

Linden **HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Preserving the History of The Linden Wisconsin Area

Linden school spirit prevailed a century ago



View of the Linden High school in final stages of construction. Linden was proud of their new school in 1915, a century ago.

Ernie Cretney of Ridgeway was the contractor for the brick school building needed after the frame structure burned in 1913. In a note with the above picture from our archives it states that Mr. Cretney said the Linden school was one of the best buildings his firm ever built.

Cretney had labor troubles as the project was in the time frame of Linden's biggest mining boom. He hired several Polish workers away from local mines. They were hard workers but needed constant supervision because they were not used to construction work with few carpentry skills. The workers got drunk after their first paycheck and were hung over on Monday. Cretney then gave the men one half of their pay and the other half to their wives on payday to solve the problem.

Linden Athletic Association–1908

Students of Linden High organized an Athletic Association in October, 1908 to promote and raise money for the sports program. In the early days of Linden High School all sports expenses were raised by the community, no tax dollars were used.

One of the first fundraising events was an entertainment program sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Stephens at Hancock's hall on main street. The hope was to make enough money to buy new baseball and basketball uniforms.

The Athletic Association started out with 38 members from the high school. School officers in 1908 were: President, Elmer Rule; Secretary Alta Spargo and Treasurer Claude Masters.

There was both a spring and fall baseball season for local high schools in the early 1900's. In October, 1908 Linden defeated Montfort 11-5. A Linden student wrote of that game, "A great deal of credit is due the Athletic Association as it turned out in a body and marched with the two teams to the ball grounds. (On the present Richards farm, South edge of Linden.) The girls did equally as much as the boys towards winning the game by good clean baseball rooting."

In addition to baseball, students also had their hopes on basketball success that same month. Three girls squads and four boys teams were formed with nightly practice. The students anxiously awaited the start of the season

Continued on page two–Athletic association

Athletic Association, from front.

The LHS athletic association may have had a part in a strange type of field trip in October, 1908.

For one day students from the fifth grade through High School were allowed to start school early, skip lunch time so they could finish school by one PM to attend an adult baseball game. Linden had a fat men baseball team and it played for the championship of Southwest Wisconsin at the village ball field.

Was it worth it? One student wrote, "After seeing the game we felt repaid for our long fast and our hard work of the morning."



After hard work in practice the above girls made the first team in the 1908-09 basketball season. Left to right in back: Lida Hammill; Fannie Ovitz and Tryx Batten. In front: Vina Avenall; Alta Spargo and Kate Wilkins.

Compiled by Jim J. from just one issue of a Linden High School report dated October 16, 1908 that appeared in the *Dodgeville Sun* newspaper. Photo above from 1909 Linden High School yearbook in our archives.

Our Website now under Construction

See us soon at:

Lindenhistoricalsociety.com

1904 Linden Cheeseheads

Two village of Linden men were on a return trip from shopping in Mineral Point when a late winter storm hit which caused flooding of area streams.

J. W. Taylor of the Linden newspaper *Southwest Wisconsin* wrote:

Ed Rolling and James Wicks Jr., went to Mineral Point. In coming home at Terry's Creek they were forced to leave the cutter behind and both got on the back of the horse. They saved their purchase of Limburger cheese with difficulty. There would have been no fishing in that stream this coming spring if that cheese had got away from them and into the water.

February 10, 1904, *Southwest Wisconsin*.

100 years ago

New School Building at Diamond Grove

Just a few miles from Linden towards Mineral Point people in the Diamond Grove district were also proud of their new rural grade school. The building was 24 X 30 feet, divided into a main room, a large dressing room and an entry. The main room had nine large windows and a built-in library with single seats. Dressing room had twelve closets with hooks for clothing and shelves for lunch boxes. School was heated by a hot air furnace in the basement.

The Diamond Grove school was considered the largest and most modern rural school house in Iowa County in 1915. School is now a private residence.

Donations Received 2015

1-15 Tim McIlhaton \$100.00

1-15 Ruth Jungbluth 117.00

1-19 David Spargo 100.00

4-23 Tim McIlhaton 100.00

8-31 Jerry Holmes Sr. 50.00

Ruth Jungbluth memorials \$370.00

October 1, 2015 Treasurer balance \$12,028.92

WOMANLESS WEDDING WAS POPULAR PERFORMANCE IN 1960



On left is Uncle of the bride played by Elmer Weigel, Aunt of the bride is Al Spargo. Playing the part of baby is Bob Parish.

A cross dressing play in September, 1960 involved most of the immediate area of Linden. Plenty of laughs and awkward situations caused the pantomime to become a local hit.

The production was repeated one month later and it was all for raising money for the purpose of reactivating the village clock. The Womanless wedding was sponsored by the Linden Area Promotion Organization (LAPO).

LAPO included, "nine local organizations working in the interest of community projects," according to a paragraph on a surviving program from the play.

The names of the local groups were not listed on the program but it is likely they were the Linden PTA; Easter Star, Masonic Lodge; American Legion, home makers club, Couples Club and groups from the two Methodist Churches.

An online search of Womanless wedding indicates it was written by Mrs. James W. Hunt with a copyright date of 1918. You can buy an e-book of it yet today. It is also in the Library of Congress. Continued on back page-"Wedding".



Danny Bentzler, left, was the groom and Nelson Gilman was the bride.



The Womanless Wedding took place in the Linden community building for one performance in September, 1960 and an encore a month later.

Left to right, above, :Harold Liddicoat, Charles Richards, Jack Gilman, Derold Rice and Tom Faull.

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Membership dues are \$10 per year, payable to Linden Historical Society, send check to President above.

Wedding, from page 3

The cast included 29 all male actors, many dressed as women. From the printed program sheet are these characters in order of their appearance.

Bride's grandparents—Gordon Liddicoat and Harlan Goldsworthy. Groom's grandparents—Bernard Leslie and Jack Dorner. Aunt and Uncle of Groom—Alva Spargo and Elmer Weigel, baby was Bob Parish.

Groom's parents—Carlton Gilman and Charles Biddick. Bride's mother was Cecil Joynt. Minister was Albert Thomas. Danny Bentzler was the groom with Linden Methodist Minister at the time, Rev. James Harrington as best man. Soloist was Vincent Thompson.

Four giddy bridesmaids were: Harold Liddicoat, Jack Gilman, Tom Faull and Al Hackett. Flower girl was Everett Thomas, Ring bearer was Harley Roberts, matron of honor was Bob Rickard. Bride's father was Milton Fritsch, Bride Nelson Gilman and ushers were Whitford Faull, Vernon McGranahan, Derold Rice and Charles Richards.

Several of the cast members, dressed in full bridal outfits appeared in a parade float to promote the production. Others in the community helped make this a successful fundraiser.



Hardly any advance publicity appeared in the local newspapers. Word of mouth, posters and this float attracted attention.



Groom's grandparents: Bernard Leslie, left and Jack Dorner, right. Photos courtesy of Jack Gilman, Randy Baker did research on this article.