

Nuggets of History

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OLD HOMES AGAIN IN DANGER

By Robert H. Borden

Once again there arises the possibility that Rockford will lose two of its most historic old houses. It is considered by some to be "inevitable" that the high-priced property north of Sears on North Main Street must be sacrificed to its "highest and best use". This is a common term used by those who value money over culture. Roughly translated, it means "the highest building and the best offer" without respect for any esthetic values.

The old W. F. Barnes residence which houses Rockford's natural history museum is one of the most beautiful exam-



W. F. Barnes residence
Now the Burpee Natural
History Museum
813 North Main Street

ples of architecture of the 1890s. Next door to the south stands the Burpee Art Gallery at 737 North Main Street. Together these two historic homes stand on property which for its size cannot be surpassed in beautiful scenery. They both sweep down to the water's edge, and they contain some of the finest old trees in the city.

There was a time when Americans were uninterested in their heritage. The old Federal Building in New York, where George Washington took his first oath of office and



Home built by John S.
Coleman about 1852;
later purchased by
John P. Manny, and
finally the residence
of William Nelson, 737
North Main Street

gave his first inaugural address, and where our first Congress under the Constitution held its meetings, was later torn down to make way for a treasury building. Today it is believed that we are more enlightened, that we are more concerned with leaving some historic places for the benefit of future generations. Are we?

HONOR PAID THE MEMORY OF MALINDA JANE PERHAM ROBERTS
By Hazel Mortimer Hyde
(Concluded from last issue)

On February 13, Melinda Perham became the bride of Ely Foster Roberts of Perryburg, New York, who was also of Revolutionary ancestry, and the following year with her husband and baby boy, journeyed by way of the Great Lakes to the west, settling near Rockford, Illinois, in what was then Kishwaukee precinct. They were located on a farm on the old state road along which passed a constant stream of Prairie Schooners bound for the farther west. Their neighbors were half a mile away. But nearer were their four-footed companions - the wild cat - the deer which could often be seen bounding down their runways or across the clearings. The Indians which they came in contact with were all kindly disposed - the days of the bandits were over so they dwelt in security. The first tramp ever seen in the vicinity appeared in the door one day when little Henry was playing upon the floor with two hundred and fifty dollars in gold and silver pieces. Mrs. Roberts hastily gathered the coins into her apron, but this tramp of the late forties desired only a luncheon of bread and milk - at least one deserving tramp on record.

When Cherry Valley, Illinois, grew to be a flourishing grain center, Mr. Roberts became a grain merchant and amassed a small fortune, retiring from active business at the end of fifteen years. After a five year residence in Rockford, Illinois, they moved to Chicago to spend the rest of their lives. On the evening of February 13, 1859, they celebrated their Golden Wedding with three generations of their posterity about them. Of their seven children, all now living, five were present. The seven children are as follows: Henry Clay Roberts, Chicago; Mrs. Earnest L. Waxam of Rockford, Illinois; Dr. Charles Allan Roberts, Chicago; E. Foster Roberts, Deadwood, South Dakota; and Mrs. Eugene E. Loomis, Chicago.

Death entered the family circle for the first time November 2, 1897, taking away the husband and father. The mother was not left alone, being surrounded by children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. In the household in which she now lives, there are, including herself, four generations of daughters, all born on Monday and testifying to the truth of the old saying that "Monday's bairn is fair of face."

The past summer Mrs. Roberts spent with her sister Mrs. L. M. Carter at Cattaraugus, N.Y., and together they cele-

brated Mrs. Carter's 80th birthday. They spent long afternoons visiting on the flower covered veranda or in the shade of a rose tangle at the corner of the house. The sons of Mrs. Carter delighted in taking snap shots of these dear Daughters of the American Revolution, talking over the old days, and old friends and old memories.

Ely F. Roberts drove the Frink Walker Stage line before he married and after he brought his wife west, he drove it again. This stage line went from Chicago to Galena, passing through Midway [now Rockford]. The picture presented to the Rockford Chapter was taken in Cattaraugus, New York, with her sister when she visited her. Melinda Jane Perham Roberts died February 15, 1912, and is buried at Forest Home Cemetery, Forest Park Station, near Chicago.

The generations represented at the Golden Wedding of Ely F. Roberts and Melinda Jane Perham Roberts were: Mrs. Addie Roberts Bauder - daughter - 1203 Hamilton Avenue, Mrs. Florence Bauder Strange, 5843 Cabanna Avenue, Mrs. Doris Strange Field, 6238 North Drive, Cynthia Lee Field, 6238 North Drive, St. Louis, Mo., is the daughter of the National Childrens Society, Aurora, Illinois, Chapter. Ely F. Roberts died November 1, 1897. Melinda Jane Roberts died February 15, 1912.

HERE SLEEP THE BRAVE
By Mrs. Harold B. Hyde

On Memorial Day, as the parades step out, the bands blare out a marching rhythm, and flags flutter along the streets, there is a quiet spot that claims a share of attention. The Veterans' organizations visit the cemeteries of Winnebago County and place new flags on the graves of all the brave men who have served their country in the wars in which the United States has been involved. Many cemeteries have flags waving over marked graves of soldiers in wars as long ago as the War Between the States. Four cemeteries have the stones marking the graves from the war that gave our country its independence and gave to the people the opportunity to found a great nation.

More people have become interested in learning about the men who have fought for our country. One place to start is by checking the Winnebago County Honor Roll, which lists all Winnebago County War Dead and their branches of service. It was authorized by the State of Illinois and complete up to 1956.

In fact there is a great interest in recording the information found on the stones in the cemeteries. The Illinois Genealogical Society has as one of its projects the listing of every cemetery, county by county. It has been one of my privileges to cooperate in sending the list for Winnebago County. Now I have cooperated in another project of the ISGS by listing the Revolutionary War Soldiers buried in Winnebago County.

Winnebago County has five Revolutionary War Soldiers,

whose graves have been marked by the Rockford Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. The names and records of these soldiers who fought in that war for independence are to be listed in an advertisement along with other Chapters of DAR in the Daughters of American Revolution Magazine. The men and a summary of their records follows. The approach of the Bi-Centennial activities has awakened an interest in other states in listing their Revolutionary War dead.

Revolutionary War Soldiers in Winnebago County:

Jehial (Joel) Harmon

Born October 5, 1762; died March 3, 1845

Served state: Connecticut

Buried: Greenwood Cemetery, Rockford, Illinois

Ephraim Palmer

Born December 17, 1760, Greenwich, Connecticut; died June 30, 1852. Served state: New York and Connecticut

Buried: Kishwaukee Cemetery, near Rockford

Samuel Campbell

Born October 8, 1762, Massachusetts, died November 8, 1844. Served state: Massachusetts and Vermont

Buried: Hulse Cemetery, near Rockford

Abraham Roberts

Born in Vermont; died March 10, 1857. Served state: New York. Buried: Twelve Mile Grove, near Rockford



Monument over the grave of Jehial Harmon, placed there in 1902 by the Rockford Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution

Chester Wells

Born in Connecticut; died June 16, 1860. Served state: Connecticut. Buried: Twelve Mile Grove, near Rockford

On November 13, 1902, Jehial Harmon's grave in Greenwood Cemetery was marked by the Rockford Chapter DAR. Sometimes he has been called Joel Harmon. He was married to Betsy E. West, born 1776 and died 1867. Harmon left his Suffield, Connecticut, home at the age of sixteen to serve in the Connecticut Volunteers and remained in the service until the end of hostilities.

Two of Jehial Harmon's sons and other children were living in Winnebago County and wrote enthusiastic reports of the country. He would have been about seventy-seven years old when he arrived in 1839. He was accompanied by his wife and three daughters. Hearing accounts of the fer-



Monument of Mr. and Mrs. William Johnson. Mrs. Johnson was the daughter of Jehiel Harmon. After the death of Mr. Johnson she was married to a Mr. Meredith, but when she died in 1911 she was buried with her first husband.

tility of Winnebago County, he "determined" to join his two sons. The little party set out from Suffield, Connecticut, to Westfield, Massachusetts, by team. They were able to go by railroad to Albany, New York. The next lap of the tedious journey was by the Erie Canal to Buffalo. Then they took a lake steamer to Chicago and came on to Rockford by wagon. Some accounts say this was a covered wagon. There are two different dates given for his coming, one placing the date in 1845.

Mary Ann Harmon, his daughter, married first to Mr. Johnson and second to Mr. Meredith, joined Rockford Chapter DAR. She was Rockford Chapter's second "real daughter" and was presented with a gold spoon in April of 1902, as was the custom of the organization. Her stone was marked by Rockford Chapter DAR.

Rockford Chapter's first "real daughter" is not buried in Winnebago County. Her name was Malinda Jane Perham Roberts and her father was Ezekial Perham, Jr., of Massachusetts. Her grandfather, Ezekiel Perham, Sr., was also a

Revolutionary War soldier. Neither of these soldiers was buried in this county.

Ephraim Palmer was born December 17, 1760, in Greenwich, Connecticut, a town on the Long Island South. He is buried in Kishwaukee Cemetery in the extreme southwest corner of the county. In fact, he only missed being buried in Ogle County by a few feet. He died in "Harlem, Illinois", on June 30, 1832. The descendants of Ephraim Palmer and



Monument marking the grave of Ephraim Palmer in Kishwaukee Cemetery

the Rockford Chapter DAR combined to erect and mark a large brown gravestone, in the year 1906. The inscription reads in part: "Imprisoned in the Old Sugar House New York 1779-1780. Was one of the Guards of Major Andre in 1780. A Brave Defender of his Country's honor."

Ephraim appears to have stopped off for many years in Medina County, near Akron, Ohio, on his way to Illinois. His wife's maiden name was Margaret Force, born in 1765.

His service record was one of varied times of service. He was a volunteer in 1775 as a private in the 5th Company of the Seventh Regiment of the Connecticut Line; Was in Col. John Woods' Regiment, Connecticut (Discharged December 20); Private in 1780 in Captain Steven's Company, New York Line; and was entered on the Pension Rolls of Medina County, Ohio, just prior to coming to Winnebago County, Illinois, where he died.

Samuel Campbell was born in Massachusetts and was married to Grace Plum. Samuel came to Illinois late in life, some time before 1844, because two of his sons, David and Jeremiah Campbell, were living here. Samuel lived with his son David who had come to Winnebago County in 1836. David Campbell had walked all the way to Dixon, according to family tradition, in order to file the land claim for 160 acres. About 136 years later, this land is part of the farm of Gene Sarver, a grandson of Mrs. Rayme Sarver, a daughter of David Campbell. He is a great-great grandson of the Revolutionary War soldier, Samuel Campbell.

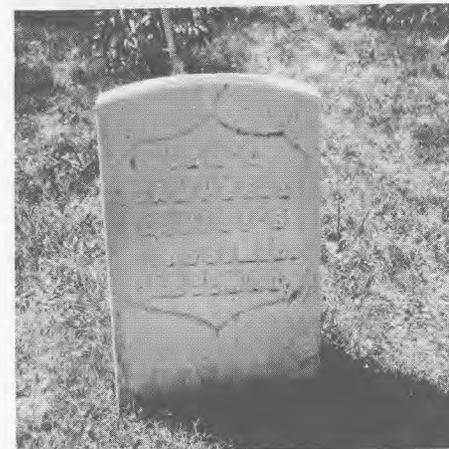
Mr. and Mrs. Carr Sarver, parents of Gene Sarver, occupy a farm house which includes part of the first frame home David Campbell built to replace his log cabin.



Stone marking the grave of Samuel Campbell, Revolutionary War soldier

After David Campbell had proved his claim, he returned east and married Erixna Barker, of Swan, Vermont. The couple made the long trip back to the farm by ox team.

Samuel Campbell is buried in Hulse Cemetery, located on Trask Bridge Road, about fifteen miles from Rockford. The white stone marker gives the birth date as October 8, 1762, and the death date as November 8, 1844. At the foot



Military marker beside the stone of Samuel Campbell in Hulse Cemetery

of the grave is a stone which records that he served in Ashley's Massachusetts Militia during the Revolution.

Campbell also served three months in 1780 in Captain John Spoor's Company of John Brown's Berkshire County Regiment. He served two different shorter terms in 1781 in a regiment commanded by Col. John Ashley, Jr. He was also in 1781 a private in Captain Abraham Salisbury's Company in Vermont Militia. Such short and varied enlistments were fairly common in the Revolutionary War.

Samuel's father was William Campbell, born in Massa-

chusetts. The Campbell family began in this country with Robert Campbell who came to New London, Connecticut in 1719.

The Rockford Historical Society visited the Hulse Cemetery on one of their county tours, organized by Clem Burns and Stewart Golding. They found that Mrs. Gill, the president of Hulse Cemetery Association, is a great-granddaughter of Samuel Campbell and also of Henry Hulse who gave the land for the cemetery. The will of her grandfather P. Hulse also specified the land was given for the purpose of a cemetery "forever". Barbara (Gill) Burns is also a descendant.

(To be concluded in next issue)

Left to right: Mrs. Charles Vaccaro, Miss Faith Armstrong, and Mrs. Harold B. Hyde. Members of the Rockford Historical Society, these ladies were copying cemetery inscriptions for DAR at Kishwaukee Cemetery



Photo at left: Rockford Historical Society Tour Group in Hulse Cemetery, near grave of Samuel Campbell



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