

## More About Moorefield

The Moorefield Celebration article generated a related tale, passed on to Helen Parks from her mother, Martha Andrew Burnett. Bill Stout had written a letter to the Vevay Newspapers, probably about 15 years ago, seeking to get in touch with others who had grown-up in the Moorefield area. Martha Burnett remembered Bill Stout from her childhood and the two started corresponding. While both are gone now, the following is a result of that correspondence and serves as a remembrance of past times in Switzerland County as well as a rekindled friendship.

### The Great Moorefield Celebration (gathered from letters written by Bill Stout to Martha Andrew Burnett)

The Celebration was a summer meeting with dinner on the grounds sponsored by the local churches. Incidentally, this was where I was introduced to the most remarkable game I'd ever seen. I have always wondered why on earth its builders neglected building a men's restroom. Well, I figured out the answer to why this little comfort station for men was overlooked. It was done deliberately. You see, after lunch where everyone's drank all the lemonade he can hold he gets up off the ground where the lunch had been spread, and gives a yank on his pants, and starts looking around. This guy joins a couple of other fellows and they all start looking around shaking their heads and pointing off up that way and then start walking off and are soon out of sight.

I forgot who the kid was I was with, probably some little brat as nosy as I was. We decided to follow the men, for in the beginning our reason was as good as theirs.

We got all the way to the circle before anyone noticed us. There were three blankets stretched out on the ground, three circles of men down on their knees, and lots of money out in the middle where the dice were being thrown. Then all heck broke loose, someone had noticed us.

Everything stopped, bottles were recapped and put out of sight, the edge of the blankets were pulled over the money and dice and an abundance of strong words followed. "Go play with the girls, get out of here. If you guys come back here I'll wale you with one of these grubs." We went.

At that age, I of course knew what dice were and what they were used for. The faces I recognized around that circle confused me. Some of the very pillars of local society, with both churches well represented. People I'd known all the eight years of my life. I think this marked the day I first came into contact with what I believe they refer to as the double standard. You know, it's all right for me to do it, but if you do it you're labeled "a bad boy".

I often grin at the thought that if Old Aunt Mary G. had known about the "crap game" her hair would have turned green clear to the roots. She always tried to run everything, including the Celebration. She sure slipped up when she didn't build that privy so she could keep track of the men.

Helen Parks has gleaned a sense for what life in Moorefield was once like from Bill's letters. Bill mentions Mr. and Mrs. Patton taking eggs to town on a Saturday evening when everyone congregated, and hitching their horse and buggy at Viv Grey's Barber Shop, where most of the loafers hung out. Mayor Lock, Riley's Store, Carl Joyce's store when it was owned by the Arneys, and old Granny Smith were all part of Bill's letters.

The Switzerland County Historical Society would like to hear more about Moorefield's past. If you have stories to share call 427-3560 or email [swcomuseums@embarqmail.com](mailto:swcomuseums@embarqmail.com).

*Martha Bladen*