

N U G G E T S o f H I S T O R Y

Special Tour Issue

August 16, 1970

FIRST HISTORICAL TOUR
by the Rockford Historical Society
covering western Winnebago County

LET'S BEGIN OUR TOUR
by Clement V. Burns
Chairman of the Tour

This tour has been planned to take you through an historic part of Winnebago County, which was settled early in our county's history. We know there are other portions of this and adjoining counties of more than considerable interest, and which we promise to cover in future tours.

Recalling our route from North Towne, we came west on Riverside Blvd., across Rockton Ave., and Owen Center Rd. (N. Central Ave.), passing through land settled early by members of the Sarver family (of whom you will hear more later), and of interest, not so much from an early standpoint, but because of the passing of a farm occupation, that of fruit raising; for the Darringtons and Otis Hinkley had large orchards in the area to our left.

Leaving Riverside Blvd., we continued on Route 70, or Trask Bridge Rd., or Kilburn Ave., as you prefer. (Remember, you may be dated by the name you use for this road.) On the right is a man-made lake, and we old timers (and some not so old) can remember this as the meandering Kilburn's Creek.

As we passed the Harrison Rd., we entered another area where it was said that everyone was either a Sarver, related to them, or married to one, as was true in what is still referred to as "New England."

Just before passing the Burritt or Wempletown community, we passed through the path of the Palm Sunday tornado of just a few years past, which, in this area, completely destroyed two farmsteads.

WEMPLETOWN
by Clement V. Burns

On the left as you entered Wempletown, was the home of the Burritt Grange, sponsors of the Trask Bridge Picnic for 50 years, and the Burritt Community Church. The building as it now stands is two church buildings remodeled into one. This church is part of the Greater Pecatonica Parish of the United Methodist Church.

On the northwest corner of the Burritt corners intersection was the site of the stone building which sheltered the Town House, on the second floor (where this writer voted for the first time), and the blacksmith shop. A short distance south the Tressier family resided. Mr. Tressier, being quite a mechanic, built a threshing machine which was set up and operated (separating the wheat or oats from the straw), and shipped later to Australia. The southeast corner of the intersection held a building which housed the grocery store and Post Office, operated by the Snowden family. Mr. Snowden was a farmer, as well as minister to the spiritual needs of the community.

An important part of the community economy was served by the "Batch Porter" spring in the center of the section one-half mile west and about the same south of Burritt corners, where, in the days of few fences and plenty of help, it was the custom to bring the herds of cattle and other animals for water, grazing in the unfenced, and likely unclaimed lands of the time.

FOUR LAKES AND WESTWARD
by Clement V. Burns

To the left we saw the present Four Lakes Recreation Area, formerly called the State of Illinois Fish Hatchery; but in the memory of old timers, this was the locale of quite a recreation area around the fine springs on the south side of the road, where the Knapp family operated a zoo of considerable local renown, a ball park, and a track for either saddle or trotting horses.

Moving westward, we passed through an area homesteaded by Fells, Hamers, Franklins, Hartleys, Scotts, and

Andrews. Passing the road now known as Cemetery Road (leading to the North Burritt Cemetery), which was at one time generally known as the Mud Hollow Road, along which the Hartleys, Olivers, and others lived, as well as leading to the North Burritt Church and School; and it is with quite a bit of pride and appreciation that we realize the time, energy, and sacrifice made by our forefathers to inculcate religious training as well as secular, donating land, material, and time for community well being.

TRASK BRIDGE

(Reprinted from the Durand Centennial Book, 1956)
added notes by Hazel A. Kluck

In 1931-32 a new concrete road was built to Rockford, over the old Trask Bridge Road. This is Route 70, but more commonly referred to as Trask Bridge Road, made well-known because of the Trask Bridge Picnic, sponsored by . . . Burritt Grange and the largest farm picnic in the world, held for many years in Andrews Grove. This area was to your left as you rounded the big curve towards Trask Bridge itself.

This particular crossing of the Pecatonica river has played an important part in the making of Winnebago County history. In early days it was necessary to swim the stream or go several miles upstream to an old Indian Ford on what is now the Thomas Derwent farm. Mr. Alva Trask, living near, sought to commercialize the needs for transportation with a ferry which did a thriving business beginning May 17, 1836, according to other information in this book until travel finally demanded a bridge. The location of the ferry was on the bend of the river behind the new house under construction as you rounded the curve past the bridges across the new and old channels of the Pecatonica. It can be seen when the leaves are off. In 1839, the Rockford settlement proceeded to incorporate as a town, having reached the required population (150). A stage line was established between Rockford and Monroe, Wis., to carry mail and passengers, and it is safe to assume that the first wooden bridge was built about this time.

The Pecatonica bottom land and the land toward and about Durand held a wealth of timber that was marketed as cord wood in Rockford. The first bridge had no railings, and people, coming upon the bridge from a rise and off a sharp curve, sometimes had several moments of fright, and some had very narrow escapes. In 1868 a new bridge was built. It was the source of pride to the settlers and a curiosity to the Indians who viewed it with suspicion. The new bridge had curved steel side beams making arched railings, and the Indians, seeing these beams during construction, thought that they were to support the floor, and condemned the bridge, saying there was no sense in making a horse walk up and down those curves to get across the river. Some of the settlers did not trust the strength of the new bridge, so many people cut green wood, loaded their wagons, and lined them up on the bridge, testing its strength. It withstood the test, and served the public until 1931, when a new concrete bridge was completed, to the Southeast of the old bridge. Jim Boomer recalls having hauled many loads of cord wood to Rockford over the old bridge and selling them for \$5 a load, as can others. . . . The new bridge was built on dry land, in the middle of a corn field, and two bends were removed from the river, and a new channel dug under the bridge; the old bridge was razed in 1933. The estimated cost of the new bridge was \$100,000.

TRASK BRIDGE TO ELTON

by Clement V. Burns and Hazel A. Kluck

It is interesting to think of the woodlands along the Pecatonica bottoms, within easy sight for several miles from this point, as being an important part of the early economy. Many a farmer bought a ten acre tract, cut out saw logs for a barn or stock shelter, or even for house framing and sheathing, taking out each winter enough stove wood for the family fuel supply, and in many cases (as mentioned above) hauling cord wood or stove lengths to Rockford. One family comes to mind who paid for an 80 acre farm in a relatively short time by this method, driving one team and sled load of wood and leading another to Rockford, crossing the "Pec" river on the ice

and travelling diagonally to Rockford with the loads; the route is said to be discernible to this day from a plane.

At a point about one-half mile past the Trask Bridge is the spot just south of the highway where Burritt, Pecatonica, Durand, and Harrison Townships corner; and just west is the site of a race track of early days, ball diamond, etc.; and across the highway in a grove of trees is the site of Indian encampments for several years after the tribes had migrated northward from Illinois but returned here to make medicine in the land of their fathers.

We passed through the area settled by Barninghams, Boomers, Leeches, Derwents, Houghtons and Haughtons, Sarvers, and Campbells. Some of these names are heard commonly today, and others exist only in the memory of old timers. We must remember: "Memento, homo, vitan commadatus, non donatus est." -- that life is only loaned to us, not given us forever.

At this point we came to about the highest point in the entire trip, at the intersection of Trask Bridge and Judd Roads, and at the southwest corner we saw a home of an unusual material for this area, red brick, said to have been pressed and burned along Pink Creek, and built by the Mylott family. We mention the unusual building medium because the homes were commonly of frame or stone. These early settlers had brought their own building styles from the New England States. Looking back just east of the corner, one could see the old Haughton house, said to be one of the first permanent homes in this area --though other old timers claim the honor for the smaller house on the north side of the road at the foot of the hill and close to the fine spring. The next farm east of this last one, on the north side, and set back some distance, as was the custom in the 1830s and '40s, is one of the Derwent homes, and the "summer kitchen" at the north line of the present house is the original log cabin, its identity lost under sheathing and siding, but still known to old timers as part of our American Heritage.

If you had turned south on Judd Road, you would have been able to see traces of the old stage road where it comes up from the ford, and around the corner onto Brick

School Road, back from the road on the right, the old stone barn where the stage coaches could be driven in for repair. To your left is the area to be included in the new forest preserve along the river.

Now back to Trask Bridge Road again.

ELTON

by Clement V. Burns and Hazel A. Kluck

The hilltop offered a view of a great many spots of interest, including Route 70 north to Durand, but we burned our thoughts to the days of the Elton Community--long since but a memory.

"The village once had 17 houses, a post office (Tyler), a store, and blacksmith, cooper shop, and stage stop for travelers continuing west to Galena or taking the northwest fork in the trail to Mineral Point," according to the Durand Centennial Book. Other known businesses were a horse-powered grist mill and the Elton Steam Mills, which, according to the 1871 county atlas and plat book, were located along the creek on the north side of the road.

First settlers in this general area were Nelson Salisbury and Harvey Lowe, in the fall of 1835. The following February brought Newman Campbell; a week later, David Sam Campbell and D. E. Sterns, who cut timber for the early settlers. Salisbury and Lowe returned to Indiana for their families and goods, and these families, together with the Scott Robb family, were the first to use Trask's Ferry, after helping Mr. Trask complete the building of the boat.

"The first year the settlers raised corn, oats, buckwheat, potatoes, and a few garden vegetables," (again quoting from the Durand Centennial Book).

1837 added the following families to the area and the Elton settlement was formed: Pettingill, Felts, Cochran, Phillip, Johnson, Reese, Cram, Fleming, Franklin, Mann, and Brach.

Quoting once more from the Durand Centennial Book:

"The Derwents and Haughtons came from England about 1842 . . . The Derwents were carpenters as well as farmers, and as the community needed flour, lumber, and

wagons, they erected a flour and saw mill on Beaver Creek. Aaron Haughton was a stone mason and built the first stone house in the community. He was skilled at erecting stone arches; and when the first attempt to built the Court House at Rockford in 1877 ended in disaster, he was called upon to complete the building . . .

In the 1850s a stock company was formed to run a railroad from Milwaukee southwest through Elton. Land abstracts show that many of the families mortgaged their farms to buy stock in the venture to bring the community closer to needed markets and supplies. "Land was bought from the Haughtons in 1856 . . . and a right-of-way staked out. The survey was changed to go through Durand, and the Derwents then moved their mills to Rockford. . . . thus Elton ceased to be a village," so the book on Durand's Centennial tells us.

Just as you left Route 70, on the south side of the road was one of the original Haughton farms--still in the family. Southwest of these buildings, by looking back, you could see the original stone Elton School House, which has been remodeled and used as a ceramic studio for a number of years.

A question probably entered your mind as you looked at the next farm on the right: "Why is the house set at the unusual angle?" Sons of Rayme Sarver, who build this house about 1876, say that it was set "square with the road," rather than "square with the world," because it faced the old "Lead Mine Trail" from the diggins around Galena, New Diggins, and Mineral Point. The lead pigs were carried overland to Chicago and Milwaukee on this trail, as were loads of grain and frozen sides of beef and hogs in winter. Foot deep ruts are still visible in the woods west of the house. You could spot them by the uneven tree line.

One should think, during the next trip to the modern supermarket, of the struggle for existence which was based on taking such produce to Chicago and Milwaukee, hoping the weather would hold and the snow not thaw. One family tells of the father taking two loads of wheat or corn to Chicago and returning with only a small sack of tea. Another tells of the joy experienced when the flouring mill was put into operation at Epplyanna, in

Stephenson County, as they would not have to go to Milwaukee to have flour ground and bolted. Trim, sash, and windows for dwellings were brought back over the same long, cold, wet miles.

On the right you must have seen a row of towering hard (sugar) maples, which were brought from New England by David Sam and Erixna Campbell after their marriage in 1840, together with the copper evaporating pan used in cooking down the syrup and making maple sugar. During the sugar shortage in World War I, it was used in cooking down sorghum (molasses) from home grown sorghum, which will not crystallize. During the depression the pan again was pressed into service to aid the economy and preserve a tradition of many years.

At the foot of the hill, at the end of this row of maples is the "Elton House," the David Sam Campbell homestead, purchased from the government at a cost of \$2.00 per acre. A grandson, Carr Sarver, and his wife, Marie, now live here. This house has hand hewn timbers. (Another of the Campbell daughters became Mrs. D. J. Stewart.) It was in front of this house, perhaps your wheels passed over the very spot, where David Sam Campbell killed a buffalo. Northeast of the house was a spring where the old log house stood for many years. Just east of Elton House was an Indian burial ground, which has long since been excavated for relics. It was this house that served as an inn for stage travelers.

Sam Campbell, father of David Sam Campbell, was a drummer boy in the Revolution and is buried in the Hulse Cemetery, just west and on the other side of the road. This cemetery is carved from the northeast corner of the Hulse farm, the original house of which can be seen around the corner on the road to Pecatonica. The first burial in this cemetery was that of Nathan Tibbets. This area is the locale of the union of the Barker, Hulse, Campbell, Sarver, and many other families. Just down the slope is "Pink Creek," said to be so named because of the vast numbers of these beautiful little flowers growing along the banks.

At the corner where we turned south toward Pecatonica, the northwest corner of this intersection is said to be the site of "one of the first, if not the very first

school house built in the county . . . The first teacher was Ziba Jones." (Durand Centennial Book)

Just after turning this corner, you crossed Pink Creek again, where, it is said, there was a little settlement on the west bank close to a spring, so important to all settlers before the times of dug or drilled wells, and where Grandma Woodruff was the local weaver and spinner. On the left was the Hulse house, just past another free-flowing spring, a source of good sweet water, and the only refrigeration for the milk, eggs, and meat in the warmer days of the year. Downstream to the southwest along Pink Creek is the clay bank, from which the red brick mentioned before were made. Of course this is where the Red Brick School got its name. This school, located a mile or so south on land donated by some of the Campbells, was leveled by the 1948 tornado.

PEEKETOLIKA AND TO THE SOUTH by Clement V. Burns

In Pecatonica are many points of interest, more than seemed feasible to encompass in this afternoon's tour. Claude Colberg, usually to be found at his office at the north end of the business district; Miss Anna Rogers, in the Winchester Insurance office; and Mrs. Sylvia Swartz are good sources of the history, lore, and families of this place called Pecatonica, from the Indian name, variously spelled: Peekeetawnaugh, Peeketolika, etc., and later known as Lysander.

We saw three interesting old churches in the east part of the town: St. John's Lutheran (white frame), First Lutheran (brick, built in 1882), and the United Methodist (gray stone, built in 1868) which is the oldest congregation in town, having been organized in 1835. Of note also is the dam site east of the Fairgrounds which powered a grist mill and a saw mill, which were operated by the Wolvin and Sumner families. Time spent in the cemeteries in the west part of the town will be richly rewarding in local names. It is well worthwhile to read the early history, for this town had many industries, including a shoe factory.

On Taylor Street in the easterly part of town was an

artesian well, capped over and piped into a horse watering trough. The excess spilled to the side of the street, flowing into Kerr's Creek, but it is now capped over at the side of Mrs. Thompson's house.

Vanceborough

Now something from an old timer's memory:

Shortly after crossing U. S. 20, on the left was the settlement of Vanceborough which was quite a gathering place of earlier days, and notable as the scene of a dance, perhaps on New Year's Eve, when the floor timbers gave way and all fell into the "cellar."

Twelve Mile Grove

Among places named by association, was Twelve Mile Grove--church, cemetery, and ordinary or tavern. This was a twelve mile stop from the old stage stop on West State across from Didier's, later the Charley Hall farm. So we find the reason for many names if we but seek in the right direction. As we proceeded in the direction of Seward, Twelve Mile Grove Cemetery is on the left, with the church across the way.

On towards Winnebago

Turning left on Cunningham Road toward the Winnebago area took us through the area known at one time as the "Big Slough," where our grandfathers poled small boats about while hunting ducks and geese, but modern methods have installed drainage ditches and tiling. The names of Conger, Neely, Sheldon, Clark, and Scott are among those recalled as early settlers. At the edge of the old slough area is a home, once the Sheldon School, named for one of the several pioneer families of that name.

Toward Winnebago we find the names of Nevins, Two, and Watson, this last being one of the organizers of the Edwardsville Creamery.

And at the end of our journey--the home of Jon and Anne Fritsch (our newlyweds), a wonderful example of restora-

tion of a Victorian home of the 1870s, but we will let Hazel Hyde describe it for you. Sorry to have missed the bride and groom, but Jon's parents, the Emery Frit Fritsches' were most hospitable substitute hosts. They were ably assisted by ladies of the Marguerite Circle of Bethesda Covenant Church.

There are other points of interest which we plan to see another day. We've enjoyed having you with us and hope you have enjoyed the tour. Come again.

AT THE HOME OF MR. AND MRS. JON FRITSCH by Hazel M. Hyde

Nightlight of this Rockford Historical Society Tour was the visit in Winnebago to the historically important house known by some people as "the old Parsons House." This early Victorian home was started in 1874 by Nahum Parsons. Mr. Parsons and his wife, Nancy, moved in during 1876. Hugh Parsons, a son, lived in the house until 1940, when he sold it to the Jacobs family. Milton Fisher was its next owner, gaining possession in 1958. Mr. Jon Fritsch, a teacher at Rock Valley College, purchased the historic house in 1965.

Tour cars stopped in front of the two story house of red brick with white trim. Some of the older society members began to recall the 1919 trial of Mrs. Parsons in Rockford on charges of being a socialist. Some copies of the story of her defense by the famous lawyer, Clarence Darrow, are still in existence. It is entitled "The Trial of Helen McCloud."

Jon Fritsch has furnished the house throughout with appropriate antiques. People who had previously admired the distinctive house on Cunningham Road in Winnebago from the outside only were overwhelmed at the charm and authenticity.

Back-to-back fireplaces in living room and dining room were noticed soon after entering. A vine design decorated the living room fireplace, and old fashioned ceramic tile from floor to ceiling gave distinction to the dining room in contrast to the dark paneling of the dining room walls.

Specially chosen wallpaper (some purchased in Canada)

afforded special interest to some of the walls. Two quaint, stylishly stiff horsehair sofas and a horsehair chair give the touch needed for a house of the period. One soft had the original upholstering. An old reed organ and a square grand piano made everyone think of the old parlor, as did the tables and lamps.

The Bird's Eye Maple bedroom set with its locking chest, vanity, table, and bed had much detail, the trim of each piece differing creatively from the decoration of the others.

The imported kitchen stove was unique, being six-sided. There was an old fashioned ice box, too. There were beautiful English and German dishes, one set of which had belonged to Mr. Fritsch's grandmother.

It was a gay occasion, and some people were too busy chatting with friends and enjoying their cookies and lemonade to carry away a lasting impression of all the charm to be seen. They recalled period pieces such as marble topped tables, old dressers, and brass beds. The phonograph that played cylinder records was interesting. There were period items of equipment such as coffee pots and coffee grinders, too. It was a rare privilege to be received in this home, not by the owners, as we had expected, but by Mr. Fritsch's parents. It was a surprise to find this house that could have been museum-like had such a homey air that exuded welcome and a lived-in quality, which we are certain will be even more so when Jon Fritsch brings his bride, Anne, and her children to live there before school starts.

EARLY SETTLERS OF WINNEBAGO TOWNSHIP by Hazel M. Hyde

David Adams Holt came from New York in 1835 and built a cabin on Section 34 to become the first settler in Winnebago Township. In June, 1836, his daughter Harriett arrived, to be listed as the first white baby to be born in the township. To chalk up a third first, David Adams Holt became the first person in Winnebago Township to die. He was only 39 years old at the time of his death, July 13, 1839.

William and Elijah Holt, brothers of the first settler,

came in 1836 and 1837 respectively and settled on Sections 26 and 35. The trip from New York to Illinois often took three months.

In the early spring before navigation on the lakes was open, William Holt, a man of 41 years, started walking from New York to Chicago. At Chicago he arranged for a seat on the stagecoach to Dixon, Illinois, and rode for two days. Progress was so slow and the stage coaches got stuck so often in deep mudholes, William decided he could make better progress by walking. He walked the remainder of the distance to Winnebago Township.

Rev. Leonard Holt, a minister in the Methodist Church was a son of the man who walked most of the way to this area. A former pastor of Centennial Methodist Church in Rockford, Rev. H. V. Holt, a grandson of William Holt, was superintendent of West Chicago District in 1911.

In 1840 Elijah built a stone house in Winnebago Township. He lived there for a number of years. In 1953 the Boetches family was living in this century-old stone house. Elijah Holt died March 30, 1876. There was a stone quarry in the woods back of Mr. Holt's place, near Westfield Corners. It was from this quarry that the rougher stone for the Old Stone Congregational Church was taken.

The Holt family was associated with the first school in Winnebago township. It was started in the home of David A. Holt, the first settler, by Miss Mary Treadwell, who afterwards married Elijah Holt. Subscription schools were common in that day, and Miss Treadwell's school was quite successful. In 1844 a frame school house was built, and Mrs. Mary Treadwell Holt was employed for \$2.00 per week and had to board herself. Mrs. Holt had forty scholars and cared for her own two small children while hearing the lessons of her pupils each day.

BEGINNINGS OF THE VILLAGE OF WINNEBAGO by Hazel M. Hyde

The reminiscences of old time residents and the scanning of existing records by the Winnebago Community Council and their publication in 1954 of "Winnebago

"Centennial Celebration" remains the best source of information on the early days of Winnebago. The Rockford Public Library is indebted to Rockford Historical Society member, Miss Faith Armstrong, for the gift of a copy of this valuable printed record. Those of us who try to ferret out the early settlers and the way of life must rely heavily on such library materials. With a bit of imagination, visits to the sites of recorded happenings, and an old photograph or two, we can present on today's mental motion picture screen some images of how it all was long ago.

Joseph D. Warner came to Winnebago County from Canada. Like many others he came to better his economic condition and had no thought of becoming a local historic figure. He lived the life of a pioneer in the day by day pattern of the times.

Rockford Historical Society members usually quote the story of the building of the Galena and Chicago Railroad Company as one of the facts at the tips of their tongues. This company was chartered in 1836 for the purpose of building a railroad from Chicago to Galena. It reached the east side of Rock River in Rockford by 1852. The next year the bridge was completed and the line extended to Freeport. In 1864 the line was consolidated with the Chicago and Northwestern.

The first man to build a house in the village of Winnebago had the honor to also be the first station agent. He was Joseph D. Warner. The first house was built in 1854 in the month of December and was destroyed by fire shortly after completion. Undaunted, Mr. Warner built another house which he occupied the latter part of January, 1855. Or was that the correct date? Kett's History of Winnebago County, Pub. 1877, and Kauffman and Burch's Rockford City Directory and County Gazetteer for 1869 disagree about the dates of the platting of the village. Kauffman and Burch date this platting as October, 1854. If Kett is correct, and evidence seems to favor his dating, it is more probably that Warner's house was completed in 1854.

Kett states that on December 30, 1853, T. D. Robertson of Rockford surveyed and platted the village of Winnebago. One of Winnebago's first ministers wrote a letter

at the request of G. R. Vanhorne in 1911. Mr. Vanhorne was writing a series of articles on the early days in Winnebago for the Rockford Register Gazette. He asked Rev. W. D. Atchinson, who was, in 1854, the junior preacher of the Byron Circuit, for his memories of that time.

Rev. W. D. Atchinson recalled that he preached his first sermon in the village of Winnebago in the private dwelling of Joseph D. Warner. He stated this was before the railroad depot was built. Meetings continued to be held in this home until the basement was completed for the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was started in 1854. In the light of Rev. Atchinson's writing, the year 1854 seemed the more probable date at which J. D. Warner's house was finished. A hundred years later, in 1954, the first house to be built in Winnebago was occupied by the Stringer family.

CREAMERIES OF EARLY DAYS

by Hazel M. Hyde

Do you remember, as some of the older members do, the cream testing station of some fifty or sixty years ago? To the child of that day the bottles of milk that whirled around rapidly in the test-tube type bottles with long slender necks were utterly fascinating. There was the mystery of how the tester could arrive at the final result telling how much butter fat each separate specimen of milk contained.

Have you listened to the splash, splash of the cream in a hand-operated stone churn? Have you grasped the wooden handle and kept up the rhythmical up and down motion that helped to separate butter fat from the milk? Perhaps you remember the goodness of real buttermilk taken from the churn after the butter was formed. Have you watched the deft hands of your very favorite auntie as she worked out excess moisture and shaped the butter into a beautiful golden mount? Later there was the thrill of homemade butter on homemade bread.

Then did you, by chance, have an uncle who operated a village creamery? It was fun to watch the farmers bring their milk in large galvanized milk cans. Oh, you've

seen the milk can painted purple out in a yard in Rockford! These cans were plain, hard-used cans that carried sweet milk in its daily trip to a creamery. This was the way milk was transported in the days when cows were milked by hand. There were no milking parlors, milking machines, pipelines, or bulk milk trucks. Those were the days when small creameries flourished.

The village of Winnebago had a creamery in its early days, and this proved to be one of its most important industries. Yes, it claims to be a first, too. Clark Mellen founded this concern as the first creamery in northern Illinois. The milk of a thousand cows made up the bulk of the product it received. Butter was regularly shipped to Elgin and often as far as New York. The thirty-pound cheeses went to Chicago and to Kansas to be sold wholesale for \$2.10 each.

Cyrus Miller made a visit to a dairy farm in New York. He told at a grange meeting of the tremendous price of fifty cents per pound for butter that this concern was getting in Vermont. This led to the organization of the Edwardsville Creamery, still in operation in 1970, located on Edwardsville Road. The year was 1878. Clifford Whitney, who is now a leading Midwest dairyman, remembers that in his youth he delivered milk to the Edwardsville Creamery. It was customary to be permitted to drink "for free" all the natural buttermilk you wanted, using the community dipper, while you waited for your turn to have your milk cans emptied.

Otto and Jonas Vaughn came at an early date to operate the Edwardsville Creamery. The intake at the beginning was 1,200 pounds daily. Clark Mellen, a dedicated creamery operator, at one time owned the Winnebago, the Edwardsville, the Burritt, and the Westfield Creameries.

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