

# Podunk Pioneer Papers

Issue 41

Fall 2004

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for the latest news about Podunk  
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Thanks to Betsy Davidson for  
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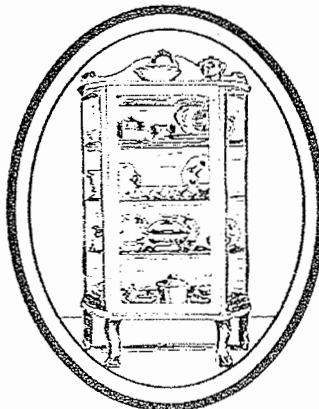
## Meeting Schedule

The Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton and Mundy Townships meets on the second Monday of each month at 7:00P.M. at the Fenton Township Hall (March-October.)Upcoming meetings:

**Sept. 13 and October 11.**

## ANNUAL ELECTIONS

We want to thank Joyce Simmons and Phyllis Yancy for their help with elections. We welcome Mary Jane Pinkston as our new Secretary and Frances Warner and Alice Bristle for stepping in as Trustees. And as always, we thank our dedicated volunteers who continue to help by serving on the Board or as Trustees.



## From the Editor

This summer we were saddened by the deaths of two of our dedicated volunteers: Fanchon Cowles and Vincent Gauthier. We extend our sympathy to their families. In this issue of *Podunk Pioneer Papers* is a tribute to each person.

**PIONEER DAY will be held Saturday, Sept. 11, 2004 from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. at the site of the Podunk House and Pioneer Museum. See the enclosed flyer for details. Volunteers are needed to help set up on Fri. Sept. 10 at 3 PM.**

A 4<sup>th</sup> grader touring our Pioneer home wanted to know what kind of toys kids played with "in the old days". In this issue you will read about Victorian toys. When you go upstairs in the Podunk house into the first room on the right, you will find two cast iron toys on display for the first time.

There are lots of new items on display in the house and museum. Be sure to look for them.

## NEWS FROM PRESIDENT VICTOR MOORE

- The 37th annual **Buffalo Dinner** in April was held in the Lake Fenton High School Cafeteria due to an unexpected scheduling conflict. Thanks to all our volunteers for helping things go so smoothly. And thanks to all our guests who joined us.
- Thanks again to all who helped on the windmill project. The windmill, purchased with funds donated by the Warzynski family, stands tall and majestic nestled between our pioneer farm home and museum.
- **Thanks to Ramona Green** for her diligent efforts to keep our membership lists up to date.
- We have a new project in the works and are looking for volunteers to help with the restoration of the cupola (bell tower) donated by the Gillespie family. This cupola was originally on the roof of the old Mundy School on the corner of Baldwin and Linden Roads which is now the home of Georgina Gillespie and her son. Mrs. Gillespie graciously donated the cupola in memory of her husband whose family settled in Mundy township. The original family farmhouse still stands on Linden Road just south of Baldwin.



- Ironically, we were also given the donation of a cast iron farm bell by Marge Kelley, granddaughter of another long time pioneer in Mundy Township, Asa Pierce. The original Pierce farm home still stands on Baldwin Road west of Linden.
- So...when the repair of the bell tower (cupola) and installation of the farm bell are completed, they will make a nice addition to our museum collection of artifacts depicting local Pioneer history.

Again, by coincidence, we have acquired another item which we had been seeking: an engraved spoon from the old Long Lake church (Located on the corner of N. Long Lake and Torrey Roads it is now called the Lake Fenton United Methodist Church). When visiting her former Torrey Rd. neighbors, George and Betty Beck now of Marysville, Phyllis Heusted was given the spoon as a memento by Betty. Phyllis, in turn, is loaning the spoon to complete the place setting. Loretta Gauthier attached the spoon along with the matching knife and fork on a plaque which was made by her husband Vince. The completed set is now hung in the museum building next to the wooden wall board that was used in the old church to list the hymns to be sung on Sunday morning.

- Thanks to the volunteers who helped on Work Day. The house is looking great due to the efforts by Velma Butts and Phyllis Yancy.. Some new linens from the collection of Mary Ellen Weyer and the silver polished by Loretta make the table setting look nice. The yard crew did a great job sprucing up the grounds.

## NEW AT THE MUSEUM

- **Pierce Farm Bell**
- **Gillespie Bell Tower (cupola)**
- **Long Lake Church spoon**
- **Watkin/Warzynski windmill**
- **Early 1900s wedding attire from the Christie/Pinkston family collection**
- **Floe Blue pottery, linens and ice-fishing gear from the collection of Mary Ellen Weyer**
- **Child's school desk**
- **Cast iron horse-drawn toys**
- **And much more!**

## SAVE YOUR VG'S RECEIPTS FOR US!

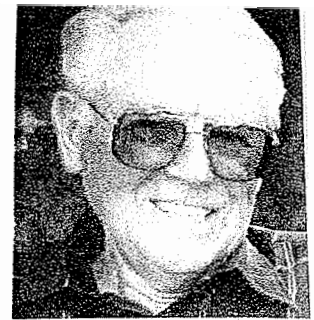
**HELP! We need the following:**

- **VOLUNTEERS** to set up on **Friday, 9/10 at 3 P.M.**
- **VOLUNTEERS** to work on **Saturday, Sept. 11**
- **VENDORS, CRAFTERS**
- **COLLECTIONS/DISPLAYS**
- **RUMMAGE ITEMS** (no clothes, please)



## VINCENT GAUTHIER

APRIL 27, 1923 - AUGUST 1, 2004



Vincent Gauthier was born in Flint, Michigan in 1923 to Alfred and Alice Gauthier and he died on August 1, 2004 peacefully at home from complications of liver cancer. Vince graduated from the Flint Technical High School Class of 1942. He was especially proud that he had achieved the Eagle Scout standing in Boy Scouts. Vince married Loretta Colwell on July 3, 1948 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Flint and they shared 56 years of marriage together. (Vince and Loretta regularly held their high school class reunions at their home on Crane Lake. Several classmates and old neighbors attended his funeral service and recalled their years together as kids growing up on the northeast side of Flint. The neighborhood baseball field was right next to the Gauthier home and so that was the local gathering place for the neighborhood kids.)

Vince retired as a die maker from Buick in Flint after 43 years. He was a veteran of the United States Army and was a jeep driver for General George S. Patton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Army in World War II. He was a member of St. John, the Evangelist, Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus Council #7418, lifetime member of Curtis Wolverton VFW Post #3243 and a lifetime member of the Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton and Mundy Townships.

Vincent is survived by his wife Loretta; three children: John (Shelly) of Racine, WI, Suzanne (Wesley) VonSeggern of Plainwell, MI and Edward (Kelly) of Coopersville, MI; 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; his brothers of FL: Francis and Armand (Jerry Belle) Gauthier. Vince was preceded in death by his son James Vincent in 1975 and his brother Alfred.

Vince was a talented craftsman and enjoyed working with wood. His attention to detail and precision is evident in the built-in cupboards, cabinets and furniture in his homes in Fenton and Key West, Florida. He could fix or repair anything and everything Loretta brought to him and he often engineered a replacement part to fix an item no matter how old it might be. He loved to pour cement and many times he helped out at the Podunk House and Museum in that capacity. When he could no longer work the cement himself, he still enjoyed planning and designing projects.

Loretta's love of flowers and landscaping often required Vince's expertise and assistance. When Vince retired, he and Loretta bought a place in Key West, Florida at Seaside Resort. She became head of the beautification committee and they spent many afternoons cutting through coral and planting palm trees around the resort. Vince was very thrifty and since cans are not returnable in Florida, he created a recycling center in the park as a way to help finance beautification projects in the park. At Seaside, Vince also was able to do what he loved most: work with cement. Many times he carted bags of cement from Michigan to Florida so he would have just the right mix! Vince was known as the man to come to if something needed fixing – and more times than not, he had just the item needed in his compact tool shed.

Vince will be remembered for being a kind, soft-spoken gentle family man who was true to his faith and to his friends.



**FANCHON COWLES**  
**NOVEMBER 18, 1916 - MAY 6, 2004**

Mrs. Fanchon Cowles died at the age of 87 on May 6, 2004 of complications due to Alzheimers disease. She was born in Montpelier, Ohio to Carl and Oma Seelig. She resided in the Lake Fenton and Fenton areas most of her life. She married Vett Cowles, Jr. in 1947. He owned and operated Cowles optical business on Saginaw Street in Flint for many, many years following in his father's footsteps. He preceded her in death in 1985.

Fanchon is survived by her five children: Jessica (George) Scott, Camilla (Rick) Williams, Anita Hawks, Vett III, and William. She is also survived by several grandchildren, her brother Charles Seeling of Holly, sister Lou Livingston of Saranac and a sister-in-law, Natalie Seelig, of Marquette.

Prior to her illness, Fanchon was a very dedicated member of the Pioneer Memorial Association of Fenton and Mundy Townships. (She had also been a

member of the McLaren Women's Auxiliary and the St. Cecilia Society.) As one of the early members of the Pioneer Association, she was a great help in supporting fundraisers and providing baked goods for the bake sales and buffalo dinners. She was well known for her homemade pies and baked beans. She had great organizational skills and when her children were growing up, she supported them in their endeavors as they attended Lake Fenton school, whether it was for sports or band or Girl Scouts. She was caring and compassionate to others and gave of herself to help others less fortunate than herself. She was a good friend to many.

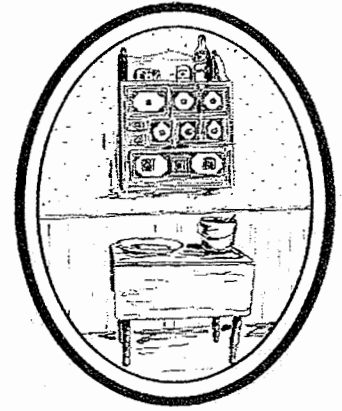
As a tribute to Fanchon, the recipes she submitted to *Favorite Recipes* (a cookbook published by the Pioneer Association as a fundraiser in 1991), are reprinted in this issue of the ***Podunk Pioneer Papers***.



**PIE CRUST** by **FANCHON COWLES** (p.97)

1 lb. Crisco or Spry      5 ½ cups all-purpose flour  
1 tsp. Salt                1 ¼ cup cold water

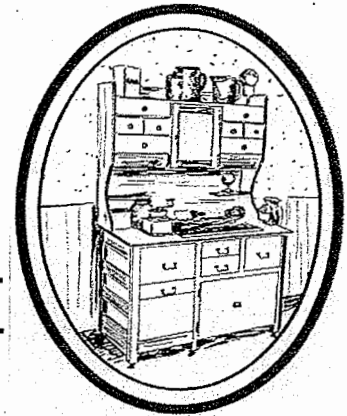
Using 2 table knives, cut Crisco and flour together.  
When cut very fine, add 1 ¼ cups cold water.  
Make into ball. Chill; roll out. Makes 5-6 crusts.  
Freezes very well. Wrap well.



**CHOCOLATE FUDGE** by **FANCHON COWLES** (p.90)

4 ½ c. white sugar      1 stick oleo  
1 can evaporated milk      2 tsp. Vanilla  
1 c. nuts                ½ pkg. Miniature marshmallows  
1 (12 oz.) pkg. Semi-sweet chocolate bits

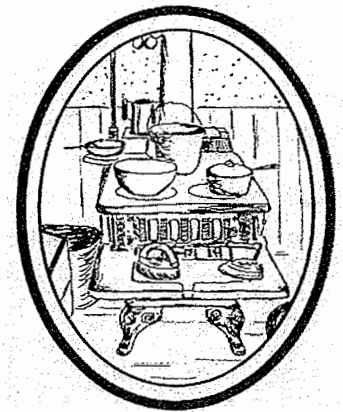
Bring sugar and milk to boil, stirring continuously (use spatula).  
Boil 6 ½ minutes. Add bits, oleo, vanilla, nuts and marshmallows.  
Stir until mixture starts to thicken. Pour in buttered pan.  
Cool for 2-3 hours. Cut in pieces. Wrap. Freezes well.



**DATMEAL COCONUT CRISPS** by **FANCHON COWLES** (p.85)

2 c. margarine                2 tsp. Baking powder  
2 c. brown sugar            ½ tsp. baking soda  
2 c. white sugar              4 eggs  
3 tsp. Vanilla                1 ½ c. coconut  
3 c. flour                      6 c. quick oats  
2 tsp. Salt (optional)        1 c. nuts

Mix thoroughly. Drop by teaspoons 2 inches apart.  
Bake at 350 degrees for 10-15 minutes. Makes 14-15 dozen.





# DENT CAST IRON HORSE-DRAWN WAGONS CIRCA 1930S

ON LOAN TO THE PIONEER MUSEUM BY PHYLLIS JUDSON HEUSTED

## Cast Iron Toys:

Although cast iron toys were produced in the 1860s, they did not appear in great numbers until the 1880s, and by the 1920s and 1930s they were being replaced by lithographed tinplate toys. Cast iron toys were usually cast in several parts which were then pinned, bolted, or riveted together. Early toys included horse-drawn wagons, fire-engines, circus trains, and guns.

From 1920-1930s the Dent Hardware Co. (established 1895) in Fullerton, Pennsylvania, produced toys notable for their exceptionally fine casting, which makes them easy to identify even though they are unmarked.

The American toy industry began in earnest in the 1830s, when the development of transportation by railway and canal made mass production and distribution viable. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century American toy manufacturers produced a wide range of tinplate toys notable for their ingenious design, hand-painted decoration, and charm. Steel was used by the turn of the century to produce friction toys and, later, pressed steel cars and trucks. By the 1880s cast-iron toys and banks were being produced in large quantities and remained an almost exclusively American phenomenon.

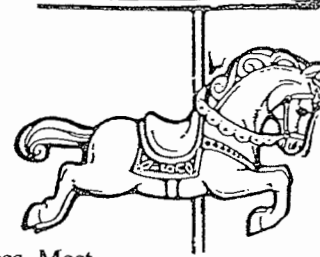
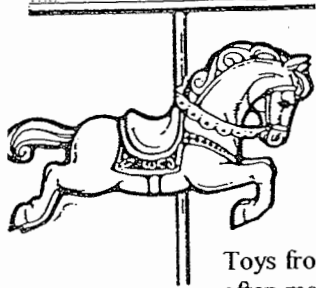


## CHILDREN'S GAMES IN VICTORIAN TIMES

Children in Victorian times collected scrap, butterflies, and other bugs; painted; played musical instruments, and read books and children's magazines. Card and board games and puzzles were the primary indoor entertainment for children. With the advent of new mass-production technology and the chromolithography (color) printing process of the nineteenth century, these games gained in popularity.

In the 1850s the firms of **W. & S.B Ives** and **McLoughlin Brothers** began publishing many of the popular games of the period. These early board games usually were designed to teach and often had religious, moral, or educational themes. Later in the century the familiar names of **Parker Brothers** and **Milton Bradley** began their long-lived and prolific game-publishing empires. The board game business was primarily an American enterprise.

The games most common to the back parlor were checkers, chess, and cards.



# TOYS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

Toys from the early part of the Victorian era were one-of-a-kind, individually manufactured pieces. Most often made of wood, but later in the century more and more toys were made of metal or at least had some metal parts. A large number were imported from Europe, especially Germany.

During the latter part of the century, tinplate toys from Germany took up a large portion of the U.S. toy market. (Made by covering a thin sheet of iron or steel with tin, tinplate was used for a variety of mechanical and "visual" toys.)

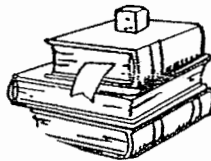
## Four categories of Victorian toys:

1. **educational** (alphabet & building blocks, "log cabin" sets; sewing, knitting, and weaving for girls; woodworking, steam engine & chemistry kits for boys.)
2. **mechanical** (the invention of the clock in the 13<sup>th</sup> century popularized the use of gear-driven mechanics which became the basis for the 19<sup>th</sup> century tinplate toys.)
3. **representative** (miniaturized versions of people, places, and things found in the adult world – dolls and stuffed animals for girls, toy guns and toy soldiers for boys.)
4. **mobile** (sleds, bicycles, carriages and a large variety of wheeled pieces)



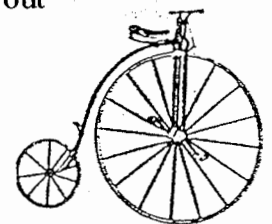
## BOOK CHARACTERS BORN IN THE VICTORIAN ERA

- |      |                               |
|------|-------------------------------|
| 1838 | <b>OLIVER TWIST</b>           |
| 1842 | <b>HANDY ANDY</b>             |
| 1851 | <b>MOBY DICK</b>              |
| 1864 | <b>ALICE IN WONDERLAND</b>    |
| 1865 | <b>HANS BRINKER</b>           |
| 1875 | <b>TOM SAWYER</b>             |
| 1880 | <b>UNCLE REMUS</b>            |
| 1885 | <b>HUCKLEBERRY FINN</b>       |
| 1886 | <b>LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY</b> |
| 1893 | <b>HANSEL AND GRETEL</b>      |



Plus the characters in **Louis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass &*** **Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*.**

Also popular: small colorful books with predominant illustrations accompanying simple rhymes, jingles, or prose. In the latter part of the century, many of these contained bright chromolithographic scenes that unfolded and popped out when the page was turned.



## REFERENCE BOOKS: VICTORIANA

1. *Antique Trader: Guide to Fakes and Reproductions* by Mark Chervenka, c.2001; Krause Publications ([www.krause.com](http://www.krause.com)), 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990-0001, telephone 715-445-2214; Library of Congress Catalog Number: 00-111278; ISBN: 0-87349-236-6. [745.102 C]
2. *Collector's Guide to Victoriana -- Furniture, Architectural Details, Glass, China, & Accessories*, by O. Henry Mace, c.1991; Wallace-Homestead Book Company, Radnor, PA 19089, ISBN 0-87069-576-2; [747.2 M]
3. *Miller's Antiques Encyclopedia*, Judith Miller, Editor; c.1998, reprinted 1999; Octopus Pub. Group Ltd, London, ISBN 1 85732 747 0 [745.1 M].