

Ogle County Historical Society

HELP FROM VOLUNTEERS

On Thursday morning, June 23, we received some help from people who had never heard of us before that week. This year, Rock River Christian Camp in rural Polo changed their main week of High School Camp to involve the campers with community service work, and that morning, seven campers and four faculty members arrived about 9:30 and set to work. The area east of the Annex was weeded, all of the windows in both buildings were washed on the inside, and most first floor windows were washed on the outside. The glass in every display case was cleaned, and doors in the house which are not used were opened so cobwebs could be swept out and glass cleaned. In addition, the wraparound porch was swept, including cobwebs on the ceiling and walls. After a brief tour, the campers enjoyed a typical OCHS Cookie Break Time.

Our thanks go out to the 11 people who participated, and also to RRCC Program Coordinator Tiffany Cox for thinking of us when selecting service projects for the week.

CHANGES AT OCHS

Back in 2012, Kathy Stauffer designed our new website, and has been managing it since then along with adding a Facebook page and serving as vice-president. Since starting a new business, Aireloom Studios, last year, demands on her time have become very great, and she asked to be relieved of responsibility for maintaining the website and Facebook page. New member and docent Michal Gigous took over the Facebook page recently, and Kris Gilbert has agreed to maintain the website. Her first duty will be posting this issue of the Gazette on the website.

QUIZ TIME

It's time for another historical quiz. Since an Ogle County manufacturer which is still in business made automobiles for a few years, this one is about auto manufacturers. Answers will be printed in the October Gazette.

Match the first and last names of these pioneering automobile manufacturers.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| 1. David ___ | a. Dodge |
| 2. John and Horace ___ | b. Olds |
| 3. Enzo ___ | c. Cadillac |
| 4. Louis ___ | d. Kaiser |
| 5. Edward ___ | e. Chrysler |
| 6. Henry ___ | f. Buick |
| 7. Walter ___ | g. Daimler |
| 8. Gottlieb ___ | h. Ferrari |
| 9. Ransom ___ | i. Chevrolet |
| 10. Antoine ___ | j. Etnyre |

Bonus points: give the middle initials of #s 5,6,7,& 9.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

This spring and early summer have been a very slow time for items being donated, especially compared to last year. What we did receive, however, were mostly documents and photos, items for which we do not have to struggle to find a place in our extremely limited storage space.

In May, member Michal Gigous brought in a small framed photo which was unidentified, but everyone who has seen it believes it is most likely early 20th century concert pianist Augusta Cottlow. She used her brother's home in Oregon as her mailing address while she traveled the world playing concerts. The photo was found at the home of Michal's in-laws, Bob & Betty Gigous. Betty was the unofficial historian of the Methodist church in Oregon, and since Augusta Cottlow played a benefit concert there annually for a local charity, it seems likely that Betty would have a photo of her.

Later in the month Peggy Halloran of Redwood City CA sent us certificates belonging to her Ogle County ancestor, Martin V. Peterman, Jr. He was Ogle County State's Attorney from 1924-1932 and served on the county Selective Service board during World War II. His certificate to practice before the Illinois Supreme Court, dated 1922, is signed by all of the Justices, including Oregon's James Cartwright, who served on the court for 25 years. We also received, from the Oregon Public Library, the front cover and a three page article from the September 7, 1912 issue of *Scientific American*. The cover has a photo of John Prasuhn working on the full-size model of the head of Lorado Taft's Eternal Indian statue, and the article is titled "A Novel Use of Cement in Sculpture". Perhaps we should send copies of this to all of our state Representatives and Senators, along with some pointed suggestions about living up to their responsibilities.

Lastly, member and docent Judy McNett brought in several items. These included four 8x10 enlargements, plus negatives, of photos of Riverside School, taken in the mid-to-late 1920's. The school was in Taylor Township, on what is now Lost Nation Rd., just north of Flagg Rd. Also included were a newspaper article, with photo, about the steamer *Oregon*, and a 36 page booklet from the Etnyre Hereford Farm's annual sale in 1949.

These items have been filed, and in some cases scanned, and are available for research purposes.



This is a photo of Riverside School taken in the mid-to-late 1920's. It was located in Taylor Township on what is now Lost Nation Road just north of Flagg Road.

RECENT VISITORS

On Saturday July 30, fourteen members of the Chicago Chapter of the Victorian Society in America visited our museum. After a 1 ½ hour tour and many questions, docent Bill Bailey then led the group to the courthouse lawn, with brief stops at the John Phelps statue and the plaque indicating the location of the first schoolhouse in Oregon. The group learned about the three courthouse buildings, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, the 2 cannons, and Iron Mike. After a brief trip to the Oregon Public Library and lunch at Maxson's, the members crossed the river and went to Lowden Park and Taft Campus. Since several of them are interested in Lorado Taft and the Eagle's Nest Group, they had arranged a tour of the Eagle's Nest Colony buildings which still exist. This was followed by free time to visit other places of interest in Oregon. The Ogle County Historical Society is grateful to have been a significant part of their day in Oregon.

After a dearth of visitors in June and early July, visitation at the museum was up the last two Sundays of the month. Hopefully this will lead to a good August and September and a great Autumn on Parade weekend.

DON'T FORGET!

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S ANNUAL POT LUCK IS SUNDAY, AUGUST 28 AT 5 PM IN THE ANNEX BUILDING. BRING YOUR OWN TABLE SERVICE AND A DISH TO PASS; BEVERAGES WILL BE PROVIDED. YOU MAY ALSO BRING AN ITEM OF FAMILY OR LOCAL HISTORY TO SHARE DURING OUR SHOW AND TELL TIME. EVERYONE WHO LIKES FOOD AND HISTORY IS INVITED!

OGLE COUNTY IN THE CIVIL WAR

#24—Charles E. Cort, Lane (Rochelle)

by Bill Bailey

Charles Edwin Cort, known as Ed to his family, was born in Pennsylvania on March 1, 1841, the second son of Jacob and Jane Mary Cort. In 1855, Jacob came to the land office in Dixon IL and filed a claim on land near Lane Station, now Rochelle. He became ill on the way home and died shortly after returning. The following spring Ed, age 15, and his 18-year old brother Joseph found themselves moving their mother and 3 younger siblings to northern Illinois to clear land and build a farm. The two brothers worked hard to make the farm a going concern which would provide enough income to educate Maggie, 16, William, 12, and Arthur, 10.

By 1862 the farm was doing well enough that Ed decided it was his duty to serve in the army and help put down the rebellion. He joined the 92nd Illinois Volunteer Infantry, which trained at Camp Fuller in Rockford, and was mustered in as 4th Corporal of Company H. (Each company had 5 Sergeants and 8 Corporals as well as 3 Officers and 70-80 Privates.) One of his first diary entries indicates how quickly some of the men picked up on how to obtain a few luxuries: “some cows passed through camp and the boys caught them and milked them.” A slightly later diary entry indicated that the regiment never fired their rifles until the day before they left Camp Fuller for the front. This was unfortunately true for many Civil War regiments, and cost them dearly in their early battles.

Like most Union soldiers, Ed Cort was fighting to preserve the Union, not to free the slaves, but in a November 1862 letter he said, “but if the rebellion cannot be put down without emancipation I say emancipate and do not let slavery stand in the way in any shape.”

In February 1863 Ed was promoted to 2nd Corporal. The day after his 22nd birthday he advised his sister in a letter to not start teaching school too soon with these words: “You know how sour looking school teachers get when they begin young.” Like many Civil War soldiers, Cpl. Cort had superstitions about weather and marching: “As usual it began to rain as soon as we were on the road.” (March 29, 1863) One of his most perceptive comments came in an April 23, 1863 letter, “I think it would be a very good move to mount two or three of our Brigades here in this department as we are very short of cavalry. Then mounted infantry are better suited to the purpose as they can dismount and infantry can whip double their number of cavalry easily especially in timber and rough country.” Just 2 ½ months later the 92nd was transferred to Col. Wilder’s recently formed brigade of mounted infantry and did just that for the rest of the war.

In early May Ed wrote, “We have got a new Chaplain. His name is Cartwright. He is from the neighborhood of Mt. Morris of the Methodist denomination. He appears to be very earnest in his work but has got the regular shouting style.” This was Rev. Barton W. Cartwright, a circuit-riding preacher who started many of Ogle County’s Methodist churches and was also the father of James Cartwright, attorney, horse breeder, founder of the Oregon Bachelor Club, and Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court for 25 years.

As the war went on Ed Cort developed quite a talent for comic understatement in his letters: “I have got to be quite a hand for potatoes especially sweet ones. They are \$1.00 per bushel but when we come across a reb patch we get them somewhat cheaper.” (September 28, 1863) At about this time he was promoted to Sergeant and indicated in several letters that he was glad he had a little more money to send home to help out the family.

In spite of the fact that Ed Cort’s education stopped at 8th grade, or maybe because of that, he was always trying to learn more. In a March 1864 letter he wrote, “In the evening I went a-visiting to another tent, and examined some heads and had a good time. I am studying Phrenology some little now. I have got a book that I sent after. The army is a splendid place to study it as you have every kind of character here to try your hand on that you want.” Phrenology was a 19th century “science” which taught that the intelligence, personality, and aptitude of a person could be determined by studying the shape of their skull and feeling the bumps on their head.

By the end of the war Ed was 1st Sergeant of Co. H, doing the weekly and monthly reports and acting as second-in-command whenever only one officer was present. Two years after coming home he and Joseph sold the original farm south of Rochelle and bought one west of town which they farmed until 1883. By that time Maggie, William, and Arthur had all received good educations, their mother had been gone 5 years, and Ed and Joseph were both married and had families. They sold the farm and Joseph and family moved back to Pennsylvania while Ed, his wife, and 2 daughters headed for California. Not liking it there, they returned east and Ed filed a homestead claim in South Dakota Territory. While proving it up, he took a correspondence course in pharmacy and eventually opened a drug store. Ed Cort was elected to the Territorial Congress which framed the state constitution prior to South Dakota’s admission to the Union. He remained in the pharmacy business and died in Huron SD in 1903 .

The Ogle County Historical Society
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Application for Membership

_____ \$35 per household per year

___ \$5 per year for hard copy of Gazette

Renewals due in November for following year

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

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