FROM LODGES TO GARDEN CLUBS

Whenever people settle, congregate or colonize, the need soon arises for social activity, for a chance to relax or expand one's horizons. So, it was with the early Cambria settlers. They developed intellectual societies, service organizations, ecumenical religious groups and social clusters. Perhaps many of the earliest associations were tied to old-world ways and institutions. Soon, however, the American life style asserted itself, and these groups developed, changed, expanded and grew or else they dwindled and faded as their functions were assumed by other groups.

The following accounts reflect many of the organizations which are, or were, influential in the history of this village.

The Independent Order of Good Templers

One of the earliest recorded chartered community groups was that of the Good Templers. Organized in 1864 in the interest of temperance, this Cambria organization met Friday evenings in the McConchie Building.

Originally there were forty charter members including Kennedy, Scott, Perrie Williams, Rev. Rees Evans, Peter Williams, George Beyer, William E. Williams, Jennie Williams.

A later group, begun in 1895, called the Golden Ray Lodge followed in the same purposes as the Good Templers. This lodge lasted two years.

Cambria Lodge No. 152, F and AM

Another of the early groups was this lodge which held its first meeting on July 25, 1865, with the Fox Lake Lodge No. 67 as their sponsors. The independent charter was granted June 18, 1866.

Following are the officers of the sixty member 1976 lodge:

Worshipful Master Frederick Lightner
Senior Warden Ole Evenson
Junior Warden Dana Albee
Treasurer Fred Mohr
Secretary Walter Kuehn
Senior Deacon Robert Behling
Junior Deacon Donald Mohr
Senior Steward Robert B. Jones
Junior Steward Frank Lightner
Tyler Lester Kuehn
Trustee Clayton Morgan
Trustee Robert Slinger
Trustee Robert B. Jones

Another lodge was mentioned in the History of Columbia County. This was the Cambria Lodge, No. 61, A. O. U. W. which was organized in April 24, 1879 by A. H. Casey and fourteen other charter members.
Modern Woodman, Fidelity Camp, No. 16

This insurance association originated in Cambria August 29, 1892. The six charter members were Wm. E. Williams, camp director; Owen C. Williams; J. Ap Edwards; John Slinger; D. R. Price; and Rudolph Rausch, and they met originally in the Good Templers Hall.

Eventually the number of insurance holders in the community dropped, and group meetings have not been held for many years.

Royal Neighbors Society of America, Juanita Camp, No. 2051

This women's insurance group was instituted on March 15, 1900, in Cambria. The charter members numbered twenty-five, and they met in the hall on the third floor of the Edwards Building.

The following are the names of those charter members:

Maggie J. Williams  Ella Marquardt
Mary M. Morris      Sarah O. Williams
Margaret Williams   Louise M. Healey
Elmina Inglehart    Nell Owen
Annie T. Sawyer     Cornelia Ford
Bessie Roberts      Mary Cross
Jane Lloyd Jones    Maggie Ernsberger
Jane Thomas         Jessie Dodge
Mary Ann Hughes     Laura Neilson
Louise M. Glenske   Ellen Cross
Fannie Walker       Rachael Gorsuch
Jessie Deakin       Fanny Healey
Mary Schemmel

At present there are sixty holders of insurance, but there is small attendance at meetings necessitating home meetings.

The present officers are: Oracle, Lita Nielson
Vice Oracle, Janet Nielson
Recorder, Marjorie Smith
Receiver, Della Leary

Shakespeare Club

Organized in Cambria, 1898
Affiliated with State Federation of Clubs, 1901
Charter members and officers:
Sarah Lloyd
Hermie Edwards
Mary Williams
Matilda Parry
Vinnie Blanchard
The club was started when high school level educational opportunities for women were limited; Shakespeare was the popular subject studied to fill a need. After 1930 a variety of programs were given and studies continued. The group is civic minded and active in all village and community projects.

The current officers are:
President: Anna Mable Williams
Vice President: Arvon Sanderson
Secretary: Alice Mohr
Treasurer: Marjorie Smith

The Woman’s Club

When the Junior Woman’s Club was organized in 1934 it was federated with the District and State General Federation of Woman’s Clubs, under the leadership of Mary Allen Rowlands. Since 1941 the affiliation has been severed, and it has become an independent club with a study program and local social and civic projects. Some of the studies have been on Better Radio Listening, Home-School Relationships, Libraries, State Schools and Penal Institutions. They have sponsored the Summer Recreational Programs, made gifts to the library, assisted the County Nurse in hearing tests and on the Chest X-Ray Mobile Unit and other local concerns have had their help.

At the present time the membership is 14. The 1975-76 officers are:
President:.........................Mrs. Dana Albee
Vice President:..............Mrs. Thomas W. Williams
Secretary:......................Mrs. David Lloyd
Treasurer:......................Mrs. Clifford Mays

Ramona Chapter No. 141, Order of Eastern Star

Sponsored by the Randolph Chapter No. 134, the Eastern Star held their first meeting June 16, 1903 in Cambria.

Through support of the Estral Fund, this fulfilled one of its functions which is to provide help for young people going into the field of Christian Education.

A new temple for both the Eastern Star and the Lodge was constructed on W. Edgewater Street in 1949.

The present membership numbers about fifty with the following slate of officers:
Worthy Matron..............Mrs. Thomas W. Thomas
Worthy Patron..............Mrs. Walter Kuehn
Associate Matron............Mrs. Fredrick Lightner, Sr.
Associate Patron...........Mr. Ole Evenson
Secretary.....................Miss Eleanor Davies
Treasurer....................Mr. Fred Mohr
Conductress................Mrs. Walter Kuehn
Associate Conductress......Mrs. Dana Albee
Chaplin......................Mrs. Fred Mohr
In 1907 the Cambria Volunteer Fire Department was organized, and the constitution and bylaws formulated. The officers were to consist of a foreman, assistant foreman, property man and secretary-treasurer, elected annually. The regular meeting was and still is the first Monday of the month with practice twice a month from May to October.

The original equipment was a hook and ladder company of from ten to fourteen men and a hose company of fourteen to twenty men, ages 18 to 50, who pulled their own carts to the fires.

The first floor of the old town hall south of the Music Hall on Scott Street was the Fire House; water was hand-pumped from cisterns or near-by bodies of water until the acquisition of a large soda-acid fire extinguisher mounted on a cart. This was then stored in the basement of the Lockhart Company Store to prevent freezing.
In the early days a few water mains were run to hydrants at the corner of 146 and Commerce Street, at the corner of 146 and County P and one near the Music Hall. To force the water into them, a pump was installed in the basement of the old mill, and when the fire bell on the Town Hall sounded, the miller placed the drive belt on the water main from the pond, using steam power or water power, which ever was being used at the moment.

In 1925 the Cambria water tower was erected, and all of Cambria was equipped with water mains and hydrants. The first fire truck, a 1929 G.M.C., was purchased and kept in Leary's Garage.

![1927 fire truck, the first such vehicle purchased by the department](image)

After the present fire house was erected in 1946, the 1949 Ward La France fire truck was the star equipment piece. Another advancement was the formation of the Cambria Community Association and the policies which were set up with the Townships of Springvale, Courtland, Randolph and Scott. Equipment from then on was shared, and fire costs were charged to the township or village where the fire took place.

A 1966 pumper, a 1973 International tanker and a 1975 Chevrolet 4-wheel drive pick-up with a 150 gallon tank for grass fires were bought. In 1974 a used Ford van that is utilized for emergencies was purchased and has two certified ambulance attendents, Lee Vaughn and Don White.

All equipment has new two-way FM radios installed. Retired fireman Hugh (Jeff) Williams mans the fire calls at the base station or Fire House.

Some of the early firemen in the community were:
Ben Price, Dan Glyn Williams, Evor Roberts, Lewis Lloyd, Dr. E. O. Roberts, Fred Pickrun, Fred Evans, B. W. Hughes, David Davies (Christmas).

The 1976 roster shows Monte Bradley and Temp Slinger as this year’s fire wardens. Fire chief is William Gorsuch; first assistant fire chief, Emery Leary; second assistant fire chief, Jim Wright; Secretary-treasurer, William Slinger, Sr.; Property man, Dennis Gorsuch.

Five honorary retired firemen are Ray Leary, Hugh Williams, Charles Missal, Wilbert Tonn, Raymond Jones.
Girl Scouts

At present there are four divisions of the Girl Scouts: Brownies, Junior Girl Scouts, Senior Girl Scouts and Cadettes. Their respective leaders at present are: Virginia Deakin, Karen Wiersma, Mrs. Marilyn Cutsworth, and Nancy Braaksma.

The original Troop at Cambria started on February 28, 1927. There were 25 members under the leadership of Mrs. Mary Allen Rowlands:
Geniveve Mair
Evelyn Fox
Ruth Fay
Sylvia Slinger
Minnie Reifsnider
Margaret Slinger
Carrie Montgomery
Margaret Andrews
Janet Closs
Nona Owen
Robertta Griffith
Florence Behnke
Leona Bahr

Boy Scouts

Boy Scouts are divided into two sections: Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts. At the present time there are twenty boys, ages 8 to 11, in the Cub Scout packs. These packs, the Bears, Wolves, Webelos, are presided over by the leaders, Arline Oliver, and Mr. and Mrs. George Carpenter.

The Boy Scouts have Jim Sanderson and Warren Williams as their Scout Masters for 1975-76.

Kiwanis

This service organization was formed in Cambria in 1957 with the motto, "We Build". There are four committees within this organization which illustrate its purposes: vocational guidance, public business affairs, agriculture and conservation.

Some of the present community services they provide are the annual athletic banquet; awards to outstanding senior athletes; various civic projects involving the park, ice-out contest, Christmas lighting prizes.

The first officers of the original group were:
President...........Dr. Joseph Brown
1st Vice Pres........Irvin Abendroth
2nd Vice Pres........Warren Williams
Secy.-Treas............John Gorsuch

The current officers are:
President...............Thomas Williams (Beeck Hill)
1st Vice Pres........Daniel Weber
Secy.-Treas...............Freeman Stalker
American Legion Post No. 401

This post was organized in 1961 with the following list of officers:

Commander Aage Schou
Adjutant Jay Williams
Treasurer Frank Graafsmal
Chaplain Fred Leystra
Service Officer Pierce Lloyd

Officers of the Columbia County Council of the American Legion as of 1976 are:

Sergeant at Arms Russell Retaczak
Col. Co. Service Officer Frederick W. Lightner
Col. Co. Chaplain Evelyn Jones
Service Officer Wally Wiersma

Local Post No. 401 Officers:

Commander Russell Retaczak
Adjutant Pierce Lloyd

Treasurer Elden Rode
Chaplain Evelyn Jones

The Legion performs several services to the community. For example, a hundred dollar Americanism scholarship is presented to high school seniors, and the Legion sponsors, a Badger Boy's State delegate to Ripon. They also conduct military funerals and Memorial Day exercises at Cambria and Friesland. During the summer the group maintains the refreshment stand at the park, and they man the barbecue service on Park Day.

Cambria Legion Auxiliary No. 401

The thirty-five senior members and eight junior members of the Legion Auxiliary meet the first Tuesday of every month.

This group works hand in hand with the Legion, but they also have several projects and functions of their own. In April, The Auxiliary sponsors a Bingo Party at Madison Veterans Hospital with prizes and treats. In June they send a girl to Badger Girls State in Madison, and they have also adopted a veteran at the residence in Tomah who they remember on special occasions such as his birthday and Christmas.

Community functions include a softball team, float entrees in the Park Day parade, and helping the community's veterans and their families.

Of course one of the most notable occupations is the poppy selling project held before Memorial Day.

The current officers are:

President - Evelyn Leary
Vice-President - Alice Lightner
Secretary - Harriet Evans
Treasurer - Sara Sommers
Sgt. at Arms - Veronica Neary
Historian - Darlene Behling
Sunset Garden Club

The club was organized in July 3, 1962, with eleven members present. It meets on the second Tuesday of each month at the homes of the members. Their projects consist of ways to beautify the village. Some of these projects are window boxes for the main street and planting of shrubs, bulbs and trees in the park.

The first Officers were:
President - Mrs. Eugene Hahn
Vice-president - Mrs. Oscar Ruehl
Treasurer - Mrs. Robert Closs
Secretary - Mrs. Morris Williams

The present officers are:
President - Gwen Achterberg
Vice-president - Inez Closs
Secretary - Mrs. Elmer Erdman
Treasurer - Mrs. Hubert Cottam

Cambria Conservation Club, Inc.

The present Conservation Club was organized in 1948 with Griff (Pa) Jones elected president. Bylaws were adopted for Incorporation which called for lake improvement and Pheasant rearing and plantings.

Art Brossard was the next president and under 25 years of leadership many projects were completed, such as tree plantings, lake shore line clean ups, fish stocking assistance and rearing 500-1000 pheasants for stocking in the Cambria area. A club house has been built and also facilities for trap shooting.

Present officers of the club are: President Jim Fredricks, Vice-president Lester Kloostra, Secretary-treasurer Myron Byre. The club has 80 active members.

Contributed by Edwin Hughes, Cambria