

NUGGETS of HISTORY

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O. F. BARBOUR SCHOOL FIFTY YEARS OLD By Veronica Murphy

O. F. Barbour School is located at 1116 Montague Street. The building, designed by Frank A. Carpenter, is a fire-proof building with brick and tile walls, reinforced concrete floors and walls.

The building is made of reddish brown brick and it sits behind a Y-shaped side walk. The lawn has various shrubs, flowers, and trees, one of which was planted by the sixth grade class. Each pupil at Barbour School feels a pride in the school, its history, and the man for whom it was named.

Barbour School was to have been completed August 1, 1916, but because of some delay, it was not finished until 1917. An addition to the school was built in 1954. It was constructed by Gus Holm, and the architect was Reyner Eastman.

ROCKFORD TEACHER HAD FAMOUS ROOM-MATE By Linda Hill

Orion Ford Barbour was a man who dedicated his life to the teaching of children and tried to fulfill his duty to the community. He was born on September 30, 1834, in Perry, Lake County, Ohio, and received his education at Hiram College, Painesville, Ohio. While attending Hiram, he had as his room-mate James A. Garfield, who later became the twentieth President of the United States. Mr. Barbour felt that his life was as rewarding personally in its smaller sphere and desire to serve as was that of his illustrious room-mate.

Barbour began teaching at the age of eighteen in a district school before going to take charge of a village school. In the early eighteen-fifties he taught in Toledo, Ohio, which was then a city of 6,000. He came to Illinois to take charge of the Plainsfield schools.

Barbour married Eliza A. Marlett Taylor in Aurora, Illinois, on July 17, 1860. They had two sons and a daughter.

Prior to his accepting a job in Rockford, Barbour visited the city to get ideas for his work. Later, a principal was needed for the South Rockford School. Barbour applied for the job and was accepted. The school was a wooden establishment two stories high.

In 1866 he was appointed principal of Kent School, named after Germanicus Kent, which is now known as the Booker T. Washington Center.

Barbour liked to have students collect flowers on Memorial Day. It has been claimed that he originated the "salute to the Flag" which later was for many years practiced in schools throughout the country. He also loved music. He was a choirist at the Third Methodist Church and director at the Second Congregational and Centennial Churches.

In 1876 O. F. Barbour was appointed Dean of the Library Board. He was proud of the fact that he was never absent from a meeting except for an excuse that was unavoidable. He was reappointed by successive mayors.

Eight weeks before his death, Barbour was stricken by the grippe. He was only able to be up for periods at a time and he could not resume his duties at Kent School where he had spent nearly half a century.

His last five weeks were spent in a chair because he was unable to lie down. He knew he was going to die, and he discussed his funeral with his family. A few days before his death, Barbour saw the plans of the proposed school which was to be named after him.

Barbour died at 11:55 on Monday, April 26, 1915, at his home at 512 North Court Street. His death was due to the result of a nervous breakdown and because of his advanced age of eighty years.

He was buried beside his wife in Greenwood Cemetery in Rockford. Every year on his birthday, students from Barbour School put flowers on his grave.

THIS WAS KISHWAUKEE
By William J. Condon
(Continued from last issue)

As the community developed, schools and churches began to appear. It is difficult to determine when and where the first school was held. According to early accounts, school sessions were held in the homes of the settlers. According to Lester Rothwell, his father, William Rothwell, attended school where the cemetery is now located. Since he was born in 1838, the school must have been in existence sometime in the 1840's. This school subsequently burned down in 1852. At about the same time, on May 17, 1844, devout members of the community met to organize a church. It has been said that the first services were held in the log schoolhouse at the cemetery. When this school burned down, the school district was divided and the church was left without a home.

A squabble then ensued among the people of the area. The eastern faction wanted the school built in their territory and the western group wanted it re-built in the same general area as the first. A tentative compromise was made to build a centrally located school on what was known as the "Hog's Back" which was located on the George Stevens farm on Condon Road. The compromise was rejected and the western group built their own school about one half mile west of the cemetery, just inside Ogle County, and called it Maple Grove. This school is still standing on the farm at the west edge of the cemetery. The eastern faction built a stone school where the present Kishwaukee School is located at the corner of Stillman Valley and Condon Roads, and this also served as the church of the community.

The church people decided on November 25, 1863, to purchase a tract of land, so they bought two acres just west of the school from Heman Clothier for the sum of fifty dollars. Due to the Civil War, construction was not begun until 1868, and the building was dedicated October 17, 1868. This church burned down in 1929, and the present Kishwaukee Community Church was built and finally dedicated in 1930. Charter members included: Mr. & Mrs. Isaac Johnson, Mr. William Johnson, Mrs. Louisa Miller, Mr. Richard Vaughn, Robert Rothwell, and Freeman Clothier.

The first burial in the community was made where the cemetery is located now, but before any type of cemetery association was organized. A daughter of Seth Noble, an early pioneer, died as a young child and was buried there in 1839 although it was not until December 26, 1845, that Charles B. Jarvis and Richard Vaughn, owners of land in section 31 of New Milford Township, gave deed to Robert Rothwell, William H. Johnson, and Seth Noble for slightly more than one acre of land at a cost of five dollars. No mention was made as to the use of the tract, but it was apparently for the purpose of burial since Mr. Noble's daughter had been buried there prior to the recorded purchase.

On June 6, 1869, the three men mentioned above gave deed for this property to John S. Pardee, Isaac H. Sovereign and Osmer Noble as Trustees of Kishwaukee Burying Ground and to their successors in office in perpetual succession by the will and for the use of the inhabitants of the adjoining district of country as a burial ground. The first addition was made on February 28, 1877, from a deed given by Horace Hoisington. As this was used, his four grandsons, who inherited the farm from which the land was taken to the west of the cemetery, deeded another half acre in 1925. The final addition was made in 1941, and the

total acreage is presently almost three acres. Originally the cemetery was cared for voluntarily until a contribution drive was begun to establish an endowment fund. Since that time, the sale of lots has contributed enough to sustain the cemetery association.

There are thirty-one veterans buried there, and among them are one from the Revolutionary War, three from the War of 1812, and seventeen from the Civil War. The oldest member of this group at the time of death was my great grandfather, Charles Wilmarth, who served in the Civil War and died in 1944 at the age of 103. The oldest living former resident of Kishwaukee is presently Mr. Lester Rothwell of Rockford. As he first recalls, Memorial Day Services were first held at the cemetery when he was twelve or thirteen years old. As Mr. Rothwell is now ninety-eight, the services must have begun in the early 1880's. At that time, no organized program was held and veterans simply gathered to talk among themselves. Later, speakers were obtained and a quartet provided the entertainment. The services still continue to be held every Memorial Day.

By the 1870's the village of Kishwaukee was located at its present site just south of Kishwaukee School. During those days a post office was located in the village, and the leading user of the postal services was the leading employer mentioned earlier, Frank Johnson. The first post office was located west of the church, just north of Condon Road, and the first post mistress was Emma Clothier, whose father, Edwin Miller, at one time owned the land where the school is now located. The date of the first post office is not recorded, but it was there as early as 1877.

THE SEMINARY ANNIVERSARY

(Reprinted from THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY CHIEF,
Thursday, June 25, 1868)

The Anniversary exercises at the Female Seminary commenced with the examination of classes on Monday last. The Baccalaureate Sermon was preached by the Rev. M. P. Kinney, in the afternoon of the Sabbath preceding, before a very large congregation, and at half past seven in the evening a sermon by Rev. J. F. Yates, at Anniversary Hall. The following was the order of exercises for the Graduating Class of 1868:

Music. Greeting—Ellen R. Shepard, Brookfield, Iowa. Music. Essay—"Things Best and Purest lie in Obscurity"—Ella L. Edwards, (Normal) Dundee. Essay—Glimpses of Egypt—Mary Price, Ottawa. Music. Essay—Uncrowned

Prince:—Martha L. Baker, Berlin, Wis. Essay—Strange Allies—Mary E. Holmes, Rockford. Music. Annual Paper. Music. Essay—Iconoclasts—Elizabeth M. Griffin, Lacey. Music. Essay—Where?—with the Valedictory—Eva F. Townsend, Rockford. Parting Song. Benediction.

At 11 o'clock A. M. the Anniversary Address was delivered by Rev. Mr. Helmer, of Chicago.

We very much regret our failure of attendance through the whole of the exercises, but circumstances over which we had no control prevented us. The pupils whom we heard, however, were very efficient in their various pursuits, evincing evidence of ripe scholarship and culture. To speak of individual merit deservedly, as we should take great pleasure in doing, would extend this article beyond the capacity of our columns. The various essays were much above the average of those generally read at commencements, containing more thought and less sentiment than usual. We however observed the same error in voice and articulation during the recitations in French and Trigonometry (the only ones we heard) so common with female pupils—Not one word in five could be distinctly recognized as a part of speech, half way distant across the hall from the speaker, and every sentence seemed to be half sung in a kind of melancholy monotone. It does seem as though more attention should be given to the correction of this common defect. Many young ladies lose their laurels by not enunciating distinctly at public examinations.

Taking the institution throughout, it is in a most flourishing condition, and does Rockford great credit, standing at the head of all similar places of education in the great Northwest.

THE FOURTH IN ROCKFORD (Reprinted from
the ROCKFORD GAZETTE, Thursday, July 9, 1868)

Saturday last was a rather lively day here, even for Rockford. It was intensely hot, but notwithstanding the extreme heat, our streets were crowded with our citizens, and visitors from the county, all intent on commemorating the anniversary of the day on which a new government was begun, and the United States of America added to the list of nations.

The celebration proper came off according to programme, the procession forming near the Court House, soon after 10 A. M., the Cavalry from Winnebago and Westfield Corners in the lead; they presented a very fine appearance. The "G.A.R." and Firemen turned in large numbers, and added much to the appearance of the procession. By some blunder, our City Fathers, who

expected to ride in the procession, were not provided with a conveyance, and after waiting an hour or so, in vain, for said conveyance, "departed each man to his own house." The procession went over on the East side, through the principal streets of the city, and arrived on the Fair Grounds about 12 M. The address of Emory A. Storrs, which we were not fortunate enough to hear, is spoken of very highly by those present. The extreme heat, which almost overpowered him, rendered it necessary for Mr. S. to somewhat curtail his remarks, and the oration occupied not more than half an hour in its delivery.

The display of Fireworks from the barge in the river, at night, was very fine, and was witnessed by not less than five thousand persons. Both shores of the river, adjacent houses, the bridge, and everything in the vicinity, was literally covered with animated humanity. The "Bombardments" seemed to us to present the most attractive spectacle. It was a beautiful moonlight evening, hardly dark enough for fireworks, but making it very pleasant for the people.

We regret to say that during the day there were more breaches of the peace, and more drunkenness, than we ever before saw in our goodly city. West State street, from the bridge to the Court House, was the scene of not less than a dozen "knock down and drag outs," in one of which, at least, revolvers played a very conspicuous part; our extra police force had their hands full, and their time fully occupied. A few of the disturbers of the peace were ignominiously dragged off to the calaboose. Altogether, Saturday last was rather a lively day for Rockford.

HOW MUCH IS A PARK REALLY WORTH?

By Edward Kistler

In 1915 Fairgrounds Park, located at Kilburn Avenue and Jefferson Street, was declared the second largest park in Rockford. It covered $24\frac{1}{2}$ acres at that time. It was also said that there was no combination park and playground that could match Fairgrounds Park.

When the park was first opened, Kent Creek was dammed and used as a swimming area. Quite often the creek would fill up. The water hit the dam with force, making deep holes in the soft bedding of mud and sand. This made it dangerous for public swimming.

In 1921, six tennis courts were resurfaced. Also a frame garage was built for housing tools and was used as a base of operation for motor trucks.

Finally, in 1923, Fairgrounds Park had a swimming pool. The water at that time was supplied through six pipes from the city main water line, provided free by

the City Council. Today the park has to pay for the water supplied to it by the city.

Every night during the swimming season, between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., the waste was taken out of the pool by two eight-inch drains. Then the pool water was drained, the pool scrubbed, and refilled. During this time period in the summer the Health Department had to take daily samples of the pool water and they conducted exhausting studies to try to find a way to make the pool water more sanitary for the public.

The flood of June 13, 1926, caused a great amount of damage to Fairgrounds Park, but no buildings were lost. Kent Creek was the cause of the flood in that area.

In 1927 an old wooden shed, which had served as a refreshment stand for years, was torn down and replaced by a new substantial brick building.

Also in 1927 a horizontal power pump with motor was installed to increase the supply of water to the shower rooms. The dressing and locker rooms also needed considerable repair at that time.

When the park was first established, it had been estimated at a cost of \$90,000 plus the improvements of \$8,000, for a total value in 1915 of just under \$100,000. Today it is, of course, worth much more, but has probably returned many times its worth to the public throughout the years.

Fairgrounds Park still provides an adequate playfield, although only limited indoor facilities are available. No one can really estimate the value of a park in terms of its worth to the community which it serves.

AND WHY THIS NAME?

By Shelley Gucciardo

What did Julia Lathrop do to receive the honor of having a school named after her? Few of the boys and girls who attend this school realize that Julia Lathrop is nationally famous.

To begin with, Julia Clifford Lathrop, born on June 29, 1858, was the first child of William and Adeline (Potter) Lathrop. She had one sister and two brothers. The family lived in a house on N. Rockton Avenue. Mr. Lathrop was a lawyer and, at one time, a Congressman.

Julia went to the public schools of Rockford and was considered a "good" child and a "smart" scholar. But Julia was stubborn. Her teacher had told her this once when she was about seven years old, after Julia refused to run an errand. Even after the teacher had urged her, she refused because she was too shy to face

the boys in the upstairs classroom.

After finishing Rockford High School, Julia attended Rockford Seminary as a day student for one year. But Julia's real desire was to attend Vassar, one of the first women's colleges, and her father was quite willing to let her go there.

Most of the members of Julia's class at Vassar had entered from the preparatory school which was conducted in the same building. They had formed groups of friends and Julia was sometimes lonely. Julia had to study harder than her classmates because she did not have the advantage of the preparatory school. She entered Vassar in the sophomore year, and through hard work graduated three years later, in 1880.

After graduating from Vassar, Julia worked as secretary in her father's law office. She learned a good deal about the law there.

In the latter part of 1889, Julia entered Hull House, an establishment founded by Jane Addams to aid the poor people of Chicago. She was put in charge of a tenement area. She also worked with Jane Addams to provide a nursery and recreational center for the people whom Hull House served.

Then, in 1892, the Governor of Illinois appointed Julia Lathrop to the Illinois State Board of Charities. She assumed the position in July of the next year, and served until 1901. She then resigned in protest against a political appointment. But she was reappointed by a new governor in 1905. While serving on this board, Julia took a part in the establishment of the first juvenile court law and the first Juvenile Court. She also studied the institutional care of prisoners, delinquents, and the deaf, blind, and mentally ill. Julia served eleven years on this board.

In 1912, President William Howard Taft called on Julia Lathrop to head the newly formed Children's Bureau. While serving as chief of the Children's Bureau, she worked to obtain federally supervised birth registration and to prevent unnecessary removal of children from their parents by providing aid to mothers. Julia resigned as chief of the Children's Bureau in 1921. After this she spent a great share of her time on the lecture platform. She died on April 15, 1932.

It was because of her outstanding work for the welfare of children and the fact that she was born in Rockford that Julia Lathrop received the honor of having a school named after her.

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