

# NUGGETS of HISTORY

Volume 25

Summer, 1988

Number 3

## MONTAGUE SCHOOL 1917-1919 by Eva (Smith) Sanborn

Way back when street cars were the mode of transportation in Rockford, there was a school building of brick and stone in South Rockford, built in 1883 and located at 1306 South Court Street. (See picture: NUGGETS OF HISTORY, March-April, 1967, Vol. IV, No. 3 "Montague School—Its Past and Present Glories"—Jeffrey Harris). Montague School bore the name of an early settler. How I became a teacher there of Grades 3A and 4B from 1917 to 1919 now seems like a dream almost seventy years later. It is something that could not happen in this time, in an age when college degrees seem of such importance to a profession which is rapidly being taken over by robots and computers.

Destiny, a scholarship, and financial help from my sister Mabel took me to DeKalb in 1915 to attend the Northern Illinois State Normal School. I was sixteen years old at that time and had planned — if I had thought that far ahead — to teach in a country school such as I had attended in my early days, at a little one-room school on Tate Road.

In my second year at DeKalb an assignment in English class was to write a letter of application. Knowing that a Mr. Jones was then Superintendent of Schools at Rockford, my letter was addressed to him and sent. He came to DeKalb to interview prospective teachers, and wonder of wonders he offered me a job at Montague School. Although my training had been in the eighth grade at the Glidden School in DeKalb, I decided to accept the offer. I have always preferred associations with teen-agers all of my life, but I loved the children in my classes the two years I taught at Montague. The children were loving, well-behaved, and eager to learn, and did so in spite of my inexperience.

I recall when I first entered the building to attend a teachers' meeting prior to the opening of the school year. It was conducted by the principal, Miss Olive Barber. I even remember what I wore on this occasion. It was a skirt of black and white of rather bold design and a white georgette blouse over which I had a lovely belted silk sweater of deep pink bordered in green.

Some rules and regulations were set down by Miss Barber — some simple things I am sure because I can scarcely remember any of them. I only remember Miss Barber's quiet and professional manner in which she conducted the meeting and how I was awed by it. I recall to this day the teachers who taught at Montague at that time. They were: Mae Feldeen, Madeline Isaacson, Alma VanDerkar, Mae Cordell, Luella Woodcock, Kathryn Quirk, Lillian Stib, Ruth Carlson, and Gertrude Olsen, all of whom became my close friends as well as co-workers.

Thus it was that a rather timid, shy Eva Smith became a teacher at Montague School. My father was then superintendent of the County Farm on North Main and, although it was some miles north of Rockford, there was where I boarded and roomed. To reach Montague School I had to walk or be taken in our Model T Ford to the North Main Street Car Line. Downtown I transferred at Porter's Corner to the South Main Street Car and walked up the hill to Montague School.

Armed with lesson plans all written out as per the instruction gleaned from my critic teacher, Carrie Simonsen, at Glidden, I entered my classroom that first day of school, seated myself at my desk, and



Montague School

awaited the pupils who arrived shortly before 8 a.m.

South Rockford was in those days, as I recall, predominantly Italian with some Polish and German mixed in. I had one black pupil, Daniel Skelton. He was a well-mannered youth, eager to learn, as were all the children of that day. There was never a discipline problem. As I look back on my own school days, and my teaching days, what a rewarding experience education was. There were teachers to guide one, books with information, and one's own God-given computer — one's brain — with which to come to conclusions. So reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, with yes, penmanship and some music thrown in were on the agenda for the day.

I do not recall prayer as such in the school, but books were full of patriotism and love of country was taught, and one had only to look at text books of that day to find there-in Christian principles. The heritage of our past, the sacrifices of our forefathers in establishing a freedom not yet 150 years old were emphasized.

I said there was no discipline problem and yet there was a teacher in a grade above mine who taught 4A and 5B who frequently used the paddle (she had one for this purpose). It wasn't applied for misbehaving but for non-learning. If a pupil didn't have his lesson, he was kept after school and the paddle applied. Even as "green" as I was as a teacher I knew that the psychology of this was all wrong. So be it — but that is what went on in one room at Montague.

I did have one bout with a discipline problem at Montague. I had a boy in my class who was much older than the other children and inclined to show off. It was rumored that he had been sent to the principal's office on several occasions and actually had put up a fight with Miss Barber. So when I first encountered him as a problem, I asked him to come up in front to my desk, which he did willingly, prepared to show the others he was master of the situation. I asked him to hold out his hand, which he refused to do. The punishment was to have been a tap on the palm of his hand with a ruler. Upon his refusal I calmly said, "You may go back to your seat. Any other boy or girl in this situation would have accepted his or her punishment, but you are a coward — afraid to do so." This ended his insubordination.

Winters presented the most problems as far as getting to school on time. After a winter snowstorm roads were almost impassable for man or beast. On one such occasion I found myself wading through snowdrifts to the North End trolleyline. Upon transferring I finally arrived at the school, breathless and bedraggled to find I was the only teacher in the building to arrive on time. What to do? I went to my classroom, closed the door and proceeded with the day's activities. All of the teachers eventually arrived. I can't imagine why schools weren't closed that day but perhaps it was because of lack of means of communication as few people had radios at that time.

The teachers had to carry their own lunches, but more often than

not when we gathered in a sort of lounge in the basement where there was an adjacent kitchenette with a stove, we took turns preparing a warm meal of soup or some hot food. By going down an hour ahead of the noon hour one could put potatoes in the oven to bake. In that early day there weren't too many hot dishes, but I recall jambalays, which was a rice and tomato dish with strips of bacon on top.

My starting salary was \$65 per month in 1917, but as luck would have it, that second year and indeed I think the second half of the first year all teachers were given a blanket raise, so by the fall of 1919 we were getting \$105 a month. The Superintendent of Schools was a Mr. Reed. When I was asked for an extra \$5 per month raise (as some were getting \$10), Mr. Reed informed me that no beginning teacher was worth anything the first year and not much more the second.

That is when I decided to leave Montague as I had received an offer to teach the three upper grades at Westview, which was on North Main and nearer home. I remember the day and how good I felt when I walked into Miss Barber's office and called Mr. Frank Willoughby on the phone and told him I would accept the offer of the school board of Westview of which he was president. My salary there was \$135 a month. I felt very rich indeed.

The Westview School building on North Main is no longer used as a school, but a big new Westview has been built on Halsted. I taught at Westview for two years until my marriage in 1921, when I moved to Superior, Wisconsin. Thus ended my short teaching career. I haven't seen the new building called Martin Luther King School, which was built on the site of Montague School.

#### MONTAGUE FROM ROCKFORD TO PROMONTORY POINT by Hazel Mortimer Hyde

Who was Richard Montague? Where had he lived before he came to Rockford? Did he have any children? He is remembered in Rockford as a person of some importance. Although the school given the Montague name in 1883 has been torn down and replaced by a new building renamed Martin Luther King, it is still remembered. Montague House no longer exists except in the memory of children and adults who spent many happy hours there. Now there is still a street, a road, and a library bearing the family name. Some old land abstracts have his signature and bear witness to the considerable amount of land he owned in South Rockford, one of the oldest parts of Rockford. The land Montague owned was "Indian float" land originally purchased from an Indian of mixed blood who received the land by grant in the Treaty of Prairie du Chien in 1829. It had been granted in Article V to Simon Leciier, the child of Mauh-nah-tee-see. Here many of the older settlers first lived, and families of importance in the social life of the city had established homes. Little Stone House on South Main Street had belonged to the Richard Montague family. The son who was to become important in railway history-making must have played on the premises, for he came with his parents and grew up in Rockford.

Robert West Howard tells the story: On a summer day, the wagon of Richard Montague teetered down the Berkshire Trail to the Troy ferry landing. Richard and Content were filled with the New West Fever." Their

farm at Keene, New Hampshire, had been sold. It barely brought enough to pay for the provisions for the two months' trip to the prairie homestead around Rockford, Illinois. They had heard glowing accounts of the Rock River Country. Their route through Troy took them past St. Paul's rectory. Six-year-old Samuel Skerry Montague rode on the wagon's tailboard.

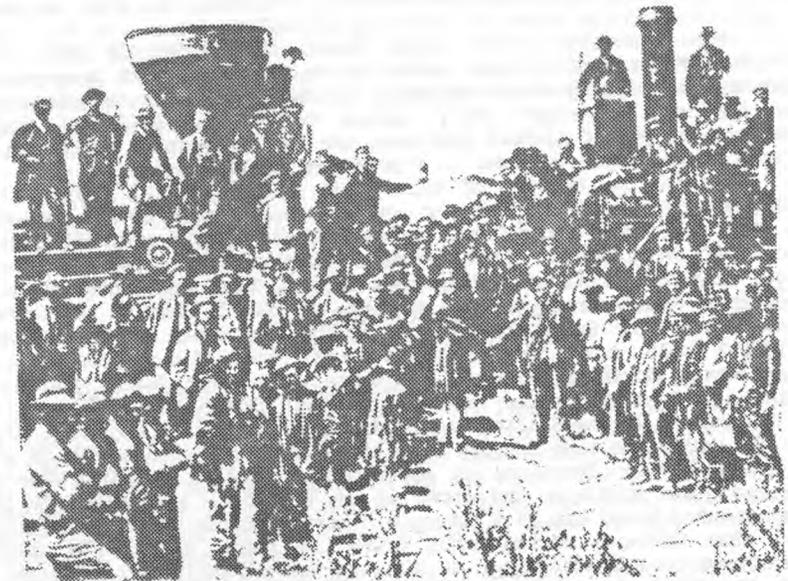
Mr. Howard wonders: Was Ted Judah on the rectory porch when the Montague wagon passed? This question is appropriate as a prelude to Ted Judah's decision reached in Sacramento, California, on February 12, 1862, to hire Samuel Skerry Montague as his assistant engineer.

Theodore Dehone Judah, with whom Samuel Montague was to find a career connected with the railroad, was born March 4, 1826, in Bridgeport, Connecticut. In 1833 his father, the Reverend Henry R. Judah, was assigned to the pastorate of St. Paul's in Troy. By the time Ted was ten years old his father was deceased. His dreams of becoming a railroad engineer seemed impossible. So being an only child, in 1836 he spent lonely afternoons huddled on the rectory steps. Golden Spike Day, 1869, was far ahead for both boys and Promontory Point, Utah, unknown to them.

In 1836, Theodore Dehone Judah, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, Thomas G. Durant, Sidney Dillon, Bret Harte, Collis P. Huntington, SAMUEL MONTAGUE, Philip H. Sherman, and William Tecumseh Sherman had all lived at, or visited the pioneer railway junctions of Albany and Troy, New York. Henry Brooks Adams wrote: "Intimates are predestined."

Leland J. Nordlund, a member of Rockford Historical Society, who lives with his sister Lois on Eleventh Street in New Milford, has an interest in trains and railroads. It was he who purchased the book GREAT IRON TRAIL by Robert West Howard and brought it to my attention. He pointed out the pages that told the story of the work of Samuel Skerry Montague, who left Rockford and became an engineer on the Union Pacific, when the tracks and roadbed were built from Omaha to Utah. We had a brief interview June 12, 1984. Soon after he left I went to North Suburban Library and came home with an armload of books about trains and railroads.

Before I was eleven years of age, I lived for some years in Dennis, Kansas, a very small village. My father had a grain elevator and coal business right beside the Frisco railroad tracks. Mother was most often "down town" at our general merchandise store. Thus I watched the trains come in quite regularly. It was a great day when the depot agent became Mrs. Foster. She and her daughter, Louise, moved to our small town. Louise was about my age and we were soon becoming familiar with the depot. We climbed on the trucks used for baggage or the mail sacks. We asked questions about how messages were sent. The sound of train whistles is different from any other, and it awakens desires to see far places. A frightening memory was the night the depot burned in the dark. Volunteer firemen and a bucket brigade could not save it. And it was necessary to build a new depot. It wasn't long after that when a man came to be our new depot agent. There were no more happy days of playing ante-over, a throwing a ball over the post-office building, with Louise. I watched the "switching of cars" to be loaded with wheat at our elevator. I was intrigued with the tale my father told about the settlers hiring Attorney Wilson Shannon to fight the railroad company for the land on which they had settled and build their homes. The case was won by the former Governor Shannon (of Ohio) and the settlers could buy the land from the government instead of paying the high prices the railroad interests would have charged. Emanuel Mortimer, who had secured



the services of Wilson Shannon, named my father in his honor.

Having watched section hands move up on a hand-car to replace a rail or put in new railroad ties, I could understand the quotation from one of the books:

"It was grand Anvil Chorus that those pounding sledges were playing across the plains and mountains, in triple time; three strokes to the spike; ten spikes to the rail; 400 rails to the mile; 425 miles in 1868 on the road to Promontory and the completion of the great work of the age..."

So I was doubly interested in the story of railroads and the search for the story of the Montague family. In the book WESTWARD TO PROMONTORY, subtitled BUILDING THE UNION PACIFIC ACROSS THE PLAINS AND MOUNTAINS, A PICTORIAL DOCUMENTARY WITH TEXT by Barry B. Combs, I found the picture of Samuel Sherry Montague preserved on the century-old plates of A. J. Russell's 10x13 inch, wet-plate collodion negatives. He was the chronicler of the building of the Union Pacific Railroad, one of the greatest engineering feats of the day. Barry B. Combs' text combines his intimate knowledge of the history of the Union Pacific Railway with his thorough study of the photographs. It verifies the part played by one of Rockford's own citizens. And strangely, after working for Union Pacific, Samuel Montague became associated with the Central Pacific. Grenville M. Dodge and Central Pacific Chief Engineer Samuel S. Montague are pictured shaking hands. As the book states: "East and West Shaking Hands...Done! A double band of iron stretched from Omaha to San

Francisco. East and West were met and permanently forged together, the work of an Age completed. Manifest Destiny achieved. 'No, 119' has moved forward, crossed the spike and moved up to Jupiter."

The book: THE GREAT IRON TRAIL, THE STORY OF THE FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD was dedicated to "Those Valient Dreamers and Doers who, by linking the Union with its Pacific sisters, achieved more than Northwest Passage" truly refers to Rockford's Samuel Skerry Montague, the son of Richard Montague, who was an engineer in the employ of both of the lines that met in a point called Promontory.

Reading the history of this great achievement, a person finds Montague's name every step of the way. "Between August 20 and September 15, 1841, the first wagon train crossed Utah and pioneered the route," said Robert West Howard, "that Crocker (Charles Crocker was a native of Troy), Stanford, Huntington, Montague, Durant, Reed, and Casements would agree upon twenty-seven years later as the final link in the Union's Pacific Railroad." Surveyors sent out by Theodore Judah and Sam Montague in 1862-3 would prove that Humboldt's gorges provided a natural railroad route across Northern Nevada," he stated. In 1862 Judah, the chief engineer of Central Pacific had hired Samuel Skerry Montague away from the Sacramento Valley Railroad and made him an assistant engineer. After his 1836 tail-gate ride through Troy (important for its association with the Mohawk-Hudson Junction, an experimental station for the then new railroad), Sam Montague had grown up in Rockford, Illinois. In 1852 Peter Dey had hired him as a surveyor's assistant for the Rock Island.

Sam Montague worked with Grenville Dodge for a year before moving over to the Burlington & Missouri as an assistant to Samuel B. Reed. The Pike's Peak gold rush lured him to Denver. In 1860 he joined a wagon train to California and hired out as a location engineer for the Folsom-Marysville extension of the Sacramento Railroad. Early in 1863, Montague was assigned to handle the location surveys toward Dutch Flat, and soon proved his skills.

Ted Judah was to open the Pacific Railway Museum in 1863. It was at this occasion that the old man died from a heart attack. He had seen almost 300 miles of Pacific Railway completed. The Associates had named Samuel Montague as acting chief engineer a few days after Theodore Judah's death. But Montague had neither Judah's reputation or experience. Central Pacific needed a consulting engineer with a quotable background of achievement. Huntington interviewed George Gray and recommended him to Leland Stanford. Grey sailed for California and settled in during the spring of 1864 with Montague and Clement, and decades later succeeded Montague as chief engineer of the Southern Pacific.

In 1865 Samuel Montague reported "the Chinese experiment has proved eminently successful...They are faithful and industrious."

It was May 4th, 1868, when Crocker and Montague visited Truckee Canyon out in the Nevada meadows. A cluster of shacks on the south bank of the Truckee River was called Lake's Crossing. One of Montague's assistants was a Mexican War veteran who had served with Hesse Lee Reno, a general later killed in the Civil War battle of South Mountain. They decided this place would be a freight junction for freight traffic for all the mines of the Comstock Lode. The place was on Central Pacific property. Montague suggested it be named Reno. Crocker agreed and on May 9th the Associates Realty Department held a public auction of Reno's lots. The first one brought \$600, and two hundred more were sold before sunset. The little Sam Montague playing as a child in the yard of the Old Stone House in Rockford could not even in his wildest dreams have guessed he would give Reno, Nevada, its name. Nor could he have dreamed

that his picture and his story would be published in books about railroads as Central Pacific's Chief Engineer when a double band of iron stretched from Omaha to San Francisco.

THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE called the event an important occasion for the city of Chicago when May 10, 1869, Golden Spike Day celebrated the completion of the railway to the Pacific. The lead editorial state, "It opens a new era."

#### THE TORNADO OF 1928 Fourteen Dead; Many Injured

One of the most serious disasters in Rockford's history occurred sixty years ago, on Friday, September 14, 1928, in the southeast sector of the city. At 3:15 in the afternoon a tornado swept a narrow path through that area, killing four people immediately, putting thirty-five in the hospital, demolishing factories and homes, and rendering hundreds homeless. As of Saturday morning, fifteen men were still missing. Three people later died in hospitals, and seven of the missing were found dead over the weekend.

Two boys were killed and a third fatally injured when they were struck by the roof of a garage near the corner of Seventeenth Avenue and Seventh Street. Everett Cornmesser, 16 years old, who lived at 1728 7th Street, and his cousin, Bernard Cornmesser, 14, of 433 16th Avenue, were killed instantly when hit by the roof. Virgil Cornmesser, 17, brother of Bernard, died of a skull fracture and other injuries at 7:15 that night at Swedish-American Hospital. A twelve-year-old younger brother of Everett said that they were at the corner of Seventh Street and Eighteenth Avenue when they saw the storm approaching from the southwest. They were running toward home, attempting to beat the tornado, when the three were struck down. The little brother escaped with a few minor bruises and hurried home to notify his parents. Virgil and Bernard had moved to Rockford from Exline, Iowa, earlier in the year, so after their triple funeral on Sunday, led by Rev. O. Garfield Beckstrand I, their bodies were sent to Exline for burial. Virgil had been working as a packer for Landstrom Furniture Company.

Most of the missing were employees at Factory B of the Rockford Chair & Furniture Company, located at 311 Peoples Avenue. More than two hundred firemen, policemen, deputy sheriffs, state highway patrolmen, National Guardsmen, together with policemen from Beloit, Freeport, Belvidere, and Dixon spent the next two days digging through the debris at Factory B. Some injured men were found there and brought to local hospitals; two of them later died. Six bodies were found in the rubble of Factory B on Sunday (September 16) or early Monday morning. One was found in the ruins of the Union Furniture Company plant at 1221 18th Avenue, and one died Saturday morning of injuries received at Union Furniture. The body of one other man was found near a barn on Harrison Avenue four blocks west of Kishwaukee Street; he had been trimming trees and repairing a hen house when his skull had been fractured by a flying board.

At the request of Police Chief August Bargren, National Guard Captain Warren Aldrich called up Company K, Rockford's National Guard

unit, to aid in rescue work and patrol the area. City engineer Harold Wolcott, Street Department superintendent Willard Lindsay, and Sewer Department superintendent Ed Hogan brought squads of men to the storm district as soon as the tornado had left the area. By 9 o'clock Friday night they had cleared all the streets in the stricken area of debris, including Broadway, which had been littered with debris from Elco Tool Company, 1800 Broadway, and National Chair Company, 1827 Broadway. Both plants were greatly damaged by the twister, their walls having fallen out onto Broadway and blocking the street for 200 yards. The workers also cleared 9th Street, 18th Avenue, and Kishwaukee Street, and worked their way slowly to the ruins of Chair Factory B.

Every available lineman also worked desperately in the storm-swept area during the night in an effort to remove poles and wires from houses, stores, and streets where they had been blown by the terrific force of the twister. Groping about under flickering flares, flashlights, lanterns and even blow torches, scores of men braved the danger of touching unseen high tension wires while they frantically endeavored to clear the way for traffic and restore power and communication.

Some of the poles were reduced to splinters and scattered over wide areas, but the majority of them were snapped off even with the ground and thrown against houses and other buildings, crushing roofs and punching gaping holes in their side walls. Until new poles could be installed, the wires had to be several feet closer to the ground, as the old broken poles had to be used temporarily.

More than a score of homes belonging to families of Calvary Lutheran Church were hard hit by the tornado. The Rev. Melvin Smith, pastor of Calvary at that time, and other volunteer workers were busy throughout the night checking the list of injured and missing. A special edition of Calvary News, the church's weekly paper, was sent through the mails at midnight, and unlike today's mail was delivered the next morning. It contained an announcement that Calvary Hour on radio station KFLV (predecessor of WROK) at 9:30 p.m. Sunday would be given over to relief work. Rev. Smith announced that he would pay the expense of the broadcast so that all donations sent in could be used to help those in need as a result of the storm. Rev. Smith was later pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and a member of the County Board of Supervisors.

Amazingly about 1,000 children in three grade school, almost directly in the storm's path, escaped its fury. The wind cut its swath just south of Brown School at the northwest corner of 16th Avenue and 8th Street, and Turner School at 1400 Broadway, and missed Hallstrom School at 1300 17th Street by less than a block. Just around the corner from Hallstrom School, on 12th Avenue, was a scene of desolation. Second stories were blown clean off of homes, and one big flat was shifted many feet off its foundation. The second floor of a two-family apartment was almost blown clean of furniture, with a dresser reposing out in the middle of the street.

Also spared by the tornado, although very near its path, were the Second Swedish Baptist (later Elim Baptist) Church, 1406 16th Avenue, and the home of its pastor, Rev. Eric Hallden, at 1519 10th Street. The Rock River Baptist Association was holding its convention at First Baptist Church, and the delegates offered special prayers for the city's stricken and homeless and for wives and children waiting for news of men trapped in crumbled buildings.

The storm was hardly over when many groups in the city started

relief funds to help the homeless and suffering. Rockford High School officials decided to turn over the receipts of the opening football games against Lane Tech of Chicago at the Stadium on Saturday afternoon to the tornado fund. The entire gate receipts, with the exception of the expenses of the visiting teams, were to be donated to the sufferers from the storm. For several days, newspaper articles listed the names of people who donated to the various funds, and the exact amounts of their donations.

Several disasters have occurred throughout Rockford's history, such as the collapse of the court house dome, many huge fires, and the flood of 1926. Ranking them in their order of severity would be difficult, but certainly the tornado of 1928 would be one of the worst.

#### THE MEXICANS AMONG US by Hazel M. Hyde

(Continued from last issue)

Later as a teacher in Cherryvale, Kansas, I again met Mexican children. Edgar Zinc Company operated there what was called the largest zinc smelter in the world. The smelter came to that area because of the natural gas field. While still a pupil myself I had toured the smelter, marveling at the white hot liquid metals being poured and the cooling bars of zinc. There were company stores and company houses provided. The principal of my school, McKinley Grade School, insisted that teachers visit the homes. I saw the parents in some very clean neat homes, and I visited others where the family goat was kept in the house. All received me politely and were happy that the visit was friendly and not caused by poor behavior of their children. Beside being the reading teacher for grades 4 to 6, I taught auditorium. I found that boys who played aggressively in a ballgame were shy and soft-spoken when facing a class to give a short speech. These children all spoke English, even if their parents might need the help of the company interpreter, or one of their own children.

Why do Mexicans come to the United States? For the same reasons many have found their way to Rockford. They are seeking to better themselves economically. They came to our country to find work, to build the railroads, work in the mines, the smelters, or the fields. The factories and foundries of Rockford have been a magnet.

Many of the people have become, legally, American citizens but they cluster around others of their own Mexican background. They cling to the Spanish language. But Mr. Rodriguez believes that becoming a bi-lingual nation is not in the best interests of the United States. He says that failure to learn and use English separates the Mexicans from the public life of this country. He felt Mexico and United States should establish guidelines allowing migrant workers for seasonal crops

to enter and leave this country. These people need work and the industry needs their willing labor. Better living conditions while they are here and schooling for children should be arranged by agreement. Negotiations might bring better border control and deepen friendly relations between the two countries.

To understand the life and culture of people of Mexican ancestry, it is important to do more than just read about Fiesta Hispana. In ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR, Going Out Section, July 3, 1987, an article by Peggy Howe quoted by USA TODAY as writing: A special report on Hispanics in America said Illinois has the fifth largest Spanish-speaking population in the country. It was this knowledge that led Gloria Cardenas, her husband and some friends to plan the fiesta, which has become an annual affair in Rockford. We should recall that the term Hispanic does not mean just Mexicans, but includes also Puerto Ricans and Colombians. READERS DIGEST states that Mexican-Americans are 60% of the Hispanic American population. Mrs. Cardenas said, "We wanted to share what we are really like. We wanted to share the richness of our culture including our language, entertainment and food..." She is in her fourth year as president of Fiesta Hispanic Board of Directors.

Peggy Howe wrote July 10, 1987, telling about three young people who had been granted scholarships from money raised from the fiesta. She stated there are 10,000 Hispanics in Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle Counties. Of the fine young people, two graduated from Guilford High School and one from Boylan. Melissa Rosales speaks of vacations in Mexico. She plans to major in communications at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

ROCKFORD MAGAZINE, July 1987, has a charming picture of Rosa Carmen Mendrano on the occasion of her "quinceanera" which happens at the time of the fifteenth birthday and renewal of baptism vows. This celebration is a gathering of most of Rockford's Mexican community. The young Rosa Carmen and about twelve girls are beautifully dressed for this special day and their escorts wear handsome suits. Mr. Mendrano works at the Chrysler plant.

Julio Guerrero, who came to Rockford from Texas, was seen in Guadalajara Restaurant. His family came to Rockford in the mid-1960s. A friend helped him to find work in a factory. The people who have become established here help the newcomers from Mexico or border towns to find housing and work. The Mexican community numbers about 10,000 people. Many have bought property on Corbin, West, Sanford or Cunningham Streets. The area is made up of cousins, uncles, and brothers.

One kind of job that drew Mexicans to this area was the picking of peas and the gathering of sweet corn for the canning factories near Rochelle. The foundries of Rockford found Mexican workers withstood the heat. The problem of language made it hard for many to move to better jobs in this factory area. Some factories transported workers.

In WE THE PEOPLE I observed some surnames made familiar because of surnames of young people who had attended Washington Junior High School from 1940 to 1968. A search of a stack of yearbooks confirmed my memory: LUNA: Esperanza, E. Luna, Maria who was one of the few who had participated in several school activities: Publications, chorus, cheerleader, Mellowtones, Student Council and pep club; and Rebecca whose name I found for all three years as I did for most of the others.

I did not find Greg Luna, who says he came as a migrant worker;



Mr. and Mrs. Greg Luna. Luna, a former migrant worker, is holding a picture of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Manual Luna.

Andy Campos, or Armando Cardenas, but I found Theophelo Quinonez. CAMPOS: Jesse (boy) who was in my civics class, with dramatics as an activity; Robert who had Pep Club as an activity; and Joe Campos. CARDENAS: I found G. Cardenas in 1965-66. QUINONEZ: Theophelo in 1958-59 and in the '60s there was Thomas who was in chorus.

Among the earliest names were Sevilla and Joseph Camacho. Many names were like an echo of Mexican names with which I was familiar as: Vasquez, Garcia, Hernandez, Rodriguez, Martinez, and Nunez.

On July 24, 1987, the Rockford Chapter NSDAR were in the Federal Building for a Naturalization Ceremony. There were forty-nine people be become American Citizens. They spoke the English language and were apparently extremely happy to become citizens. One person with whom I spoke had studied English in the Washington Junior High School Building now used for adult education. They wanted the flag to show and held up citizenship documents when photographed with the Judge. Each year Rock-



Theophelo "Tuffy" Quinonez

ford Chapter NSDAR provides cookies and coffee for the reception.

We are likely to think of the problems of illegal aliens, the dishonest men trying to send people across the border in horrible circumstances, and the problem of how to keep from becoming a bi-lingual country and still preserve the Spanish while teaching the English. St. Elizabeth Social Center has done a remarkable job in South Rockford in the Americanization of many. Centennial Methodist Church has done much to provide meeting facilities for religious services and the learning of English. Other agencies provide services. Very important is the help from the Spanish-speaking community itself.

Among those listed as making a difference were:

Armando Cardenas, director of Spanish Speaking Services Center housed in 1975 in St. Elizabeth Social Center; Geraldo Jimenez; Andy Campos who was a job counselor for several years for the west side community organizations.

It is important to preserve the mores and traditions, but urge that these people gain American citizenship. The youth must be encouraged to seek higher education. One fine characteristic of the Mexicans is the importance of the family. A promising aspect is the attendance of non-Latins to their festivals and the greater appreciation of their restaurants, their music, and the art of Mexico.

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NUGGETS OF HISTORY, published quarterly by the Rockford Historical Society, Rockford, Illinois

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