



*Preserving the Past
is our Present
to the Future.*

Lockport Area Genealogical & Historical Society

Issue No. 21

NEWSLETTER

April 2003

Old City Hall— Site of Laghs' March Meeting

"Old" City Hall has been made new again. After a long absence, several city offices once more occupy the building. Snuggled between 3-story buildings reflective of the late 1800s, the renovated structure retains its original facade indicative of a place of government and community.

On Saturday, March 22, Gordon McCluskey led Laghs' members and guests on a tour of the building, now called the Lockport Community Development Center. Sharing space is the city's planning and engineering departments, the Chamber of Commerce, LCTV, and a satellite office of the police department.



Gordon McCluskey
as pictured in 1975
CC&A booklet.

"I wanted to share a bit of nostalgia-- something about how the building was used in the past and how the city has returned to the site because of its need to expand its offices beyond Central Square."

Gordon was Laghs' first VP, and he served for many years as Director of Public Works and as City Administrator. §

(An Open House, dedicating City Hall in 1838, took place on May 28, 29, 30. (More inside-back))



"LOCKPORT GOVERNS BY GOOD PEOPLE JUST LIKE YOU!"

The caption above is the same as found next to this picture featured in:
"Lockport: Historic Old Canal Town," 1975.

A reminder of Lagh's commitment to publishing
a 175th anniversary book is the dedication to the 1975 booklet:

*This Book is Published by The Civic and Commerce Association
in Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of its Founding
145th Anniversary of First Local Settlement
Coming Bicentennial Observance of
1776 Independence Declaration
and to Acquaint Visitors
with History, Virtues, Services, Opportunities, and Enterprises
of Lockport, Illinois
and
to Renew and Refresh Awareness of Residents of These Values.*

Message from the President ~

Now that March madness is over,
it is time for April showers and fresh reflections on our past.

At our April meeting we are going to reminisce about sports. What brings this topic to mind is that 25 years ago this month, the Lockport High School basketball team won the state championship. Heroes and legends were made during that championship season of 1978, and still more throughout the years in football, cross country, bowling, and girls' volleyball and basketball.

How about George Mikan, the greatest professional basketball player of the first half of the 20th century, who lived in Crest Hill? And don't underestimate Lindbergh, All-American at the University of Illinois. And how about some of the coaches such as Burk, Basarich, Corcoran, and Rogers?



Dr. Reno G. Caneva

One particular time I would like to talk about is when Lockport was the hometown of Ed McKeever, coach of the Chicago Rockets. McKeever coached at Notre Dame until Frank Leahy returned from the Navy after World War II. The team was the third-placed professional football team in Chicago, where they played at Soldier Field.

Red McCarthy played for the Rockets. Many a time my family entertained the coach, his family, and players at our home. I remember, too, that the Lockport and Joliet high school bands performed at the halftime show at Soldier Field on "Red McCarthy Day."

Who remembers?
Lockport's famous girls' basketball team of the '30s?
The teams from the Moose and Texaco?
The grandstand at Dellwood? Park?

Lockport has a rich tradition of amateur and professional sports.

We don't want to overlook any of our fine players, coaches, or organizations for our anniversary book.

Bring your photos, stories, and memories to Share & Tell.

See you on April 26th,
Dr. Reno G. Caneva



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Mailing Address

Laghs, c/o Bonnie Packley
1016 Maitland Drive
Lockport, IL 60441

E-mail: blpackley@att.net
Phone: (815) 838.9388

Newsletter Staff

Managing Editor
Charlene Giardina
e-mail: cgiardina@dnrmail.state.il.us

Editor & Photographer
Judith Richardson

Production & Distribution
Bonita Packley

History in Our Own Back Yard

by Georgene Bankroff



Anyone wishing to help the society copy obituaries from the Joliet Herald News may do so by contacting me at 838-1862. This work is easily done right here in our Lockport Library.

Snapshots in Time

We have three wonderful scrapbooks that have been given or lent to our society. One is the scrapbook of one of our members, Mabel Hrpcha. It is a wonderful collection of nostalgic memories for Lockporters.

The Luella Pesavento scrapbook is in the process of being copied thanks to the efforts of another member, Tom Reardon. We'll let you know when it is finished and ready for viewing.

The Rev. Bengtson/Ron Pesavento veterans' scrap book is now complete. Be prepared to spend some time perusing it. Anyone who lived through World War II will be entranced by it. There will also be a copy at the Lockport Library.

For anyone is interested in doing Italian genealogy by mail, the following address will be of help if your ancestors came from Asiago. And whose didn't (it seems)? Address: Archivio di Stato, Provincia di Vicenza, Via G. Casale 91, 36100 Vicenza, Italia.

If your ancestors came from a different province, call me and I'll check my book. If anyone wishes to borrow my copy of Italian Genealogical Records by a renowned genealogist, you are welcome to do so by contacting me. He has a sample letter which should produce good results if you write directly to Italy.

**Comments, Questions, or
Appointment to visit the Archive:**

Georgene (815) 838,1862 or KG1990@aol.com.

Jacquie 9185) 838.3795 or
jlmunch@earthlink.com

Chasing Your Tale

by Jacqueline Munch



Here are some tips for this month.

Free e-mail genealogy newsletters

rootsweb.com - RootsWeb Review
and Ancestry Daily News - Scroll
down home page to "Free

Genealogy Newsletters."

rootsforum.com/newsletters/index.html - Eastman's
GenealogyNewsletter
genealogy.about.com/library/blnews.htm - About
Ancestry and About Genealogy Tip of the Day

National Archives Site

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has released the "Access to Archival Databases" (AAD) System to the public. AAD provides researchers with online access to over 50 million historical electronic records organized in over 350 databases that were created by some 20 Federal agencies. The long-term plan calls for the program to be expanded to over 500 databases.

AAD enables researchers to search, retrieve, print out and download records. One of the files available is **Famine Irish Passenger Record Data File**. If your Irish ancestor came to America between the years 1977-1989, you may find him/her in this database. You can access this system at the following website: archives.gov/aad ---from Aids for Genealogical Research by NARA

Quick Tip- determine birth date

Want a quick way to determine a birth date when you have only a death date and exact age at death? Let the internet do the calculation (for dates only after 1782). Using website web2.iadfw.net/bhende19/b-date.htm enter the death date and the complete age (day-month-year) and click on "compute." This will give you the birth date. --from NGS Newsmagazine, Vol. 29, No. 1, in a column "Family History Online" by Byron C. Bray.

Contact me about what you'd like to see in this column. —Jacquie

Membership news



with Bonnie Packley

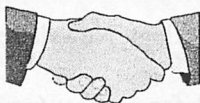
New Members

Virginia Coffeen, Lockport
Alice G. Kuehnle, Lockport

Renewing Memberships

Lillian Caneva, 1-year renewal
Louise Morris, 2-years renewal
Betty Shinn, 1-year renewal
B.J. Sterioti-Ferry, 1-year renewal
Don & Helen Meints, 1 year renewal
Bill & Bobbie Molony, 2-year renewal

Welcome



THANKS

To: Gordon McCluskey, who donated the donuts for our March meeting at the new Community Development Center.

To: Carol Giardina, Judy Richardson, and Olga Schumann for providing hospitality at our March meeting.

FIVE MORE HOSPITALITY TEAM MEMBERS NEEDED

Members of this committee arrive 45 minutes before the meetings, help get the meeting place organized, greet and make members and guests feel welcome at our monthly meetings.

Birthday Club & Card Committee Needed

Volunteers are needed to plan the activities of the committee. The Birthday Clubs are: 90-99 Club and Century Club.

Outreach Team Needed

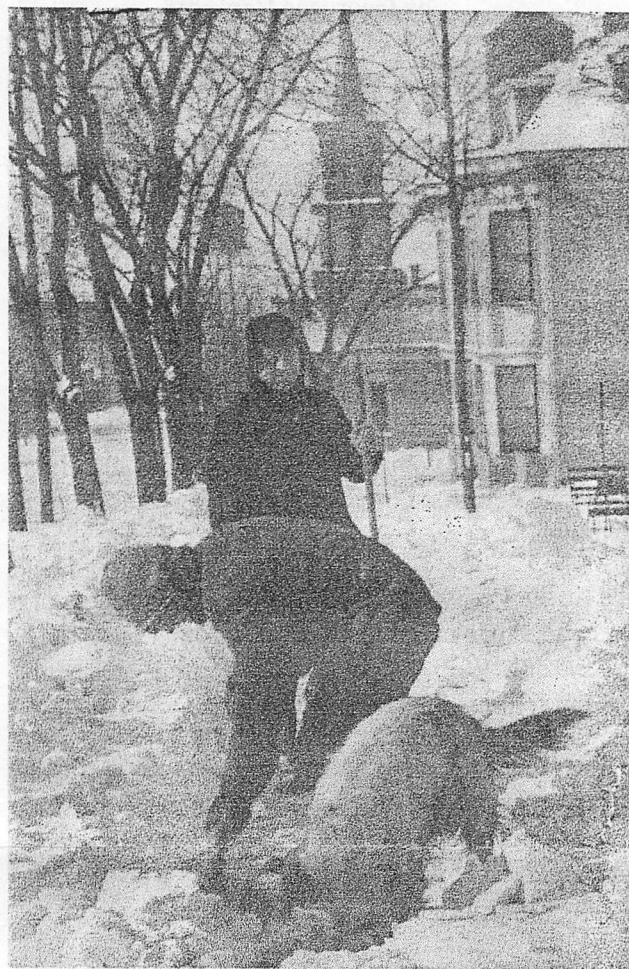
Nancy Wilda and Betty Shin are scheduled for the Community Expo. We still need many more volunteers if we are to fulfill our education mission. Check last month's newsletter for the list of outreach events to see when you can join us.

Birthday Clubs

Let us know your birthday, and we'll say "Happy Birthday to You" at our monthly meetings. Members 90 years and older are recognized as 90-99 Club and Century Club members.

For information on committee teams, contact Bonnie at 838.9388 or blpackley@att.net.

Easter Sunday, March 31, 1918



(Courtesy of Reno Caneva)

Reno remembers days gone by. . .

From time to time I would like to share photographs and memories with the membership. I hope you will do the same. Just contact me or newsletter editor Char Giardina and tell us your story.

Local photographer R.L. Stephenson took this picture of Mr. A.L. Gaines shoveling snow with his son when it should be time to cut the grass! (Don't know the dog's name.)

Gaines owned three stores in downtown Lockport. The view in this photo is looking west, down 10th Street. Notice the water tower at the Norton Building on 10th & Commerce and the steeple of the Old Baptist Church, built in 1852.

My father started a new trend when he opened Weber's Dairy there. Don Meints and I ran an ice cream store there, too, for a while, now it's Cool Creations, but the Old Baptist Church sign is still posted above the door to remind us of days gone by.

— RGC

Lockport High School Cheerleaders

by Mabel Hrpcha

I grew up in Romeoville and attended the country one-room school of Burkhart, #98 on 127th St. in DuPage County. There were about 150 people in Romeoville, so it was natural the boys and girls shared equally in any sport that was played.

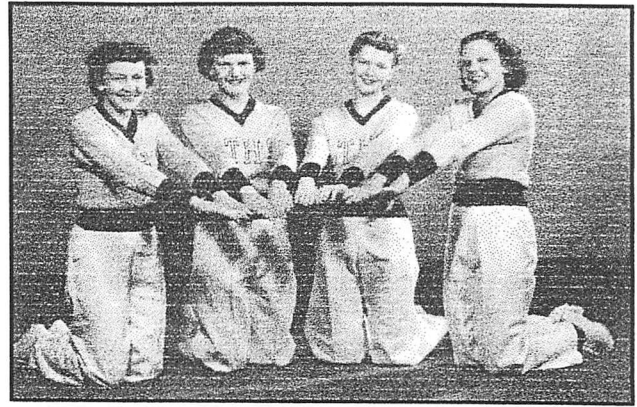
I attended Lockport Township High School from 1933 - 1936. Going to high school was a big experience for me. All the sports that we had been playing in the cornfields and barns now had real playing fields. GAA (Girls Athletic Association) was just right for me. Miss Lennon was our gym teacher. I enjoyed playing basketball, baseball and volleyball. There was the swimming pool at the high school, but growing up in Romeoville with the quarries, I already swam like a fish.

*... if you
wanted to be a
cheerleader,
you got it.*

Cheerleading Squads

In my junior year, Marie Pierce (my friend from Romeoville) and I became cheerleaders. There weren't that many people in school, so if you wanted to be a cheerleader, you got it.

There were five on the squad in my junior year and four in my senior year. Three of the four cheerleaders were from Romeoville in 1936. You bought your own skirt or slacks, but the sweaters were provided. At the end of the year, you turned the sweater back in for the



Left to right: Mabel Fracaro, Margaret Startz, Betty Bishman, and Marie Pierce.

next year's team. There was no teacher or sponsor for the cheerleaders. The routines were passed down and learned from the prior year's squad.

Away Games

The boys were taken to the games on a school bus. We had to find our own way to the game. I usually got a ride with Mr. Neil Murphy. Mr. Murphy (who owned Murphy's restaurant in Romeoville) never missed a Lockport game.

Game Schedule

I have the game schedule for the March 1936 Junior Invitational Basketball Tournament in Blue Island. Our coach then was Mr. P.L. Ahlberg and the team players were R. Smith, A. Cunico, C. Young, E. Rossetto, A. Vrklan, P. Tondini, M. Williams, H. Hicklin, T. Bills, and R. Johnson. ~~~

When Kool-aid Was the Drink of Summer



Nostalgia from Cyberspace (via e-mail)

Remember before the Internet or the MAC,
before semiautomatics and crack, before SEGA or Super Nintendo?

I'm talking about hide-and-seek at dusk, red light-green light, kick-the-can, and mother, may I? Playing kickball and dodge ball until your porch light came on. I'm talking about red rover, Hula-Hoop, and roller skating to music.

Lying on your back on the grass with your friends and saying things like "That cloud looks like a" Running through the sprinkler. Catching lightning bugs in a jar.

Climbing trees. Toting your friends on your handle bars. Getting an ice cream off the ice cream truck. A million mosquito bites and sticky fingers.

Running till you were out of breath. Laughing so hard that your stomach hurt. Being tired from playing. Bedtime prayers and goodnight kisses.

Items appearing in "Nostalgia from Cyberspace" are taken from widely circulated e-mails.

Lockport Area Genealogical & Historical Society
c/o Bonnie Packley
1016 Maitland Drive
Lockport, IL 60441

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~Downtown Lockport~

\$39.95 (each set of 12)

INSIDE

"Romeoville Aces"

"LTHS Cheerleaders"

G & H columns

Membership news

Tell a friend about LAGHS.

Invite them to join us at a meeting.

They'll tell two friends,

and they'll tell two friends.

And so on, and so on.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Membership meeting May 24, 2003

Romeoville Area Historical Museum
in the Fountaindale Library
(corner of Route 53 and Normantown Road)

9:00 a.m.
(door opens at 8:45 a.m.)

**Members will tour the museum after a brief
business meeting.**

**For information about the museum, please
call Dorothy Hassert at (630) 257-7954.**

Civil War exhibit

The First Division Museum at Cantigny will feature the exhibit "When You Heard Your Country Calling: Illinois in the Civil War" through November. The museum's hours are currently 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. Cantigny is located at 1S151 Winfield Road, Wheaton. For information, call (630) 668-5185.

Candlelight Tour & Reception

Friday, May 9, 2003 7 - 9 pm

Heritage Hall (Thimbles second floor)

\$12 in advance includes two glasses of wine-beverage, hors d'oeuvres, and a historic tour. (\$15 at the door) A Tinsmith demonstration. For info, call Main Street (815) 834-0700.

Lockport's Old Canal Days

June 20, parade June 21 & 22, festival days,
Journey into the Past at Pioneer Settlement, and
Wright Brothers and Gold Rush
exhibits on display at the I & M Canal Museum.