

NUGGETS of HISTORY

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ROCKFORD SEAMAN SERVING ON USS KISHWAUKEE

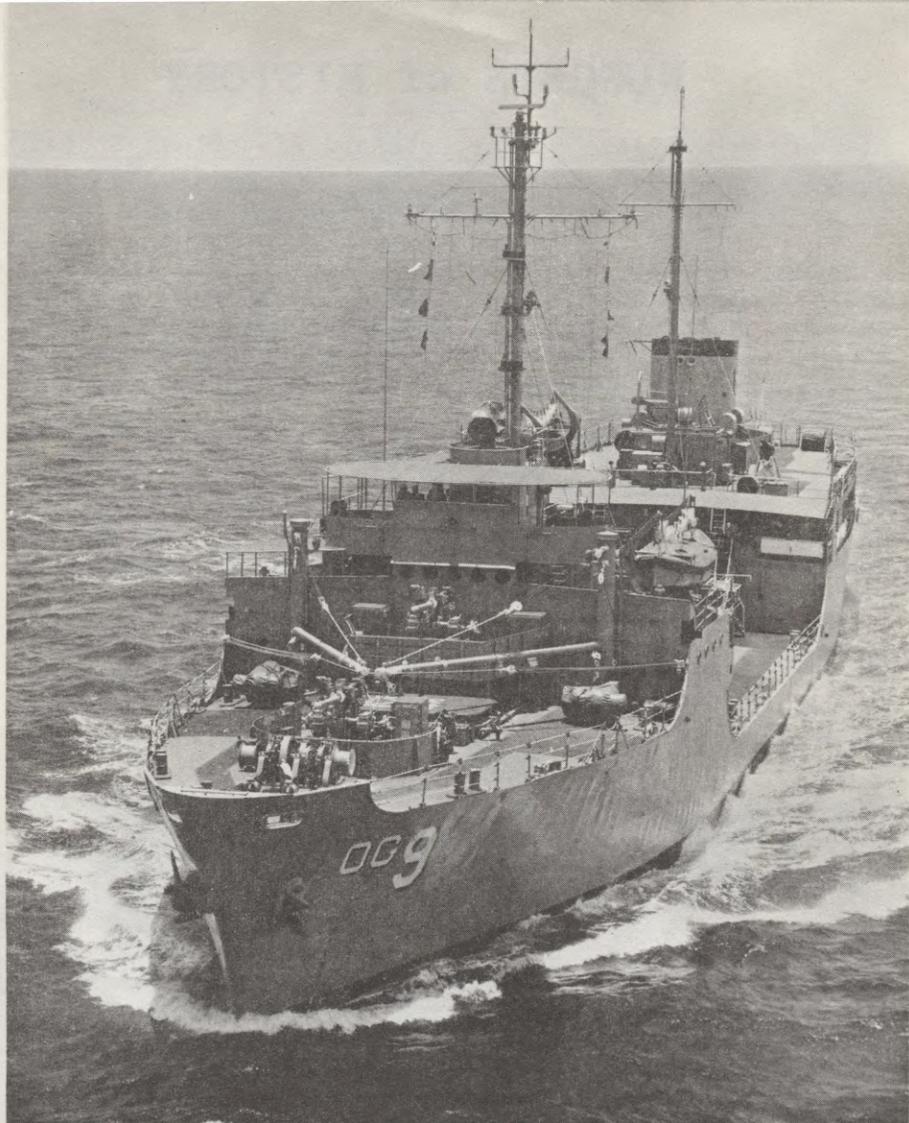
Seaman Robert J. Prezioso, son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Prezioso of 517 Rome Avenue, Rockford, has been serving aboard the USS KISHWAUKEE for about seven months. Seaman Prezioso is pictured here near the bow of his ship. A photograph of the KISHWAUKEE will be found on page two.

The USS KISHWAUKEE (AOG-9), a 310-foot gasoline tanker, is designed for logistic support of overseas bases and ships. Capable of carrying aviation gasoline, diesel oil, and other petroleum products, as well as light freight and provisions, KISHWAUKEE can conduct underway replenishment of ships in addition to close support for combat troops ashore.

The KISHWAUKEE was named for the river in Illinois which has its mouth in Winnebago County south of Rockford. It was built by Cargil Incorporated at Savage, Minnesota. The name KISHWAUKEE has often been claimed to be the Indian word for "clear waters". However,



according to Virgil J. Vogel in INDIAN PLACE NAMES IN ILLINOIS (1963), the Sauk Indian word "Keesh-a-wock-quai" meant "sycamore tree", and the word "Kishwake" was the Potawatomi word for the same tree.



The KISHWAUKEE's keel was laid on September 25, 1942, and launched by her sponsor, Mrs. John L. Shipp of Hayspring, Nebraska, on July 24, 1943. At the time of launching, Mrs. Shipp had three sons in the Naval Service, one in a Japanese prison, another somewhere in the Pacific, and her youngest on duty in the Atlantic.

The first commissioning of KISHWAUKEE took place at New Orleans, Louisiana, on May 27, 1944. Upon completion of training in Norfolk, Virginia, she departed in a convoy arriving at Nicholas Bay, Aruba, West Indies,

to take on a full load of cargo for delivery to the West Coast. After transiting the Panama Canal on July 17, KISHWAUKEE joined Service Squadron EIGHT at San Diego on July 29. As part of the Pacific Fleet, she made repeated runs, supplying the advanced bases on Johnston, Midway, Palmyra, and Canton Islands.

KISHWAUKEE departed Pearl Harbor, her home port, on October 5, 1944, with a logistic convoy bound for the waters of the Philippines, destined to participate in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. After successfully repelling enemy air attacks, she provided numerous services such as refueling carriers and supplying gasoline for PT boats and aircraft.

On March 28, 1945, KISHWAUKEE arrived in the newly won harbor of Kerma Ketto, Nansei Shoto Island, her base of operations during the Okinawa Campaign. Once again she fought off numerous enemy aircraft while performing refueling operations.

At the close of hostilities with Japan she remained in Buckner Bay providing tender services, and departed from Okinawa on December 20, 1945, for Sasebo, Japan, for duty as station tanker. KISHWAUKEE provided the same service at Tsingtao, China, early in May of 1946.

Returning to San Pedro, California, in July of 1946, she underwent overhaul at Mare Island Naval Shipyard and returned to Pearl Harbor in November to make island runs in the Mid-Pacific and Far East. Twice during the Pacific post-war quiet, she returned to the West Coast for overhaul.

On October 25, 1950, KISHWAUKEE sailed from Pearl Harbor to begin her participation in the Korean War, remaining on station until August 1, 1951, before returning to San Francisco for repairs. Once again she resumed logistic runs from Pearl Harbor, Midway, and the Marshall Islands until June of 1953.

On June 23, 1953, KISHWAUKEE departed Pearl Harbor to shuttle gasoline between Alaskan bases and garrisons at Kodiak, Skagway, Whittier, Shemya, and Adak. After making a short call at San Francisco, she returned to Pearl Harbor for overhaul in preparation for a logistic voyage that carried her to Guam, Formosa, the Philippines, Borneo, and Indo-China (now Vietnam). On May 10, 1954, she delivered commissary items to the military assistance group at Saigon. Upon fully loading at the Philippines, she delivered a half-million gallons of aviation gasoline to Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and repeated that mission again at Tourane, French Indo-China.

On October 17, 1954, KISHWAUKEE returned to Pearl Harbor and for the next thirty-six months shuttled gasoline, dry stores, and petroleum products to Midway, Johnston Island, and the Marshalls. KISHWAUKEE departed Pearl Harbor on November 2, 1957, enroute for

eventual decommissioning at Astoria, Oregon, on April 2, 1958. Her name was stricken from the Navy List on July 1, 1960, and she was transferred to the Maritime Administration Reserve Fleet, remaining there until October of 1965, when the name KISHWAUKEE was reinstated to the Navy List.

After being towed to Northwest Marine Iron Works at Swan Island, Portland, Oregon, she was stripped of all equipment and extensive overhaul was begun, including air conditioning, improved living conditions for her crew and officers, as well as the latest equipment for the services she would soon provide. Upon commissioning on September 1, 1966, Lieutenant Gene Yarber assumed command.

KISHWAUKEE joined Service Squadron Five in October, 1966, after completion of outfitting, to commence refresher training and preparation for overseas deployment. On December 5, 1966, KISHWAUKEE deployed for service with the U. S. Seventh Fleet. After brief stops in Guam and the Philippines, she arrived on January 2 in Danang, Vietnam (Tourane French Indo-China), once again to provide petroleum shuttle service between Danang and the outposts of Hue and Dong Ha on the Cua Viet River in support of the U. S. commitment in Vietnam.

In February of this year visits were made to Hong Kong, BCC, where KISHWAUKEE was awarded the Fenwick Pier Service Men's Guide Award for outstanding conduct, and Kaoshuing, Taiwan, where 19,000 pounds of Operation Handclasp material was delivered.

After forty-five days on the line, KISHWAUKEE departed Vietnam enroute Pearl Harbor on April 15. She visited Sasebo, Kobe, and Yokosuka, Japan, on the way home, and arrived in Pearl Harbor on May 15. During her first deployment since commissioning, KISHWAUKEE anchored 106 times in three months and developed a rig which permits fueling of M-8 boats in heavy weather.

PIONEER CARPENTER

David D. Alling, whose home is shown on page five as it still appears at 826 North Main Street, was born in Westfield, Connecticut, on April 27, 1813. At the age of seventeen he was apprenticed to a carpenter and continued with him until he had mastered the trade. On May 29, 1836, he was married to Miss Rebecca Botsford in the Third Congregational Church at New Haven, Connecticut.

During his boyhood days Mr. Alling and Goodyear Asa Sanford were warm friends. In 1837 Mr. Sanford came to Rockford, but Alling migrated to Georgia. Sanford



wrote to him enthusiastically describing the beauties and attractions of this far western place. Mr. Alling was interested by his friend's descriptions of the richness of this area and its great possibilities and promise of a brilliant future, so, with his young bride, he decided to come west.

The Allings returned to New Haven and left there on a steamer for New York in September, 1837. By boat from New York up the Hudson River to Albany, and from Albany to Buffalo on the Erie Canal, the first part of their journey was comparatively easy. It is not known today whether they traveled from Buffalo to Chicago on the Great Lakes or overland, but they finally arrived at the "Windy City", which in those days was a collection of huts in a low swampy area. The stage route from Chicago through Dixon and Paw Paw was the only way to reach Rockford at that time, according to an old newspaper. In the roughest kind of a wagon, seated on a box behind the driver, or helping to pry the wagon out of the prairie mud, the pioneers at last made their way to Rockford, driving through the hazel brush to the home of Mr. Sanford, who at that time lived near the east end of Mulberry Street. During the drive from Oregon to Rockford, they stopped at Stillman Valley overnight, staying at the home of a Frenchman, whose wife told Mrs. Alling she was the first white woman who had ever called on her there.

On the afternoon of his arrival, Alling obtained a job on the new dam which was being built across the river. Early in 1838 he built a home for himself on

the west side of South Main Street between Chestnut and Elm Streets. He also built a carpenter shop at the same location, probably to the rear. When buildings and addresses in Rockford were given definite numbers in the late 1860s, Alling's address became 219 South Main Street.

Mr. and Mrs. Alling continued to live in the same house on South Main for 32 years, but about 1870 he built the home at 826 North Main. He continued to use his carpenter shop, later numbered 223 South Main, until about 1888. He then worked out of his residence for two or three years before retiring. When Mr. Alling died in 1898, one account of his career claimed that the building then occupied by Field's second hand store had been built by him. The 1896-7 Rockford City Directory lists Field's second hand store at 223 South Main, the building in which Moskins Clothing Store is now located. The 1894-5 City Directory lists Field as having his store at 222 South Main, directly across the street. As city directories are usually more accurate the later they were printed, probably 223 South Main is more correct, especially since the later listing was nearer to the time of Alling's death. By the time the 1899 City Directory had been printed, Field had gone out of business. It is said that Alling made two lots out of the property where his carpenter shop stood, selling one for \$50. The other lot he held until 1891, when he sold it for \$16,000.

Mr. Alling was one of the founders of the Second Congregational Church, and is said to have built the first building it occupied. He was one of the first directors of the Rockford Society of Early Settlers, and was one of the last members left when he died on August 1, 1898. His wife Rebecca survived him by about four years. He was also survived by a daughter, Mrs. D. W. Dankey, and a son, Frank Alling.

ANNUAL PICNIC MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The annual meeting of the Rockford Historical Society was held at Alpine Park on Sunday, September 10. Dinner was again served by the Top Hat Catering Service, and no one was heard to complain about not getting enough to eat.

Following the meal, the meeting was called to order by the president, Brice H. Sheets. The primary business to be discharged was election of officers and directors for the coming year. The chairman of the nominating committee, William H. Barrick, presented the slate of officers.

The officers chosen for the 1967-68 year were Robert



H. Borden, president; Emma C. Lundgren, first vice president; Jesse L. Robinson, second vice president; Arthur B. Huenkemeier, third vice president; Hazel A. Kluck, secretary; and Faith Armstrong, treasurer. The directors elected to three-year terms were Clarence J. Agnew, Mildred Fredriksen, Herman G. Nelson, Barbara Nilsson, Stuart A. Ralston, Carl Severin, Brice H. Sheets, and Maude S. Stowell.

FIRST NEGRO ROCKFORDIAN

By Gregory Wells

(Washington Junior High School Student)

The first Negro resident of Rockford was a slave. His name was Lewis Kent, or sometimes known as Lewis Lemon Kent, and he was owned by Germanicus Kent, founder of Rockford. After Lewis Kent there never was another slave in Rockford.

When Kent was living in Alabama, he purchased, for four hundred dollars, a Negro boy named Lewis, then about seventeen years old. Deciding to move to Galena, Kent made an agreement with Lewis. The plan was to take him along and permit him to buy his freedom at the end of six years and six months, with interest at ten percent.

Four years and four months later Lewis obtained his freedom. On September 6, 1839, Kent placed in his hands a deed of manumission, which read as follows:

"And it further appearing to the satisfaction of said court that the said Lewis Lemon has resided in the state of Illinois as a man of color since the month of August, 1834, and that he has demeaned himself as a sober and honest person, the Court doth therefore order ...said Lewis Lemon is a free person of color, entitled to all rights and immunities as such."

(Continued on page 8)

A transcript of this document is on file in the Winnebago County Court House in Rockford. Upon his freedom Lewis became a gardener and since his previous owner, Mr. Kent, had purchased him from a man named Lemon, Lewis seemed to prefer to be known as Lewis Lemon. Lewis Lemon died in September, 1877.

AN INVITATION FROM LIEUTENANT YARBER

Lieutenant Gene Yarber has issued a general invitation to Rockford citizens to visit the USS KISHWAUKEE. If any Rockfordites visit Pearl Harbor or are in Hawaii while the KISHWAUKEE is in port, Lieutenant Yarber writes, "I would be delighted to have them aboard as our guests. To reach us they can call Ship's Information at the Pearl Harbor Naval Base."

AFTER A HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

By Randy Kramer
(Washington Junior High School Student)

In 1841, a beautiful farm house and three buildings were erected on a farm on South Main Road, which becomes Illinois Highway 2, located about four miles from Byron, Illinois. At this time Mr. Morris Johnson owned the land. When this farm home was built South Main Road, also called the River Road, was just a long dirt road. Now it is a blacktop highway, well-known for its scenic beauty as it often skirts Rock River and wooded areas.

After Mr. Morris Johnson died, the farm was sold to Mr. Boehland, who managed the E & W Clothing Store on South Main for many years. Mr. Boehland had much to do at the store, so he could not take care of the farm as well as he wished. He put the farm up for sale. Right after it was offered for sale, a big businessman named Mr. Mauritz Nordell bought the land. He later became the president of Rockford Drop Forge. During his ownership Mr. Nordell rented the farm in 1928 to Mr. and Mrs. Dick Bokker, who lived there twenty-three years, until 1948.

(Continuation of the article as well as two pictures of the property will be in the next issue.)

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