COBDEN PEACH
FESTIVAL
1938 ~ 1987

Oh, there's quite a stir in Cobden,
When peach harvest rolls around,
And folks are all a-twitter,
Until a Queen is found.

In this land of God's abundance,
Where King Peach reigns all supreme,
It is natural they should do this,
for each King should have a Queen.

On this day the girls of Cobden,
Are all brushed to brightest sheen,
And it's quite a job to pick the best,
With every Peach a queen.

Yes, it's quite a day in Cobden,
And people come from far and near,
To shake hands with friends and neighbors,
And renew acquaintance dear.

--Byron L. Cole
in Cobden Review 8/18/44

It was 1938. Cobden, along with the rest of the United States, was slowly climbing out of the Depression. The C.C.C. boys were busy graveling the roads, getting farm families "out of the mud." Cobden's new sewer system, built with New Deal money and lots of local support, was nearly complete.

For years Cobden businessmen had tried to organize. They had formed a Commercial Club and a Chamber of Commerce, but nothing quite jelled. In the spring of 1938 Cobden businessmen made another attempt to organize, this time, under the sponsorship of C.W. "Runt" Bishop, as the Lions Club. The fledgling organization, with 31 charter members, met in Fritze's Restaurant, a popular cafe near the People's Market, where Draper's Grocery now stands. They decided to sponsor a fund-raiser that year. It would be a harvest festival, with a queen to boost the region's peaches.

The first Peach Festival, held Saturday, August 13, 1938, was a one-day affair and showed a great deal of planning and work, for everything had to be built from scratch. The festivities took place on the south side of the high school (where the gymnasium is now). Stands had to be built, and a platform for the coronation. A program had to be created and music, games, and food had to be obtained. Fortunately, the Lions had many resources in their membership.

Curt and Marie Scott owned a butcher shop and grocery store. Scott was a charter member, and volunteered to provide hamburgers. For a couple of nights before the festival the Scotts and other Lions ground beef while their wives made them into patties, storing them in the Scott's freezer. For a number of years all the hamburgers were hand made.

T.V. Tunnell, another charter member, was manager of the Egyptian Lumber Company, and George D. Ede operated one of the best machine shops in Southern Illinois. The owners of both box and basket factories, Randall Lawrence and Howard A. DuBois, were members, as was John Stroehlein, owner of a hardware store. Just about every business in town was represented.

The first ever Cobden Peach Festival was a rousing success. The Cobden Review wrote:

> The Cobden Lions Club was more than pleased last Saturday night

when a large crowd, conservatively estimated at 1200 people, attended the first annual Cobden peach festival. Many were on hand when the festivities opened at 7 o'clock and in less than a hour, the festivities were in full swing, with all concessions doing a rushing business.

Prize peaches were judged Saturday afternoon by Herman Schulte, chief inspector, Division of Markets, Department of Agriculture, and Fred C. Hartz, assistant.

Prizes were awarded as follows: Elbertas, Hugh Lamer, Jr., first; Billy Casper, second; Hales, J.E. Venerable and Sons, first and second. A fine bushel of peaches was brought in by Henry Lingle but was received too late to be entered in the contest. During the evening, tickets were sold on the prize-winning bushels and at 10:30 they were awarded to Earl Venerable, Mrs. Ben Biggs and Charles DuBois.

The highlight of the evening, of course, was the coronation of Miss Delores Flamm as Queen of the Festival. Under the glare of powerful floodlights, the ceremony, planned and directed by Miss Mary Lawrence, was one of breathtaking beauty. L.E. Morris, Lions district governor, officiated at the ceremony.

Immediately after the coronation ceremony, a dance was held in the high school gymnasium, with music furnished by Dave and Willie and their Novelty Band. Many people attended the dance, which concluded the festivities at 1 a.m.

C.W. "Runt" Bishop, active in the Carterville Lions Club, sponsored the new Cobden Lions in 1938. Bishop represented the Southern Illinois district in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1940 to 1954, and held other public service positions. He was district governor of Lions Club District 1C and worked for 10 years for Lions International. Bishop was originally from Buncombe and Anna.

As several merchants have said this week, the festival "would have been a success if the club hadn't made a penny". That detail holds no cause for worry, however, as the Lions Club did enjoy a nice financial return for their efforts, the larger part of which they plan to use for civic purposes.

The editor of the Cobden Review, James H. Allen, had a somewhat more sober assessment of the Festival, as he wrote in an editorial:

Well, the first effort to direct wide-spread attention to Cobden and Alto Pass fine peach crops through the medium of a peach festival is all over as far as the public is concerned.

Although a fairly good-sized crowd attended the festivities on the high school campus Saturday night, it should have been larger. Many apparently failed to catch the spirit of the occasion or to realize the importance of helping to make it a success. To us, it seems to offer the greatest possiblity on which the community might capitalize. Through wide-spread and favorable publicity the event can be made to attract attention throughout the Mid-west, which in turn would create a greater demand for the crop and bring a greater prosperity for the entire community.

Certainly the Lions Club is to be congratulated and highly commended for their first efforts. It took a lot of work, a lot of time from their business and a lot of worry about details to put it over. Public appreciation of such an affair would be greater if the work involved was more generally understood.

We say "more power" to the Lions and if in the future, the Peach Festival can be combined with or become known as a home-coming time for all former residents who may have moved away, as well as a day and night of fun and festivities that might include a parade of beautiful floats, they will look back

upon their first effort and realize it was a tremendous success.

Fifty years later, those individuals who carried the ball down through the years can look back and see that that small group of Lions who worked and planned so diligently indeed began a tradition that has grown and flourished. The Cobden Peach Festival has carried on through three wars, recession, inflation, floods, droughts, rain, heat, and lost crops. Despite, as one of the early members said, "swearing every year that that one was the last one we would have" because of all the work, "we'd get cooled off and go in again."

The wives of the Lions worked as hard as their husbands, and a number of non-members volunteered as well. The Club formally thanked Father Brumleve, Miss Mary Lawrence, and several boys who helped park cars, and decided to hold a Ladies Night "at which the wives of the members and all those who helped make the festival a success would be entertained." Ladies Night has become a Lions institution, and is held each year in December.

HARD TIMES

Despite optimistic reports on the local economy (see box), Union County had not shaken off the Depression. In 1938 the peach crop was short because of spring freezes, so those who had peaches got a good price. In 1939, however, the crop was bountiful and, the Murphysboro Independent reported, "prices were discouraging ... $.85 to $1.15 per bushel. Most discouraging of the markets in recent years."

Prices were still at Depression levels: Ridgway's Red & White Store advertised sugar in a 10 lb. cloth bag, 55c, and in a 10 lb. paper bag, 49c. Fourteen ounce bottles of tomato catsup were selling for 3 for 25c, and a one pound can of salmon cost 10c. Ivory soap was a nickle. Clingingsmith's general store in Jonesboro advertised women's white shoes at $1.59, while children's white shoes cost 98c. The profits from the first Peach Festival, between $125 and $150, was a considerable sum, given these prices.

> Times are better for Union County people. Don't let anyone tell you it is not.
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> When the Gazette man came to this county about five years ago, married and single men were being paid at the rate of 50 to 75 cents per day (without board and room) and the average time was for about three days, only, per week. Much of the time there was no work for anyone. In addition to those handicaps, laborers were often required to walk to and from their work a distance of from 3 to 6 miles, and this distance was also the rule when employed on "work relief jobs". Now, that has been changed.
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> Just now, boys not over 12 and 14 years of age are receiving as much as $1.50 per day.
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> With the W.P.A. work, bean picking, berry, asparagus, tomato, apple, wheat and melon seasons, there should be no idle laborers in Southern Illinois.
>
> **Jonesboro Gazette** July 23, 1938

In 1939, the Lions hauled the lumber for the concession stands and queen's platform out of Basler's potato house and the barns where they were stored, and a full program was underway. The Cobden Review reviewed the day's program:

> Although intermittent showers in the afternoon and threatening skies in the evening is believed to have kept many people away from the event, several expressed their opinion that this year's crowd was larger than the one entertained here last year.
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> More concessions were on the grounds this year, and were placed in solid, well-decorated booths, ample seating and parking space was provided and other improvements over last year's Festival were noted. Practically all concessions were in

operation at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and continued until late in the evening. Beginning about 3 o'clock and continuing until just before the coronation ceremonies, a 26 piece band played several numbers, all of which were greatly enjoyed by the crowd.

Just before 9 o'clock a splendid address was given by Roy Gulley of Zeigler, Lions district governor. This was followed by the singing by a mixed chorus from Jonesboro, of a song concerning this section and its peaches, written especially for the occasion.

The high spot of the evening's activites came when Miss Mary Jane Lamer was officially crowned Queen of the Festival, in a beautiful and impressive ceremony that was planned and directed by Miss Aileen Hardin.

Following the coronation ceremonies, a dance was held in the high school gymnasium with music being furnished by the Dixieland orchestra of Herrin. Many people attended the dance, which concluded the festivities at about 1:30 a.m.

A fine example of the quality and beauty of Union county peaches was given all those present when the prize winning peaches were displayed on the grounds. The following growers won prizes for the best Elbertas exhibited; Paul Miller, first; Donald Casper, second; and Hugh. H. Lamer and A. Flamm and Sons tied for third. In the showing of Hale peaches, J.E. Venerable and Son won both first and third prizes and Donald Casper won second.

The peaches were judged by Henry A. Anderson and Fred C. Hartz, state inspectors, and M.A. Russell, Federal inspector and O.K. Loomis, agricultural teacher of the Anna-Jonesboro Community High School.

The thoroughness with which the bushels of peaches were inspected is evidenced by the fact that the four judges spent three hours in examining the sixteen bushels entered.

The amateur contest, held in the afternoon, was won by Miss Lorraine Wallace of Cobden, with a tap dance number.

The prize for the best decorated store window was awarded to Jacques' Tavern, for a well executed miniature of the coronation ceremonies.

WINDS OF WAR

In Europe fascism was on the rise and Hitler's army was jostling Germany's neighbors. As Europe armed world trade rebounded, rippling back to Union County, where the kaolin clay deposits south of Mountain Glen were reactivated. Cobden got its first movie theater, the Ritz, in 1940.

The Peach Festival in 1940 expanded again. This year the Lions offered three attendance prizes, of $2.00, $3.00 and $5.00. The Festival opened at 2:00 p.m. on August 10th with a ball game between the Cobden Bulldogs and Camp Pomona. Camp Pomona was a C.C.C. camp for black recruits; the C.C.C., like the U.S. army, was completely segregated in 1940. The ball game was followed by bicycle races, (winners receiving $1.75) and peach judging went on throughout the afternoon. A 90-piece band, made up of high school bands from Cobden, Grand Tower, and Ava, played in the early evening.

After the band concert ended, the prize peaches were auctioned off. For many years, the peach auction was a major focus of activity and suspense, as the various fruit buyers vied with one another to buy the prize peaches. Conrad Baggott, who drove a produce truck for Homer Wilkins, recalled that Cobden was a "beehive of activity" during the peach season. Produce buyers came to Cobden from many different states, as far away as Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio. Buyers flocked around the People's Market and went to larger growers' packing sheds, competing with one another to put their stamp on the best produce. They, along with many seasonal laborers who poured into Union County during the harvest season, came to the Peach Festival. One year, Baggott recalled, one of the buyers, Johnny Enderline, bought out a food stand for $100 and sold the remaining food himself.

The peach auction was followed by a square dance demonstration and square dancing in the gymnasium--10c admission per person and 10c a couple per dance. And, of course, the crowning of the Queen.

The 1941 Festival followed much the same format as the previous year. In the afternoon, the Lions sponsored a bicycle race, sack and three-legged races, a ball throwing contest, and, for those weighing 200 pounds or more, a fat man's race. Courtney Miles of Grand Tower again led the high school band in concert. The Lions also engaged the Barnyard Jamboree to entertain during the afternoon and evening, and Jimmy Thompson and his 12-piece orchestra from Cape Girardeau to play for the dance. Admission to the dance was $1.00 per couple in advance, $1.50 at the door.

The Festival was established, in part, to boost Cobden peaches, and in 1941 the Lions made arrangements for the Egyptian Club to host the Peach Festival Queen at their annual picnic. The Egyptian Club was an organization of Chicago residents who came from Southern Illinois. In 1938, correspondent Catharine A. Brady wrote to the Jonesboro Gazette:

> The annual meeting of the Egyptian Club was held in the Cameo Room of the Morrison Hotel, Chicago, on Saturday, May 21st, at 8:00 o'clock p.m.
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> More than 700 former residents of Southern Illinois attended this meeting. Union county had the largest number of attendants.
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> The first part of the evening was spent in meeting old friends and acquaintance, who are now residing in Chicago.
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> During the dinner hour, several musical numbers were given by talented people from the various counties of Egypt, as Southern Illinois is known.
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> The greater part of the evening was given over to dancing.
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> This gathering, held once a year, is so worthwhile that more Union county and other former residents of the southern tip of the state now residing in Chicago should attend.

In 1941, the Egyptian Club held its annual get-together August 17. The Lions Club paid all the expenses for the new queen, Corrine Goodman, and sent several bushels of peaches along to be distributed at the picnic.

That winter, the war broke in upon the United States. December 7, 1941. Pearl Harbor. Suddenly life was no longer normal, as the U.S. geared up to a war-time footing. By 1942 the war effort was in full swing. The May 21st edition of the Anna Gazette Democrat, for example, had front page stories headlined:

MORE SUGAR FOR CANNING NOW AVAILABLE.

UNION COUNTY BOY HERO AT PEARL HARBOR.

SIXTY-SIX FROM UNION COUNTY LEAVE WED. (boys inducted into the military); and

COUNTY FORCES UNITING FOR PRODUCTION AND CITIZENSHIP.

Each issue of the paper had a list of **THOSE GETTING TIRES THIS WEEK.** Rubber was a necessary material for war production, and tires were in extremely short supply.

Hemlines on skirts went up. Ads began to have war themes. Victory Gardens and War Savings Bonds were promoted. The nation was mobilized to collect scrap metal, rubber and, later, grease. Movies beat the drums of war, with such titles as ""Remember Pearl Harbor" and "Two Yanks in Trinidad".

And with the mobilization came an acute labor shortage. The Gazette-Democrat appealed to those left at home: ASK EVERYONE TO HELP WITH PEACH CROP: SHORTAGE OF LABOR IS WORRY TO COUNTY GROWERS. This labor shortage grew as the war progressed. In later years, some growers got German Prisoners of War, who were housed in the old Pomona C.C.C. camp. Laborers were also flown in from Jamaica. And every available man, woman, and child was recruited to bring in the valuable harvest. Public aid rolls shrank dramatically.

Wages moved up from the 10c to 15c an hour common during the depths of the depression. The union wage scale for common labor, for 1942 to 1944, was 75c an hour; skilled construction workers got $1.00 an hour. Interest rates, however, were low. In a 1942 ad by the Anna National Bank, 90-day U.S. Treasury bills carried a rate of 3/8 percent (yes, three-eights of one percent!). Twelve year savings bonds paid 2.5 percent.

The Cobden area became a part of the war effort. By April of 1943, 1009 Union county men were in the military. Ede's Cobden Machine Works was classified an essential industry, and was therefore able to get metal. In 1943, with the backing of the Lions Club and other civic groups, and financial backing from the Farm Security Administration, a group of 250 farmers organized the Union County Purchasing and Marketing Association and opened a tomato cannery in Cobden. The Gazette Democrat wrote (7/22/43) "American soldiers overseas will soon be learning that the name "Cobden" on a can of tomatoes means more food for victory." The Cobden canning factory, called the Egyptian Plant, had widespread community support. The Lions Club installed a sewage system for the new plant and Ede's Cobden Machine Works made and installed boilers, flues and other equipment.

1941 Queen's Court, with prize peaches. The stage is on the south side of the high school. Back row, left to right: Marilyn DuBois, attendant; Ruth Rich, retiring queen; Corrine Goodman (Rich), Queen; Mary Lingle, attendant. Flower girls: Virginia Rexroat, Luan Shadowens, Martha Jean Williams, Martha Dameron, Sandra Wilkins, (Jane Riley or Ann Clutts). Pages: Don and Bill Flamm.

The labor shortage and increased military demand brought about sharp increases in prices. In mid-June of 1943, the Gazette Democrat announced, PEACHES SELL FOR MORE THAN $8 A BUSHEL, **Beans On Rampage Monday Sell For $5.50.** Wages went up, as well. The Office of Price Administration (OPA) soon clamped ceilings on the prices, but even with controls produce prices were stronger than they had been in years. "Peach fever" hit and farmers set out thousands of new trees.

The People's Market was one of the busiest places in the region in the summer. The Cobden Review wrote on July 14, 1944,

> The person who visits the market early in the morning will see one of the reasons why Cobden is known throughout the country as an outstanding produce shipping center. Arriving from every direction are all sorts of conveyances--large trucks, small trucks, farm pickups, trailers, big passenger cars.
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> Trucks, all loaded to capacity with tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, in fact every sort of product that the good land around Cobden produces. People milling about, checkers, commission men, warehouse employees and truck drivers, all intent on one purpose--getting the produce to the city markets; and this activity continues throughout the day and far into the night. According to Frank Rendleman, the Market Manager, the important crops just at present are tomatoes and cucumbers. A few days ago it was asparagus; within a few weeks it will be peaches--the product that made Cobden famous.
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> Growers state that the peach crop as a whole will be the largest since 1931. Both basket manufacturing plants, H.A. DuBois and Sons, and the Lawrence plant, have been working to capacity for some months to get packages ready for the bumper crop both here and in other states.

The Peach Festival carried on. Beginning with the 1942 Festival, the queen and her attendants were given war bonds as prizes, and in 1942 Harley (Junior) Wilkins gave a stunt flying exhibition. That year Congressman C.W. (Runt) Bishop made an unexpected appearance, giving a short talk on the growth of the Cobden community. In 1944, the Lions brought Ambrose Haley and his Ozark Ramblers down from St. Louis, where they had a 12:30 program on KXOK radio. The 1944 Festival, the seventh, "far exceeded that of former years," the Cobden Review wrote.

> Here was demonstrated the true meaning of cooperation. The local Garage Manager, Lion Williams fried hamburgers, the Bank Cashier Lion Lockard sliced onions, Lion Stroehlein presided over the Bingo stand. The Mayor, Lion Broadway, looked after the peach stand, in fact it seemed every one was willing to take any place where he was needed without hesitation. The affair would never have been the success it was had it not been for the women who cooperated in the arrangements and work.
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> The huge crowd consumed 122 lbs. of hamburger, 35 lbs. of weiners, 1100 buns, 30 loaves of bread, 9 gallons of pickles, 25 lbs. of onions, 74 cases of soda, 45 gallons of ice cream. At six o-clock, the standing of the contestants for the honor of Queen was announced. ...
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> The merrymaking went on until ten o'clock, when the announcement was made that the coronation of the Queen was to take place. In a matter of seconds, refreshment stands, bingo game and in fact every concession was devoid of customers--all rushing to gain a place where they might catch a glimpse of Her Majesty.

Toward the end of the war, sugar was rationed and 10 cases of soda was all they could get. Conrad Baggott recalled that they went to Fred Houseman's bottling company in Red Bud and he delivered them a truck load of soda pop. It was warm, but they slid it through the ice water and sold it just about as fast as they could unload it

Scene in gym before the crowning of 1948 Queen Mary Lou Lence, with 5 previous queens. Back row, left to right: Sue Jacques (1947 Queen, dec.), Lorraine Wallace (1946 Queen); Faye Lamer Ballance (1945 Queen); Carol Casper (1944 Queen); Mary Jane Norris (1943 Queen, dec.). Second row, left to right: Earlene Guthrie, attendant; Wanda Spiller, attendant; Mary Lou Lence, Queen. Flower girls Linda Randall, Charlotte Knox, Miss Croslin, Jeanne Ann Rich (Sensmeier); Pages, Ronnie Guthrie, Jay Minton. Photo by Horrell Studio.

their wake only a lot of paper, cardboard boxes, tin cans, etc. They will move on north with the season, many going as far as Michigan.

Some growers have the same group of pickers, year after year, while others depend on picking up whatever happens to come along.

The 1947 Festival was able to display the fruits of previous festivals, with a new fire truck for the Volunteer Fire Department. Information is scanty on the 1946 through 1949 Peach Festivals. It seems the queen contest was the big draw (see feature on the queen contest, p. 21), or perhaps the publicity committee was not as active as in other years. Judging of peaches continued, for in 1949 the Gale-Glenn farm was awarded permanent possession of a trophy for having won the best peach prize three years in succession. The attendance prize had become more elaborate, as Paul DuBois won a gas stove in the drawing.

The late '40s and early '50s was a period of rapid re-organization of county affairs. Union County pioneered road district consolidation and schools were merging. By 1950, only 31 rural schools were left in the county, from 75 in 1917 and 67 in 1935. Fly, Toppington, Sifford, Water Valley, Lence, John Rich, Lamer, Tunnel Hill and Rendleman consolidated with Cobden between 1948 and 1952. Limestone, Union Point and Mt. Glen were the last to merge with Cobden in 1956.

Despite a decline in the number of orchards and amount of produce grown in the county, the Metzler Brothers began construction on a new fruit packing

plant south of Cobden on old Route 51. The Metzler Company was a major concern, with about 1000 acres of peach and apple orchards in the area. The new packing shed was expected to be able to load 38 freight cars on a special siding built by the I.C.R.R. when completed in July, 1950.

The 1950 Festival was promoted on several fronts. The Illinois Fruit Council urged all county peach growers to enter a bushel of their finest peaches in the display to compete for the $25 first prize and $15 and $10 second and third prizes. The Eisenhour Quartet from Royalton was hired to entertain the crowd. The queen contest was featured, as usual. And there was a new wrinkle: a public wedding. The Lions advertised in an article in the July 14, 1950 Cobden Review:

> Wanted: A couple who are interested in getting married--according to E.O. Mull, president of the Cobden Lions Club. Now Mull is not promoting a lonely hearts club, and he is not interested in just single individuals who want to get married --Mull says there are plenty of that brand. What he is searching for is a couple who have already made up their minds to get married, but haven't yet made the fatal step. Someone who will get married on the stage at the 1950 Peach Festival.

That Festival was a memorable one. The festivities were held on the new ball park. Right after the War, a group of 13 men borrowed money and built the ball park. It was the first lighted soft-ball field in the region, according to Jack Williams, one of the 13. The lights added a brilliance to the festival, but it also attracted bugs. Conrad Baggott recalled frying hamburgers in the open stand as bugs, dazed by the lights, collided with the grill. "Guess we fried more bugs than hamburger." The problem was solved in later years by building covered stands.

The crowd was the largest to date, with an official estimate of 5,000 people attending. That year Tom Demos, a Chicago produce buyer, bid $50 for the prize bushel of peaches that was sent to President Truman to publicize Cobden Peaches. The Palmer Family of Perks spontaneously joined the Eisenhour Quartet on the stage to sing for the crowd. Voting was intense on the queen candidates. Finally, the wedding, which many had thought to be a hoax, turned into a double wedding, and was held on the stage after the queen ceremony. The two couples were Delbert Dusch of Makanda and Joan Thetford of Carbondale; and Charles E. Beppler of Buncombe and Geraldine Hickam of Anna.

Enthusiasm for the 1951 Peach Festival was dampened by a heavy rain in the afternoon and cloudy and threatening weather all evening, but the presence of Bill Veeck, owner of the St. Louis Browns, to crown the queen made the day memorable. Continuing to boost Cobden peaches, Margaret Flamm, the new queen, and her attendants attended the Illinois State Fair at Springfield, with all expenses paid for by the Lions Club, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Everett Randall. Franklyn Hartline of Anna, who worked for the Division of Marketing for the State of Illinois, arranged for the royal party to meet with Governor Adlai Stevenson, to whom Margaret Flamm presented a bushel of fine peaches.

Games were not always the great fundraiser the Lions planned. One year, Finis Hunsaker created a "mouse-in-the-hole" game. He caught a field mouse and put it in a box with two holes, each hole painted a different color. Contestants placed money on which hole the mouse would run into; if it went into that hole, the contestant won. The only problem was, the mouse always went into the same hole, and Fin was broke in an hour and a half. That game did not make it back to the next year's Festival.

In 1952 the queen was selected by judges for the first time, following rules used in National Beauty Contests. The winner, Joan Griffith, was sent to the State Beauty contest, with expenses for herself and the two attendants paid by the Lions Club.

In 1953, a major polio scare kept children home all summer, and prompted clean-up campaigns in towns around the area.

The 1953 Festival was heavily promoted by the Lions. They organized a water fight between the Cobden and Murphysboro fire departments, which ended in a draw when each side won a bout by pushing an empty barrel along a cable across their opponent's goal. In the afternoon, a series of games gave the children an opportunity to win some money. Among these was a greased pole with a five-dollar bill at the top.

Judy and Jan Sirles of Alto Pass performed acrobatic dancing, and John Ice of Anna presented a magic show. For the first time, the queen contest was open to all girls in the county, and an Anna girl, Marjorie Miller, was chosen queen by the judges. Judges selected the best fruits and vegetables displayed, which were then auctioned off. The bidding was fierce, and Homer Wilkins ended up with the prize peaches for $55 and H.W. Venerable paid $50 for the next highest bushel. It was the largest crowd in many years. The Gazette-Democrat reported, "More than 120 pounds of ground beef was made into hamburgers and sold while hundreds of bottles of cold drinks, many pounds of salad and other foods were passed across the counters to patrons." As a note on the treasurer's report said, "Most stands either sold out or wore out."

In 1954 nobody ran for queen, and the festival hit right in the middle of harvest, so the Festival drew a much smaller crowd than usual. The 1955 Festival was highlighted by a concert by the Cobden School Band, wearing their new uniforms for the first time.

Homer Wilkins and Lions District Director with a bushel of prize peaches. 1950s.

A hard freeze in the spring made the peach crop short, but there was "a particularly beautiful and eye-catching exhibit ... a display of fruit in the shape of a rainbow, topped by a star and the words, 'Cobden, Star of Little Egypt.' A clear glass tube carried an endless stream of water from the tube into a tank." according to the Gazette Democrat. The display was made under the supervision of George N. Boyd, vocational agriculture instructor at Cobden Community High School.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN COBDEN

By the mid-1950s, rural areas were on the decline. Young people were leaving for jobs in cities, the number of farms was shrinking and with them, the number of businesses. At a community meeting held in early 1956, the Cobden Review reported,

The committee has decided that the most important problem is the declining population. A comment was made that unless we do something about it the decline will continue. During the past nine years out of 247 graduates 167 or 70 percent have left Cobden. The conclusion was drawn that the decline in population was a liability as the only asset that could possibly be found from it could be less traffic.

So many young people had moved west that, by 1955, ex-Union Countians began holding an annual picnic at Benning Park in Wilmington, California, near Los Angeles. Russell Manus wrote back to the Cobden Review in 1956,

One hundred and three attended our first picnic last year and our hopes are set to double or triple this number this year with a little help from those who have friends or relatives, former Union county people, now living in California, by notifying them of the date and place of the affair.

It's like old times, getting together once a year with a big basket dinner and renewing acquaintance.

Despite, or perhaps in part because of, the decline, Union Countians organized. The Home Bureau became very active in forming a public health department, so that children could be innoculated against childhood diseases. They brought a mobile unit for T.B. testing into the county on several occasions.

The Southern Illinois University Community Development department approached Cobden to participate in their program, and the village agreed. The village undertook a self-study which resulted, among other things, in the "History of Cobden" booklet. Mass

1956 produce display, with its creator George Boyd. Boyd, an instructor at Cobden High School, created a similar display in 1955, when the peach crop was too short to permit the usual display of prize peaches. His creation began a tradition that has continued to the present.

COBDEN CLINIC BUILT

The Cobden Review reported that, in early June, 1958, 300 gathered to hear plans for a new clinic discussed. The meeting was attended by Norman Davis of the Sears Roebuck Foundation, Dick Poston of the SIU Community Development Program, Dr. Charles Neal, the new dentist, and Dr. Tweedy, who had retired after many years caring for Cobden area residents. Plans progressed and the Community Council selected the site of Green's Grocery for the clinic site.

The Community Council then launched an ambitious fund-raising campaign. They held a Pancake Day at the Cobden Market, sold wooden nickles, and sold bonds to Cobden residents. By February, 1959, $16,500 had been received, still $10,000 short of the goal. The new clinic was dedicated February 5, 1959, and has served the community since that time.

Other developments were also at work. In 1957 a new tomato packing and shipping cooperative, operating under the Pyramid Brand, was formed with 25 members. It continues to operate to the present in a more modest form. That same year the new bridge across the Mississippi River at Cape Girardeau was opened in a gala ceremony, in which Kay Guthrie, the 1956 Peach Queen, participated. In 1959 ground breaking for the new Bald Knob Cross was the highlight of the Easter Sunrise Service. And at the end of 1958 the struggling Ritz Theater closed its doors.

The Peach Festival continued to grow as a harvest festival, homecoming, and promotional affair for area produce. Articles in the Gazette Democrat promoting the 1961 Festival, in addition to describing the queen contest and the Minstrel show, highlighted the varied activities available:

Along the midway and throughout the park will be entertainment features for the enjoyment of all those who attend this 24th annual Cobden Peach Festival.

Lehr's Rides (Redbud, Ill.) will be on the grounds with their chair-o-plane, kiddie cars and Shetland ponies, along with other mechanical rides.

There will be games throughout the two-day festival which will test the skill of the most expert "marksman" and games which will be all fun for any who may wish to test their ability at quick action performance. You can't miss all the time! There's sure to be winners!

Then, there's the peaches and cream concession where Cobden's most delicious peaches will be served with the thickest of cream, a luxury which all will enjoy. A food stand,

WOODEN NICKLES SOLD IN CLINIC DRIVE

For several years paying for the Cobden Medical Clinic was a major Lions Club and community project. In 1958, the First National Bank of Cobden developed a scheme to promote the Peach Festival and raise money for the Clinic. Here is how it worked, as described in the Cobden Review of July 24, 1958:

"Several hundred wooden coins have been obtained and will be sold to merchants, or anyone else, at the rate of 5c cash. A cash fund will be created from these sales and will be used to redeem any wooden nickles at their regular value. It is hoped that the merchants in the area will accept the wooden nickles at their 5c value in trade and the Bank will always be willing to redeem any wooden nickles presented to it.

"The old adage 'don't take any wooden nickles' need not apply to this community for the period between now and August 31st."

Most wooden nickles were kept as souvenirs and not redeemed, and the proceeds went to the clinic.

with delicious odors from many foods inviting all to come will offer sandwiches of all kinds along with cakes and pies all made by the best of cooks, homemakers of the Cobden community. The soft drink stand nearby will be the center of attention for thirsty ones throughout the two-day festival.

A commercial display by merchants and others in the area is expected to attract much attention during off-moments when one is inclined to relax. A fruit and vegetable display featuring the many fruits and vegetables grown in this area will also be of interest to all who attend the Peach Festival.

In 1961 another Cobden institution, the Cobden Museum, was opened by C. Joe Thomas, Charles Thomas, and Conrad Baggott, and another one, the Cobden Review, closed.

1962 marked the Silver Anniversary of the Peach Festival and was very well attended. "The attendance for the two day event was many times that of the population of Cobden," the Gazette Democrat reported. The 1963 peach crop was again destroyed by frost, but the Lions Club managed to buy peaches from more northern orchards that had not been so badly damaged.

1964 was a banner year for Cobden. The Appleknockers, the boy's basketball team, made it into the "Sweet Sixteen" of the Illinois High School Basketball Championship play-offs. They returned home as runner-up, and as heroes. "'Meet the Appleknockers,'" the Gazette Democrat said, 'a 'peach of a team' at the Cobden Peach Festival." The Appleknockers had a booth where autographed apples and other mementos were sold for the benefit of the Tom Crowell Memorial

1958 Queen's Court. Back row, left to right: Teresa Flamm, attendant; Jackie Ferrill (Berkheimer), attendant; Glenda Blessing, Queen; Lions Club District Director.

Trophy Room, being built at the school. Proceeds from the Peach Festival went to the Tom Crowell Memorial, as well. Thomas W. Crowell, Jr. was Captain-Elect of the Cobden Basket Ball team when he drowned in May, 1963, in Little Grassy Lake.

Another first that year was the dunking booth. It was so popular that it continued through 1982, when the Lions' insurance company refused to cover it. In 1966 the Festival committee entitled the machine "Dunk the Mayor, Deposit the Banker and Immerse the Preacher," a title it held until re-christened "Dunk the Monkey" in 1968, with the invitation to dunk your friends, a soaking experience. "As always," the blurb in the Gazette Democrat ran, "featured on the Dunkin' Board, you will again find many Cobden businessmen, farmers, and others."

ATTENDANCE PRIZES

Attendance prizes became more and more valuable over the years. For many years, War or Savings bonds worth from $15 to $50 were the major prizes, with an occasional ham or, as in 1949, a gas stove. In 1965 a 10 cubic foot deep freeze with 50 pounds of frozen food was the main prize. Color T.V.s, stereos, and radios were favored during most of the late '60s and early '70s, although for two years in the '70s a 900 lb. steer was the grand prize and mini-bikes were second prizes. The first prize in 1975 was $500. In the early '80s the attendance prizes were generally $250, $150, and $100 cash. Since 1985, the first prize has been a Television or VCR, and a shotgun as a second prize. To celebrate the Golden Anniversary, two $50 gold pieces valued at $1000 are being given away as attendance prizes.

The late '60s and early '70s were a period of civil unrest in the nation, and Southern Illinois was not exempt.

SLIDE PROGRAM

The produce display has remained an attractive feature since its beginning in 1955. For 13 years, from 1965 till 1978, Richard Cerny prepared a slide program to go along with the display. Cerny made a screen that projected the pictures from behind and mounted the projector and screen on a wagon. The first year the program showed area fruits and vegetables in various stages of growth. Using his own photographs, he added houses, flowers, and scenic views of the Cobden area. He always included a slide of the previous year's produce stand and scenes of the Peach Festival crowd. In 1974, the tenth anniversary of the Appleknockers' victory, he showed slides he had taken on their triumphant return to Cobden.

The newspapers started carrying notices of boys who died in action in Vietnam, and the Gazette Democrat ran a weekly column, "Servicemen's News" to share news from soldiers involved in the war.

At the same time, the U.S. space program was literally rocketing ahead; in July, 1968, the first human beings landed on the moon. War on Poverty money and war-generated prosperity reached into Union County, with expanded medical care, housing for senior citizens and low income people, and funds for other improvements.

Plans for new U.S. Route 51 began in the mid-60s. Cobden, Alto Pass, Anna, and other small towns were no longer market centers for the farmers in the surrounding area. They had become homes for people who worked elsewhere, often travelling many miles to their jobs. Cobden remained a center of fruit and vegetable production, but only a few large growers maintained the tradition. The era of the very small, diversified farm was over. The remaining growers banded together in the late '60s to build a packing shed and migrant camp north of Cobden; a cannery, South Pass Products, was soon added.

R.J "Bally" Basler at a game of skill

The Lions Club recognized that the Cobden area was no longer a well-defined region when, in 1964, they opened the queen contest to the entire county. They had opened it to the county once before, in 1953, but that aroused such feeling, according to some reports, that no Cobden girl would run the following year. Eleven years later, conditions had changed. Girls from all parts of the county were welcome to enter the contest.

The county celebrated its sesquicentennial in 1968 (1818-1968). A special display was mounted and the county Democratic and Republican Central Committees set up booths at the Peach Festival.

The following year the Boy Scouts, with the leadership of Charles Thomas, set up a model log cabin and a tepee on the Festival grounds. That same year, in a cooperative effort between the Lions Clubs and the State of Illinois, a mobile eye-testing unit was on the Festival grounds, testing pre-school children.

During the '70s the Peach Festival continued each year in the format it had settled into. A carnival for the children, games of chance and skill, the enduringly popular bingo game and Spin 'n Win for peaches, home-cooked bar-b-que, hamburgers, chicken, cole slaw, and french fries, peach cobblers with ice cream on top, a display to show off the area's produce, and of course the choosing of a Queen. Spin 'n Win, Bingo, and hamburgers and soft drinks and a Peach Queen have been part of the Festival since its beginning. The rest has grown and changed with the times.

The 1980s. Another period of growth and change. A new bank is built in Cobden, on the site of the old Chevrolet Garage. The town is spruced up with treeplanting downtown (funded with

proceeds from the Peach Festival) and a park by the railroad.

In 1982 the Cobden American Legion Post 259 began a parade on Saturday afternoon, and they have organized it each year since. Bands, floats, and displays, parade down "the widest main street in the world."

That year the peach crop was a total loss, due to one of the worst winters in southern Illinois history. The Lions Club bought 80 to 90 bushels of peaches from Missouri and Michigan growers, including 10 bushels for the Peaches 'n Cream booth. The rest were for Spin and Win. They had to pay $15 to $20 a bushel. Women took the last year's peaches out of freezers and off their canning shelves for cobblers and pies.

In 1983 the Cobden High School classes of 1933 through 1938 held a reunion during the Peach Festival. What a buzz of excitement that made as old friends reunited! The Cobden Museum put on a special exhibit of old photographs at the same time.

The 1984 Festival coincided with an open house sponsored by the Cobden Clinic, newly affiliated with the Carbondale Clinic, and a fundraiser by the Cobden Volunteer Fire Department. The Union County Historical Society and Cobden Museum also set up a display of old photographs and other relics of prior years which attracted hundreds of curious visitors.

After a half century, the Cobden Peach Festival continues to be a community endeavor, drawing on the energies of all the people of the Cobden area. It remains a popular homecoming and harvest festival.

1969 Queen's Court. Left to right: Karen Porter, Miss Congeniality and third runner-up; Rebecca Throgmorton, first runner-up; Festival Queen Kathy Flamm (Reeves), who was also selected Miss Swimsuit; Sherry Goodman, retiring queen; and Christine Jerdon, second runner-up. Photo by Wiggs.

QUEEN CONTEST: HIGH POINT OF PEACH FESTIVAL

As Cobden has changed, so has the Queen contest. The first fifteen years, the queen was chosen by popular vote. Candidates and their friends and families sold tickets, generally 10c each, or a penny a vote, and the girl with the most votes won. The field was frequently so crowded--in 1945, 25 girls ran for queen--that there was at least one, and sometimes two, eliminations. The first elimination, about a week before the vote, narrowed the field to 10 candidates. Then, the afternoon of the Festival, which during those years was only one day, the votes were counted and only the three highest were left in the race. What a flurry of activity then occurred! One year a man dumped a briefcase full of tickets into the voting box just before voting closed.

In 1952 the Queen Committee decided to adopt the National Beauty Contest regulations for choosing the queen. The candidates were judged by people from outside the area, on poise, personality, posture, and their appearances in a swimsuit and a formal.

Ten years later the Queen Committee decided to return to popular votes, but this procedure was used for only four years. Then the Lions Club sent letters to businesses and civic organizations throughout the county, inviting them to sponsor a candidate, as Cobden organizations had for many years. A number of groups responded, and many candidates from all over the county entered the 1965 contest. That year the candidates were once more judged by outside judges. That year the Queen's Tea was begun, so that the judges could meet informally with the candidates in a comfortable home. Not only was a queen selected, but "Miss Swimsuit"--more recently "Miss Sportswear"--was chosen by the judges, and "Miss Congeniality" was chosen by the candidates.

The Peach Festival Queen can then go to the Murphysboro Apple Festival, with the possibility of becoming the Illinois Fruit Queen; or to the Anna County Fair, with the possibility of becoming Miss Illinois State Fair.

THE PAGEANT

Until the Festival moved down to the ball park in 1950, the Lions erected a stage at the south end of the high school (where the gym is now). When the booths were about sold out and evening grew late, the coronation ceremonies began. The 1947 ceremony was typical:

> The winner was not announced until time for the coronation ceremonies at 10:00 p.m. Then as the music began the line of march formed at the grade school, while people moved back the eager throngs to make way for the procession.
>
> Leading the queen's group were four queens of past festivals: Annette Wallace of 1942, Carol Casper Spiller of 1944, Fay Lamer of 1945 and Loraine Wallace of 1946.
>
> Six small flower girls, each wearing gowns of pastel shades and carrying a hand bouquet of asters from which flowed varied colored streamers of ribbon participated. They were escorted by four young men of their own age, each wearing white shirts and long dark trousers.
>
> Immediately following the 1946 festival queen Loraine Wallace, was the queen of the 1947 peach festival, Miss Sue Jacques, who was escorted by Lester Jones of Johnston City, district governor of the Lions Club. The Queen's attendants followed. ...
>
> District Governor Lester Jones crowned the queen and spoke briefly. Just before the close of the ceremony Mayor Blake Broadway presented gifts from the Cobden Lions club to the queen and her attendants. The queen received a diamond ring, the first attendant a wrist watch and the second attendant a matching necklace and bracelet.

The queen's robe was of purple velvet, lined with purple taffeta and sprinkled with gold sequins. Her gold crown was studded with rhinestones and, by some accounts, real jewels. The crown was designed and crafted by Ira Casper, the jeweler, and the robe was sewn by Mrs. Ira Casper.

Frequently, a trumpet fanfare or musical processional accompanied the royal party to the stage. The stage was decorated with an elaborate backdrop, bushels of peaches, and flowers. Most years the district governor of the Lions Club crowned the queen. A notable, such as Don McNeely of KFVS-TV, Bill Veeck, owner of the St. Louis Browns, Don Michel of WRAJ, and other dignitaries also appeared on the stage as master of ceremonies. In 1957 Barbara Leibig, Miss Illinois Fruit Queen of 1957, participated in the ceremonies and the 1967 Miss Southern Illinois, Becky Hindman, crowned Maribeth Inman, the 1967 Peach Queen.

The queen and attendants received prizes, in addition to trophies, most years. During the War the queen received a $50 war bond, while the first attendant received a $15 or $25 war bond and the second attendant was given $10 in war stamps or a $15 bond. The most elaborate prizes were diamond and pearl jewelry, during the 1940s. For a number of years during the '60s Mrs. Helmut Hartman baked a several-tiered cake for the queen, and the candidates received 10 percent of their ticket sales. In more recent years the queen and attendants have received savings bonds in addition to trophies for Miss Swimsuit or Sportswear and Miss Congeniality, as well as 25c for each attendance ticket they sell. The queen now keeps her crown as a memento.

The Festival has been remarkably fortunate in weather. The coronation ceremonies have been delayed only five times in the 50 years the Festival has been celebrated. In 1964, rain on Friday night forced the entire festival to be pushed back one day; on the other four evenings, ceremonies were delayed until Sunday.

1983 Queen's Court. Left to right: Natalie Adams, first runner-up; Tina McCleland, Queen and winner of the Sportswear trophy; Pam Keil, 1982 Peach Queen, and Dawn Honey, second runner-up. Photo by Mychael S. Wozniak for the Southern Illinoisan.

COBDEN WOMEN'S CLUB

The Cobden Women's Club has operated the Peaches 'n Cream stand since 1958, when in conjunction with the Home Bureau it took over responsibility for this concession. Its members have always helped with the Festival. The Women's Club, like the Lions Club, is committed to community improvement.

The Cobden Women's Club has been part of Cobden life since 1908, when it was organized as the Rose Maple Club. They changed their name to the Women's Club in 1939 to be in line with other club names. In the early years, the club undertook a number of improvements for the cemetery, sponsored educational programs, and put on picnics and meals for their members and families. To raise money, they put on plays, ice cream socials, and meals.

In both world wars, the Women's Club contributed to the war effort, and they were active in New Deal programs, particularly the Cobden water and sewer projects and the W.P.A. library.

For the past 30 years the Club's major fundraising project has been the Peaches 'n Cream concession at the Peach Festival. At the June meeting, the Club draws up a list of tasks, assigns time slots to work at the stand, and estimates the number of cobblers needed each night. Members call women to bake cobblers and to help out in the stand. At least 40 to 50 women are needed to work in the stand.

When the Red Haven peaches are at their height, Flamm's Orchards donates peaches and members gather at Hallie and Wilma Nebughr's house to peel and slice the peaches. The Women's Club estimates the number of peaches needed, and the several gallons of Red Havens, which do not turn brown, are frozen until the Festival.

The Lions Club supplies the ice cream, and each evening women bring in cobblers and cakes as arranged. If any cobblers are left over, they are sold at the end of the evening. Any leftovers are donated to the school.

The Lions Club makes a contribution to the Women's Club each year, which the women use for a variety of civic projects. They have made contributions to the band, helped children attend music camp, and other educational projects. In addition, they have worked with the Lions Club on most of their civic improvement projects.

PEACH COBBLER

(As made by Lou Stadelbacher)

Crust: 2 c. flour
1 tsp. salt
2/3 to 1 c. Crisco
1/4 c. ice water (enough to form a ball)

Cut shortening into flour. Mix in water until a ball is formed.

(For a large batch of crust, use 6 c. flour, 1 T. salt, 2 1/2 c. shortening, and enough ice water to form a ball). Chill and roll out to form a bottom and a top crust. Place in 9 X 13 inch pan.

Filling: Slice enough peaches to fill the pan. Sprinkle 3/4 to 1 cup sugar and approximately 2 T. flour on peaches. Toss together. Place in pan. Dot with butter. Place top crust on, cut vents for steam to escape.

Bake about 1 hour in 400° oven, until crust is browned.

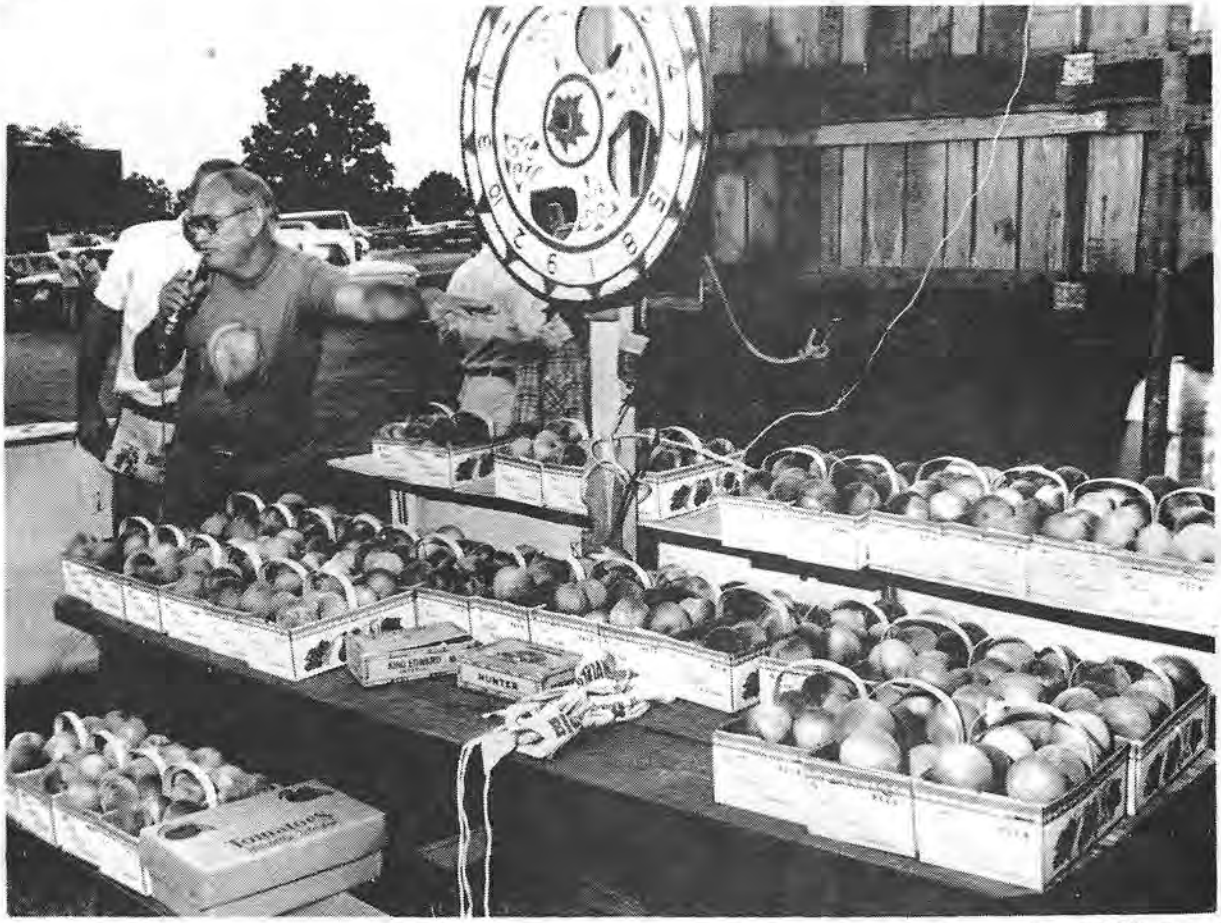
FESTIVAL TAKES A LOT OF WORK

The thousands of people who attend the two evenings of the Peach Festival do not see the many hours of labor that go into organizing this production. The Lions begin planning the next year's festival almost as soon as the Festival ends. In the spring, committees are formed to take responsibility for every aspect of the Festival--each food and game stand, the produce display, parking, publicity, finances, and so forth. The committees then begin making arrangements for their particular areas of responsibility.

A week before the Festival the Lions begin erecting the stands, stringing lights, and getting the grounds ready. The Spin and Win committee buys peaches from area growers (or locates peaches if the local crop has been frozen out) and arranges for them to be delivered. Work frequently goes far into the night.

While the men are putting up the stands, their wives prepare food for the food stand. Gallons of potato salad, cole slaw, and other foods are made up and stored in the school refrigerators and in Lions' homes.

The evenings of the Festival, Lions and other community volunteers work at the stands, coordinate parking, and in general make sure everything goes smoothly. When the Festival is over and everyone goes home, the Lions' job is still not over. Sunday, they show up on the Festival grounds to dismantle all the stands and booths. The structures are designed so that they can be taken apart. They are stored in a shed on the school grounds for the next year's Festival, when the whole process begins again.



Clifford Heil announcing winners at the Spin and Win stand at the 1983 Peach Festival. Photo by Mychael Wozniak for the Southern Illinoisan.

PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE COBDEN LIONS CLUB

The Lions Club was organized in 1938 to promote the welfare of the Cobden area. This small group of men, which has always numbered around 25 to 30 members, has been an important part of the many projects for community improvement that Cobden has undertaken over the past half century. Club members were active in the sewer project which, like the recently completed water project, brought modern conveniences and sanitation to the village. They worked with the Women's Club to set up the town Christmas tree, as well.

The Lions organized the Peach Festival as a way to raise money for community projects, as well as to boost the Cobden area peaches and provide a homecoming fair for the village. The first Festival in 1938 raised between $125 and $150. By 1949 that amount had grown to more than $1800. In subsequent years the club spent more on entertainment and other expenses, so the net proceeds were not as great, ranging around $600 to $800 through most of the '50s. Since then proceeds have steadily climbed, to reach several thousand dollars in the 1980s.

Virtually all the money received by the Lions Club returns directly to the Cobden community. The Club buys locally when possible. More important, the proceeds are returned to the community in a wide variety of projects.

The Club was instrumental in organizing the volunteer fire department, and in 1947 bought a new fire truck. This fire department, they observed, not only protected the town from disastrous fires, but also lowered insurance rates for homes and businesses. Twenty-five years later they bought another fire truck. As Gene Dammerman said in the Gazette Democrat in August 1973,

> "If we hadn't had the new truck at the time of the box factory fire, we would have probably lost much more than just one building." He further stated, "While it isn't commonly known, the insurance rates were slated to rise with the old truck and since the purchase of the new equipment the rates have either remained the same or dropped slightly. There have been times since we got the truck that we would have had a catastrophe without it." Normally the Lions Club doesn't donate that much to any one cause but they all feel that it has more than paid for itself already.

The 1966 and 1967 Festival proceeds went toward purchase of a strong Civil Defense siren for the fire department.

The Cobden Lions have also contributed to the Alto Pass Volunteer Fire Department.

The Lions Club was one of the most active participants in the Community Council formed in 1956. From 1958 through 1971 large proportions of the Festival proceeds went to support the new medical clinic.

In 1965 they helped finance and build the parking lot along the railroad tracks.

The Lions Club has been a consistent supporter of Scouts in Cobden. They have provided funds for Girl and Boy Scouts and younger organizations when they have existed, and for many years they provided leadership for the boy's groups. They have contributed to the Cobden 4-H club and supported school activities, such as the High School Annual, the Varsity Club, the Press Club and cheerleaders.

They have also made sizeable donations to the American Legion, the Union County Radio Club, Care, United Fund, and the Cobden Museum.

In 1964 they established the Tom Crowell Memorial Fund to commemorate a member of the Cobden basketball team who drowned in Little Grassy Lake. The fund was used to create a trophy room

at the Cobden High School for the Appleknockers when they were finalists in the state championships.

The club bought land for a village park in 1974. However, when resources were unavailable to develop it, they sold it to the school in 1982.

The Lions Club also worked for safety gates at the railroad crossing and for a black top road between Cobden and Alto Pass. Their Standing Road Committee contributed to influencing Union county to become a pioneer in rural road district consolidation.

IN THE '80s

Their ability to support worthy projects has grown along with their earnings. Each year since 1980 the Lions spend between $300 and $500 for Christmas baskets for needy people in the Cobden Area. The high school Beta Club helps by collecting canned goods, which they contribute to the baskets. With increased proceeds they were able to increase their regular contributions to local clubs and organizations, to a total of approximately $2000 a year.

The Lions have continued to support the medical clinic as it has needed capital funds. In 1981 Peach Festival proceeds were tapped to make a $1000 contribution to the Cobden Medical Clinic. In 1985 they supplied another $2000 to the clinic.

The Lions Club has continued its community improvement projects, $2000 for building a shelter in the downtown park in 1981 and a major commitment of money ($2000) and labor in to planting trees in downtown Cobden in 1982.

The Lions 50-year commitment to the Cobden Fire Department has continued, with a $1000 donation to the department in 1987.

The Lions have been a major contributor to the high school band and to the school grounds. In 1979 Festival proceeds went to installing new lights in the ball park. They have also supported the Khoury league from time to time, and contributed funds to the initial building of the ball park. They donated $500 in 1982 for new band uniforms, and in 1985 gave $1000 to the band for their trip to Washington D.C. to march in the National Independence Day Parade. In 1984 they provided $3000 to the School District for a new fence around the ball park, and in 1987 they donated another $3000 for new bleachers at the baseball park.

The Lions Clubs have an international focus on eyesight. Local club contributions to their parent organization help fund guide dogs for the blind and other remedial programs for seeing impaired people. With cooperation of the state organization, the local club has sponsored glaucoma testing, vision testing for young children, and purchase of eye glasses for children who could not afford them.

The Cobden Lions, along with Lions Clubs all over the state, undertook an ambitious new project in 1981, an eye research institute at the University of Illinois Medical School in Chicago. The Cobden Lions pledged $500 a year for the next 10 years, plus an extra $500 in 1983 to cover unanticipated expenses.

Beginning in 1985 the local club pledged to contribute $500 a year to sponsor a child to attend Camp Lions for handicapped children at Little Grassy lake.

The Lions Club and its members have been active in just about every civic improvement and activity in the village. Despite occasional periods of doldrums, inevitable in any organization, it has sustained its membership and its importance to the Cobden area.

COBDEN LIONS CLUB
CHARTER MEMBERS -- APRIL 27, 1938

Frank Petty, President

George D. Ede, Secretary

John P. Mesler
Everett Randall
Melvin Caraker
A.L. Ashworth
Paul Corzine
Glenn Lamer
Donald Ridgway
John Stroehlein
T.V. Tunnell
Robert Wallace
William B. Lamer
H.W. Venerable
A.J. Bigler
Blake Broadway
Howard DuBois

Charles W. Neal
C.R. Scott
Albert E. Townshend
J.H. Wilkins
R.L. Lawrence
W.E. Mangold
Melvin Lockard
Arthur Allen
Harold Clutts
F.A. Hunsaker
R.G. Parks
H.L. Stroud
John Tripp
H.L. Wohlwend

PAST OFFICERS OF COBDEN, ILLINOIS, LIONS CLUB
Organized April 21, 1938

1937-1938
President - Frank G. Petty
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - William B. Lamer

1938-1939
President - Frank G. Petty
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - William Lamer

1939-1940
President - Lester Biggs
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - Thomas A. Hood

1940-1941
President - John D. Mesler
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - Melvin Caraker

1941-1942
President - Charles W. Neal
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - Melvin Caraker

1942-1943
President - Dr. A. L. Ashwort
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - Melvin Caraker

1943-1944
President - George Ede
Secretary - R.G. Williams
Treasurer - Melvin Caraker

1944-1945
President - Melvin Lockard
Secretary - S.L. Speer
Treasurer - George Ede

1945-1946
President - R.G. Williams
Secretary - Bert Casper
Treasurer - George D. Ede

1946-1947
President - J.H. Wilkins
Secretary - Bert Casper
Treasurer - Raymond Williams

1947-1948
President - Hallie Nebughr
Secretary - Bert Casper
Treasurer - Raymond Williams

1948-1949
President - S.L. Speer
Secretary - Bert Casper
Treasurer - Raymond Williams

1949-1950
President - Bert Casper
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - Raymond Williams

1950-1951
President - E. O. Mull
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - Carroll Rendleman

1951-1952
President - Willis M. Ferrill
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - Carroll Rendleman

1952-1953
President - A.J. Flamm
Secretary - Rev. L.R. Gilliland
Treasurer - Ira Casper

1953-1954
President - Harry Row
Secretary - E.O. Mull
Treasurer - Ira R. Casper

1954-1955
President - Leon Sitter
Secretary - Rev. L.R. Gilliland
Treasurer - Ira Casper

1955-1956
President - Everett Randall
Secretary - Rev. L.R. Gilliland
Treasurer - Ira Casper

1956-1957
President - A.N. Root
Secretary - Rev. F. Edward Watson
Treasurer - Ira Casper

1957-1958
President - Frank Lyle Petty
Secretary - H.L. Stroud
Treasurer - Ira Casper

1958-1959
President - Dr. Charles W. Neal
Secretary - H.L. Stroud
Treasurer - Ira Casper

1959-1960
President - R.W. Griffith
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - Ira R. Casper

1960-1961
President - John Lipe
Secretary - George D. Ede
Treasurer - Arthur N. Root

1961-1962
President - Charles B. Wilkins
Secretary - George P. Riley
Treasurer - Arthur N. Root

1962-1963
President - Howard Boaz
Secretary - Robert M. Baker
Treasurer - Arthur N. Root

1963-1964
President - John W. Reeves
Secretary - Robert M. Basler
Treasurer - Arthur N. Root

1964-1965
President - G. Wallace Rich
Secretary - N. Clifford Heil
Treasurer - Arthur N. Root

1965-1966
President - Robert M. Basler
Secretary - N. Clifford Heil
Treasurer - Roger G. Gray

1966-1967
President - Charles Kovach
Secretary - David S. Cox
Treasurer - Roger G. Gray

1967-1968
President - Charles T. Flamm
Secretary - Richard Cerny
Treasurer - Roger G. Gray

1968-1969
President - Bobby G. Myers
Secretary - Richard J. Cerny
Treasurer - Roger G. Gray

1969-1970
President - N. Clifford Heil
Secretary - Conrad Baggott
Treasurer - Roger G. Gray

1970-1971
President - Leonard Flamm
Secretary - Raymond E. Tweedy
Treasurer - Roger G. Gray

1971-1972
President - Richard J. Cerny
Secretary - Raymond E. Tweedy
Treasurer - Roger G. Gray

1972-1973
President - Ford E. Baggott
Secretary - Eugene Dammerman
Treasurer - Roger G. Gray

1973-1974
President - Roger E. Deming
Secretary - Eugene Dammerman
Treasurer - William C. Rich

1974-1975
President - Clyde E. Smith
Secretary - Jon Lutz
Treasurer - Douglas Meadows

1975-1976
President - Jack Sensmeier
Secretary - Andrew Kreutzer
Donald Ballance
Treasurer - Douglas Meadows

1976-1977
President - Willard Hughey
Secretary - Frank Millis, Jr.
Treasurer - Douglas Meadows

1977-1978
President - Andrew Kreutzer
Larry Flamm
Secretary - Donald Harbert
Treasurer - Douglas Meadows

1978-1979
President - Larry Flamm
Secretary - Donald Harbert
Treasurer - Douglas Meadows

1979-1980
President - Donald Harbert
Donald R. Campbell
Secretary - Jim Sutton
Robert Rader
Treasurer - Douglas Meadows

1980-1981
President - Donald R. Campbell
Secretary - Will Travelstead
Treasurer - Douglas Meadows

1981-1982
President - William Berkheimer
Secretary - Will Travelstead
Treasurer - Douglas Meadows

1982-1983
President - Larry Hale
Secretary - Will Travelstead
Treasurer - Douglas Meadows

1983-1984
President - N. Clifford Heil
Secretary - Will Travelstead
Treasurer - Paul Askew

1984-1985
President - Marty McMorrow
Secretary - Will Travelstead
Treasurer - Paul Askew

1985-1986
President - Dennis W. Baggott
Secretary - Charles Kovach
Treasurer - Paul Askew

1986-1987
President - Dennis W. Baggott
Secretary - Charles Kovach
Treasurer - Paul Askew

1938 BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY
DURHAM DIRECTORIES, COBDEN, ILLINOIS, UNION COUNTY

American Fruit Growers	H.H. "Witt" Lamer, Superintendent L.A. Lamer, Office Manager
John Basler	Standard Oil Service Station
Robert J. Basler	Feed and Produce, Boxes and Box Material
Clement Bigler	Fruit Solicitor and Broker
Rudolph A. Blessing	Fruit Belt Service Aladdin Oils
Blake Broadway	Funeral Director, Ambulance Service
Leo B. Brumleve	Shoe Repairing
Ira R. Casper	Jeweler and Watch Repairing
Harold Clutts	Fruit Broker and Solicitor
Hobart W. Clutts	Flour Salesman, Wholesale only
J.R. Clutts	Fruit Broker, Wholesale only
W.C. Clutts	Fruit Broker and Solicitor
Cobden Machine Works	Albert B. Ede, George D. Ede. Machine Shop---Plumbing and Heating
Cobden Review	James H. Allen, Owner and Publisher Ralph Vancil, Business Manager
Daniel Grocery Company	Floyd Hanna, Manager. Retail Grocery.
Davis Battery Service	Leslie Davis, Batteries, Electrical Service, Radios, Refrigerators, Washers
S.O. Dillinger	General Insurance Company
H.A. Dubois and Son, Inc.	Manufacture of Fruit Packages, Boxes, Crates and Baskets. Also Wholesalers and Retailers of Sprays and Spray Material, Machinery and Fertilizers.
Egyptian Lumber Company	T.V. Tunnell, Manager, Lumber, Building Material, Glass, Sash
First National Bank	H.H. Lamer, President Melvin C. Lockard, Cashier
E. Foreman and Son	Albert Foreman, Prop., Druggist
Bertha Frick	Music Teacher
Karl W. Fritze	Tavern and Cafe
R.A. Gilmour	Custom Hatchery. R.F.D. 2
Emery D. Green	General Merchandise
Nelson L. Hake	Principal, Cobden Community High School
Joseph W. Hilton	Fruit Grower, Broker, and Truck Service
Hoef Radio & Electric Service	John B. Hoef. Radio Sales and Repairs, Farm Lighting, Plants, Refrigerators, Electric Washers
Howes Bargain Store	Cecil Howe, Variety Store, Dry Goods
Illinois Central R.R. Co.	A.J. Daisy, Agent Bert Jacques, Cashier
Illinois Commercial Tel. Co.	Frank Shepard, Local Manager Mable Dockery, Chief Operator, Cobden.
Mrs. S.M. Kaufman	Cafe and News Stand Mrs. S.M. Kaufman, Theodore Kaufman
Kroger Grocer and Baking Company Store No. 105	Retail Grocery
Randall L. Lawrence	Manufacturer and Wholesalers of Boxes, Crates & Baskets for Fruits & Vegetables
Oscar W. Lirely	Garage and Service Station
G.C. McPass	Fruit Broker

Willis E. Mangold	Sheet Metal Work & Tin Shop Furnaces
John D. Mesler	Shell Service
Delbert L. Messamore	Merchant, Groceries
R.R. Messamore	General Merchandise
Modern Beauty Shop	Mary Ellen Wilkins
Bertha L. Morris	Music Teacher
Dr. Charles W. Neal	Dentist
Emmett W. Newman	Principal, City Schools
Peoples Fruit and Vegetable Shipping Association	Melvin Caraker, Manager
Phoenix Flour and Feed Store	Flour and Feeds
Frank G. Petty	Agent Standard Oil Company
Donald C. Ridgeway	Merchant
R.B. Ridgeway	General Merchandise
C.R. Scott	Retail Grocery
L.L. Sitter	Authorized Ford Dealer
Sitter and Dubois	T.L. Sitter, Manager, General Merchandise
H.A. Stewart	Sinclair Service Station
John D. Stroehlein	Retail Hardware, Implements
L. Sumner	Office R.L. Lawrence, Collector Central Illinois Public Service Co.
Tripp Cafe and Tavern	Also Service Station, John Tripp Robert Bell
Dr. J.R. Tweedy	Physician
Max E. Vitt	Blacksmith Shop
Union County Oil Co.	Randall Lawrence, Everett Lawrence Barnsdall Products, Wholesale & Retail
Lindorf Walker	General Insurance Agency
Robert F. Wallace	Agent, Mutual Benefit Life Ins. Co.
J. Harley Wilkins	Authorized Chevrolet Dealer
Raymond Williams	Service Station
Dr. H.L. Wohlwend	Dentist
Telephone Service	Illinois Commercial Telephone Co.
Telegraph Service	Western Union Telegraph Co. Office, ICRR
Electric Service	Central Illinois Public Service Co.
Water	Plant Municipally Owned and Operated

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Other sources used include: "History of Cobden," by C. Joe Thomas and the Community Development group, 1956; "Through the Looking Glass: Cobden Women's Club 1908-1976" by Clara Bell Miller; the Murphysboro Independent; the Southern Illinoisan;" and "The Transformation of Rural Life in Union County, Illinois, In the Twentieth Century," by Jane Adams (PhD Dissertation, 1987).

COBDEN PEACH FESTIVAL QUEENS

1938	Delores Flamm
1939	Mary Jane Lamer
1940	Ruth Rich
1941	Corrine Goodman
1942	Annette Wallace
1943	Mary Jane Norris (deceased)
1944	Carol Casper
1945	Faye Lamer
1946	Lorraine Wallace
1947	Sue Jacques (deceased)
1948	Mary Lou Lence
1949	Hazel Tripp
1950	Sharon Bell
1951	Margaret Flamm
1952	Joan Griffith
1953	Marjorie Miller
1954	No Queen
1955	Nancy Kelly
1956	Kay Guthrie
1957	Sue Ferrill
1958	Glenda Blessing
1959	Pam Hudgens
1960	Sue Rodgers
1961	Linda Mangold
1962	Bobbie Sue Parker
1963	Antoinette Flamm
1964	Shirley Sweitzer
1965	Marilyn Draper
1966	Gayle Baggott
1967	Maribeth Inman
1968	Sherry Goodman
1969	Kathy Flamm
1970	Debbie Clutts
1971	Sharon McKinney
1972	Betsy Hutton
1973	Martha Smith
1974	Trina Schaefer
1975	Belinda Davis
1976	Karen Kay Schlenker
1977	Norine Stadelbacher
1978	Crystal Walker
1979	Caroline Rich
1980	Malina Heil
1981	Barbara Flamm
1982	Pam Keil
1983	Tina McCleland
1984	Rebecca Keil
1985	Terri Rae Hogue
1986	Diane Williams

1970 Queen's Court. Left to right: Jana Walker, first runner-up and Miss Congeniality; Kathy Flamm, retiring queen; Debbie Clutts, Queen; Debbie Green, second runner-up and Miss Swimsuit and G. Wallace Rich. Photo by Wiggs.

1951 Queen's Court. Marjorie Flamm is queen. To her right are 1950 queen Sharon Bell and Barbara Bevil (seated), attendant. To the queen's left is Beverly Randall, attendant. Flower girls are: Carolyn Summers, Jan Sirles, Janice Meadows, Ann Gates, Sheila Clutts, and Antoinette Flamm. Pages are Jimmy Clutts and Paul Lee McCann.

"Cobden Peach Festival: 1938-1987" by Jane H. Adams
Cover design by Judy Travelstead and Rita Flamm
Judy Travelstead, Project Director

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COBDEN

PEACH FESTIVAL

At Cobden Ball Park

Sat. August 19th

A Program Of Entertainment To Include The

Eisenhour Quartet

A PUBLIC WEDDING

ON THE STAGE

AUCTION SALE OF PRIZE PEACHES

PLENTY OF EATS AND DRINKS

See The Queen Coronation At 10:00 P.M.

Come To COBDEN On This Date