
Linden HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VETERANS MEMORIAL ESTABLISHED IN LINDEN

Local residents and travelers on highway 39 in downtown Linden have enjoyed the sight of a memorial established over the last few years to honor all who served in the military.

The idea for the Veterans memorial started with the late Stan Griffiths. Stan and his wife Sue toured area towns to view how other communities honored their veterans. Stan grew up in Linden, attended Linden grade school and Iowa-Grant high school. He served 20 years in the U.S. Air Force and was active in the

Linden community upon his return from the service.



Street side view of the memorial with the Linden Community Building in the background.

Stan was the moving force in getting the memorial started and completed, he found the statues in Galena and took orders for bricks with the names of veterans and area residents. Each branch of the military is represented with a statue and service flag. The location on Main Street in front of the Community building and right across the street from the American Legion seems most appropriate.

Stan passed away unexpectedly in September 2016. After his death, Linden Legion member Rick Shaw discussed with other members of local American Legion Post 493 to have a stone placed in the memorial to finish the project. Rick worked with the Dodgeville Monument Company to design a beautiful marker now situated in the center of the memorial. The front of the marker has the American flag with the wording:

“Dedicated to those who serve.” The five branches of the military are represented underneath. The back side of the monument reads, “In Memory of Stan Griffiths.”

Bricks with the names of family members are available for purchase and are not limited to veterans. Two sizes of bricks are available. A small brick for \$50 is 4x8 and can have three lines of lettering with 16 letters and spaces per line. A large brick for \$100 is 8x8 with six lines of lettering at 16 letters and spaces per line. Forms to purchase a brick are available from Stan Cutler or any Linden American Legion member.

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL, CONTINUED



Partial view of bricks with names of Linden area residents and veterans. Photo courtesy of Stan Cutler.



This marker is a fitting tribute to the memorial project started by Stan Griffiths. Photo courtesy of Stan Cutler.

BLOOMFIELD, A LINDEN TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY

If I told people that I grew up in Bloomfield I would expect them to respond, "You grew up in a nursing home!?" No, the community of Bloomfield was a Linden township neighborhood long before a nursing home took the same name.

In 1860 the county purchased 160 acres from Peter Temby in Linden township and established a county poor farm and later an asylum building was added to the grounds for the mentally ill. Later the property evolved into only a nursing home with the farmland rented out. In 1975 the nursing facility was known as the Iowa County home, this name, however, was perceived to have a stigma dating back to the historic origins. The search was on for a new name and Bloomfield Manor was suggested.

This proposed name did not sit well with those living in the Bloomfield community at the time. There were letters to the editors of the local newspapers pleading the case to call the nursing home anything but Bloomfield.

In August 1975 a neighborhood Women's organization - the Bloomfield Merry Mixer Club sent a letter to Richard Scullion, Chairman of the Iowa County Board which strongly voiced opposition to the use of Bloomfield for the nursing home name.



The Bloomfield Church was a frame structure built by William Jewell. It was torn down around 1940 and some of the lumber was used to build a new house in Cobb.

The letter stated in part, "Bloomfield Manor was suggested as a suitable name and this letter is written to enlighten you that the location of the present Iowa County home is not in the Bloomfield community. Years ago the School Districts went by numbers and this school district was known as District No. 4, and the community went by the name "Bloomfield" but the boundary lines of the school district did not include the legal description of the land upon which the Iowa County home is situated. From a geographic standpoint the communities of Pine Grove on the North, Laxey on the West, Punkin Center, or Sunny Slope, would have a closer relationship than Bloomfield."

The letter written by club Secretary Lavon (Pellow) McMahon, suggested choosing a name that depicted the surrounding landscape such as Hilltop Haven.

The letter to the Iowa County board closed with, "The purpose of this letter is to fully inform you that our club members, individually, and as a group, do not wish to have the name 'Bloomfield' appear in the name because this is a County-wide place of residence and does not apply to any one City, Town, Village, or Community. It is under the jurisdiction of the Iowa County Board and, therefore, should not bear a name indicating otherwise."

BLOOMFIELD, CONTINUED

Local government in 1975 ignored the community opposition and adopted Bloomfield Manor which has since morphed into Bloomfield Healthcare & Rehabilitation Center.

Bloomfield identity was also a bit confusing to outsiders in the 19th and early 20th centuries for a different reason. It all started with an influx of Manx immigrants from the Isle of Man who bought up property in the Bloomfield area, built a church and named it Laxey after their home town across the sea. The Laxey Primitive Methodist Church was constructed in the mid 1850's and less than a mile away on County Highway Q the Bloomfield Methodist Episcopal Church was built at about the same time. While there was a School district boundary for the one-room country school, neighbors within District #4 would identify themselves as being from either Laxey or Bloomfield based on their religious and ethnic backgrounds. The two churches never competed against one other but instead cooperated with each other which was best illustrated when one church had a fund-raising dinner or picnic the entire neighborhood of Bloomfield pitched in and helped out.

The physical landmarks of Bloomfield were the Laxey P.M. Church on County Highway B; the Bloomfield Church on Highway Q, the Bloomfield School on Highway Q and the cheese factory near the corner of Highways B & Q. Highway B between Sunny Slope Road and Highway Q was originally known as Laxey Lane, just up the road from the Laxey cemetery today off of County B is Bloomfield Road.

Bloomfield (or if you prefer - Laxey) had close ties with the village of Linden and numerous newspaper articles tell of exchanges between the Linden Churches and the two Bloomfield Churches. There was also traffic back and forth between young people to attend dances, and strike up romantic relationships. My own Great-Grandfather Nicholas Jewell of Bloomfield married Rebecca Jolliffe from the village of Linden and his brother married Rebecca's sister.

Bloomfield and Laxey had a long tradition of celebrating Christmas in the two churches, after the churches closed circa 1940, the Bloomfield school held an annual Christmas program. Some of us younger students would get stage fright when the program would start and the school could not have been more packed with parents and family. It was, of course, a sympathetic audience with broad smiles on everyone's face, thunderous applause and laughter. At the end of the program each student received a paper bag with an apple, nuts and candy in it which was much appreciated by us kids.

A particularly interesting Bloomfield Christmas occurred in 1882, revealed by two correspondents to the Mineral Point newspaper, *The Iowa County Democrat*. Unfortunately, the identities of both writers were revealed only to the editor of the *Democrat*. The first correspondent wrote, "The people of our community are busy with the Christmas preparations. Everybody wears a happy smile but is still too busy to stop and chat by the wayside."

The writer then reported, "Extensive preparations are being made by the Bloomfield church people for a Christmas tree. From the efforts of the young people, the evening's entertainment promises to be the event of the season in this region. The talents of our young people will be displayed in recitations, readings, dialogues and music; - indeed the music will form an important part in the program. An admission fee of ten cents will be charged for all persons over twelve years of age. The proceeds are to go towards buying a new organ. All are cordially invited."

BLOOMFIELD, CONTINUED

The second person from Bloomfield had a more enthusiastic view of the Christmas program, in the manner of an old time circus barker: "The M.E. Sunday School will hold in their church at Bloomfield one of the most magnificent Christmas trees ever witnessed in this part of the state. Everybody is looking forward to and preparing for a grand time; and those who miss it will lose one of the grandest sights between the Atlantic and the Mississippi."

The second writer also offered a friendly poke and jab at the nearby P.M. church, "Hurry up Laxey or you will be left in the rear."

The unusually warm December of 1882 allowed for the construction of two landmark barns in Bloomfield. Nicholas Thomas had a 40 foot wide by 80 foot long barn with stone foundation that towered over 50 feet high. Al Jewell restored this barn which was then struck by lightning in July, 2014 and burned to the ground.

At W.H. Penhallegon's an old-fashioned barn raising was held with 25 men constructing a 32x66 foot barn, which still stands today.

An article from the November 4, 1892 Dodgeville Chronicle, reported, "A load of 14 Lindenites went over to Laxey and took with them an ample supply of refreshments to last them till the big sun rose at 6 in the morning, but their journey forth and back was hard, for some had to walk up hill, while others were afraid to ride down hill." This hill might have been the Laxey hill on County B which was much steeper with a narrow bridge at the bottom and all gravel when I was much younger.

The first mail service was provided by the Mineral Point Post Office in 1903 when civil war veteran John Bishop delivered the mail. Sadly just two years later he died in Bloomfield when he suffered a heart attack on the mail route. Starting around 1907 Bloomfield had its own telephone exchange to make further contact with the outside world. The telephone exchange connected with the Mineral Point exchange on the South end and Dodgeville on the North end. A total of 24 farm families had telephones on the Bloomfield exchange in 1907. In the 1920's cars and trucks became common replacements for the horse, by 1940 both churches had closed. The school continued until the spring of 1962 and neighborhood children were bussed to either Mineral Point or Dodgeville schools.

LINDEN NEWSPAPERS ON MICRO FILM IN ARCHIVES

The Linden Historical Society now has a complete run on microfilm of all the newspapers that were published in Linden. These are available to view by appointment, or can be loaned to view at area libraries with a returnable deposit fee on each roll. For more information call Jim Jewell at 608-623-2772. Unfortunately the Linden newspapers were short lived, *The Southwest Wisconsin*, edited by J.W. Taylor survived the longest.

Micro Film Titles in Archives

Conservative, April 22, 1909 - Feb 9, 1911

Linden Reporter, Feb 16, 1911 - Dec 28, 1911

Southwest Wisconsin, Feb 21, 1894 - Oct 11, 1907

WATERWORKS AND TOWER A MAJOR CONTROVERSY

Turning on the tap for water is like flipping a light switch in our homes today - we take it for granted. In the village of Linden in 1907 the establishment of a water works system was a big debate that divided the community, it didn't come easy. At that time, the major reason for village well and water mains was fire protection, Linden had survived past fires but the town was susceptible to a major calamity with mostly frame buildings throughout the community. The only means of protection was a bucket brigade using shallow wells not always close to the conflagration. A secondary reason for the village to get involved was pure, safe drinking water. Not everyone in the village was on board for this new infrastructure. Before 1907 a half dozen village residents would typically go together and have a neighborhood well drilled with the group using and paying for the well. The prospect of having to pay higher property taxes for water they had already bought and paid for didn't set well with some people.

The village board decided to place a referendum on the spring election ballot to let the people choose yes or nay to an \$8,000 bond issue to drill a village well, construct a water tower, and install mains and hydrants. The board deemed this a conservative start since only six hydrants were to be installed, mostly within the downtown area, and the water mains would be expanded to cover all the village in years to come rather than all at once.

The 1907 bond issue called for a 40,000 gallon tank mounted on a steel frame 80 feet high. The top of the tower to be than 100 feet high. Water would be pumped by a 20 horsepower gasoline engine. It was estimated that it would be possible to throw a strong stream of water to the top of the belfry of the Methodist Church. Along with the new well, the board voted to purchase 700 feet of two and a half inch hose with a horse drawn cart for the local fire department.

When the referendum votes were counted the tally was 83 for bonds and 80 against. However objections were raised that the vote was not legal due to failure to give proper notice on the question. Now the project was delayed until a second referendum could be held.

The follow up referendum which was legal, passed by a majority of ten votes. Joseph Goldsworthy wrote in *The Dodgeville Chronicle*, " When a fire happens to break out some day after the works are put in all the minority voters will be glad they were beaten in the election. It doesn't take long for a fire to burn up \$8,000 worth of property if you have no means of putting it out."

In October both the well drilling and water mains were started. Construction of the water tower began in December. Drilling of the well proved to be the most problematic. In the fall of 1907 the drillers were plagued by equipment breakdowns and in November at a depth of 216 feet the drill became stuck. Eventually another drilling outfit who had recently completed the Dodgeville municipal well, came in to finish the job.



This may have been the original steel water tower constructed in 1907 and served the community until 1989 near the corner of Mary & Elizabeth streets

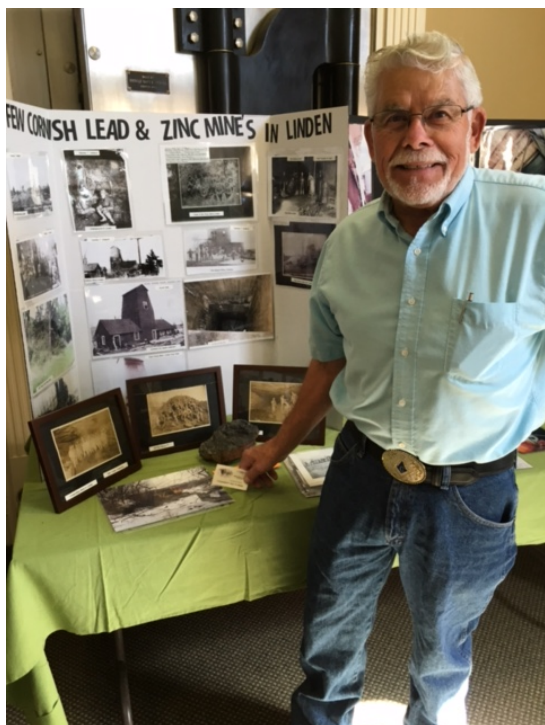
WATERWORKS, CONTINUED

Finally in the middle of May 1908 at a depth of 578 feet water was pumped for the first time into the tank at the top of the tower. The old water tower at the corner of Elizabeth and Main streets was a village landmark for many years, it was removed in 1989. In contrast today Linden has approximately 85 hydrants, the current tower is 125 feet high with a capacity of 125,000 gallons.

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Above: Photo taken around 1945 in front of the house of Joseph Frank Rule on Galena street looking west. Linden and the nation were war weary, editor feels that Norman Rockwell could have made a fine painting from this four generation family snapshot with the dog showing his approval.



Left to right: Joseph Rule, Zona Rule Miller and Orville Richard Rule. The young boy was Richard Miller, who grew up to join the Navy, worked construction and started Miller excavating. Sadly he died at the age of 36 in a car accident in 1978.

Joseph Frank Rule was a farmer. His wife Nina (Wicks) Rule owned and operated the Richards & Rule variety store with her sister Sophia Richards on the corner of Church and Main street. Zona Ardelle Rule Miller was a housewife, farmed with husband Charles and worked at Burgess battery in Mineral Point. Orville mined here, moved to Milwaukee for a factory job and returned to Linden in 1934 to farm.

Left: Linden Historical Society member Stan Cutler made a fine display of Linden mines at the pop-up museum exhibit during the Cornish festival in Mineral Point, held the last weekend of September.

******PHOTO AND DOCUMENT DONATIONS ALWAYS APPRECIATED******

If you have any photos or documents on Linden area history we would love to make a copy for our archives. Photos and documents can be scanned and returned to you if desired. Contact either the President or Vice-President listed below. Membership in the Linden Historical Society is \$10 per year, lifetime membership \$100. Make check payable to Linden Historical Society and send to Treasurer Robin Lindner.

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