

NUGGETS of HISTORY

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FIRST DEED ENTERED ON RECORD IN WINNEBAGO COUNTY

By Hazel M. Hyde

Catherine Mayott, a woman of Indian extraction, conveyed to Nicholas Boilvin her right to an unlocated section of land for the sum of eight hundred dollars. A Major Campbell aided in the transaction. Subsequent events showed this land to be owned jointly by Nicholas Boilvin of Chicago, Charles Reed of Joliet, and Major Campbell, said to have been a resident of Ottawa. The instrument of writing conveying the ownership of the land was the first deed entered on record in Winnebago County.

In its entirety it read: "Know all men by these presents, that I, Catharine Mayott, of the town of Chicago, and State of Illinois, for and in consideration of the sum of eight hundred dollars, to me in hand well and truly paid by my relative and friend, Nicholas Boilvin, of said Chicago, the receipt whereof I hereby acknowledge, have granted, bargained, sold and conveyed, and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said Nicholas Boilvin, his heirs, executors and assigns, the unlocated section of land which was granted to me by the fifth article of the treaty between the United States and the Winnebago Nation of Indians, made and concluded at Prairie du Chien, on the first day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine (the other sections granted to me having been sold to Henry Gratiot), together with all the right, title, interest, claim and control which I, the said Catharine Mayott, have, or may, or can have, by virtue of the treaty aforesaid. To have and to hold to him, the said Nicholas Boilvin, his heirs executors and assigns, to his and their sole use and behoof forever. And furthermore, I, the said Catharine, for myself, my heirs, executors and assigns, hereby covenant, promise and agree to and with said Nicholas Boilvin, his heirs, executors and assigns, that all acts and doings in the premises which hiterto have been done, or may yet be performed under the direction or authority of the said Boilvin or his lawful agent, I will ratify and confirm; and I hereby bind myself, my heirs, and executors, to the fulfillment of the contract between the said Boilvin and myself, hereby granting and selling unto the said Nicholas Boilvin all my right, title and interest in and to the premises aforesaid, in as full, perfect and absolute a manner as it is possible to be done, performed, or executed. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, at Chicago aforesaid, this twenty-fifth day of August, in the year of our Lord one Thousand eight hundred and thirty-five.

her
Catharine X Mayott (Seal)
mark

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of

G. W. Dole

Thomas Hartzell,

(Continued on Page 2)

Issac Harmon

State of Illinois, Cook Co.

This day came before me, Catharine Mayott, to me personally known as the real person who executed the foregoing deed of conveyance; and then before me, after the same was read and the contents thereof being fully explained to her, acknowledged that she had executed the same freely and voluntarily for the uses and purposes therein contained, and acknowledged herself satisfied with the consideration therein named and received thereof.

Given under my hand and seal this 25th day of August A.D. 1835.

Issac Harmon J. P. (Seal)

Recorded September 3, 1835 Recorder's Office, Cook County, Illinois. I Richard J. Hamilton, Recorder of Cook County and State aforesaid, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing, deed of conveyance from Catharine Mayott to Nicholas Boilvin is a true copy of the original as recorded in my office, on the third day of September, 1835, in Book I, page 428. In testimony whereof I have set my hand and seal of office, this 29th day of August, 1835.

Ten years after the date of the certificate of the Recorder of Cook County, the copy of the deed certified to by him was entered for record in Winnebago County, as the following endorsement certifies:

Filed September 7th, 1846. Recorded and Examined September 8th, 1846.

Daniel H. Whitney, Recorder

Winnebago Co., Illinois

With the warranty conveyed in this deed, Nicholas Boilvin, claimed section fourteen, town ship number forty-four north, range one east of the third principal meridian, about two miles above the city of Rockford.

This land figures in the early efforts to locate a county seat for Winnebago County.

THE BLACKSMITH SHOP

By Hazel M. Hyde

William Penfield had a blacksmith shop on the east side of Rock River, in Rockford. Oldsters may remember what a blacksmith shop was like. Younger members of Rockford Historical Society may not know from first hand experience the pungent, warm smell of horses, the sounds like a giant hissing or the sizzling of hot fat that comes from with a blacksmith shop. Share my recollections of a blacksmith shop --

The blacksmith shop was a fascinating place for small boys and girls. As you approached, you could see a bench out in front of the wooden building. There sat some of the older men of the vil-

lage. They were whittling. One of them might be whistling softly, possibly, "Red Wing". My favorite among these characters was a kindly old man who lived alone and we called him "Uncle Billy". It was shady where these men sat and talked about "The War". And the war was the Civil War, where they or their fathers had tasted an adventure that soon lost all romanticism, except in recollection.

On the sunny south side there would be a lively horse shoe game in progress. Mother would be annoyed if my father was wasting time there. While he was a very busy man, he had developed a great deal of skill and often soiced "a ringer". This was an almost forbidden spot, of course. But if Uncle Billy had whittled out a nice paddle for mother to use in stirring the apple-butter, the scolding was likely to be shorter. I might even be allowed to go thank Uncle Billy and promise him a jar of apple sauce.

Inside was the real exciting place. There near the doorway stood a big horse. The blacksmith would pound the red-hot horse shoe with his hammer, with a loud clang-clang-clang. His big bare arms glistened with sweat. After heating it in the forge, he would fit the shoe, temper the metal in water, and then nail it securely on the horse's hoof. He would hold the horse's foot expertly as he worked. The fire was very hot but he had a bellows that he pumped to make it even hotter.

Later, when the horse was "shoed", the farmer would lead it out and hitch him up to a buggy. Or, there was apt to be a wagon and two horses. Then there would be the chance to watch the fastening of the tugs. We could never help but feel sorry when a bit was put into a horse's mouth. Worst of all was the use of blinders at the sides of the horses's eyes. We shivered a bit in concern over that. Finally the single-trees or the doubletrees were fastened. The driver put his foot on the step, got on the seat and picked up the lines. "Giddap", he would say. Sometimes the wagon had to be backed out with a great deal of "Gee," "Haw" and other instructions.

The clanging was taken up again as another man brought another horse. The sounds of the horse-shoe game were also clamoring and clanging of horse-shoes. It was all very thrilling, with a half musty odor, and a great deal of activity on a summer day.

Well, this wasn't William Penfield's blacksmith shop; but the blacksmith shops were very similar wherever you found them.

EAST HIGH FOOTBALL PLAYERS HOLD REUNION

Coach Palmer Tells About 1940 Game

During a happy reunion in the Svea Soner club rooms, East High School football players of the early 1940s renewed friendships and reminisced with their coach, Harry Palmer, who was guest of honor. Mr. Palmer was East High's first football coach. Also a guest at the affair was Steve Polaski, former sophomore football coach at East.

Before the smorgåsbord reunion, held on October 9, most of the "old" gridders attended the East High homecoming game at Swanson field, which saw East's varsity trounce Guilford High School, 36-

(Continued on Page 6)



1940 EAST ROCKFORD HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SQUAD

Back row: Curt Ostberg, Don Willett, Joe Bruno, Eugene Benton, Roger Olson, Carey Stephenson, Jean Quentin Jones, Danny Petretis, Ronald Petrie, Vince Gucciardo, Rodney K. Anderson, Jack Lain, Gino Donofrio.

Third row: Asst. Coach James Laude, Gene Peterson, George Skinner, Joe Spadacini, Joe Coniglio, John Dumochowski, Ward Kirchner

4

Roland Wilson, Norman Tester, Coach Harry Palmer.

Second row: Edwin Olson, Howie Hillman, Vito Defay, Douglas Hall, Al Mastrangeli, Jim Gibson, Jim Flood, Bill Anderson, Don Melquist, Bob Elof Carlson.

First row: Carl Defay, Jens Levine, Don Bergman, Frank Alonzo, Frank Vella, LaVerne Dahlstrand, Al Carlson, Dave Norbeck. Not present: Whitey Larson.

5

14. Their loyalties were divided, however, as several now reside in the Guilford district and have children attending the newer school.

The high point of the reunion was a nostalgic talk by Coach Palmer, capturing some of the highlights of the first East-West game on October 11, 1940, which was won by East 6-2. Mr. Palmer was introduced by master of ceremonies Clayton Burman. West had been favored to win in 1940, apparently having inherited a greater number of lettermen from Central High's 1939 team. However, the combination of Frank Alonzo's terrific punting, running, and pass intercepting, alert heads-up playing by Frank Vella, Jim Gibson, Al Mastrangeli, and the other E-Rabs, plus the crowd-thrilling 30-yard touchdown run by speedy Don Melquist, brought about the first upset of the 30-year East-West rivalry.

The idea of having an annual reunion of East High football squad members, managers and coaches who had participated from 1940 through 1943 was originated in 1968 by Clayton Burman, John Domski, Tony Giardini, Dick Hughes, John Ritchie, Bill Sterud, and Harold Wilson. In 1969 it was decided to invite the wives to the gathering, and also coaches Palmer and Polaski and their wives. A total of sixteen players plus the coaches attended last year. This year forty-eight couples were scheduled to appear at the smorgasbord, so the affair seems to be growing each year.

When other reunions, athletic or otherwise, are held in Rockford from time to time, it will be appreciated if those who are aware of them will report it to the editor, as reunions, large or small, are important to our accumulation of Rockford history.

SOME WINNERS OF DAR ESSAY CONTEST WROTE ON LOCAL TOPICS

By Hazel M. Hyde

The Rockford Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution sponsor a historical essay contest each year. This year 581 young people from 26 schools participated. Mrs. Asher D. Carratt, historian, makes the contact with the schools and secures the judges. There was a state and a national topic. The national topic was "The Declaration of Independence" and we commend the young people who wrote on this subject, whether they won an award or not.

Among the winning essays on the state topic, which was "Land of Lincoln Historical Sites", were two that seemed particularly concerned with historical sites of this area. Nuggets presents the work of these young winners, with the hope that they will continue to be interested in local history.

Among the winners in the state topic were these: First place in 8th grade: Maria Cuppini, 1226 Cunningham Street, who attends St. Anthony School; First place winner in 7th grade: Donna Caldwell, 216 Paris Avenue; Lincoln School; (whose essay is herein published in full); 1st place in 6th grade: Eric Lerner, 4966 Brigadoon Road, Spring Creek School; 1st place in 5th grade: Anne Roseleip, 418 Alliance Avenue; St. Patrick School. We are publishing also the honorable mention essay by Carol Nowicki, 4215 Marsh Avenue, Lincoln School, because its subject matter is suitable for our publication.

THE BLACK HAWK STATUE

By Donna Caldwell

While driving on highway 2, which is also known as the Black Hawk Trail, between Dixon and Rockford, Illinois you will come across a huge concrete statue, towering above Rock River. This statue, located in beautiful Lowden Memorial State Park, has been placed in respectful memory to the famous Indian warrior Black Hawk.

Black Hawk statue was built by a well known sculptor, Lorado Taft. Lorado Taft was born in 1860 in Elmwood, Illinois. He studied art at the University of Illinois and in Paris, France. When he was 26 years old, he taught at the Art Institute of Chicago. Through this he gained many followers throughout the mid-west. His work, consisted of building figures, military monuments and memorials.

The most famous of his works was the Black Hawk Statue. This statue stands 250 feet high and shows the great warrior wearing a long Indian robe with his arms folded across his chest. This impressive statue is a tribute to a man who was not only strong and courageous, but also a brave and fearless leader.

Black Hawk was born in 1767 and became head chief and medicine man of the Sac (or Sauk) and the Fox tribe when he was 21 years old. He was a peaceful Indian and abhorred scalping and killing. He was also one of the greatest Indian chiefs ever to live.

During the 1830's the United States was building and expanding westward. This expansion forced Black Hawk into signing a treaty that required the Sac and the Fox tribe to move farther west across the Mississippi River into Iowa. A year later, Black Hawk, having thought the treaty was unfair, recrossed the Mississippi River back into Illinois. Black Hawk brought back with him nearly one thousand men, women, and children. This return of the Indians frightened settlers, and General Henry Atkinson at St. Louis sent several hundred soldiers to deal with the Indians.

Black Hawk did not wish for war. He apparently was heading to Wisconsin to plant crops, but when his flag of truce was fired upon and the two men holding it were killed, he had no other choice but to fight back. Afterwards, several small battles were fought in northern Illinois, and in southern Wisconsin. Afterwards Black Hawk offered to surrender, also trying to get the remainder of his people safely back into Iowa. Ignoring this surrender, the United States troops attacked and killed most of the Indian men, women and children. This attack was known as the Battle of Bad Axe. This unnecessary slaughter wiped out most of the Indian force.

In 1832 Black Hawk was captured while fleeing to the Wisconsin Dells and was taken to Prairie du Chien. He was kept imprisoned for a period of one year. When he was released, Black Hawk was taken on a tour around the east, thus returning to his tribe in Iowa. Black Hawk died in 1838 on the Sac reservation. He was 71 years of age.

The Black Hawk War was very significant because it opened the Illinois territory to the new frontiersmen and left Illinois to develop in relative peace. The removal of the Sac and the Fox tribe also was a boon to the tremendous growth of Chicago, the second largest city of the United States.

Black Hawk was a great hero to all the Sac and the Fox tribe



Black Hawk Statue
in 1941, before Lowden
State Park was opened.

and was very highly respected by white men. This respect has been shown by Lorado Taft in his well known Black Hawk Statue located in Oregon, Illinois.

TINKER SWISS COTTAGE
By Carol Nowicki

Tinker Swiss Cottage is one of the most interesting buildings in mid-west Rockford. It was built in the days of luxurious home building, and it still is a very popular site, one of the most for many miles around. It has things like a sofa and chair that Lincoln once sat on that most places don't have. It has furniture made out of pressed oak roots, and famous people like Mark Twain have been there.

The cottage served as a place where the Robert Tinkers could go and get away from the big house which stood where the Illinois Central Station and freight yards are now. Their lawn was a beautiful picturesque lawn, and since the Tinkers had a lot of parties at home, there was a wide variety of interest in the yard. There were waterfalls, a suspension bridge (which still stands), statues of animals and people, and an endless number of gardens, all laid out in a picture perfect order. There were trees then, that are even more attractive now than they were before, and underneath some of them are little stone seats. There was a stone terrace along the cliff with many eye-catching plants and little winding paths that led to many different gardens.

One of the more interesting rooms in the cottage is the library. This room was copied after Sir Walter Scott's library in Abottsford, Scotland. It is hexagonal shape, and it has a beautiful spiral stairway leading to the balcony overhead. One of the things about this room is that it has a sofa upon which Abraham Lincoln once sat when he visited John Manny because of the Cyrus McCormick-Manny law-suit. This was Lincoln's only trip to Rockford. The wood used in constructing this room was milled in the Bradley Planning Mill which stood across from the former Nelson Hotel. The library also contains hundreds of rare and very old books.

(Concluded in next issue)

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