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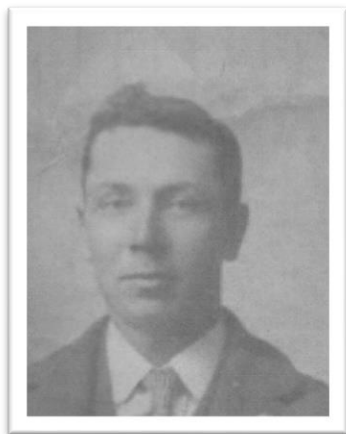
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Metamora Stonemason Created Many Memorials

Woodford County Journal, October 12, 2017 by Michelle Lehman

You've seen the structures all around the area adorned with local stones and you may have wondered about the story behind them. Woodford County Journal Michelle Lehman researched the topic and here is the fascinating story of what she found...

"Ove the course of three decades a Metamora bricklayer and stonemason hauled stones and small boulders from fields and streams to construct various monuments, and even an entire house, that still dot the Metamora landscape.



Herman Weber

"Herman Albert Weber, a Piper City native who lived in Metamora from 1929 to 1959, created at least seven stone structures, including the veterans' memorial which was built around 1940.

Weber's handiwork began in 1923 with the construction of the 10-foot-tall soldiers and sailor's monument in Oakwood Cemetery, according to Karen Fyke. Weber then built the grotto at St. Mary of Lourdes Church in 1928 and the bandstand in the village square in 1931.

"The 1940s were an especially busy time for Weber, as he constructed not only the veterans' memorial in the village square, but also the ornamental stonework in St Mary's Cemetery. That's also when he built his family's own quaint cobblestone house. The home originally was located along Illinois Route 116 on the east edge of Metamora across from the current Snyder Village.

"When state officials began work to change the curve on Route 116, they told Mr. Weber that he had to knock down the house," according to long time Metamora resident Lynn Elbert. "But Mr. Weber told them that the house would never be knocked down. The state argued with him, and they finally came to an agreement about how much to pay him for his property. He moved back to Piper City, and eventually the state moved the house to its present location on

North Prairie Street."

"Mr. Elbert also recalls the Mr. Weber affixed a penny into the concrete near his home's back door and "told us kids that he'd never be poor as long as he had that penny."

"Weber's final stonework project for the village apparently was the 1954 of the stage located on the west side of the village square.

"Weber's work sometimes was lauded with great fanfare, such as the dedication ceremony of his first work, the soldiers and sailor's monument in Oakwood Cemetery. The Metamora Herald reported the monument was dedicated with a beautiful address by a local pastor, words from the American Legion commander, a firing squad salute and he playing of "Taps." Echoes of that soulful refrain carried throughout the cemetery. Even today, as one stand near that monument, or any of the other structures credited to Mr. Weber, one can imagine the sound of the clinks and the scraped of the stonemason's tools building strong, silent memorials to stand through the years.

"According to Mr. Weber's obituary, he was born in 1883 in Brenton Township in Ford County. His first wife died in 1911 after only four years of marriage. His second wife died in 1963 following their 50-year marriage. He had three daughters. Weber died in 1973 at age 90 after residing with a sister during the last three years of his life."



Bandstand 1931



Stage 1954



Veteran's Memorial – 1940s



Oakwood Cemetery Veteran's Memorial 1923



St Mary's Metamora

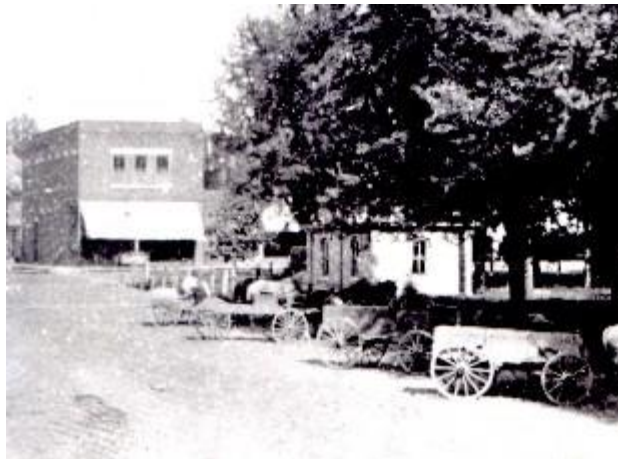


Mr. Weber's Home

Bob Fandel Remembers Gathering Stones

Bob Fandel recalls collecting stones from his Grandfather Fletcher's creek north of town for some of Mr. Weber's projects. After finding a nice, useful stone, it had to be toted up the hill and deposited in a farm wagon. The pay for this work – 25¢ an hour!

The Village Discovers an Old, Long-Forgotten Well



TOWN PUMP In 1921 the Village Town Pump House in the Village Park was replaced with a water fountain with several bubblers. The old pump house was located near the northeast corner of the village square as seen in the above photo. The new fountain was installed directly across from the Metamora Court House.

This public improvement project was started by the local Home Economics Club at the Metamora High School. Funds to pay for the fountain came from proceeds of ice cream socials and bakery sales. Pies, cakes, other baked goods and dressed chickens were offered at the show room of Wagner-Thompson Garage on the east side of the square. The Village assumed the cost of installing the fountain.

THE OLD WELL You may have driven past and seen the village crew digging up the old brick streets across from the from the Jim Maloof office on the north side of the Square and wondered what was going on.

It seems the park mysteriously had developed a wet spot. When the village crew started investigating, they discovered not only an old well (barely seen at the top of the photo above) but also another unexpected water line.

If you have any information about the old well, we'd love to hear from you!

Wonder what else might be down there...?

Contact Us

Questions, ideas - Love to hear from you

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