

NUGGETS of HISTORY

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JOHN H. MANNY FACTORY By Cynthia Weatherall

On Race Street, near the railroad bridge, stands an old three-story stone building which is now a part of the Ward Love Davey Pump Cor-



poration. An important historical event was the building of the first Manny reapers in this place. The incidents connected with this building had much to do with the industrial fame of Rockford, known for many years as "The Reaper City."

John H. Manny arrived in Rockford in the spring of 1853. He was attracted to the Rock River location by the 750-foot dam built earlier that year by the Rockford Water Power Company. The ROCK RIVER DEMOCRAT for February 28, 1854, quotes Manny as saying, concerning leaving his Waddams Grove location, "This change has been induced by the magnificent Water Power recently attained in this place ...

and being near the depot of the Galena and Chicago Railroad, enables me to fill the orders promptly." By 1855 Rockford had a population of about 6,618, and he may have felt that labor would be more plentiful in Rockford.

In July of 1852, at Geneva, New York, Manny competed with eleven other reapers to establish the excellence of the Manny reaper. He was successful and was soon world-wide renowned for his machine. The little factory was soon swimming in publicity, and orders far exceeded production. A total of 2,893 machines were built and sold in 1855.

In 1855 the Manny reaper won top honors in European trials. This was too much for Cyrus McCormick, and he filed suit against Manny for patent infringement. Abraham Lincoln, at that time a Springfield, Illinois lawyer, was a silent partner in the Manny lawsuit; he prepared a brief but did not speak in court. When Lincoln was in Rockford in connection with the case, he, Manny, and Edward Dorr walked up the "water power" to a point along the Rock River and sat upon a log to discuss the defense.



The Manny Reaper

Lincoln was a guest at the Manny home, a small frame building on South Main Street at the present site of the Milwaukee Depot.

The decision in the Manny-McCormick case was handed down on January 16, 1856. A later appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court also resulted in a favorable decision for the Rockford firm.

Manny was thirty years old when bad health, overwork, and worry resulted in his death two weeks after the results of the trial had been announced. This old stone building on Race Street, however, still stands as a memorial to John H. Manny, and reminds us of the days when Rockford was "The Reaper City."

ROBERT TINKER'S BEQUEST
by Mary Riofredo
(Continued from last issue)

After Mr. Tinker died on December 31, 1924, the home became the property of his second wife, Mrs. Jessie (Dorr) Hurd Tinker, whom Tinker married March 14, 1904. The second Mrs. Tinker transferred the real estate to the Rockford Park Board in 1926, and the contents to a



Board of Trustees in 1937, directing them to make the collection available to the public.

As visitors approach Tinker Swiss Cottage through the gardens, they see this chalet on a picturesque bluff overlooking Kent Creek. The exterior is of wood and stone construction with six-foot overhanging eaves supported by



serpentine brackets. Several small balconies serve as porches and verandas for ventilation and relaxation. Tall Gothic windows, a glass conservatory and a two-level basement are other interesting features of its construction.

Most visitors enter through the rear of the chalet, stopping to look at the conservatory. They then find themselves in the kitchen, which serves as a place to keep Mr. Tinker's sketches and contains the guest register. The walls here have been decorated with murals.

The library is copied after Sir Walter Scott's library in Abbotsford, Scotland. It is of hexagonal shape and contains a beautiful spiral staircase leading to a balcony.

In the library, the visitor may see the sofa



A Portion of the Tinker Library
Displaying Mr. Tinker's Chess
Set on the Table.

or loveseat on which Abraham Lincoln sat when he visited Mr. and Mrs. Manny prior to the McCormick-Manny trial. It is claimed that the \$1,000 fee which Lincoln received made it possible for him to further his political aspirations, which eventually carried him to the White House.

The dining room, decorated with very fine murals, contains the original glass and dinnerware from Bohemia, France, Germany, England and even China. Adjoining the dining room is a butler's pantry, into which food was passed through a small opening from the kitchen.

A real glimpse into the past can be gained by looking at the furnishings and paintings. The "door within a door" between the parlor and library is an unusual feature, and there are many others. Robert Tinker becomes more real through a visit to the Tinker Cottage. His bequest to Rockford has preserved an aura of the past.



Tinker Cottage Dining Room

A CENTURY OLD HOUSE ON SOUTH MAIN STREET -
by Shirley Boles and Belinda Wilson

At 1115 South Main Street stands a vine-covered stone house. Only the Grahams, their daughter's family, and the Ginestras have lived in this one hundred-and-nine-year-old home.

Freeman Graham, Sr., built the residence in 1857 and lived there for the rest of his life. When the Grahams' daughter married Henry S. Warner, the Warners moved in with them and remained until 1927. A son, David Graham, in 1894 built a red brick home next door at 1111 South Main; it has since been razed. Thirty-nine years ago Leonard Ginestra bought the old stone house from the Warners, and the Ginestras are still the owners.

For many years the only way of heating the house was with fireplaces. Formerly there were five in use, but now there are only two fireplaces which are ever used at all, and



they only in the spring and fall when the temperature is not low enough to require using the central heating system. In the living room and dining room may be found these two unusual fireplaces, which have stained glass in the wood bin; the glass in the living room fireplace glitters when the electricity is turned on. The dining room fireplace has a gas-operated unit.

On the ceiling of the living room is an original hand-painted picture which is over seventy years old. A winding stairway with a stained glass window on the side leads to a balcony above. Also in the living room are some Grecian pillars. In the dining room is a stained glass chandelier designed of roses and butterflies. The floor is parka with some parka designs in a square.

The downstairs bedroom has an eighty-year-old antique walnut bed. Also in this room are a chest and desk made of walnut. The bedroom floor is of beech and maple wood, laid in a square pattern. The door to the basement leads from the bedroom. The basement floor is made of stone.

Outside, at the back of the house there is a porch, with stairs leading to the upstairs.

There is still an outhouse in the backyard. The driveway is a semi-circle with an island of flowers in the middle. In the flower bed is a large rock with a "G" engraved on it, which originally was for "Graham" but is still appropriate for "Ginestra". The exterior of the home is covered with English ivy on the south side and trumpet vines on the east side.

Mrs. Aileen Sites, Freeman Graham's granddaughter and the daughter of David Graham, was brought up in the home which stood at 1111 South Main Street. She now resides at 2315 Eleventh Avenue.



Where Abraham Lincoln is supposed to have discussed the Manny-McCormick trial with John H. Manny - by the old tack factory

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