to be made in the allocation of interest, however, it is prudent to look ahead and plan for what might happen if a major part of the Special Project Fund were to be used -- say, for an expansion of the museum as may be required some day with the growth of the community and the museum's contents. This would eliminate interest on which the Society has come to rely for its day-to-day operations.

Thinking along those lines led the Board to conclude that a modest increase in the dues structure might be appropriate at this time. Even the impact of the one recently implemented would not necessarily be enough to bring the receipts and disbursements for normal day-to-day operations into balance, but it would be a step in the right direction. In saying this, we are not suggesting that there is any present thought about future increases. Few not-for-profit organizations such as the Society can, or should ever be expected to, live on dues alone; we would need to look for other resources -- more fund-raising projects, for example. Our most important asset is an interested, involved membership, and we would never want to establish a dues structure that would drive members away or discourage new ones from joining. We have many older members, some of whom go away for all or part of the year; although we hope that they will send in their dues on a timely basis, they need not fear that their names will be dropped from our mailing list because the date when their dues expires has slipped by.

In summary, it can perhaps be said that we are trying to introduce some long-range planning and a little prudence into our operations but are not about to focus exclusively on what is now commonly called the "bottom line."

The Society's financial operations are accounted for and reported in two funds. The General Fund reflects the day-to-day, recurring operations of the Society. The Special Projects Fund (identified as the "Special Fund" in the accompanying financial statements) covers receipts and expenditures for special projects that fall outside the Society's normal, ongoing operations.

Treasurer's Comments on Yearly Financial Operations
General Fund The principal source of funds in the General Fund is interest. Under existing policy, the general fund receives all the interest from the Society's investments. The \$8,160.39 of interest for the 1995 fiscal year represented about 75 percent of the General Fund's total receipts of \$10,921.18. The other principal receipts included \$793 from dues and \$1,040 from sale of Gazebo prints.

Late in the fiscal year, the Society purchased 100 Gazebo prints for \$3,550, to be resold at \$80 apiece. Thirteen of these had been sold through September 30, 1995; the General Fund receipts, as noted above, include \$1,040 from these sales, and disbursements include \$461.50 as the cost of these prints. The assets of the Society at September 30, 1995, included \$3,088.50 as the cost of the 87 prints held for resale at that date.

The largest General Fund disbursements for the year related to the operations of the museum. Under arrangements with the Batavia Park District, the Society pays for the security system; payments to Alarm Detection System and to Ameritech for the related telephone system totalled \$900.07. Museum insurance accounted for \$428, and display material cost \$451.

Because of the substantial interest received on investments, the excess of General Fund receipts over disbursements totalled \$6,986.84, which was added to the fund balance of the General Fund.

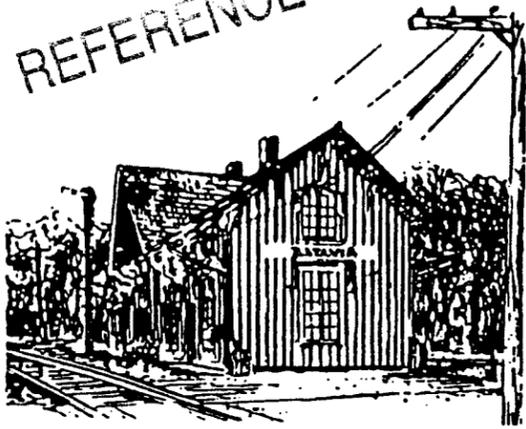
Special Projects Fund The Board's financial policy has established that the Special Projects Fund should include all bequests and memorial donations, single donations in the amount of \$100 or more, and those donations specifically designated for special projects under the fund. Expenditures from this fund are for nonrecurring expenses related to projects not customarily part of the operating expenses of the Society.

During the fiscal year ended September 30, 1995, the fund received generous donations of \$23,067, of which \$22,175 were designated for the purchase and installation of Batavia-manufactured windmills around the Municipal Building and the Riverwalk. The identities of the donors are shown in financial statements; however, it should be noted that the \$10,000 attributed to Arthur W. Swanson (along with another \$5,000 received after the end of the fiscal year) actually comes from the combined families of Arthur Swanson and his sons, Wayne and Dennis.

A total of \$32,097.50 was expended for windmills and related costs during the fiscal year. Descriptions of these windmills are included in an article in this newsletter.

Disbursements during the year exceeded receipts by \$9,030.50, which resulted in a decrease of that amount in the balance of the Special Projects Fund.

REFERENCE



The Batavia Historian

Bataoia Historical Society

<R.O. }30~ 14 Batavia,
Illinois 60510

Vol. 37 No.4

October, 1996

The Challenge Com.pany ... and Its People

Personal Reminiscences by Elliott Lundberg

In the mid 1920s to 1929 the U.S., Challenge and Appleton windmill companies and the Newton Wagon Works were probably at their peak of employ-

ment and manufacturing. As the Great Depression followed, they never did recover, although World War II brought employment through war work. Well

over 1,000 people were employed at these plants and the population of Batavia was a little over 5,000. Almost all workers lived in Batavia and walked to and from work. It was quite a sight at quitting time to see the hundreds of workers carrying their lunch buckets heading home, most of them walking east and west on Wilson Street. This was before the repeal of Prohibition so there were no tavern stops.

As with many Batavians, windmills were in my family's blood. My grandfather, August Lundberg, had arrived in Batavia from Sweden in 1887. Most of his working life was spent at the U.S. Wind Engine and Pump Company. My father, John Lundberg, also worked at the U.S. (as it was called) most of his working life. My aunt, Freda Lundberg, started working at the U.S. in 1920, fresh out of high school. She became secretary to H.N. Wade, President of the U.S., and after his death

worked there until the mid 1940s, about when it closed down. One of my sisters also worked at the U.S. for a time.

In the mid 1920s we lived on Water Street, just south of the U.S. and I remember walking a couple of blocks to the U.S. to meet my father at quitting time to explain my misadventures of the day to him on our walk home so he could determine what punishment was required.

In 1938 I started work at the office of the Challenge Company. By then business had improved some from the depths of the Depression, but there still were many 4-day weeks. Frank Snow was President and the old timers in the office were Maurice Marcuson, Bob Lewis, Art Clark, Sam Thomle, Ray McDaniels, and Frank Nelson, and a few younger men, Alan Larson, Harry Pierce, Charles Hoag and Ralph Erzen, and also five women and three real young men, including me.

No doubt very little, if any, of the machinery had been upgraded since the 1920s. Water power from the river was the main power source. The plant was electrified but water power was used wherever possible due to its low cost. Money was in short supply. The average worker in the shop was paid 55 cents per hour. The Wood Room and the Foundry and Core Room were union, and at that time foundry moulders made 92 1/2 cents per hour.

Electricity was being provided to many farms by this time so that in our

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Do you know where this building is?

If not, see answer on page 5



The Challenge Company ... and Its People Continued from p. 1

area there was more demand for the #30 pump jack and the #45 deep well pump than windmills. Windmill production was still a big part of the company's business but mostly for the southwest and western parts of our country and for foreign shipment to Australia, South America and other places. Still there were plenty of windmills in operation in the country surrounding Batavia and also it was expensive to buy a new electric pump, and the depression had not really ended.

Local farmers could not afford to buy new electric pumps or new windmills. As a result there were still a lot of old windmills being used, and many farmers came in to get repairs for their windmills, no matter how old. Many repair parts were kept in stock, but if not a part could usually be provided. George Thrun (I believe he was the father of William Thrun, fire chief of Batavia for many years), worked in a room below the machine shop, which itself was below ground level. When a repair part could not be found in the stock room, I would take the farmer with his part down to see George Thrun. He was a short man with a large mustache and a German accent. He would usually find the part, but if not, he'd say that he would find the pattern and have one cast in the foundry. In 1940 parts were being provided for 50 year old open gear windmills. Any business was acceptable in those days.

Until production ceased, Challenge Company was selling a revised version of the Challenge 27 windmill, like the one recently erected west of the City Hall by the cut. Arnold Hall worked in the machine shop at the Challenge, where windmills were assembled, and he erected windmills which were sold by the company in this area. He recalled that the last windmill he erected was on the Charles Gould farm on Nelson Lake Road, probably in the early 1940s.

The Challenge Company had branches in Minneapolis and in Lubbock, Texas. Shipments of windmills and allied products were made to these branches by rail. There was a spur of the Chicago Northwestern Railroad into the Challenge yard. Many of the windmills going to Lubbock were for the customer Burdick and Burdick, and their name was stenciled on one side of the vane.

The self-oiling windmill, whereby the windmill motor ran in a bath of oil, all enclosed in the head, was a great improvement and made its appearance in the 1920s. The Aermotor Company of Chicago was one of the first manufacturers of this type of windmill, and the most successful. The Challenge Company was slow in their development of the self-oiling windmill, and when the Model 27 came out, they were sued by the Aermotor Company for infringement of patent. The Aermotor Company won their suit, and I used to hear that it cost the Challenge \$100,000, though I've not seen this amount verified.

The Wood Room was located in the large two-story building at the north end of the factory. Staves and other wood parts of cypress and redwood were produced here for use in the manufacture of large wood water tanks which were sold mainly to companies and to municipalities and other institutions for water storage. John Carlson, a Swedish immigrant, was foreman of the Wood Room. He was also 2nd Ward alderman. Almost every noon he would come up to the office before lunch hour was over for a discussion with some of the office men, in which he was usually defending his positions on affairs of the city council or a political discussion would ensue. I believe all of his workers in the Wood Room were Swedish, except Mike Kouzes.

The Plating Room was located at the north end of the row of buildings which

fronted River Street. George Glasser was in charge of plating and had one or two other employees.

South of the Plating Room, the Foundry and Core Room were located. Oscar Anderson, a Swede, was foreman of the Foundry, but he was more often referred to as the boss. More than once he literally picked me up and threw me out of the Foundry. He didn't always like the questions I raised, in line of duty. He was the boss. His son, Erik Anderson, worked in the Core Room - Erik's son is Kenneth Anderson of Cincinnati Bengal fame. Nick Hermes was foreman of the Core Room which adjoined the Foundry in the same building.

John Kershules was the cupola tender in the Foundry, Faith Rice (a black man) was his helper. In later years Faith Rice worked up at John's Tap in Geneva. When he came in the bank about the time of the Geneva Swedish Days parade, I always told him he should lead the parade in Geneva as he probably could speak more Swedish than anyone else in Geneva. He couldn't, of course, but he had picked up a bit of Swedish working in the Foundry since so many Swedes worked in the Foundry.

In addition to moulding all the castings for use in the manufacture of Challenge products, the Foundry did a lot of work for other companies - the Chicago Pump Company, the Aurora Pump Company, the American Well Works, the Lindsey Light and Chemical Company, the Red Devil Tool Company and others. Therefore, this was a very important unit of the Challenge, and the Foundry quite often had work when the rest of the plant did not.

The Steel Tank Room was located just south of the Foundry. Gust Johnson was foreman and there were three or four men working there. They produced galvanized steel water tanks for use mainly by farmers for livestock. I believe they also made the galvanized steel parts for the wheels and vanes of the windmills.

(Elliott's reminiscences - with names of many more old-timers - will conclude in the next issue. The *Windmill Herald* carried the introductory material in this article during the Windmillers Trade Fair last June.)

1/0t1't Miss t6e October b Cemetery Walk

The 5th Annual Cemetery Walk sponsored by the Heritage Committee of Access and the Batavia Historical Society will be October 6, with guided tours every half hour from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the West Side Cemetery. A rain date is October 13.

Congregational Church of Batavia - A Brief History

This is the first in what we hope will be a series of histories of the many churches in Batavia. Fortunately, as part of its Sesquicentennial Celebration in 1985, the Congregational Church published *A History of the Congregational Church of Batavia, Illinois, 1835-1985*. With the help of Ruth Burnham, who chaired the Sesquicentennial Committee, your editor has extracted from and abridged the wealth of information that booklet contains. Anyone who has an opportunity should try to find and read the fascinating story in full.

Addressing the semi-centennial celebration of the Congregational Church of Batavia in 1885, Dr. William Coffin observed that the church was organized in 1835 "in another locality, was known by another name, and had a different denominational connection." He pointed out that the church "was formed in a log cabin, on the farm of Mr. Thompson Paxton, six

miles southeast of us, outside the limits of our township, outside the limits of our county even. It adopted the Presbyterian form of government and worship, and took, for a name, The Church of the Big and Little Woods."

Since no church had been established by 1835 in their newly settled area, five early families met in a large room in the Paxtons' log cabin to organize one. Except for the Paxtons, all had recently arrived from New England, New York and Indiana. The Paxtons had been driven from their home in Tennessee because of their strong stand against slavery. As Dr. Coffin observed, their home was thus a fitting place for the organization of a church.

But why a Presbyterian church?

Under an 1801 Plan of Union, the Presbyterian and Congregational churches had agreed to send missionaries jointly into the frontier. Because of a prevalent notion that the Presbyterian mode of government was better suited to frontier life than the Con-

gregational, missionaries came with specific instructions to establish Presbyterian churches unless a local congregation had strenuous objections.

Although most of the founders of the Church of the Big and Little Woods had Congregational antecedents, they apparently did not have "strenuous objections" to becoming Presbyterians, as evidenced by the record of organization:

"On Saturday, the 8th of August, 1835, Rev. R.W. Gridley and Rev. N.C. Clark visited the vicinity of the Big and Little Woods for the purpose of organizing a church of Christ. The following persons presented testimonials of their good and regular standing in the Presbyterian church and gave a relation of their Christian experience:

William J. Strong, Carolyn Strong, Elijah S. Town, Hannah E. Town, John Gregg, Thompson Paxton, Cynthia Paxton, Maria Paxton, Margaret Paxton, Thomas N. Paxton, Elizabeth Maxwell (married daughter of Mr. Paxton), John Sawyer and Elvira Sawyer. William J. Strong and Elijah S. Town were elected ruling elders. Sabbath, August 9th, after a sermon and short intermission, the elders elect were set apart to the office by ordination of E.S. Town, and installation of William J. Strong over this church. The church was then declared to be duly organized with the name of 'Big and Little Woods.' Thus a Christian church was organized and families, until recently strangers, were united in Christian fellowship and friendly sympathy to last through life."

From 1835 to 1840, the church had no house of worship and no regular, fulltime minister. The elders, however, seem to have been faithful in their work, and by August, 1840 the membership totalled 29. During that same period, considerable development had taken place in Batavia, and a dam and bridge had been built there. Accordingly, the members decided, in a meeting at the house of Sylvanus Town, to build a church at the river, near the bridge, in the village of Batavia. The plans appear in the subscription paper:

"We, whose names are hereunto annexed, do hereby agree to pay to Elijah Town, Sylvanus Town and Joel



McKee, trustees of the Presbyterian Church and Society of the Big Woods, the sums set opposite our names for the purpose of erecting a house of worship for said society, to be located on the east side of the highway (now Batavia Avenue), a few rods north of Dr. Town's office, said house to be twenty-four by thirty-two feet. This subscription paper payable one month from date, Batavia, Illinois, October 7, 1840."

The sums subscribed, aggregating \$401, ranged from two dollars to seventy-five dollars. Although the amounts may seem small today, those subscribing were mostly living in log cabins, with little furniture and only a few hard-earned dollars.

Some eighteen months after the decision to move and twelve months after the dedication of the new church in Batavia, the Paxton family, along with several others, were dismissed to start a new church in the Big Woods. This latter church is Big Woods Congregation Church, which stands today on Eola Road, just south of Butterfield Road. During this same period, five other members were dismissed to start a new church in Aurora.

On March 7, 1843, the Society was

Continued on p. 5

News and More- Small but Important

Our Society, and Batavia in general, recently lost the day-to-day presence of one of our best loved members, Miriam Havighurst Johnson, who has moved to Evanston to live with her niece. Batavia's long-time librarian, its Citizen of the Year in 1966, and a Life Member of the Society, Miriam regularly attended all Society events and was a faithful volunteer at the Depot Museum up to the time of her move. We know she would welcome hearing from friends at 9310 Hamlin Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60203

As you have undoubtedly noticed, the Society uses a non-profit bulk mail permit in sending out meeting notices and newsletters. New requirements for sorting and labeling bulk mail are so complicated that the person in charge of that area at the Batavia Post Office wrote to those with permits: "To be honest with you, you will need to become a professional bulk mailer or take your mailings to a professional bulk mailer." He gave the names of three in our area, and we contacted the one in Batavia, Compulist Mailers at 879-5949. JoAnn Stevens, who operates Compulist, generously offered to handle our mailings at no charge other than postage. Only someone who has worked on the mailings in the past, even before the recent changes, can appreciate the effort involved. As a small token of our appreciation of JoAnn's contribution, we have extended her a family membership.

We regret to report that we have lost, through death, two long-time members, Helen Johnson (a member since 1961) and Esther Sloggett (a member since 1960). Our deepest sympathy goes to their families.

Does your address label have a yellow dot? If so, it means that, according to our records, you have not yet paid dues for 1996. We would appreciate your current support of our growing program.

Didn't you enjoy Helen Anderson's and Elliott Lundberg's reminiscences in this issue? Surely you have some of your own to share with our readers. They can be long or short; we can even start a "Letters to the Editors" column if you want to follow up on someone else's story that we have printed. Send whatever you have to Bill Hall, 345 N. Batavia Avenue, or call him at 879-2033.

In summarizing the accomplishments of the late Arthur Swanson in the last

issue, we stated that he was mayor "during the years in which the groundwork was laid for what is today our Government Center and the River Walk." Jim Hanson, who was then an alderman, has written us that this gave Art Swanson the wrong -- and possibly too little -- credit. As Jim informed us, "The property on which the Government Center, Riverain and the River Walk are located was purchased ... during Bob Brown's first term as Mayor, four years after Art left office.

"Among Art's achievements while Mayor one could list the development of the shopping plaza (Walgreen's, etc.); redevelopment and filling in of the area

now occupied by Pinnacle Bank, Harris Bank, McDonald's and the Batavia Professional Office Bldg.; annexation of the large industrial area along Fabyan and Kirk Roads; and being instrumental along with Phil Elfstrom in securing the financial support of a number of businessmen to save what is now the Depot Museum for Batavia when it was about to be sold and moved out of town."

A historical society should be accurate, and we are glad to clarify Art Swanson's accomplishments -- and, at the same time, to give Bob Brown his due.

Museum Doings by Carla Hill, Director

The museum has had a very successful summer. Attendance has been very high, and we saw a great number of families who were participating in the Museum Passport program. This is a very successful program which is sponsored by the Kane DUPage Regional Museum Association, and it continues to grow each year. We have over 45 museums and historical sites participating this year.

The museum now has a computer on site which will help us with the preparation of label text and information for the various displays. We are making many changes upstairs and will be working throughout the fall and winter to get things re-organized.

Our new sales items have been a great success. I have also purchased a few copies of the book, "Great American Railroad Stations". The Depot is among the stations listed in the book.

On Monday, August 5, Georgene Kauth and Marilyn Robinson hosted a group of residents from the Holmstad at the museum. This was a very successful open house and gave us some new members. Georgene has already mentioned the possibility of scheduling another tour for those who were unable to get on the bus. The painting is continuing at the museum and many of you have probably noticed the new walls that were being constructed on the lower level of the building. This project will be followed by some new landscaping which will give the museum and the area a very fresh new look.

I am currently scheduling third grades from the Batavia schools, and we have recently completed a new exhibit entitled "A Peek At The Past", the history of the early Batavia School system and the one

room schools.

This year's Christmas ornament, which each of the museum volunteers receives at the Christmas Party, will feature the Congregational Church. The additional ornaments will go on sale November 1.

The museum volunteer fall bus trip will take place in October and we will be sending out the announcements in the next few weeks.

Anyone interested in becoming a museum volunteer, can contact either myself at 879-5235 or Kathy Fairbairn at 4069041. Come join your friends -- it's fun!

Historic Records Project Needs Your Help

A Plea by Marilyn Robinson

Volunteers are still needed for the Kane County court records project at the Campana Building. We are making progress, but still have 85 boxes to sort (about 6-8 months of work.)

Here's the good news. The 85 boxes are from the 1880s and 90s and are very interesting. The bad news -- they are almost all handwritten and slow to sort.

Our summer crews have been sparse. With fall, it's hoped that all our regulars will be back on the job. New people are welcome. It takes only a few minutes to learn how to do the work.

We work every Thursday (except holidays) on the third floor of the Campana Building. It's a long climb, but a good aerobic workout. Batavia's shift is from 12:30-3:30 p.m. However, you'd be welcome at the 8:30-12:30 shift as well.

This has been a long chore for all the Kane County historical societies but well

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The Batavia Historian

*Insert for Society Members Reports
of Secretary and Treasurer*

Highlights of Meetings· Held Since Last
Reported in Newsletter

Submitted by Francine Popeck, Secretary

HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S 1996 SPRING MEETING

A short business meeting was held prior to the start of the Spring, 1996 Program. Business in brief on May 19th, 1996:

- Minutes of 12/3/95 Annual Meeting were approved;
- Auditor's Report was accepted;
- Announcement of IL State Historical Society Award to Batavia Historical Society for Windmill Preservation Project;
- Bill Hall commended for Newsletter coordination;
- Current Board of Directors announced and introduced (listed in previous publication).

With an eye to the then much anticipated Windmillers Trade Fair (held in Batavia June 12th through 15th), Marilyn Robinson provided a well-researched historical look at Batavia's rich windmill history. Batavia can boast that it was home to at least 6 windmill manufacturing companies. Danforth, Mole, and Nichols were the least reknowned owners of windmill firms, although Nichols was linked with the Elgin Windmill Company after he moved from Batavia. Batavia's world recognized windmill companies were the Challenge Co., the Appleton Manufacturing Co., and the U.S. Wind Engine & Pump Co.

Some famous Batavia family names were involved in the windmill business. In the 1850's, the U.S. Wind Engine & Pump Co. was founded by John Burnham and Daniel Halladay in Connecticut. Van Nortwick, then President of the CB & Q Railroad, convinced them to move their enterprise closer to where the growth market was for windmills--newly homesteaded farms and railroad expansion. Thus the start of the windmill industry in Batavia in 1854. After the Challenge Co., begun in 1857, was reorganized after a fire in 1872, James Mair, Thomas Snow and Mary Snow bought the company. The Appleton Mfg. Co., founded in 1872 in its namesake Wisconsin town, was purchased by Van Nortwick in 1883. Did you know that he built his own factory town near Geneva and called it Van Nortwick? He then moved to Batavia's Western Paper Bag Co. building and later built the Appleton factory which now houses Batavia's City Administration and Police Department.

Society members Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kline donated a Challenge Co. pump to the Society. Mr. Kline, a former employee of the Challenge Co., also generously shared his memories of his employment there for the many interested Windmillers Trade Fair attendees who toured the Challenge and U.S. Wind Engine & Pump buildings and listened to the stories told by former employees of the bygone Batavia windmill manufacturing days.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 6/10/96 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Copies of the 5/31/96 financial statement were distributed.

Motion was approved that Historical Society, one of the sponsors of the Windmillers Trade Fair, would contribute \$1,000.00 toward the expenses of the event.

President Bob Popeck requested Society fund a professional videotape of the Windmillers Trade Fair activities. Citing the historical value of this footage to the Society's archives, the request was approved for raw footage versus an edited version.

BATAVIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Unaudited Results for Eleven Months Ended August 31, 1996
 Preliminary and Tentative

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Special Fund</u>
<u>Receipts:</u>		
Interest	\$7,900.44	\$0.00
Dues	2,245.00	0.00
Donations-		
George and Erdene Peck	0.00	100.00
Ruble Family	0.00	100.00
Arthur W. Swanson Family	0.00	5,000.00
Arlene Nick Family	0.00	1,200.00
Kent Shodeen	0.00	1,000.00
Various under \$100 each	744.25	0.00
Memorial -		
Martha May Lundberg	0.00	330.00
Violet Maulding Porter	0.00	50.00
Gazebo print sales	560.00	0.00
Book sales	292.90	0.00
Museum sales	268.05	0.00
Total receipts	<u>\$12,010.64</u>	<u>\$7,780.00</u>
 <u>Disbursements:</u>		
Security system	\$1,071.48	\$0.00 0.00
Museum insurance	428.00	0.00
Newsletter Postage	1,452.85	0.00
Meeting expense	421.01	0.00
Office supplies	438.45	0.00
Books for resale	96.13	0.00
Cost of prints sold	490.00	0.00
Windmillers Trade Fair support	248.50	0.00
Dues, fees, and miscellaneous	293.35	0.00
Museum sign	656.41	2,120.00
Restoration of Van Nortwick music box	0.00	1,500.00
Videotape of Wind millers trade Fair	0.00	2,600.00
Windmills and related costs	0.00	<u>6,001.40</u>
	.QJLQ.	
Total disbursements	<u>\$5,596.18</u>	<u>\$12,221.40</u>
Increase (decrease) in fund balances	<u>\$6,414.46</u>	<u>-\$4,441.40</u>

BATAVIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 Unaudited Financial Position as of August 31, 1996
 Preliminary and Tentative

Assets:

Checking account		\$4,216.92
Money Fund		9,038.84
Certificates of deposit-		
5.20% due December 21, 1996		20,728.75
5.10% due January 19, 1997		20,168.11
4.78% due February 2, 1997		19,163.93
5.15% due August 13, 1997		20,512.49
5.27% due December 21, 1997		8,293.02
6.50% due February 7, 1998		19,402.56
6.00% due January 25, 1996		9,804.53
Vanguard Fund		31,746.66
Gazebo prints for resale		<u>2,840.00</u>
 Total assets		 <u>\$165,915.81</u>

Fund Balances:

General-

October 1, 1995	\$39,061.42	
Increase for eight months	<u>6,414.46</u>	
March 31, 1996		\$45,475.88

Special projects-

October 1, 1995	\$124,881.33	
Decrease for six months	<u>-4,441.40</u>	
March 31, 1996		<u>120,439.93</u>

Total fund balances \$165,915.81

'the preceding financial statements have been prepared on the cash basis. They are subject to adjustment upon review by the Board of Directors and the audit of the annual financial statements.

The Special Project Fund consists of all bequests and memorial donations, single donations in the amount of \$100 or more, and those donations specifically designated for said Fund. Expenditures from this- Fund shall be for non-recurring expenses related to 'projects not customarily part of the operating expenses of the Society and must be approved by seven votes of the Board of Directors or by 75% of the voting members present at a called meeting of the Society.

William D. Hall
 Treasurer

Congregational Church

Continued from p. 3

formally organized under the name of the First Presbyterian Church and Society of Batavia, but the new name was to enjoy a very short life. Issues that would ultimately lead to the Civil War and the abolition of slavery were coming to the front. With churches in the South as well as the North, the Presbyterian church did not take an unequivocal stand on what, to those members of a largely New England origin, was a pressing question. On September 2, 1843, the Batavia church issued a strong statement outlining its position, with copies to various newspapers, including those in New York. In the same year, the membership voted to withdraw from the Ottawa Presbytery (Which was sympathetic to the Batavia views) and to seek fellowship with the Fox Valley Union of Congregational Churches.

Although the church continued to grow during the remainder of the 1840s, it had difficulty recruiting and retaining ministers. A story told by Rev. G.S.F. Savage of St. Charles that John Gustafson quoted in "A Supplementary Historical Statement" at the time of the church's Centennial makes this abundantly clear:

"(The Batavia church members) were greatly divided on the question of old school and new school, pro-slavery and anti-slavery, old mission and new mission boards and could not agree in calling a pastor. To solve the

Historic Records

Continued from p. 4

worth it to preserve and index these materials for future researchers. Every town has learned some interesting history that was buried before we began. We've learned the history of the short-lived "Batavia Tribune" and the exact birth of the town's water system -- a date that can't be gleaned from governmental records.

Our regular summer volunteers have been Kathy Fairbairn, Bill Hall, Elliott Lundberg, and myself. A non-society member, Marian Heiser of Batavia, is present every week. We've met some great people from other societies and learned a lot of Kane County history.

If you can help on a Thursday, even ...AUS' once in a while or for only part of a shift, we need you. Hope to see you one Thursday soon. Dress casual.

difficulty they subscribed a \$400 salary and sent to Andover Theological Seminary agreeing to accept any man the professors should send them, without a question as to his personal beliefs. The man they selected came, with his recently wedded bride, spent one Sabbath with the church, and the next Tuesday was in Chicago with his wife and goods on his way back to Boston."

By about 1850, however, the church had grown enough. to be able to attract and support full-time ministers. Indeed it prospered enough that, by 1855-6, it needed and was able to erect the present church west of Batavia Avenue, between Wilson and First, that is familiar to all Batavians. The lot was purchased for \$960, and bids were solicited for construction. When the bids were opened, the lowest one exceeded the estimate by \$2,000; however, the membership voted to proceed, lowering the height of the basement by one foot and deferring completion of the basement until a later time.

Within a few months, the trustees were instructed to procure specifications and proceed with the construction

tion of a spire if enough money could be raised. Evidently funds were forthcoming, and the church had a beautiful white steeple, similar to those gracing New England churches, until 1877 when a high wind toppled it onto the Rockwell house to the south. A blind Rockwell child, who had been playing the piano just where the spire fell, only moments before the crash, escaped unharmed. The tower was rebuilt without a steeple.

The entire church, with appointments, cost \$13,401.52. It was dedicated on September 1, 1856.

A History of the Congregational Church of Batavia, Illinois, 1835-1985 includes names and pictures of numerous persons who, over the years, played important parts in Batavia's history. Today we find their familiar names on buildings and streets throughout our city. A 1908 picture of particular interest showed nine church members, dressed in Grand Army of the Republic uniforms, who were among the survivors of the twenty-five from the congregation who had served in the Civil War. Sixteen members of the Sunday School had enlisted in one company.

Continued on p. 6

Answer to question on page 1

This building is on Thresher Square, 208 S. Third, Minneapolis, MN. Like the Challenge Company in Elliott Lundberg's article in this issue, the Newton Wagon Company maintained an office in Minneapolis to serve the vast farming area northwest of us. As shown in the accompanying picture, provided by Bob Popeck, the building remains in excellent condition.



At the time of the Centennial, John Gustafson wrote:

"The record of this century of Christian service is one of men and women who have been devoted and loyal to the church and her Master. On January 27, 1929, a memorial service was held for Miss Alice M. Williams organist for sixty-three years and Miss Amelia E Brown clerk for forty-seven years. Former pastors, the Reverends Ira D. Stone, J.M. Hulbert and John EC. Green were present and gave tributes. Messages were read from the Reverends T.W. Harwood and T.M. Higginbotham."

"To the names of these and other devoted women may be added those of Nelson Wolcott, Judge Samuel D. Lockwood, E.S. Bradley, I.S. Stephens, J.G. Brown, N.S. Young, L.A. Des Rosier, Wm. J. Hollister, E.C. Bradley, Wm. Coffin, S.W. Fowler, Joseph Felver and Joel McKee who so faithfully served the church in the last half of the century."

John Gustafson modestly neglected to include mention of his family, members of which had faithfully served the

church and the community since 1888 when Alice and Peter Gustafson moved to Batavia from Big Rock.

In 1963, the church purchased for \$35,000 land north of the existing building for an addition consisting of classrooms, a general purpose meeting room, a chapel, church office and pastor's study. Chairman of the Capital Funds Campaign, which secured pledges for half of the cost, was Joseph Burnham. It was an exciting day for the church's 344 members when the cornerstone, enclosing the fingerprints of 138 church school members, was laid.

The next major change in the church's appearance came in 1974 when a crowd of several hundred people gathered to watch the lifting by crane and placement on the tower of the new spire, similar to the one toppled by the 1877 wind. It is the tallest point in Batavia and can be seen for miles, rising as a symbol of faith in the beautiful Fox Valley.



Pow Wow Marks Start of Fall

by Patricia Will
Vice President - Program Chairman

Our annual fall meeting was held on Sunday, Sept. 15th in the Bartholomew Room at the Batavia Civic Center.

As part of the entertainment portion of the meeting, an oral history on Capt. C.B. Dodson and Col. Lyon was given. The presentation centered on their relationships with the Native American Indians in and around Batavia.

The Fox Valley Order of the Arrow Indian Dancers, headed by Norb Kurlek, then performed dances of the Northern Plains Indians and held a mock pow-wow. The dancers were all members of local Boy Scouts of America troops who have a special interest in Native American history. All of the performers were dressed in authentic costume.

All members and guests were then invited to stay for refreshments. The meeting was sure a great way to end a summer and to look forward to the cool, crisp days of autumn.

Students Undertake World War II Project

Through a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education, the American Studies class at Batavia High School is conducting a research project entitled The Effects of World War II on Batavia.

Each student in the class under the direction of English Instructor, Robert Kummer, and John Hamilton-Dryden, History Instructor, will be conducting a project relating to the topic. Some of the students plan to interview veterans of the war, and some will be interviewing persons on the home front. Each will supplement their interviews with written accounts of war time activities.

There are 60 students in the class, and they will need to do a complete study of the community in order not to have duplicate reports. You may be asked for your memories of the war

Help with the Revision of *Historic Batavia*

Our Society's book, *Historic Batavia*, by John Gustafson and Jeffery Schielke' is out of print. The Board has commissioned Marilyn Robinson to bring it up to date before it is reprinted.

Marilyn has completed reading the local newspapers for the years 1980-1996. Still there are undoubtedly items that should be included in the book that might not have been reported in the press.

If you know of someone whose hometown is or was Batavia and whose achievements were significant but accomplished away from here, we should hear about them.

Some Batavia graduates have achieved fame in the arts, music, television, movies, literature, sports, military, or political arenas. We'd like to honor them in the chronicle of our history.

All topics of historical significance need to be recorded -- business openings, closings of long-time firms, passing of civic leaders, significant anniversaries of organizations, etc.

Please help the Society by writing a short, but detailed account of anything you feel should be included. There is no guarantee that everything received will be able to be used -- space is a consideration -- but you can help see to it that nothing noteworthy is inadvertently omitted.

Please send items to Marilyn Robinson, 1418 Clybourne Street, Batavia.

years by a young person who knows you. The students may present their results as a term paper or a video or audio presentation.

When the project is done in mid-December, the stories will be placed on an Illinois history web site on the Internet. Other schools will conduct similar studies in their area, which combined with ours will provide a state-wide record of Illinois during the war years.

If the project is successful, a different time period or subject will be covered in future years.

Marilyn Robinson is the historical research consultant for the project. Jim Nies of the high school is the technology consultant.

It is encouraging to see high SCHOOL students becoming interested in local history.

Christmas on the Farm

by Helen Bartelt Anderson

Earlier issues of *The Batavia Historian* carried parts of Helen Anderson's "I Remember Holidays on the Farm." The final installment covers Christmas at the George and Della Bartelt family farm on Warrenville Road in Batavia Township.

About the middle of December we began thinking and dreaming about Christmas. We colored and cut out Christmas trees, stars and bells to decorate our schoolroom. We even had red and green chalk to draw designs like holly on the blackboards. We had a program on an evening before Christmas so that parents and

mas Eve it was oyster stew, with homecanned fruit and cookies. The cookies could have been soft molasses or sugar cookies, which Mama had baked. Sometimes she would send to Sears for this big five pound box of assorted cookies. They would come in a flat cardboard box, each kind packed in a neat row. There were Mary Janes with frosting, plain ginger cookies, oatmeal with raisins, sugar cookies and best of all, a row of round cookies with a mound of marshmallow topping, covered with coconut. Some were pink and some white. Chocolate chips were unheard of.

I believe we always had a Christmas tree, with ornaments and icicles

ceived a little steam engine that really ran. It was powered by a small alcohol burning lamp. Another year a hired man made a wooden barn for Roger. From that time on our play time was mostly spent in making cardboard horses, cows and pigs. Never mind that I wanted to play with my doll or my butterfly transfer pictures. Roger made harnesses of string for his horses. He made stanchions and feeding troughs of cardboard.

One year I found under the tree a beautiful, large doll with a pink dress and bonnet. She was sitting in a buggy, waiting for me to pick her up. Years later I learned that my Sadie was bought by Mama's cousin, Sadie, and dressed by another cousin, Oma. At the time Santa got credit for all these gifts. The same year that I received my Sadie, Roger got a team of wooden, dapple-grey horses with bright red harnesses. Roger told me a short time ago that Papa had made these little harnesses of red leather.

One year Roger and I both had the measles. We spent Christmas Day in bed with no lights and all the shades pulled. It was believed that light would cause blindness to anyone with the measles. We were both too sick to play with our new toys, anyway. I do not remember how many days we had to spend in that hot, dark room.

Another year Santa couldn't get to our house on Christmas Eve, but after Papa came in from milking Christmas morning, we all ran into the parlor to see if Santa had been there during the night. There were real candles on the tree which Mama and Papa carefully lit. I will never forget that sight, although I was very young.

For several years after that we did not have lights on our trees. Eventually, electricity came to the country.

Our lives and our celebrations were simple and fun. We learned and have never forgotten that people do not need a lot of things to make them happy.



families could come. Our school did not have electricity. Parents brought kerosene lamps to light the room. Mrs. Perrow gave us each a little decorated box of candy that had handles for carrying.

One of the department stores in Aurora (either Sencenbaugh's or Wade, Leitz) had a long shelf on their south wall where each year an animated Santa Claus sat in his sleigh, which was pulled by several reindeer. Santa sat bOWing and waving to everyone amid the sounds of tinkling sleigh bells attached to the reindeers' harnesses ... Pure magic!

Kinne & Jeffery's was another magic place that we visited. There were so many beautiful toys -- dolls and buggies, firetrucks and trains, puzzles and games! If I remember 'ight, the toys were on the third floor.

Christmas Eve at home had its share of magic, too. As always, certain foods stand out in my memories. On Christ-

hanging down. In our home there was a front room and a parlor. The parlor was a much smaller room. It was in this room that each year a beautiful Christmas tree with gifts underneath came into being. Roger and I were not allowed to enter the parlor the last few days before Christmas. Mama said Santa Claus might be peeking in the windows and he wouldn't like it if he saw us. We tried awfully hard to be good.

On Christmas Eve, while we still sat at the supper table Papa may have said, "Mama, did you hear a noise, like a bell or something?" Mama may have answered, "I thought I heard something, too." With that Mama would jump up from the table and run into the parlor, calling out, "He's been here." Then, a mad scramble for the parlor.

Gifts were few in number. They were unwrapped and looked wonderful to us. One special year, Roger re-



