

"Our Boys"

Carroll County Times article for 21 July 1996

By Jay A. Graybeal

In my column last week I reprinted J. Leland Jordan's 1943 article about the "Fete Champete" held on the Carroll County Court House grounds in July 1875. The sponsors of the event, "The Amphions", printed a humorous newspaper during the event that contained poetry such as "Our Boys" written by Mary B. Shellman.

OUR BOYS

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'll sing a little ditty,
"Tis all about the gallant beaux of our own little city;
I'll go straight through the alphabet, if only for the fun,
And try to tell the truth about each and every one.
First on the list our Albaugh comes and frankly it is stated,
A pretty girl has spoiled him, and he's grown quite Ella vated.
Next comes a gallant trio, a band of brothers see,
Dr. Howell, Dr. Charles, and charming Louie B.
The first cures ills with patent pills, ague, chills or phthisic,
Any thing-, for he cares less for pretty girls than physic.
We'll drop him now, and leave him where he always like to be,
With powders, pills and blisters, and hasten to Dr. C.
He'll never be a bachelor, a crusty, fusty churl
For Dr. C-'s a man of taste, and loves a pretty girl.
Though Cupid's dart has pierced his heart, and caused him many pains,
He hopes to have a Smith who will rivet it in chains.
The gallant Lou though quite a beau would like to have it stated,
His head's too young to trifle with, for he's not graduated.
To maidens far, beware, take care, and always speak the truth,
And do not flirt and trifle, with this festive college youth.
Next Matthew B. is on the list, he goes out every night,
To see a charming damsel, and Mat declares it's Wright.
Mr. Crouse our Frank is next, I would not make a blunder,
But Maggie is a pretty girl, tho' mighty 'fraid of thunder.
And when the lightning flashes o'er the telegraph wire,
Frank's always at the office, for fear there'll be a fire.
It's mighty nice to be so brave, especially you know,
When a sweetheart is in danger, and you're a gallant beau.
Mr. Enzer loves to flit, but it's quite aggravating.
He's got the Mitten now at last so some one has been stating.
Mr. Englar please retire, I've naught to say for you,
You changed your love so often, I don't know what to do.
You have a girl in East End, tonight 'twill be at West,
I can't tell which you love the least, or which you love the best.
Next Fiddis comes, such constancy was never seen before,
For he has loved the self same girl, for seven years or more,

We'll leave him as a prodigy, an example of mankind,
Of love and truth and constancy perfectly combined.
Mr. Gehr, our good cashier, we'll place in this same class,
For constant he has proved himself, unto a country lass.
Mr. Matthews, just come home with winning eyes of brown,
Loves to flirt around with all the pretty girls in town,
He's been to fight the Indians, and has learned their cruel arts,
And send the arrow straight and true, right through our trusting hearts,
Ah, naughty Ned, you scarcely know, the damage you have done
With handsome eyes, and cupid's dart, and flirting just for fun.
Mr. Pierce, our champion Knight, don't like a Fete Champete,
But says he's quiet in his tastes and wants to rusti Kate,
Here the muse deserts me, and leaves me to my fate,
With lots of beaux unmentioned who attend the Fete Champete.
There's Weaver, Mitten, Sharrer, Reese, Shriver, Fouke and others
Wells and Settle, McAtee, a band of "jolly brothers."
Each one of these you'll surely see, inside the Court yard gate,
Breaking hearts for all "Our Girls," at this famous Fete Champete.

Some of the "Boys" are easy to identify such as the Billingslea brothers, Howell, Charles and "charming Louie". Research reveals the identities of some of the others like "Fiddis" who was almost certainly Hugo Fiddis. Not surprisingly, the author of "Our Boys" owned a photograph of him.

Photo caption: Hugo Fiddis sat for this portrait by Bendann Bros. of Baltimore at about the time of the "Fete Champete" held in July 1875. "Fiddis" was mentioned in a poem "Our Boys" by Mary B. Shellman and circulated at the fete. Mary B, Shellman Collection, Historical Society of Carroll County, gift of Rev. Paul Reese, 1941.