

# *Linden*

# HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preserving the History of The Linden Wisconsin Area

## One hundred years ago: Party like It's 1915

For many years the village of Linden celebrated the 4th of July with a mega festival worthy of a much larger community. Some years Linden took two days—the 4th and 5th of July to commemorate Independence Day. In 1915 the Linden Business Men's Association chose Monday, July 5th to throw a big party.

Six committees of Linden business men took charge of the day from start to finish. The celebration started at 10:30 AM with a large parade led by area bands. After the parade people could grab a bite to eat at food stands around the village.

At 12:30 PM, the first of two baseball games were played and the winners received substantial “purse” money. Mineral Point, with a late rally, defeated Linden 3-0 and Highland won over Mifflin 11-7. All four teams were talented rivals and were strong drawing cards for a crowd estimated at just over 2,000.

A local newspaper, in advance publicity, explained how people came to Linden that year. “We learn that arrangements have been made to run special trains to bring the big crowds from Highland, Mineral Point and other towns on the M. P. & N. Railroad. Besides this, people will come by auto, buggies, wagons, busses, and on foot to be present on that day.”

There was never a dull moment for the 2,000 people in Linden as a long list of events and contests filled in the afternoon. Some of those contests seem a bit insensitive by today's standards, such as the “fattest man on the grounds” competition. First prize was a case of soda pop.

Another event was, “Prettiest baby under one year old”. The judge had to be very brave as every mother



Parade float from July, 1908 in Linden

must have thought their baby was the cutest. First prize winner was awarded a silver dollar from the Bank of Linden. Second prize was a pair of slippers courtesy of Captain Bennetts and third prize was a box of candy from Robert Stevens.

A boys pie eating contest would have been fun to watch. The first prize winner won a pocket knife, perhaps considered a weapon in 2015, second prize was a dozen oranges and third prize was a hair cut from the local barber, Curtis Preston.

If you had the largest family in attendance you went home with a sack of flour compliments of the Linden co-op. A bicycle race for boys under the age of 15, on the street attracted spectators. I hope no one wiped out or was injured. (continued on page two)

## **Party Like It's 1915** (from front)

First prize winner in the boys bicycle race went home with a dollar bill, second prize was a silver half dollar, both courtesy of Roy Poad. There were also bicycle races for adults on the street.

For the ladies, a shortest woman contest and ladies (over 15) foot race were held. Fourth prize in the foot race competition was an offer by Linden dentist, Dr. J. J. Ellsworth to extract one tooth.

A "tallest man on the grounds" contest saw the winner walk away with a roll of roofing paper from the Linden Lumber Company.

In contrast the winner of the shortest man in attendance won a necktie from I. Jacobs clothing store in Linden.

Teenager Harley Hicks had just purchased a peanut roaster and popcorn wagon in time for the celebration which, no doubt, proved popular. It was the first of several businesses he founded in his career as an entrepreneur.

Evening entertainment included music by the 30 member Dodgeville band and vocal selections by the renowned International Male quartet of Madison.

After an impressive fireworks display the Highland orchestra played music to dance by from 10:30 to midnight at the Opera house.

B. J. Bennett of the Mineral Point Tribune was one of 2,000 in attendance and he wrote, "There's ample room for doubt if anywhere in this land of the free and home of the brave can be found more patriotism to the square foot than in our neighboring town, Linden."

Bennett did, however, conclude his remarks on how he observed a bit of over indulgence. "With the shadows of night came the fireworks, then hours of revelry, some of which was overdone and had a tendency to mar the excellence of the celebration".

Notes: *Mineral Point Tribune*, issues of July 1, and July 8, 1915.

## **MEMBERSHIP IN LINDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

\$10 per year for either Single or family. Make check payable to Linden Historical Society and send to:

Jim Jewell, 2073 Sunny Slope Rd., Mineral Point, WI 53565.

## **IN MEMORY OF RUTH JUNGBLUTH**

One of the organizers of the original Linden Historical Society and keeper of all knowledge on the extended Rule family, Ruth Jungbluth passed away on Thursday, April 30, 2015.

Ruth married Melvin Rule in 1945 and they farmed in Linden township until his death in 1958. In 1960 Ruth married Willard Jungbluth and they also farmed. Willard preceded her in death on January 15, 2008. Ruth's daughter Lisa Springer is a member of the current board of directors of the Linden Historical Society.

Ruth was always eager to lend a helping hand to anyone who had a question on Linden area history. It is impossible to estimate the number of people she helped find a missing link in their family tree or a student searching for information on a local topic.

She was an expert on the Rules, whom we hope to follow up on in a printed format at some time in the future, based on her past research.

In the next newsletter will be a list of monetary donations made in her name to our society.

**\*\*DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER**

**SEPT. 15, 2015**

## 1854 STORE BILL FROM PIONEER LINDEN SHOP

I have in my possession a store bill from the Ansley Store in Linden for purchases starting in July 1854 and running through April of 1855. It documents a running tab for merchandise that my Great Grandfather, William Spargo, had purchased there.

The bill is hand written on blue parchment and is quite brittle at this point. Luckily my Grandma Spargo and my Dad (Al Spargo) were both savers or this bit of history would be long gone.

William Spargo had arrived from Cornwall in 1853 and secured a job in the mines. He saved enough money to bring his wife and three children from Cornwall in 1854. The first item on the bill was a one bedstead for \$10.00. I presume they were establishing their household at that time.

The store bill is noteworthy, not only for the prices paid for the items, but items that we would not buy today or even think about. Some of the items were: stove blacking and brush, school reader, box of matches, ½ cord of wood, and candles.

Other items that we might buy today and the prices listed are: sack of flour, \$3; broom, 50 cents; boy's boots, \$1.25; 3 dozen eggs, 25 cents; 1 lb. Raisins, 25 cents; and a jar of honey, 15 cents.

Does anyone know where the Ansley store was located and when it went out of business ? A picture would be neat. Submitted by David Spargo, Honolulu, Hawaii.

1854				
July 17	To	1 Bedstead		10 00
		Sugar <sup>50</sup>	Mixed Tea <sup>45</sup>	" 95
		1 lbs candles		" 35
		Soap <sup>50</sup>	Pepper <sup>10</sup>	" 60
		Salt <sup>10</sup>	Mustard <sup>10</sup>	" 20
		Loaf Sugar <sup>19</sup>	Raisins <sup>25</sup>	" 44
		Coffee <sup>25</sup>	Broom <sup>25</sup>	" 50 13 04
18	"	3 doz Eggs		" " " 25
20	"	Cod Fish		" " " 20
31	"	Tea <sup>19</sup>	Raisins <sup>25</sup>	Eggs <sup>25</sup> " " " 64
Aug 3	"	1 G. School Reader		" " " 75
5	"	1 Sack Flour		" " " 3 00
8	"	Crackers <sup>10</sup>	Rice <sup>10</sup>	Sugar <sup>25</sup> " " " 45
10	"	Sea		" " " 25

## ANSLEY STORE IN LINDEN PRE-CIVIL WAR

Thomas Sinclair Ansley operated the Ansley general store and lived in Linden until 1860. He was born in Canada, descended from Thomas Ansley who was one of the loyalists who fled to Canada at the end of the Revolutionary war in 1783.

Thomas and his first wife Rhoda had four children, however tragedy struck the family several times here. A son George died in 1853 at the age of five and later Rhoda died.

In 1860 T.S. Ansley moved to Mineral Point where several Ansley relatives were prominent and successful. There, Thomas married his cousin Elizabeth Ansley of New York. They had four children, none of whom made it to maturity. Thomas died in 1873 and was buried in Graceland cemetery in Mineral Point. Sharing the burial plot are two of their infant children as well as son George from the first marriage.

Information from Ansley file, Mineral Point Archives, Jim J.



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## GOLDEN AGE OF STOCK CAR RACING FEATURED AT ANNUAL MEETING

Hobby stock car racing was the lively discussion at the 2015 Linden Historical Society annual meeting on Sunday, June 14.

Area residents talked about how a stock car was built and modified; the willingness of stock car racers in the area to help one another; the risks and rewards of racing.

Clyde Hirsch was one of the real pioneers of Linden stock car racers as he raced on area tracks from circa 1950 to shortly before his death in 1982. The racing team of Dale Schultz and Melvin Anderson were well known in the decade of the 1970's and more recently Dale's grandson, Larry Dale Schultz won twenty or more races.

The late Don Wood is someone whose name always comes up in Linden racing. One story brought up at the meeting was when Don was racing at the Lancaster track, missed a curve, went airborne and through a frame building adjacent to the track. Don was not hurt and in fact drove the car back on the track. A stunt Evil Knievil would have been proud of. Others were mentioned as well, Linden could easily have its own Racing Hall of Fame.

Local tracks used by stock car racers of the past included Darlington, Lancaster, Richland Center, Prairie du Chien and Platteville.

Don Mullen of Mineral Point brought a DVD which showed old footage of stock car races at some of those

tracks. A segment on the DVD also had color film of the 1941 Iowa County fair. Don related many stories and names of Mineral Point area stock car racers.

The Linden stock cars are not running on a consistent basis anymore due to high costs of building and insuring a car but the memories and passion for the old iron is still strong.



**Accidents happened as part of the racing game, a coupe of Dale Schultz survived to race again.**



**Stock car racing in Linden was a community event. At far left is Robert Alton, seated in center is Roger Reddell with his car. At far right is a young Larry Schultz. Cut down coupes were typical of the earlier stock cars.**

Special Thanks to Randy Baker who asked local residents for photos and then had them enlarged for our program.