

Victorian Lady presents tea

WORTHINGTON—In celebration of the Worthington Golf Club's 100th Anniversary, the Historical Society presented An Afternoon Tea with a Victorian Lady last Sunday afternoon at the society's museum.

The Victorian Lady, actually an Edwardian Lady, was in her element about 1904, a lady of refinement with elegance and status. According to Bob and Mary Randall, Candie Carle, a performing artist, brought the ideals of a Victorian lady to everyone's attention. Carle's performance started in her Victorian undergarments, which covered her from head to toe. A lady, according to Carle, wore layer upon layer (about five) of garments, to ensure that no part of her skin was exposed to the sun. There were undergarments, then a corset, which had to be laced tightly, over which more undergarments were added before a dress was finally placed upon her. The style of dress implied one's social status as well. If it had buttons on the back, well, one would need a servant to dress oneself. It implied a lady of social higher status, whose husband or family could afford servants. According to Carle, women in those days, as in these times, were just trying to get through their day as well as possible. With servants performing household labors, a lady could address herself to social causes, the woman's vote and charitable societies.

When Carle finished re-dressing herself, with the aid of an audience member as the servant, she had on stockings with garters and shoes, all the undergarments, a corset, the full-length dress with a high

neck and long sleeves and buttoned in the back, gloves and a hat and a parasol to cover herself. Everything had to be held on with buttons and ties as there were no zippers or elastic in those days.

It was quite an assembly of clothing, according to Society President Helen Pollard. "It was quite good and quite entertaining," she said. As Carle dressed she explained the articles of clothing and to what purpose they were worn. She also talked about the mores and status of the Victorian times. Having lily-white skin reflected a woman's social status, which was to be a lady who did not have to perform any physical labor.

A trunk of garments accompanied Carle's performance. It was filled with items, which were part of her collection, either authentic or handmade by copying the item from a catalogue.

Victorians made symbols out of everything, according to Carle. Each flower had its meaning; a red rose meant passionate love. Fans were used for codes in flirting; it had a whole language behind how it was held and what it covered. Carle offered explanations of jewelry, what a lady would carry in her purse, such as smelling salts and a nose gay, and locket of hairs, later filled with pictures of loved ones.

The tea was held outside under a tent. A marvelous selection of teas, finger sandwiches and petits fours were served. It was a lovely afternoon with blue skies and mare-tail clouds. The Victorian Lady was properly dressed to sit under the tent and enjoy her social gathering.