

## Ogle County Historical Society

### **WELL-BEHAVED WOMEN RARELY JOINED THE UMZOOWEES**

By Kasia Majewski

From the 1890s to 1920s, if you lived in Oregon, Illinois and were an upper class, unmarried woman with a bit of a rebellious streak, there was only one thing to do: join the Umzoowees. Created as the feminine alternative the Owls, Oregon's premier bachelor club, the Umzoowees chose their name from a Native American word meaning "seeker of pleasure" - a show of cultural appropriation quite fashionable for the time. Women's social clubs ran rampant across America at this time, with a plethora of goals, from charity work to networking with the most powerful families around. However, the Umzoowees seemed to have one objective in mind: show up the Oregon Bachelor Club (the Owls) and all other men, declaring their feminine independence in a time of oppressive expectations for women.

The Umzoowee women were famous, or perhaps infamous; their picnics on McKenney Island were the subject of newspaper columns. One column reported that the events of the picnics were in a sealed book until made public by the Umzoowees (*Republican*, 1897) and another told a scandalous story where one Umzoowee found a picture of a man on the island and promptly decided to "drown" it and then wash her hands of the "pollution" (*Republican*, 1899) - a dramatic media portrait of the man-hating Umzoowee. However, the Umzoowees made it clear themselves there was no room for male presence in their organization, theming the 1905 picnic "We Never Need 'Em" (meaning men) and toasting "Eat, drink, and don't marry", "Independence, now and forever" and "Beyond the altar lies the washtub". These slogans referenced and protested the thought that women needed to marry and have children; the Umzoowees not only disagreed, but looked at the harmful side of following this line of thinking.

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Creating a space for women to be empowered without the male presence was essential at this point in history, making the Umzoowees more than a mere social club to its members. At the society's founding, women in Illinois could not vote, had extremely limited options for careers that would quickly dissolve upon marriage, and little social power within the marriage: a situation created by men. To have an organization run by women, challenging the masculine values and feminine ideals meant a space where these women could for once feel in a place of power as individuals and as a gender. The Umzoowees worked together to format this space: in it they found humor and wit regarding the men they dealt with, but also a way to cope with very real social issues.



Piano Factories and Water Power, Oregon, Ill.

This colorized postcard was postmarked September 7, 1910.

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## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

As is usual during the winter months, artifact donations slowed down during the first part of the year, but we did have some interesting items come in. Member **Linda Hoffman gave an eyeglass case, probably early 1920's, from Dr. B. A. Cottlow of Oregon.** He was an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist whose home was on South Third Street, where the Blackhawk Apartments are now located. For several years we have had on display items from his sister Augusta, who traveled **internationally as a concert pianist and used her brother's home as her mailing address.**

Gary and Lori Greenfield of Dixon donated a 1951 Oregon-Mt. Morris phone directory which they found inside the wall of a house in Oregon that they are rehabbing. New member and OHS graduate Kim Warmolts, who now lives in Florida, gave a 3 ½ x 1 ½ foot wooden sign advertising Three Sister Rocks Resort, which his grandfather built in 1910. It was on the east side of the Rock River between the highway and railroad bridges in Oregon.

We received another donation from Peggy Halloran of Redwood City, CA, who last year sent us certificates and licenses of her grandfather, Martin Peterman, who **was Ogle County State's Attorney from 1924-1932.** The latest items she sent have to do with the high school career of her mother, **Donna "Petee" Peterman, OHS class of 1945.** Many of the photos and programs included have already been scanned, and color copies of programs from Oregon and Rochelle football games **and a regional basketball tournament have been added to our new "Sports in Ogle County" display in the living room of the house.** Looking ahead a few years, several other items will be part of a future display about the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Class of '45 and the end of World War II.** Hopefully by then we will have acquired items from the class of 1945 of other county high schools and will use them also.

**Two pencils from the Peterman accession, one labeled "Oregon Cheerleaders",** the other containing the 1943-44 OHS basketball schedule, have been placed in our display of advertising items from area businesses and organizations past and present. **That display now also includes a pencil from one of Oregon's newest businesses, Ukulele Station America, located in a small stone building on the west edge of Oregon that was originally a Conoco Service station.**

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Tracy Lungren of Unbroken and Renewed in downtown Oregon donated a bentwood rocking cradle which probably dates from around 1850. The person from whom she obtained it stated that it was from the Pullman and Lowden families; further documentation is being sought.

Our last acquisition of the quarter was from the Mt. Morris History Museum. These items included a card table with advertising from Oregon and Mt. Morris businesses printed on the top, a framed promotional photo of the Eternal Indian statue issued by Smith Oil & Refining of Rockford, a copy of a colorized postcard showing the piano factory buildings in Oregon (see p. 2), and a number of photos of the Rock River, from north of Oregon down to Castle Rock. These date from around 1910, and include one of a man on top of Castle Rock with his bicycle (!?!)

As always, while we appreciate the donation of items relating to Ogle County history, we are also eagerly looking forward to NEW MEMBERS AND NEW VOLUNTEERS.

## NEWS OF THE PAST

### TO START NEW SYSTEM FOR PARKING CARS

The Oregon city authorities will in the next few days mark off the streets in the business section for the parking of automobiles, a step that has long been needed. With the hit and miss parking system in use here for years, no two autos were parked alike and part of the time some of them when once parked couldn't get out until they found the owners of cars alongside and got them to move out. They plan to park all cars on an angle, each space will be defined with a big white line.

July 19, 1923

There is a man living in Oregon, who makes a practice of going to Daysville two or three nights a week, to visit a certain woman for unlawful purposes. Said man is married, and has a true and loving wife, we understand. We suppress his name for the sake of his family. Were it not for them we would drop on him like a thousand of brick and show him up to the contempt of the community.

November 8, 1877



MAY 14 WILL BE THE  
185<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE BATTLE OF  
STILLMAN'S RUN,  
WHICH OPENED THE  
BLACKHAWK WAR.  
THE MONUMENT WAS  
DEDICATED IN 1902.

**Below:** This aeroplane was the biggest attraction at the 1911 Ogle County Fair. When it flew over the new statue across the river, people stopped looking at the statue.



CURTIS AEROPLANE AT OREGON FAIR AUGUST 25, 1911.

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## OGLE COUNTY IN THE CIVIL WAR

by Bill Bailey

### #27—Company A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Illinois Cavalry

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Illinois Volunteer Cavalry was organized at Camp Butler in Springfield and was mustered into federal service on August 12, 1861. Company A was recruited from Ogle and Dewitt Counties. (Dewitt County is in central Illinois between Bloomington and Decatur.) Just over two-thirds of the men were from Ogle County and John R. Hotaling from Lane (Rochelle) was named Captain with two other men from Lane, Frank Bennett and William Cummins, as 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. and 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt., respectively, while Albert Jackson of Morrison in Whiteside County was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.

Shortly after leaving Camp Butler, the regiment was divided, with part going to Cairo IL and the rest to Paducah KY. Until June of 1864 the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> rarely saw the entire regiment together; groups of 2 to 6 companies served independently in various places. Companies A and B were assigned as escort for General E. O. C. Ord, serving as couriers and scouts for his division at the battles of Ft. Henry, Ft. Donelson, Shiloh, Corinth, and Hatchie Bridge. While scouting the Confederate right at Ft. Donelson in February 1862, Co. A had 4 men wounded, and Sgt. Frank Hatch of Lane was captured and later died in a Confederate prison camp. In the fall of 1862 Co. A and the rest of the regiment became some of the first cavalry to be issued the Sharps breech-loading carbine, which was a great advantage since muzzle-loaders were almost impossible to reload while mounted.

Early in 1863 Company A was reunited with 5 other companies of the regiment in Memphis TN. By this time the various detachments of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry had gained a reputation for reliability, as evidenced by the following communications: February 14- Brig. Gen. Israel Quinby to Gen. Stephen Hurlbut (of Belvidere IL), commanding XVI Corps at Memphis—“**If you will put at my disposal for two or three days about 300 good cavalry (the Second Illinois would be preferred), I think Blythe’s band [of Confederate raiders] may be entirely destroyed.**”; March 3-Gen. Hurlbut to John A. Rawlins (Gen. Grant’s chief of staff and a graduate of Rock River Academy in Mt. Morris)—“**If the Second Illinois Cavalry is not needed below, it would be of great use around Memphis.**”

By the end of March Companies A and E had been assigned as escort for Gen. John A. Logan, a fellow Illinoisan, and served in that capacity through the **Vicksburg campaign. They scouted and carried messages for Logan’s division at the battles of Raymond and Jackson MS, the decisive battle at Champion Hill, which prevented the defenders of Vicksburg from linking up with the other Confederate forces in Mississippi, and the siege and capture of Vicksburg.**

After the fall of Vicksburg, Company A served as escort for Brig. Gen. John D. Stevenson during his expedition to northern Louisiana, then was assigned to Baton Rouge with some of the other companies of the regiment. Captain Hotaling, who had been promoted to Major, stayed on as a member of Gen. Logan's staff and did not return to the regiment.

In February 1864, those members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> who had chosen to reenlist returned home on a 30 day furlough. Only 20 of the Ogle County men in Co. A reenlisted. Following the veterans' return from home, the regiment was divided between Memphis and Baton Rouge until finally being reunited at the latter city in late June. At this time it was consolidated into a battalion of six companies, and the handful of Ogle County men who had reenlisted were transferred to Co. E. Those who had not reenlisted were discharged in August 1864, and the reduced regiment served in Louisiana, southern Mississippi, and west Florida until finally being mustered out in November of 1865.

On November 12, 1864, just a year earlier, Lt. Col. W. H. Thurston, assistant inspector –general, sent the following communication to the headquarters of the Department of the Gulf; “The report of the assistant inspector-general of the cavalry forces of the department showing the general reputation of Second Illinois Cavalry for military bearing and efficiency, unequaled by any of the regiments of the same arm, I would respectfully recommend that official notice be taken of the same. The regiment has borne this reputation for months past, and to encourage the maintenance of the same it would seem but just to bestow the laudation it so rightly deserves.”

Future columns may cover a few of the Ogle County men who served in Company A.

**SOMETIME THIS YEAR THE ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD WILL BE PLACING A STORY ABOUT OGLE COUNTY WWI MEDAL OF HONOR WINNER RALYN HILL ON THEIR FACEBOOK PAGE. THE STORY WILL BE BASED ON INFORMATION WHICH THEY REQUESTED FROM THE OGLE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.**

The Ogle County Historical Society  
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Oregon, Il. 61061

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

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