



1013 North Long Drive
 Syracuse, IN 46567
 www.syracusemuseum.org

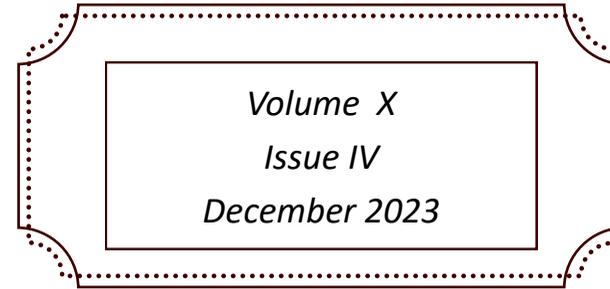
Upcoming Events

January 26: Kiwanis Soup Supper
 March 2: Indoor Garage Sale

Remodeling Coming Soon

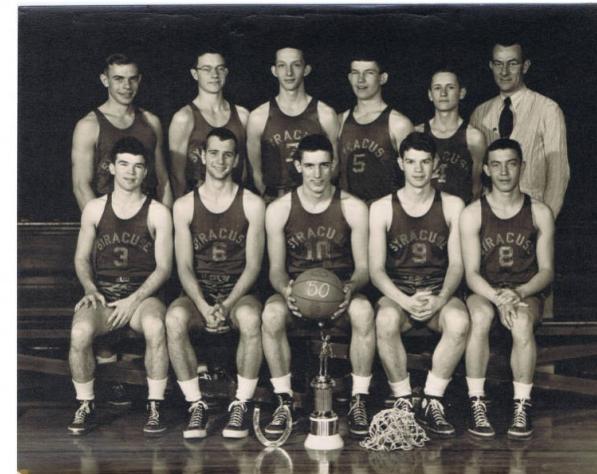
The museum will be undergoing a major remodeling of our room in the Syracuse Community Center. Due to the nature of the remodel, we will need to close to the public for a short period of time. We hope the public will have a greater historical experience when visiting the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum.

We will post on both our website and Facebook when we will shut down.



The Legacy of Jack Darr *By Ann Garceau*

The passing of Jack Darr earlier this year left a big hole in the hearts of fellow museum board members. Jack was a



Syracuse High School basketball team, 1949-50, that won the 1950 Kosciusko County tourney. Front row, left to right: Gareth Meek, Jack Darr, John Kroh holding basketball, Lowell Barnhart, and Jim Miller. Back row, left to right: Ralph Bushong, Jim Fry, Carroll Koble, Ted Stucky, Arnold "Pete" Doll, and coach Millard Sink. Photo courtesy of S-W Historical Archives.

pillar of the community and loved by all who knew him. As a lifelong resident, Jack attended Syracuse High School, graduating in 1951. He ran track and played on the 1949-50 basketball team that won the 1950 Kosciusko County tourney before losing to Columbia City in the sectionals – Jack was high point man for SHS in that sectional game. The following year the Syracuse Yellow Jackets won 16 out of 19 starts. During high school, he also found time to

The Legacy of Bill Beemer *By Mary Hursh*

Over the years, many people in Syracuse have dedicated their time and energy to community service.

Bill Beemer was one such individual. Recently, the Beemer estate gifted the museum with a large donation. We thought our members might enjoy getting to know this very special person.

One of the highlights of Bill's long life was his chairmanship of the 1987 Syracuse Sesquicentennial. He and his nine-member committee planned a circus, an ice cream social, a square dance and a carnival. The city-wide celebration gave residents a chance to enjoy a flotilla, an arts and craft show as well as a queen and beard contest. The chili supper alone raised \$585.33.

"Local was very important to my dad," said Cindi Beemer Wells. "He was very civic minded. He loved his lake community. They lived on Eli Lilly Road for 40 years and loved participating in the Fourth of July parade along the seawall between their cottage and the Feightner cottage. Dad even played the snare drum and an



Story continues on pages 5

The Legacy of Bill Beemer *Continued...*

instrument he made called a gutbucket, which was a washtub with a string for a handle. He would get a lot of music out of that!"

His lake life was packed with fun. He had an old wooden Coronado called "Bwasee." Because it was big, he could haul a lot of people around the lake. "He loved driving the kids," said Wells. His small fishing boat called "The Egg" was a regular fixture at the lake for 40 years.

Bill was born in 1926 and passed away in 2012. He and his wife Barbara were the parents of two daughters and grandparents to five. Bill was a WWII US Navy veteran serving from 1944-1946 and then spent many years in business as a manufacturing representative as well as president of Beemer Enterprises.

Bill was a member of many organizations and a leader of many. He was president of the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum, past commodore of the Wawasee Flotilla, past commander of the Huntington VFW, and president of the 1987 Syracuse Sesquicentennial. He was a member of St. Andrews United Methodist Church, Ft. Wayne Mizpah Shrine, Scottish Rite and a thirty-second degree Mason.

When asked what Bill's legacy might be, his daughter said that he was not an ordinary guy. He kept very busy. He rode his bike and his snowmobile. He went to the gym. When he could not fly his beloved model planes, he built models.

Jack Darr, continued

be a class officer, F.F.A. president and sing in a boy's quartet. In 4-H, Jack's outstanding leadership ability, willingness to work, cooperation and personality led him to being chosen a "star camper" in 1947. Ever outgoing, he participated in the SHS Junior and Senior Class plays; one titled "It's a Great Life!" which described Jack's attitude throughout life.

Jack went on to attend Indiana University where he pledged Sigma Chi Fraternity. He was a veteran of the Korean War, member of the American Legion and attended Grace Lutheran Church. Jack owned and operated Elkhart Bedding Company until he retired in 2000. He, his wife Carol and two children (Christopher and Jennifer Darr-Blissitt) loved Lake Wawasee, as did his grandchildren.

While researching this article, fellow board member, Ann Garceau, found this humorous tidbit about two "local legends" on Hoosier State Chronicles, a searchable website offering digital copies of the Syracuse newspapers from the late 1800's through 1990. Mail-Journal, Nov. 24, 1950: During a chemistry quiz Mr. (Charlie) Garner asked Jack Darr to identify a formula he had just placed on the board. "Er —ah, I have it on the tip of my tongue," Jack faltered. "In that case you had better spit it out," answered Mr. Garner. "It's nitric acid."

2023 Donors and supporters

THANK YOU to all of our monetary and artifact donors for 2023! These and other anonymous donors are a huge part of what keeps our museum open for the public year-round. We thank you all for your continued support!

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- **Norma Baugher**—Seth Ward items
- **Debbie Conner**—Personal Typewriter
- **Ann Garceau**—Marise's plastic pot strainer
- **Joan Stoelting**—Spink Coaster
- **Jack Darr**—Jack's Sunoco flyswatter, Louie's Bar & Grill multi bottle opener



Centennial Homes Programs (2016-2021) Now Available By Ann Garceau

After a lot of hard work, all of the Centennial Homes programs (12 of them) have been edited and are now available to the public in digital format. This Spring and Summer as residents return to the lake, Ann Garceau will see that each presenter receives a USB stick that will play on a computer or television. Ann feels this will be a great addition to documenting the history of the lake and hopes that additional families will want to add this to their collection. They are available for purchase **(\$30)** at the museum. For purchase, please call ahead and allow 2-3 days as the USBs are created on a by-purchase basis.



Country Corner, continued

Christmas store set up with Currier and Ives ornaments, Santa Clauses, and, according to Ellis, "all sorts of cool stuff. You felt like it was Christmas that very day."

The wooden purses painted with various local landmarks here in Syracuse were next to the Christmas area. Fabric purses by Margaret Smith were also available there. These cloth-covered purses showcased different patterns, flowers, and animals.

Past the popular purses, shoppers found Waterford crystal and Fenton pieces. Alongside those pieces were all the items typically found in a country store such as kitchen supplies, towels, and those popular red and white tablecloths. Past that was a gift shop.

"The first thing Fred Elstrod did with a new hire was to take him or her to the old cash register in the center of the store and see if that person could make change! He was a father figure for me. I remember dropping a glass which broke five other pieces as it fell to the floor. I was 15. Fred told me to stop crying and not worry about

taking the cost out of my pay. He just said the incident was a lesson to be careful when dusting," said Ellis.

Turquoise jewelry was popular at the store as were Minnetonka Moccasins which first came on the scene in 1946 and could be worn indoors and outdoors. Steward Nye copper jewelry, especially the pieces shaped like maple leaves, were always in demand. "Many people who lived on the lake, including Eli Lilly and Seth Ward, did their shopping at Country Corner," said Ellis. "The ladies would get dressed up and shop. We were very busy all the time waiting on customers, cleaning, and unpacking new shipments."

Gifts purchased were carefully tucked in boxes or put in bags with lots of tissue paper plus a ribbon. "I spent the money I earned there (\$1 an hour) to buy a big red piggy bank, a necklace with a turquoise roadrunner, a purse, and a scarab bracelet," said Ellis.

The Country Corner exhibit will be showcased at the museum this fall.

Country Corner Gift Shop Revisited by Mary Hursh

Every season, the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum highlights a business fondly remembered from the past or a current business which has become a favorite with residents. This fall, the museum will showcase the iconic Country Corner Gift Shop owned by Fred and Emily Elstrod and later by Jennifer and Robert Seward.

Country Corner, built in 1951-3, opened first as an antique store and later became a gift shop run by Emily Elstrod. It was the first

commercial building built by Buhr Builders. Later, Jennifer Seward purchased the site and operated Country Corner from 1974-1999.

Allyson Ellis, a longtime Syracuse resident, worked at the Country Corner Gift Shop for three summers when she was 15, 16, and 17. "My older sister Jill Haughey and I worked there with Jean Miller, Opal Kime and Sharon Lavernier. I worked from 10 to 5 one day and 4-9 the next day."

As many know, Country Corner was located in the current

Pizza King building at 719 Huntington St. When shoppers went through the double doors of Country Corner, they immediately came upon the

