

# NUGGETS of HISTORY

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## ANNUAL MEETING, ELECTION OF OFFICERS, AND PICNIC

Chandler S. Miller, a member of the picnic committee, has announced that Area One at Sinnissippi Park has been reserved for our annual picnic meeting, to be held on Sunday, September 8th. Most of our members who are in town at the time of the picnic usually attend, so it gives everyone a chance to see many friends whom they might not see very often during the rest of the year. Dr. Maude Stowell is chairman of the picnic committee, assisted by Miss Emma Lundgren and Mr. Miller.

The nominating committee is very busy working up a slate of officers and directors for the coming year, and these will be voted on at the picnic as soon as we have finished eating. Chairman of the nominating committee is Mr. Brice H. Sheets, our past president. The others on the committee are Miss Theo Van De Mark and Mr. Arthur Huenkemeier. Mr. Huenkemeier will again be in charge of the tickets.

Miss Hazel Kluck, our secretary, will be sending notices to all members very shortly; they may have already arrived before you receive this paper. Please notify Mr. Huenkemeier as early as possible.

## HOUSE OF MEMORIES: TINKER SWISS COTTAGE

THE ILLINOIS INTELLIGENCER, a four-page paper published by the Illinois Sesquicentennial Commission, has printed an article about Tinker Cottage written by Isadora Nelson, Sunday Editor of the Rockford Morning Star. In her article Mrs. Nelson described the Rockford landmark as "a house of more than a thousand treasures and a million memories."

Although Tinker Cottage is well-known by students of history throughout Illinois and beyond, it is often taken for granted or even completely ignored by many residents of Rockford. Perhaps there might even be some members of the Rockford Historical Society who have never passed through its doors.

Tinker Cottage is open to the public from 2 to 5 p. m. Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday, and by special appointment with Mrs. John L. Rapp, 251 W. Merrill Ave., Loves Park. Visitors are taken on a very interesting guided tour of the building, and the charge per person is very small. The official address of Tinker Cottage is 411 Kent Street, but it is actually not on Kent Street at all, but at the northeast corner of Blake and South Court Streets. To reach Tinker Cottage from South Main Street, one ascends Kent Street for two blocks to South Court Street and turns north. South Court narrows down to a mere alley between Kent and Blake Streets, and Tinker Cottage is located at the northern end of that "alley". When approaching from South Winnebago Street, turn east on Blake Street.

HOUSE AT 1215 SANFORD STREET  
By Kathy Paris

The house at 1215 Sanford Street was built in May of 1901, and its first owners, Mr. and Mrs. William Corey, moved into it in 1902. Originally, the house had one story which included many rooms. Then, in 1920, a second story was added, and the house had eight rooms and a bath. Three years later, inside plumbing was installed.

On November 17, 1924, Clarence, one of the Corey's sons, married and moved away. In 1940 he bought the house and moved back. He lived there until 1957 when he moved next door to 1219 Sanford, and rented the house at 1215 to his daughter Jean and her husband, Bud Borchers.

In 1958 the house was rented to Mr. Corey's oldest son, Bill, and his family, who lived there until 1962, at which time Lena Sartino and another lady moved in. They cared for children who were orphans or who came from broken homes. They remained there until March of 1964. After another occupancy by a member of the Corey family, this time Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Corey, Jr., the house was sold late in 1965 to Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Parson, the present owners.

The house has survived sixty-seven years and has grown with the neighborhood in which it is situated. At first, it was the only house on the block, but now it is in the middle of a cluster of houses. Cattle used to graze nearby, but now automobiles pass it many times each day. The street was probably named after Goodyear Asa Sanford, a prominent Rockford businessman who died in 1894.

TWO OLD BOYS (Reprinted from the ROCKFORD  
MORNING STAR, October 13, 1894)

Harry Starr and Charlie Brown, though 54 years old, are just as young as they used to be. Nearly every morning they mount their bikes and take a spin of twenty miles. They have done several of the surrounding towns, where they take dinner, and after the refreshment leisurely whirl homeward. Dave Starr, who is still in the trundle bed class, usually accompanies them and finds it no easy matter to keep up with the old boys. It is exhilarating exercise, and the ex-mayor and the ex-merchant enjoy it hugely.

FROM A SMALL BEGINNING  
By Timothy Wehrle

The beginning of Barber-Colman was a small one. But today it can hardly be called small. It is one of the largest companies in the city of Rockford. The Barber-Colman company is a locally owned factory, not a corporation that is owned by many different stockholders. The first Barber-Colman plant to be established is at 1300 Rock Street on the Rock River. There is another plant in Loves Park, presently called the Park Plant. Barber-Colman has

two subsidiaries: Barber-Colman of Canada LTD, Toronto, Canada; and Barcol Overdoor Company, Sheffield, Illinois; and two affiliates, Barber and Colman LTD, Sale, Cheshire, England; and Barber and Colman GMBK, Munich, West Germany.

The Barber-Colman Company was established in 1900 by a teen-aged boy named Howard D. Colman. Howard was the son of a minister in the Wisconsin Methodist Conference. This boy is responsible for a plant in Rockford that now provides jobs for almost 4,500 people. Since then the Barber-Colman people have contributed to the progress of such fields as textiles, automotive, aviation, machine tool, temperature control, plastic molding, electrical, and others.

Today 85 per cent of the cotton mills in the United States use Barber-Colman textile machinery. The machines that these companies use include automatic spoolers, hand knotters, and automatic quillers.

Mr. Colman's inventions covered many fields. By 1910 the automotive industry needed better machines to meet the increasing demands. The Over-door Division of the company in Sheffield, Illinois, manufactures radio controlled garage door openers, electric eye door openers, and fabricates overhead-type doors for private and public garages. Barber-Colman is incorporated in hundreds of products and appliances. These include antenna rotators, fans, heaters, mixers, traffic controls, vaporizers, toys, pumps, x-ray timers, micro-film cameras, scoreboard timers, advertising displays, business machines, oscillographs, and voltage regulators. In the motor assembly department, on five assembly lines, an average of 45,000 motors are produced per month.

Since 1926, the Barber-Colman Company has been manufacturing components of an electrical system of automatic controls for cooling, heating, and air conditioning.

Since the days of Pan-American Clippers, Barber-Colman workers have been supplying products to the aircraft industry for cabin and cockpit temperature control, as well as anti-icing systems and other appliances in commercial and military aircraft. There are more than 75 types of aircraft using this material. Control components for aircraft include control cabinets, temperature sensing elements, actuators, and remote positioning units.

Since 1929 molded products have been produced. A few of the materials used in this division include bakelite, Durey, Beetle, and Plaskon. In this division a wide variety of custom work is also done.

The products of the Rockford plant are sold and serviced by a nation-wide organization with offices in more than sixty cities in the United States and Canada and many foreign countries. For sixty-eight years Barber-Colman has had 20,125 years of service from its employees.

By 1855 McCormick realized that the Federal Government was not the impartial tribunal that he had believed it to be. He saw that he could not depend upon it for protection so he made a characteristic decision—he resolved to protect himself. He, too, would hire a battery of lawyers and charge down upon these manufacturers who were unrighteously making his Reaper and depriving him of his patents. He engaged three of the master lawyers of the American bar, William H. Seward, E. N. Dickerson, and Senator Reverdy Johnson, and brought suit against Manny and Emerson, of Rockford, Illinois, for making McCormick Reapers without a license.

Then came a three-year struggle that shook the country and did much to shape the history of the American people. Manny and Emerson, who were shrewd and forceful men, hired twice as many lawyers as McCormick and prepared to defend themselves. They selected as the members of this legal bodyguard Abraham Lincoln, Stephen A. Douglas, Edwin M. Stanton, Peter H. Watson, George Harding, and Congressman H. Winter Davis.

It was a battle of giants. Greek met Greek with weapons of eloquence. But Stanton outclassed his great co-debaters in a speech of unanswerable power which unfortunately was not reported. The speech so vividly impressed McCormick that in his next lawsuit he at once engaged Stanton. It awoke the brain of Lincoln, as he afterwards admitted; and drove him back to a more comprehensive study of the law. It gave Lincoln so high an opinion of Stanton's ability that, when he became President several years later, he chose Stanton to be his Secretary of War. And it gripped judge and jury with such effect that McCormick lost his case. It was a wonderful speech.

Abraham Lincoln, who made no speech at all, was the one who derived the most benefit in the end from this lawsuit. It not only aroused his ambitions, but gave him his first big fee—\$1,000. This money came to him at the precise moment when he needed it most, to enable him to enter into the famous debate with Douglas—the debate that made him the inevitable candidate of the Republican party. It is interesting to note how closely the destinies of Lincoln and McCormick were interwoven. Both were born in 1809, on farms in the South. Both struggled through a youth of adversity and first came into prominence in Illinois. Both labored to preserve the Union, and when the War of Secession came it was the Reaper that enabled Lincoln to feed his armies. Both men were emancipators, the one from slavery and the other from famine; and both to-day sleep under the soil of Illinois. No other two Americans had heavier tasks than they, and none worked more mightily for the common good.

(Editor's note: Readers may not agree with all aspects of this article. Comments will be welcomed.)

M-m-m-m! Good food is something Swedish people appreciate. The Smorgasbord is the first course of a meal. It is served buffet style; each person takes as much as he wants from the many dishes provided. It includes fish dishes, cold cuts, radishes, relishes, breads, cheese, and salads. Snaps, a kind of brandy, and glogg, a punch, are drinks that Swedish people enjoy. Swedish people in Rockford can enjoy a smorgasbord at many restaurants. One is the Sweden House at 4615 East State Street.

Swedish people are closely related to the Norwegians and Danes. They are also related to the Germans. Swedes are supposed to be intelligent, industrious, resourceful, and friendly.

In 1852, among the first Swedes to arrive here was John Nelson. John arrived here when he was 22 years old. The new Rockford terminal of the Galena and Chicago Railroad was the most westerly point that could be reached by rail. That was how the first group from Sweden chose Rockford. This was the beginning of the mass immigration that was to follow and play such a vital part in the city's growth.

William Burson and John Nelson set up a shop in a loft of an old barn and began to experiment with new apparatus. Nelson added a control wheel to the Lamm knitter and Burson made a yard carrier that automatically charged the yards required in making the different parts of a stocking. Nelson and Burson tried their machine in 1868, but they were disappointed. Two years after this failure, however, the Burson-Nelson Company made its first sock. This took place on July 23, 1870. John Nelson was just one of the many industrious Swedes in Rockford. On April 15, 1883, the great sock maker died.

Swedish people have opened many factories and buildings in Rockford. An example is the Forest City Furniture Company Factory opened by Andrew C. Johnson and J. P. Anderson on Railroad Avenue. This factory opened in 1874 and was the first major furniture factory in Rockford.

Inventing things was another thing the Swedes excelled in. In 1877 Isaac Lockwood, a clerk in Israel Sovereign's hardware store, succeeded in weaving wire window screens on a hand loom in a room over the store. After this he and N. E. Lyman established a small factory to fabricate wire cloth.

In 1941 a Swedish home for elderly persons was opened. The idea was a project of the late P. A. Peterson for whom it was named. The home is located on Parkview Avenue, south of the Rockford Municipal Tuberculosis Sanatorium. The two story building cost over \$100,000 and it has space for twenty-five or more people. P. A. Peterson donated \$500,000 for the home and other purposes.

These are just a few of the things Swedish people have done in Rockford, and are still doing. People come to

Rockford to taste its coffee and eat the food or to see the many industries that grew from Swedish ingenuity.

BALL ON THE BRAIN (Reprinted from the  
ROCKFORD GAZETTE, July 30, 1868)

The citizens of Rockford have really got Base Ball on the brain, and badly too. All kinds of "nines" are organized and try their skill at "muffing," to their own huge delight and lookers on generally. The printers vs. clerks, "thicks" vs. "thins,"—that is, fat men vs. lean—old vs. young, married vs. single, south side State st. vs. north side, and last, but not least, the boarders, or rather "hash-eaters" of the Holland House vs. those of the American House. This was played on Tuesday afternoon, and resulted in favor of the Holland House, thus proving that the "hash" of that hotel is more conducive to good "running" than the other. At the end of the 7th inning, a panic seemed to seize each individual member of the opposing nines, they clutching up their garments and running towards town as if for dear life. Somewhat astonished at this extraordinary proceeding, we breathlessly inquired, and found that the cause of this unlooked for termination of the game was the familiar sound of the supper gong, which none of the players could "hear and not attend," even for base ball.

POLITICS IN 1868

In 1868 the ROCKFORD REGISTER was very strongly in favor of General Ulysses S. Grant for President. Among their other articles and editorials extolling the virtues of General Grant was the following borrowed list of possible names for their candidate: (ROCKFORD REGISTER, July 16, 1868)

"OUR CANDIDATE:—The Buffalo EXPRESS is responsible for the following:

U. S. Grant.

Ulysses Sidney (?) Grant.

Union Saving Grant.

Usually Silent Grant.

Upright Statesman Grant.

Universal Suffrage Grant.

Unequaled Soldier Grant.

Unaffectedly Simple Grant.

Uniformly Successful Grant.

Unanimously Selected Grant.

Undisturbedly Serene Grant.

Unconquerable Spirited Grant.

Unimpeachable Servant Grant.

Unintermitting Smoker Grant.

Unquestionably Sound Grant.

Unflinchingly Steadfast Grant.

Unconditional Surrender Grant.

Unambiguously Straightforward Grant.

United States President Grant."

THOMAS BUTTERWORTH

We are indebted to Mrs. Max Webb for the picture of the home of Thomas Butterworth, which stood at 205 North Main Street. Mrs. Webb, who has resided for many years at 1314 Brownwood Drive, is Mr. Butterworth's granddaughter.

Thomas Butterworth was born on September 6, 1827, in Manchester, England. He had learned the trade of brick-laying before sailing for America at the age of nineteen. Landing at New Orleans, he found that city in the grip of a yellow fever epidemic, so he immediately set out for Cincinnati, Ohio. He obtained employment with Stacy and Company, the proprietors of the Cincinnati gas works, and in 1857 he was sent by his employers to Rockford to repair the gas works here in Rockford.

The Rockford Gas Light and Coke Company had been incorporated in 1855 by John Platt, S.M. Preston, William Lyman, Henry Fisher, and Jesse Blinn. In April, 1856, the lots at Mulberry and Wyman Streets where the main public library is now located were purchased by the company from W.A. Dickerman, G.A. Sanford, and T.D. Robertson. The erection of the gas works was begun in May, 1856.

On Christmas Day, 1856, the proprietors of the gas company gave a grand festival to celebrate the introduction of gas lights in the city. After partaking of a sumptuous meal, the guests spent the remainder of the evening dancing by the light of gas lamps, the first having already been installed in the hall where the merriment was going on. On February 3, 1857, stores were lighted by gas for the first time in Rockford, the price of the gas being four dollars per thousand cubic feet. Things apparently did not go so well, however, for in March of 1858 the works and mains were sold at public auction to satisfy creditors.

Thomas Butterworth had remained in Rockford, and he became one of the new owners. The others were Samuel Ashcraft, Robert P. Lane, G. A. Sanford, and W. A. Dickerman. They obtained a new franchise from the state legislature, and Butterworth was appointed manager. In time he bought out his other partners and became the sole owner of the company.

While serving as manager of the gas plant, Mr. Butterworth also continued as a building contractor, and built Brown's Hall, the old People's Bank Building on State Street as well as other buildings. When he became sole owner of the gas works, he sold his contracting business.

Mr. Butterworth was elected to the state legislature in 1878 as a Democrat, and served one term. He died on April 5, 1885, at Ashville, North Carolina. His survivors were his wife and seven children: Mrs. Will Tullock, Mrs. E. M. Botsford, Mrs. Paul F. Schuster, Mrs. Hosmer Porter, Mrs. George Roper, and Chester and William Butterworth.

The gas works were purchased from the Butterworth estate on March 1, 1890, for \$250,000 by the American Gas Company of Philadelphia. In 1899 land was purchased on Avon Street near Cedar, and a modern plant was erected capable of mak-

Thomas Butterworth's Home  
205 North Main Street



ing 500,000 cubic feet per day. In 1906 additions were made, bringing the daily capacity to 1,400 000 cubic feet. In 1913 the company purchased additional land and began the erection of additional capacity. By 1915 there were 145 miles of gas mains throughout the city. The original gas works had cost about \$75,000, but by 1915 the entire plant and mains together represented an outlay of over \$1,500,000.

#### ROCKFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

The agitation for a public library in Rockford began in 1852. It was not until March, 1857, however, that the first successful effort to establish a library was made. A subscription list was circulated, and by autumn of 1858 six thousand dollars had been pledged. The library was opened, but by 1865 interest had declined, and the books were sold.

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