

Accused of Dancing at the Cemetery Chapel

Joyce Peters Jenkins

It was on Halloween Night in 1940. All the older kids in town got together and planned to shivaree* a newly wedded couple. Everything was covered with ice that night. Someone suggested it was an ideal spooky night to go out to the cemetery. We all took off and skated our way out. We found the door to the chapel unlocked. It was pitch-dark, but someone had a flashlight and we all went inside.

We saw the old pump organ and one of the girls was going to try playing it, but needed a person to pump the pedals before she got it to work. Donna Tuttle played the organ and Darlene Sprague pumped the pedals for her to get it to play, so we had music until we heard voices and saw a light flashing in the distance.

We thought it was Harry Lage our town cop. Mike Burley had a Model A coupe with a rumble seat. The first ones to get to the car piled in, on the top, and on the running boards for a ride back to town. First one in the car was Orlin Ott, the Golden Glove Champion Boxer from Hartley. The rest of us skated our way back to town on the ice. We went ahead with the shivaree and the couple treated us all to malted milks at Red's Cafe.

At the time I was working at the local hamburger shop. The first customer that came in the next morning for coffee was the local barber, Merle Smith.

He greeted me with, "Good Morning, Joyce, how was dancing out to the cemetery last night?"

Needless to say, I was speechless and wondered where he got his information so soon. It wasn't long before it was the town gossip and the story grew as it spread.

Pete Leese was the Mayor at the time. He was very upset, got the names of some of the boys and called them in. He threatened to take them to Primghar and press charges. He demanded the names of

all that were there. The boys started naming off the names. Mike Burley and I recall there were about twenty of us. Some of the others present that night were Rich Anderson, Doris Olhausen, Arlo Snider and Delores Adolf (Snider).

When Pete Leese discovered the list of names included his granddaughter, Pauline Sartorious, the matter was dropped and nothing more was said. Just for the records—there really was no dancing at the chapel that night.

- A shivaree is *a noisy celebration with kettles, pans, horns, and other noisemakers given for a newly married couple.*

Joyce Peters Jenkins was born in the Hand Hospital in 1922. She recalls a time that she attended a funeral service in the Chapel.