

Historical Clippings

Three Lakes Museum

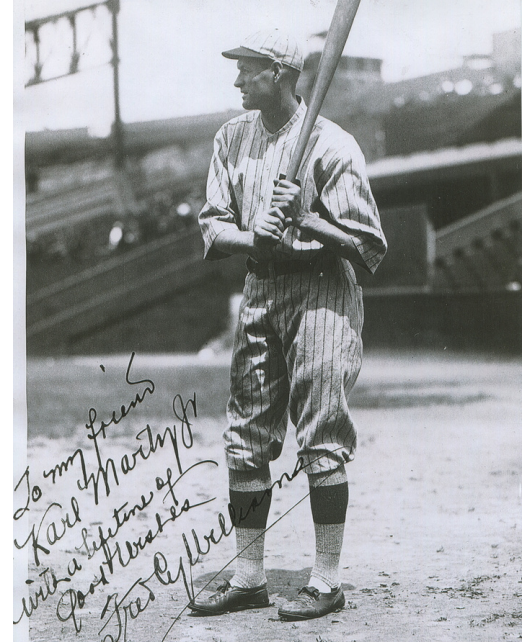
July 2023

Fred "Cy" Williams

From Baseball ...

Fred "Cy" Williams was born in 1887. He attended the University of Notre Dame, played football with Knute Rockne and graduated with a degree in architecture. But it was his baseball hitting prowess that caught the attention of the Chicago Cubs where he started his career in major league baseball in 1912. For six years he played with Chicago and then was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies where he played for the next 13 years.

Cy Williams married Vada Perkins on December 24, 1913. Her story is recorded in the book written by her grandson, Gary Williams



During this time, on the recommendation of a Chicago reporter who showed Cy a picture of the north woods of Wisconsin, emphasizing the possibilities of farming, 40 acres of land was purchased on the north shore of Rangeline Lake. It was here that Cy built a cabin in 1915, then a house, and Three Lakes became the Williams' adopted hometown.

From 1915 through 1927, Cy Williams was one of baseball's most prolific sluggers, earning four home run titles and finishing among the league's top three in home run hitters 11 times. He was the first National League player to hit 200 career home runs, and is one of three players born before 1900 to hit 200 homers in his career (Babe Ruth and Roger Hornsby are the others). All of this as baseball was emerging from the "dead ball" era. Cy was the National League's career home run leader until his record of 251 was surpassed by Hornsby in 1929.

**This summer marks one hundred years ago in the 1923 season,
Cy Williams of the Philadelphia Phillies and Babe Ruth of the NY Yankees
tied at 41 homeruns each**

to Farming ...

During those 19 years of baseball, Cy was away from Three Lakes for seven months of the year while Vada carried the full responsibility of home and family life. Cy purchased an additional 400 acres of land on Rangeline and spent the winter months there with his family.

Retiring from baseball in 1930, Cy and Vada turned their 400+ acres into Clovercrest Farm. One hundred twenty acres were under cultivation as they raised pure bred Guernsey cows for their dairy. Cy had two teams of work horses, eight riding horses for rent, chickens, ducks, rabbits, pigs, cats and dogs.



Across the country the 1930's are remembered as the driest and warmest decade. One week of July, 1936 found temperatures all above 100° reaching as high as 107° in northern Wisconsin. The drought of 1936-37 caused Cy and Vada to quit farming and sell the cows and after the cows were sold, the barns were turned into woodworking shops. In one workshop, Cy built all of the furniture for the Northernnaire. Examples can be seen at the Three Lakes Museum.

...to Building

During the farming years, Cy had built eight rental housekeeping cabins on the lake. The years following the drought, Cy entered the building business full time, designing and building businesses and homes in the area. His favorite designs were log style cabins and chalets. Many of these can still be seen in Three Lakes and the lakes area. Just a few examples -



The Northernnaire



Oneida Village
originally the Alpine Motor Inn



Sheltered Valley



The Chalet

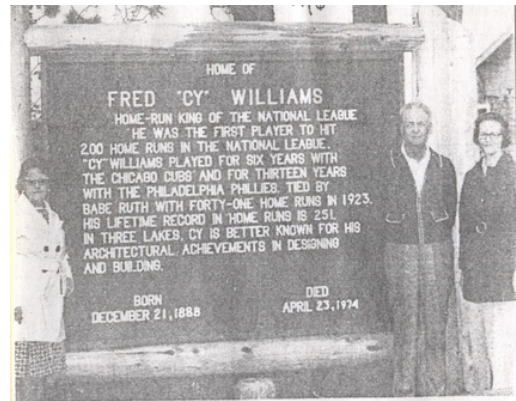


3 Lakes Theater
today the TL Center for the Arts



The Black Forest

In 1972 Fred "Cy" Williams was honored on his 84th birthday at a party at the Northernaire Hotel in Three Lakes by owner Carl Marty. In recognizing all that Williams had done for the community, Marty suggested a sign at the community park next to the Information Bureau proclaim Three Lakes as the home of Cy Williams, National League home run champion.



Memorial Dedicated

The late Cy Williams of baseball fame and a resident of Three Lakes for many years was remembered Memorial Day by Three Lakes residents. A memorial was dedicated in Maple Lake Park with friends and relatives present for the ceremonies. From left, Mrs. Cy (Vada) Williams and their son Forrest Williams and daughter Marian West. A third

daughter, Mrs. Marjorie Paschke, was not present. The memorial was erected through the joint efforts of the Three Lakes Chamber of Commerce, many donors, and Ingram Construction Co., with the inscription by Bill Boehm. The Rev. Gordon Winsor was master of ceremonies. (Eve Corkery Photo)