

“Ponderings From the Past” May 2007

During our Jubilee Celebration year, Joan VanPatten, a member of the Communications Ministry team will dig into the archives to feature some piece of history every month in Focus.

In the Fall of 2006 the famous Celia McIntyre Circle's Clam Chowder was reintroduced to the SUMC community as a fundraiser for Lynnette Cole's mission trip to Nicaragua. The day before Palm Sunday Pat & John Dahoda, Debi Deering & Katie Nolan, Lynnette Cole, Ed Cole & Nate Jacobia made clam chowder, which they sold to church members the next day. Every customer received a wonderful little booklet put together by Pat Dahoda and filled with the history of the chowder.

Here are some excerpts from the booklet:

“Before Fellowship Hall was constructed, the clam chowder luncheon was held in the Hearth Room. It was an important part of our Country Fair, very popular with the community and with members of our congregation. Each year ‘Grandma’ Nettie Morris sat at the door and sold tickets to the luncheon. Each member of the Celia McIntyre Circle (from the West Crescent Church) made a batch of chowder from the recipe handed down from Maggie DeVoe. Almost everyone brought their jugs of chowder to DeVoe's Rainbow Orchard, where Vaughn and Lawrence DeVoe stored them in a cooler. Margaret DeVoe, Larry's mother, had previously stored it for us.

Two of our members were young and not allowed to serve the hot chowder, so they were given other important jobs. Nancy Morris walked around the Church with a sign telling of the chowder luncheon and announcing ‘Chowder in the Hearth Room – Get your Chowder.’ It was very exciting. Later, Eileen Dahoda set up tables, served cake, and filled baskets with oyster crackers. They were never too young to help.

The Celia McIntyre Circle was named for the wife of the West Crescent Church Pastor, Rev. Jasper McIntyre. This Circle was very fortunate to have dedicated women like Margaret DeVoe, Rachel DeVoe and Ida Shafer as members. Margaret DeVoe and Ida Shafer stirred and mixed the batches of chowder together. Later, it was Rachel DeVoe who was in charge of stirring the chowder from kettle to kettle and mixing the *secret Ingredient* that made the chowder special. Ida was then her assistant and both worked together as one. Even when Rachel had her broken arm in a cast, she still dipped the chowder. It was important for her to do her job.

Through the years, the Circle had to enlist the help of others from the congregation to help serve the luncheon. We were now in the new Fellowship Hall and the luncheon became very popular. Lucille Sicko became a very faithful volunteer and we could always count on her to help serve. Millie LaValle also helped in any capacity she could, and we were very appreciative of her service. We had gentlemen who gave us their time by

serving coffee and helping in the kitchen. They were Gerald Morris, John C. Dahoda, Andy Sicko and Mike Sicko. It took many helping hands to make the clam chowder luncheon the success that it became.

In later years, as our Circle members dwindled, we enlisted the help of others in the congregation to make chowder for us. They were Delores (Dodie) Goody, June Pettis, Adella Harris and Lorraine Fellows. These volunteers never knew what the *secret ingredient* was. This ingredient was added the day the chowder was all mixed together. Each batch was lovingly dipped back and forth, kettle to kettle by Margaret, Rachel and Ida. All who made the chowder put time, effort and cost of ingredients into their batch of chowder. All made their batches of chowder from the same handed down recipe. The batches were then combined and mixed dipper by dipper for that special secret ingredient of *fellowship*.

Ouida Schwartz, wife of Rev. Charles Downer Schwartz, Pastor of SUMC from 1969 to 1979, was a member of the Celia McIntyre Circle. She not only made chowder for the fair, but she made a special cake for the workers of the luncheon. We were overjoyed with her effort and she made all of us feel special. She is a special person and is loved by all the members of the Celia McIntyre Circle and also by many members of our congregation.”

Next month we will feature more information about this famous clam chowder as well as the actual recipe. Thank you, Pat Dahoda, for all the volunteer work you do and for sharing this information with us. *Joan VanPatten*