

NUGGETS of HISTORY

The Bi-Monthly Bulletin of the
ROCKFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MEMBERS ENJOY THEMSELVES AT ANNUAL PICNIC



Emma Lundgren, third vice president; Brice Sheets, president; and board member Carl Severin discuss events for the coming year.



We all had a good time!

BRICE SHEETS RE-ELECTED

The annual meeting and picnic was held on Sunday, September 18, at Alpine Park. After a delicious meal provided by the Top Hat Catering Service, the new officers for the coming year were elected.

Brice H. Sheets was re-elected as president. The other officers chosen were Robert H. Borden, first vice president; Jessie Robinson, second vice president; Emma Lundgren, third vice president; Faith Armstrong, secretary; and Arthur B. Huenkemeier, treasurer.



Timothy Borden, the society's youngest charter member, receives a helping hand from mother.



Art Huenkemeier mans the coffee urn.



Filling up their plates.

HISTORY OF THE USS KISHWAUKEE

The USS Kishwaukee, a 310-foot gasoline tanker, was built by Cargill Incorporated at Savage, Minnesota. Named after the Kishwaukee River near Rockford, its keel was laid September 25, 1942, and it was launched on July 24, 1943. The first commissioning took place at New Orleans, Louisiana, on May 27, 1944.

The Kishwaukee participated extensively in the latter part of the Second World War, supplying bases on Johnston, Midway, Palmyra, and Canton Islands, and serving in the battles of Leyte Gulf and Okinawa. She also took part in the Korean War from October 25, 1950, until June of 1953. After seven more years of service in both the North and Southern Pacific, she was decommissioned and stricken from the list of Navy ships in 1960.

The name Kishwaukee was reinstated to the Navy list in October, 1965. After being towed



Lieutenant Gene Yarber

to Northwest Marine Iron Works at Swan Island, Portland, Oregon, she was stripped of all equipment and given an extensive overhaul, including air conditioning, improved living conditions for her crew, and the latest equipment. Her re-commissioning, originally scheduled for June, 1966, had at last report been rescheduled for August, at which time Lieutenant Gene Yarber was to assume command. We have not been informed whether or not the re-commissioning took place then as planned; if so, the USS Kishwaukee was to sail for Pearl Harbor as the newest addition to Service Squadron Five.

In May, 1966, Lieutenant Yarber requested the Rockford Historical Society for information and pictures regarding the Kishwaukee River which they could use for the commissioning ceremony. Brice Sheets undertook to take pictures of the river at various places, and these, together with information proved by Robert Borden, were forwarded to Lieutenant Yarber.

PRESIDENT VAN BUREN SIGNS FOR LAND SALE By Craig Herold

In the 1700 block of South Main Street there is an old, white house. The address, to be exact, is 1710. The house is a two-story building with seven rooms, and was built sometime around 1910.

The land on which the house stands and the land around it was originally given to Simeon Lecquier, the child of Mauh-nah-tee-see, by the United States government. This was on August 1, 1829. Along with the land came a provision which stated that the land could not be sold without the permission of the President of the United States.

Eleven years later, in 1840, Lecquier did sell the land, to Daniel Whitney for \$800. On

August 4, 1840, the sale was approved by President Martin Van Buren. Whitney had the land only one year when he sold it to Charles S. Hempsted for \$4,500. A year later Hempsted decided to sell part of his land to Richard Montague, after whom the street was named, for \$944.36. Montague then sold part of the land to a Mr. Dunbar for \$1,300, and a few years later Dunbar sold one hundred acres to Mr. Homer Denton for \$830. Fifteen years later, in 1860, Denton sold his land to Benjamin Foltz, and the area came to be known as Foltz Addition. The Foltz land ran from the Rock River to West Street. Finally, in 1880, the land was broken into plats. Several years later Foltz died, leaving all the land to his wife and his money to his children, of which there were ten.

Louise, Charles, and William Foltz in 1905 sold lot seven in block one to Bruce Savage for \$475. In 1907 Savage bought lot 8 in the same block for only \$180. Sometime not long after that the house at 1710 South Main St. was built.

Time passed, and when Mr. Savage died he left the property to his wife, Clara. Mrs. Savage then sold the property to Anne Gregory in 1934. In 1936 Anne Gregory sold it to Lottie Geschke, but bought it back the same year; later, when she could not keep up the payments it went to the Home Owner's Loan Corporation.



Before remodeling



After remodeling

In 1943 Steve Kacenas and his wife bought the property, and their family continued to live there until 1955, when it was rented by Edward Herold. In 1959 it was purchased by Herold for the sum of \$10,000, and early in 1966 it was remodeled, as can be seen from the photographs on page 6.

ROBERT TINKER'S BEQUEST

By Mary Riofredo

One of the Hawaiian Islands was the birthplace of Robert Tinker in the year 1836. At the age of four he was in New York State. Youthful activities led to a taste for travel which he was to indulge in later life.

At the age of nineteen young Tinker was working for a bank in Westfield, New York. He was approached by Mr. William Knowlton, a business agent of Mrs. Mary Manny of Rockford. Mrs. Manny was now a wealthy widow engaged in the manufacture of a combined mower and reaper invented by her deceased husband, John H. Manny. Robert Tinker may have heard of the Manny McCormick court case of 1855-1856 over alleged patent infringement, won by Manny shortly before his death, and this may have influenced his decision to come to Rockford.

Mr. Tinker traveled throughout America and Europe. Many delicate pen drawings and other sketches have been preserved and show the wide extent of his travels. He had a decorator's taste and a hunger to collect the art treasures he saw.

In 1862, Robert Tinker brought back detailed sketches of chalets which he had seen in Switzerland. He found a spot along Kent Creek with a bluff suited to the erection of such a chalet in Rockford. After the house was built, in 1865, he added a suspension bridge across the stream of water. Tradition has built a beautiful story of the trips he made across this bridge to court the widow,

Mary Manny.

The Manny home was originally a small frame house on South Main Street, at approximately the site of the present Milwaukee Depot. About four years after the death of her husband, Mrs. Manny purchased the John A. Holland mansion located at about the location of the present Illinois Central passenger station. In her home was the famous love seat or sofa on which Abraham Lincoln sat when entertained there by John H. Manny. In 1870 Robert Tinker and Mary Manny were married and went to Honolulu on their honeymoon trip.

Five years later, in 1875, Robert Tinker was Mayor of Rockford. His home contained interesting objects, his personal sketches, and art collected from all parts of the world. As Tinker grew old he expressed his desire that the cottage and its contents be preserved for the enjoyment of the citizens of Rockford and vicinity. He died on his 88th birthday in 1924.

(To be continued in the next issue.)



The Holland Mansion purchased by Mrs. Manny

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