

Nuggets of History

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THE SETTLING OF THE ROCK FORD

Editor's Note: This is another excerpt from the W.P.A. booklet entitled ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS, compiled by workers of the Writers' Program, written in the 1930s as part of the government's program to put people to work during the Great Depression. The first two excerpts were in the spring and summer issues of 1989.

Although the Illinois country played an important part in the early rivalry between the French and English in the Northwest Territory, the northern part of the state figured little if at all in this struggle. Most of the early history of Illinois was enacted along the banks of the Ohio, Illinois, and Mississippi rivers, which were the scenes of French explorations and the locations of the French forts and trading posts. Sugar maples felled more than fifty years ago in the vicinity of Rockford revealed scars made by chisels and gouges believed to have been used by French bushrangers to draw sap from the trees. The marks across the growth-rings of the trees enabled scientists to determine not only that they were made by European implements but also to fix the date as early in the eighteenth century.

The French, however, founded no permanent settlements in this area. Later, when the Northwest Territory became an American possession, the area surrounding the site of Rockford was overlooked by settlers for several decades although the region had good waterways and rich prairie land. At that time travel west to the settlements on the Mississippi River was by water, along the Ohio or Illinois to the south and the Wisconsin River to the north. Few pioneers braved the encounters with hostile Indians which were probable if one journeyed across the prairies and through the forests which spread between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi.

In the late 1820s there was some overland travel between Chicago and Galena, and glowing tales were carried back to New England of this rich new land in the West. The prairies were described as great oceans of grass and wild flowers, dotted with islands of trees. There was an abundance of wild game and the streams teemed with fish. Despite these allurements it was probably not until 1829 (the exact date is obscure) that Stephen Mack became the first permanent settler in what is now Winnebago County.

Mack, born at Poultney, Vermont, and educated at Dartmouth College, brought eastern ways and education into the wilderness. In his youth he had served a mercantile apprenticeship in Boston, and in 1819 he went to Detroit, where his father was a merchant. He first appeared in this part of Illinois probably in 1822, as an agent for the American Fur Company. His stations were scattered over what are now the states of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Before coming to the vicinity of present-day Rockford he had spent a number of years in the Rock River Valley living among the Potawatomi Indians. His wife, Ho-no-ne-gah, was the daughter of a chieftain. Mack settled at the juncture of the Pecatonica and Rock rivers, twelve miles north of the rock ford. Since both rivers were navigable for many miles above the point of their confluence, at a time when waterways provided the quickest and safest facilities for travel, Mack believed that his settlement would one day be an important city. A town was laid out and Mack priced the lot next to his trading post at \$1,000.

During the Black Hawk War, he guided the United States forces under Gen. Winfield Scott from Chicago to Rock River and thence to the Mississippi in pursuit of Black Hawk. He repeatedly explored the Rock River Valley.

By 1838 Mack had established a ferry service. Four years later he erected the first bridge across the Rock River in an effort to divert travel from the State Road which passed through Rockford. This effort to lure the tide of settlers to his village failed and Mack lived to see a city such as he had envisioned grow twelve miles farther south on the river. Today the

Macktown Forest Preserve commemorates Mack and his short-lived settlement.

During June, 1834, two men from Galena, Germanicus Kent and Thatcher Blake, reached the west bank of the Rock River near the mouth of the small tributary now known as Kent Creek. The expulsion of Chief Black Hawk and his braves from lands east of the Mississippi in 1832 had removed the Indian menace and Illinois had become the goal of settlers from eastern states. Kent and Blake selected a junction of Kent Creek and the Rock River as the site for their settlement and journeyed back to Galena. On August 24 they returned and began building a sawmill for which they dammed the creek. Thus with little drama Germanicus Kent, owner of the sawmill, and Thatcher Blake, his \$15-a-month employee and friend, founded the settlement which later became the city of Rockford.

Kent, a brother of Aratus Kent, a Methodist minister of Galena, was a native of Suffield, Connecticut, and had spent some years in Alabama. His wife, an Alabaman, accompanied him to the site of Rockford. Blake, originally from Oxford County, Connecticut, had met Kent in Galena.

Kent's settlement was not long without a rival, for on April 9, 1835, Daniel Shaw Haight, a native of New York, set about to establish a town on the east bank of the river scarcely a half mile north of the ford. In the vicinity of what now is the intersection of East State and Madison Streets, Haight built a cabin and started constructing a store. Several other settlers were induced to locate at his townsite, and thus began a rivalry that persisted long after the communities on each side of the river had ceased to be frontier settlements.

In June, 1835, the population of both camps numbered eleven persons and by fall it had grown to twenty-seven. Log cabins dotted both banks of the river and farmhouses were being built in the surrounding countryside. Kent's sawmill was producing lumber to replace the rough log structures. Blake had turned to farming and Haight, having completed his store, was planning to build a hotel. Within little more than a year after the first dwelling was erected, the residents of the vicinity petitioned the legislature to make provisions for the establishment of a local government.

At that time the west side of the river in what is now downtown Rockford was lower than the east bank and heavily wooded. Forest land extended as far north as present-day Fisher Avenue and west beyond Fairgrounds Park. Kent's dam created a mill pond which covered the area now occupied by the railroad yards and during floods spread as far north as Cedar Street. The east bank of the river was described by one of the early arrivals, John H. Thurston, as "a magnificent park from Kishwaukee Street to the river and from Walnut Street south to Keith's Creek."

The beauty of the countryside around the river bank settlements impressed travelers who crossed the stream at this point. The river was nine feet lower in its banks than at present and perhaps sixty feet narrower. The water was clear as crystal and both shores were lined with trees. Since the banks were high, there was very little swampland. Indian trails extended along each side of the river through grass which in places grew six feet high. Wild flowers grew profusely throughout the region. One week the prairies would be white with blossoms; a fortnight later they would be blanketed in blue as another variety bloomed, and so on through a wide range of hues from early spring to fall.

But pioneering was not conducive to nature study. To the settler the prairies meant tough, matted virgin soil to turn with the plow in the blaze of the summer sun and, in autumn, the fear of grass fires which might destroy his cabin and all his belongings. Winter brought icy blasts that whistled through the chinks in his cabin and drifted the snow high about its eaves.

Perhaps the most remarkable phase of settlement life was the willingness of the border people, most of whom had come from centers of culture and comfort in the East, to submit themselves to the extreme hardships which were the price of their new homeland. For many it meant giving up known values and relative security for a venture that was highly specu-

lative. The homes were primitive beyond belief. Many were one-room cabins with dirt floors that gradually deepened from successive sweepings until table legs stood upon conical mounds of earth. Interstices of the log walls were plastered with mud and rare was the roof that did not leak during a heavy rainstorm. Large open hearths served the double purpose of cooking and heating; the cabins were iceboxes in winter and blast furnaces in summer. When the latter season came the housewife moved outdoors, or into "summer kitchens" separated from the cabin, to prepare her meals.

Fuel came from the nearby forest; the river was the only source of water. In winter, besides the inconvenience of carrying water from the stream, it was often necessary to cut through a foot or two of ice to obtain it. The only illumination in the frontier home was provided by tallow candles or lard oil lamps. Crude lanterns utilizing candles were carried when one ventured outdoors at night. Each backwoods home was a family manufacturing plant. The pioneer mother carded the wool from sheep shorn by the men folks. She spun the yard and wove it into cloth which was used to garb the family.

Within eight years after the settlement started, however, the pioneer housewife could purchase a wide variety of articles in the village. In the Winnebago County Forum, one of the county's first newspapers, local stores advertised brass nails, bed ropes, iron and Britannia teaspoons, quills (for pens), "ink powders and waters," cassimere, satins, buffalo cloth, Kentucky jeans, moleskin, muslin, cambric, "India rubber overshoes," spinning wheels, itch ointment, shoe varnish, brimstone, saleratus, scythes, and mill saws.

Germanicus Kent was probably responsible for naming the river settlement Midway when, in a letter to a friend in Alabama late in 1834, he gave directions for reaching "Midway" from Galena. In spite of the fact that in 1835 Haight, Josiah C. Goodhue, and others renamed the settlement Rockford, the designation Midway clung for many months. To add to the diversity of nomenclature, that part of Rockford on the west side of the river was known locally as Kentville, while the section on the opposite bank was called Haightville. The rivalry between the communities was so pronounced that if a resident of one camp could be enticed to take up residence on the opposite bank it was an occasion for rejoicing.

In June, 1836, the general assembly made provisions for the organization of Winnebago County and the construction through Rockford of a State Road between Galena and Chicago. To Kent's chagrin, Haight succeeded in being named one of the three commissioners appointed by the assembly to designate the route of the State Road. Consequently the new highway was built past Haight's dooryard, several blocks north of Kent's place. Kent scored a victory in the same year, however, when his candidate, William E. Dunbar, was elected one of the three county commissioners. The commissioners' court immediately gave Kent a concession to establish a ferry service at a point where the State Road reached the river.

Winnebago County was established on January 16, 1836. At an election held in Haight's house, Haight was chosen sheriff; Daniel H. Whitney, recorder; Eliphalet Gregory, coroner; and Don Alonzo Spaulding, surveyor. The last-named was a government surveyor who had in the previous year begun the survey of Winnebago County.

Then began a spirited contest for the location of the county seat. Ambitious farmers laid out townsites amid their cornfields and erected in some instances framework of buildings. One of the strongest contenders was Boilvin's village of Winnebago, a speculative real estate development of Nicholas Boilvin, former Indian agent at Prairie du Chien, and Charles Reed of Joliet. Anticipating the formation of the new county, these men had bought two sections of Indian land along the river near the site of the present Auburn Street Bridge. When the county was organized they laid out a town which on paper consisted of 2,436 lots fronting on wide streets. Actually, it comprised a lime kiln, a blacksmith shop, a two-story house, and a ferry landing. A road was built from Winnebago to join the State Road east of Rockford. Boilvin filed his plat in 1836 and deeded twelve blocks to



REED'S HOTEL, Built in 1836.

Built by Charles Reed, partner of Nicholas Boilvin, this was probably the two-story house mentioned in the text.

the county for a county seat. The commissioners refused the gift on a technicality and the county seat contest was not finally settled until 1839 when a legislative act permitted the matter to be decided by the electorate. Winnebago received 75 votes, Rockford 320. (Editor's note: Others receiving votes were Roscoe, two; Willow Creek, five; Pecatonica, one; and Scipio, one. Scipio was somewhere along the river and was started by a man named Wattles on his own farm; the one vote received by Scipio was probably his.)

Meanwhile, the rivalry between the east and west sides of Rockford had been manifested in the settlements' street layout. In January, 1836, Kent hired Spaulding to survey three or four streets parallel to the river on the west side and divided by cross streets running to the stream's edge. A few months later Haight engaged the surveyor to lay out streets on the east side of the river. When Spaulding's preliminary survey revealed that the contour and condition of the land on the east side would prevent building streets there to correspond with the cross streets on the west bank of the river, Kent was requested to permit some minor changes on his side. This he refused to do. But though Kent and Haight could not agree on street alignment they showed a perverse harmony in selecting street names. Certain thoroughfares on each side of the river were given identical names despite the fact that they were unrelated segments. Each side had a "Main" Street paralleling the river. The resultant confusion was not dispelled until Rockford was incorporated as a city in 1852.

Immigration to the Rock River Valley in 1837 and 1838 amounted virtually to a land rush. From the East came a steady stream of settlers traveling in all manner of conveyances, some of them carting household and personal effects and others bringing little more than the clothes on their backs. Winnebago County acquired a good proportion of this increase in population and Rockford began to boom, although other parts of the country were experiencing a depression.

To John H. Thurston, who came here from New York with his father, Henry Thurston, in March, 1837, at the age of thirteen, Rockford is indebted for the preservation of much of its early history. In reminiscences published in 1891, Thurston recalls that when he arrived Rockford consisted of a cluster of buildings at State and Main (now Madison) Streets. On the northeast corner was the framework of Daniel Haight's new house and, directly east, the Haight log cabin. The Haight stable, formerly the Bundy and Goodhue General Store, stood on the southeast corner, and on the southwest corner was the new Bundy and Goodhue Store. The framework of the main part of Haight's Rockford House stood on the northwest corner of the clearing. Other buildings were scattered throughout the woodland, including the blacksmith shop of William Penfield at the northwest corner of Market and Madison Streets; James Boswell's log cabin at the southwest corner of First and Prairie Streets; Haight's barn at the northwest corner of State and Third Streets; and the Haymarket on the east side of South First Street opposite the Vance General Store.

On the west side of the river the majority of buildings were centered around the Kent sawmill, close to the present site of the Tinker Cottage. A log hut stood east of the mill and the Kent cabin was east of Main Street

and south of the creek. Nat Loomis and his son, Henry, lived on the southeast corner of State and Main Streets; Loomis occasionally kept lodgers and his house was sometimes known as the Loomis Hotel. Abiram Morgan's homestead was in the block now bounded by Mulberry, Winnebago, Jefferson, and Court Streets. The Rev. John Morrill lived in a cabin on the present site of the armory.

The first social and civic event in the history of Rockford was a Fourth of July celebration held at the partly completed Rockford House in 1837. The day was ushered in by firing salutes with anvils from William Penfield's blacksmith shop. After a patriotic program in Haight's new barn, at which Attorney John C. Kemble, a new arrival, and Charles Horsman were the speakers, the entire countryside assembled at the Rockford House at noon for a dinner of boiled beef, bread, and coffee. New shingles from Kent's sawmill served as plates, and the diners provided their own cutlery. In the evening a dance was held at Haight's new house which was just ready for plastering. An orchestra of three fiddles led by Jake Miller, the town's other lawyer, played the only dance tune in Jake's repertoire, "Old Zip Coon."

The Rockford House was completed in the fall of 1837 and immediately became the center of much of the village's social life. The tavern's guests included trappers, traders, peddlers, cultured New Englanders, sober-faced farmers, debonaire gamblers, unscrupulous land speculators, mechanics from eastern cities, and rough and ready prospectors en route to the lead mines of Galena. Lodging per night was at the rate of 12½¢ per person, meals cost approximately 37¢ a day, and a glass of liquor could be bought for 6¼¢. Much of the currency in use was French, English, and Spanish coins of small denomination.

Haight's big barn, which had a threshing floor large enough to accommodate three horses abreast, was another social center in those days. Here religious services were held before a church was built and here assembled the villagers on Saturday afternoons to watch foot and horse races. In the fall and throughout the winter, spelling and singing bees, quilting parties, and candy pulls were held in the various log homes. In 1837 Andrew Lovejoy opened a dancing school and instructed the gayer settlers in the fandango and other popular steps of the time.

On August 13, 1837, Haight was appointed postmaster, and the post office was opened at 107 South Madison Street. Mail heretofore had been brought from post offices at Chicago, Galena, or Vandalia. On September 15, 1837, the first mail sack arrived from Chicago, but no key accompanied it and the bag had to be returned. On the second trip the key was sent along. The first mail was carried on horseback but in the following January stagecoach service between Chicago and Rockford was begun by Frink and Walter of Chicago. Several independent stagecoach operators continued the service west of Rockford to Galena. Haight's barn was the stage stop. The trip from Chicago required one day, and the fare was \$5. Haight served as postmaster until 1840.

In the Rockford House on the night of October 29, 1838, Joe Jefferson, the renowned "Rip Van Winkle" of later years, took part in the first theatrical performance in Rockford. Jefferson, then nine years old, and his parents were members of the McKenzie-Jefferson troupe of players. The troupe was snowbound in Rockford, en route from Chicago to Galena. While the blizzard raged without, villagers gathered in the dining room of the hotel where, upon a makeshift stage with candles for footlights, the troupe gave a presentation of "Wives As They Are and Maids As They Were". Between acts young Joe sang "Lord Lovell," an ancient ballad that continued in popularity.

Stagecoach service increased travel through Rockford to the lead mining country. The need for additional lodging facilities was felt immediately and three hotels were built in 1838. The Washington House, later known as the Rock River House, was erected by Jacob and Thomas Miller at 307 East State Street. The Log Tavern, known as the Stage House, was opened on the west side on the southeast corner of West State and Main

Streets. Diagonally across the street from the Log Tavern, Dr. George Haskell built the first brick hotel, the Winnebago House, the ground floor of which was occupied by a store. This is said to have been the first brick store building on the Rock River above Rock Island.

Dr. Haskell, for whom Haskell Park and Haskell Avenue are named, was one of the group of newcomers who arrived in Rockford late in April, 1838, aboard the "Gipsy", a St. Louis steamboat, which was the first steam powered craft to ascend the Rock River and dock at Rockford. Dr. Haskell and his family had boarded the "Gipsy" at Alton and the vessel had made its regular run to Galena. On the return trip the doctor persuaded the captain to attempt an ascent of the Rock River. Dr. Haskell's nephew, Samuel Haskell, William Hull, and R. H. Silsby, doubting that the boat could reach Rockford, left the "Gipsy" at Savanna and completed the journey over land.

The day the "Gipsy" docked near the store of John Platt and G. A. Sanford on the west bank at the foot of Elm Street, Rockford's inhabitants cheered until they were hoarse. Only after several attempts had the boat landed against the swift current. That night people gathered from all about the township to attend the dance held on deck while the boat steamed on an excursion to Rockton and return.

Dr. Haskell, originally from Harvard University, was a Dartmouth graduate who had become prominent in Alton. He was an ardent abolitionist and, following the murder of the Rev. Elijah Lovejoy by proslavers, he decided to settle in a locality where the slave question was not so bitterly contested. In his earlier days the schoolmaster of John Greenleaf Whittier at East Haverhill, Massachusetts, he is immortalized as the schoolmaster in Whittier's poem, "Snow-Bound".

Among the prominent early citizens of Rockford who came to the settlement in 1838 and early in 1839 were James Madison Wright, Jason Marsh, Francis Burnap, Duncan Ferguson, Thomas D. Robertson, Ira W. Baker, Edward H. Baker, Henry M. Baker, David S. Penfield, Shepard Leach, Willard Wheeler, Samuel, Isaac, William, and Benjamin Cunningham, Joel B. Potter, E. L. Herrick, John, Charles, and Amos Catlin Spafford, Phineas Howe, William Worthington, Laomi Peake, Sr., William Hulin, Daniel Barnum, Harris Barnum, Horace Miller, Mr. and Mrs. John Benjamin, Mowry Brown, Isaiah Lyon, and Caleb Blood. The last three named had arrived with Dr. Haskell on the "Gipsy".

Leach and Penfield opened a hardware store at 322 East State Street in 1838. Ephriam Wyman and Bethuel Houghton were operating a bakery, the first in the village, on South Main Street, West Rockford. There were between twenty and thirty buildings on the east side of the river at this time and a total of nineteen on the west side.

The year 1839 brought several important changes. With a total population of 236, the twin settlements joined forces to incorporate as a town. At the first election, April 10, 1839, D. S. Haight, Ephriam Wyman, Josiah C. Goodhue, Samuel Little, and Isaiah Lyon were elected as members of the town board. Haight was chosen president. (Editor's note: In most sources, Mr. Wyman's first name is spelled "Ephraim".)

Of greater import to landholders in Rockford and Winnebago County was the congressional act of 1839 that provided for land purchases and ended the evil of claim jumping. Prior to this time settlers had no better than squatters' rights to the land they occupied, hence disputes over claims were common. Among the first comers were many unscrupulous speculators who gained control of choice tracts by staking out claims in the names of relatives or fictitious persons. The injustice of this trickery caused many honest settlers to disregard the speculators' claims. There were also lawless persons who attempted, many times successfully, to coerce farmers into paying money to be allowed to live in peace on land they themselves had settled and cultivated. The practice, which in many respects was like a modern "protection racket," caused disputes that often flared into open violence.

In Rockford the land problem was made increasingly acute by the so-

called Polish Grant which Congress had given to a group of political refugees from Poland. By the terms of the grant, its beneficiaries were entitled to thirty-six sections of land in any part of Illinois or the territory of Michigan. Count Chlopicki, representing his fellow exiles, came to Rockford in 1836 and claimed Rockford and Rockton townships, each of which contained budding villages and improved farmsteads. The claim failed because Chlopicki neglected to select any land in the intervening township of Owen, thereby violating a provision of the grant which stipulated that the thirty-six sections must be in contiguous townships. But it was not until 1843 that the title of lands in Rockford and Rockton townships was cleared by a government sale at which settlers were permitted to purchase for nominal sums the lands they were occupying.

Following the settlement of the land title question, the locations of the county buildings gave fresh impetus to the rivalry between the east and west sides of Rockford. As early as 1836, Haight, in laying out his plat on the east side of the river, provided for a public square at what is now Haight Park in the hope that the county courthouse might be erected there. In the first three years after the county's organization, county business and court sessions were conducted in private residences, but in 1839, when Rockford won the county seat election, the commissioners designated Haight's public square as a building site and selected a lot for the county jail just west of the present public library. Since the county was without funds, no buildings were erected. Consequently, when in 1841 a group of west side residents offered to provide suitable quarters for the county offices, their proposal was accepted.

Charles I. Horsman, George Haskell, Abiram Morgan, John W. Taylor, David D. Alling, Nathaniel Loomis, Ephraim Wyman, Horatio Nelson, Derastus Harper, and Isaiah Lyon, prominent citizens of the period who had settled on the west bank, provided a structure that stood on the site now occupied by the Mead Building, Chestnut and Main Streets. (Editor's note: The Mead Building is now called the Cutler Building, the location of Hanley Furniture Company.) The county offices were housed here for almost two years until Haight, realizing that the county was still without sufficient money to construct a building and fearing the loss of east side prestige, offered to erect a structure which would cost not less than \$4,000 on his square. The offer was tabled by the commissioners, who a few days later accepted a similar proposal by west side citizens. The commissioners selected the present site of the courthouse. Elated west side residents promptly built a brick jail and a one-story frame courthouse of Greeek Revival style.

By this time the influence of Germanicus Kent in Rockford affairs had begun to wane. Disheartened by heavy financial losses in the late 1830s and convinced that Rockford held little promise of a prosperous future, Kent took his family to Virginia in 1843 and never returned. Before departing, he freed his Negro slave, Louis Lemon Kent, the only slave in Rockford.

THE SWEDISH ELEMENT IN ROCKFORD
Industrial, Religious and Social Activities of
Men and Women of Swedish Descent
Published in 1940 by O. M. Nelson
(Continued from Summer, 1989, issue, pages 5-10)

Churches of Swedish Origin

The First Lutheran Church was organized January 15, 1854, by Dr. Erland Carlson of Chicago with 77 charter members of whom 45 were communicants. The first name given to the Church was "The Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation." Pastor Carlson agreed to visit the congregation four Sundays during the year and conduct services afternoon and evening the first Monday of each month. Rev. A. Andreen served the congregation during the

summer of 1855. On August 20 of that year a lot was purchased for \$325 and the location for a church building decided upon. The church which cost \$775 was dedicated November 23, 1856, by Dr. T. N. Hasselquist. Rev. Andreen who had served the Church partly during 1855 and 1856 became resident pastor at Rockford in August, 1856, with a salary of \$150 a year. In 1860 the congregation severed its connection with the Synod of Northern Illinois and affiliated with the Augustana Synod that was organized June 5 of that year. Rev. Andreen left Rockford in 1860, and was succeeded by Rev. A. W. Dahlsten, 1861-63. In 1864 Rev. G. Peters took up the work, continuing as pastor until 1885. A new church was erected in 1868-69 which was dedicated January 1, 1870, by Dr. T. N. Hasselquist. (Editor's note: The church built in 1856 was at the northwest corner of N. First Street and Lafayette Avenue. The church finished in 1869 was at the present site, 225 S. Third Street.) Thirteen years later a much increased membership made it necessary to raze this church and build a larger one which was completed in the fall of 1884 at a cost of \$48,716. Rev. L. A. Johnston was pastor of the congregation from 1886 till 1894. For parochial purposes a chapel was purchased in 1888 and moved to Eighth street and Broadway, and in 1891 Luther Hall was erected on Kishwaukee street, the two buildings costing \$10,000. In 1894 the communicant membership reached the figure of 2,066. Rev. Joel L. Haff served the church from April 1895, till his sudden death in February, 1896. He was succeeded by Rev. J. F. Seedoff who remained pastor of the church from 1896 till 1927. Because of removals and the cutting out of dead timber the membership was reduced to 1,434 in 1891....The church has been improved and remodelled repeatedly, the last time in 1928 at a cost of \$65,000, when a new exterior of hard surface brick trimmed with Bedford stone was put on. The present pastor...(1940)...Rev. Albert Loreen, has served the congregation since July 1, 1928. The church has now a communicant membership of 1,115.

The Emmanuel Lutheran Church was organized July 20, 1882, by Rev. Chas. Anderson who became the first minister of the congregation. The organization was accomplished at the Westminster Chapel, and 85 charter members were enrolled. The Emmanuel was affiliated with the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America until 1890 when it joined the Augustana Synod. The first church building which was dedicated October 14, 1883, served the congregation for forty years. In 1920 the building was moved...., eventually becoming Parish Hall and Sunday School Building. Since Rev. Anderson the following pastors have served the church: Rev. Hanson, 1885-88; C. Roos, 1889-90; A. P. Fors, 1890-92; G. Juhlin, 1892-95; Oscar Nelson, 1897-1900; Prof. C. O. Solberg, 1901-03; Dr. C. A. Wendell, 1905-1912; Dr. J. W. Johnson, 1912-27; Dr. E. C. Bloomquist, since 1928. A new parsonage was dedicated in 1913. The present church was erected in 1922-23 and dedicated November 11, 1923, by the Conference President, Dr. Peter Peterson. The communicant membership of the church is now 1,346.

The Zion Lutheran Church was started as an outgrowth of the First Lutheran, the charter members of the Zion Church having previously belonged to the First Lutheran. The organization meeting was held in the Swedish Methodist Church August 7, 1883, when 146 charter members were enrolled. The name of The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church was adopted. Meetings were first held in Chick's Hall, rented for the purpose. The lot on which the present church is located, at Fifth avenue and Sixth street, was purchased the same year for \$1,200. The first pastor of the church, Rev. C. G. Lundell, who was a member of the Ansgar Synod, took charge in July, 1884. Meetings were held in the basement of the church in process of erection. In 1885 Rev. Lundell was admitted into the Illinois Conference of the Augustana Synod, and shortly after the Zion Church also became a member of the Conference. The finished church was dedicated October 11, 1885, by Rev. Erland Carlson, president of the Augustana Synod. Since the resignation of Rev. Lundell in 1887 the church has been served by the following pastors: S. G. Ohman, 1888-94; J. A. Eckstrom, 1894-1901; N. P. Sjoström, 1901-12; G. E. Hemdahl, 1912-18; Carl Solomonson, 1919-28; E. G. Knock, since November,

1928. The membership of the church grew rapidly in the early nineties, and on January 1, 1894, Zion had 1,000 communicant members. A parsonage was erected in 1910 at 920 Fifth avenue, costing with lot \$8,393. A Sunday School chapel was built in Rockview in 1924 which was turned over the following year to the newly organized Tabor Lutheran Church. A two-story structure was added to the church on the south side in 1929, and in 1930 further improvements of the church property were made at a cost of \$10,000. The communicant membership of Zion is now 1,743.

The Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized January 6, 1907, with 57 communicant members. For some months previously missionary work had been carried on in this part of the city by Rev. Alfred Appell upon the call of the Illinois Conference. From the beginning of 1907 the Sunday School and other services were conducted in a chapel at Broadway and Eighth street, owned by the First Lutheran Church. In April, 1908, Rev. Appell resigned because of ill health, and...Rev. J. A. Benander was called, arriving at Salem in November, 1908. The same year lots for a building site at 6th street and 16th avenue were purchased at a cost of \$1,600, but actual work on the building did not commence until the fall of 1910. In August, 1912, the exterior of the building was completed and the church parlor ready for occupancy, but the church was not finished until November, 1917. Rev. Benander has remained as pastor of the congregation during these 31 years. The communicant membership of Salem is now 704.

The Tabor Lutheran Church was organized February 12 and 23, 1925, by Dr. Peter Peterson, president of the Illinois Conference. Fifty-four charter members were enrolled. The Zion Lutheran Church had conducted meetings in the neighborhood since the fall before in a chapel at 12th avenue and 19th street, which the Tabor Church purchased from the Conference for \$2,000. In 1935 an addition was made to the chapel. A parsonage was erected in 1938 at 1331 19th street. The first pastor of the church was Rev. Elmer Friedlund who served the congregation from June, 1925, till August, 1927. Since February 1, 1928, Rev. Clarence H. Anderson has been in charge of the church. The communicant membership is now 415.

The Mission Tabernacle Church was organized June 1, 1875, under the name of Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society. The following year the church became a member of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Synod, the membership continuing until 1885 when this Synod was merged into The Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant. Meetings were first held in the Westminster Chapel and the Centennial Methodist Church, and were conducted either by visiting preachers or local members. The first permanent minister was Rev. J. P. Lindell who served part of 1876. He was followed by Rev. Palmquist who had charge of the congregation during 1878. In 1879 Rev. J. Gustafson became pastor and remained until October, 1880, being succeeded by Rev. A. E. Wenstrand, 1882-84. In November, 1881, the congregation was first incorporated under the name of Mission Society which in 1913 was changed to Mission Church. The first church was built in 1880 at a cost of \$1,600. The present church, The Mission Tabernacle, at Kishwaukee street and Third avenue, was erected in 1888-89 at a cost of \$18,364. Since 1885 the congregation has been served by the following pastors: A. Kalin, 1885-86; F. M. Johnson, 1887-97; S. W. Sundberg, 1898-1904; O. P. Peterson, 1905-6; J. J. Daniels, 1906-9; August Erickson, 1910-16; Carl J. Andrews, 1916-21; A. T. Frykman, 1921-34; Helge Johnson, 1934-35; Carl G. Westerdaahl, since November, 1935. The church now has 830 members.

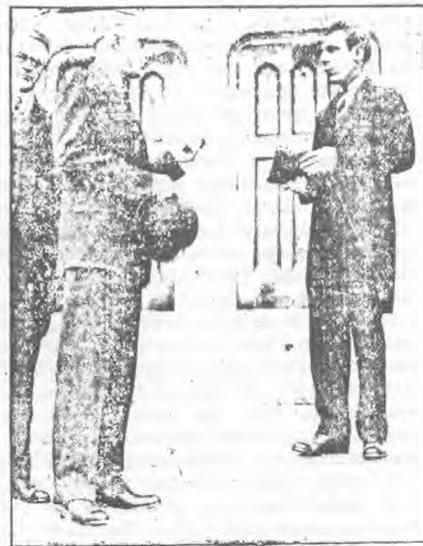
The Bethesda Evangelical Church was organized January 11, 1926, in the auditorium of the Mission church. The charter members came mostly from the older congregation, their chief aim being to establish an English speaking church in the Highland district of the city. At the first business meeting 71 charter members were enrolled. Meetings were first held in the Highland School auditorium and the Westminster church. In April, 1926, Rev. Harold M. Carlson was called as pastor for three months. Rev. Carlson came to Bethesda in June the same year and shortly afterward was called as permanent pastor. In June, 1927 Bethesda was admitted as a member of the Mission Covenant of

Dedicate Highland Church

MARCH 21, 1928.



This picture of Bethesda Covenant Church appeared in the ROCKFORD REPUBLIC March 21, 1928, in an article telling about the coming dedication.



This photo in the ROCKFORD REPUBLIC on March 25, 1928, shows C. Edward Lindberg, chairman of the board of trustees of the Bethesda congregation, presenting the keys to the church to Rev. Harold M. Carlson, pastor of Bethesda Covenant Church.

America. A site for a church was acquired in 1926 at 118-22 Washington street, costing \$13,396, deducting price received for buildings located on the property. The church was erected in 1927-28 at a cost of \$77,406, and dedicated March 25, 1928. The church has now a membership of 365 communicants with a Sunday School enrollment of 585.

The Swedish Christian Free Church dates its beginning from the summer of 1883, though not organized until the following year. A few Christians, most of them members of the Mission Church, began, in 1883, to hold meetings for Bible study in the home of Nils Jernberg on South Third street. In the fall of the same year Hjalmar Anderson conducted meetings in homes and in the Y.M.C.A. Hall at State and Main (now Madison) streets. In the beginning

of 1884 the meetings were moved to Union Hall, and Frank Johanson was chosen as the first superintendent of the activities. Visiting preachers assisted local men in conducting services. As the need of a church became more evident, it was decided to incorporate, which was done in February, 1888. A lot was purchased at Fifth street and Fourth avenue, and a modest church erected the same year at a cost of \$1,800. A record of members began first in 1890. The first minister, Elof Newberg, took charge in 1892. Professor J. G. Princell who had located at Rockford also served with preaching. The church was considerably enlarged and improved in 1894. Since the resignation of Rev. Newberg in 1894 the following pastors have been in charge of the church: P. J. Elmquist, 1894-96; A. C. Leafgren, 1897-1901; Gustaf F. Johnson, 1901-14; John G. Kalson, 1914-17; E. A. Halleen, 1918-27; Elmer Johnson, since 1927. During Gustaf F. Johnson's pastorate the membership of the church increased from 167 to 750. The old church being too small, a lot at the corner of Fourth avenue and Sixth street was purchased in 1904 for the price of \$2,700 on which a new large church building was erected in 1905-06 at a cost of \$31,000. The membership of the church is now 966.

The Bethany Methodist Church. Among the first Methodist preachers that visited Rockford were Dr. N. O. Westergren and Rev. S. B. Newman. Dr. Westergren's parents located in Rockford in the fifties and through them Rev. Newman was invited to visit the city when he organized a class and appointed Dr. Westergren's father as class leader. The Westergren family soon moved to Chicago, but Dr. Westergren occasionally visited Rockford and preached there. At the Conference of 1860 Rev. Victor Witting was appointed pastor for the little flock. He rented a little church in which the meetings were held and many of the numerous Swedish immigrants were converted and joined the group with the result that on January 30, 1861, the First Swedish Methodist Church was organized. In 1863 the congregation bought the church that they had been renting and moved it onto a lot on First avenue. During the pastorate of Rev. John Wigren the membership was greatly increased, necessitating a larger meeting place, and a new brick church was erected in 1877. Forty years later conditions had so changed that it was found advisable to seek a new location. Lots were bought at Eighth street and Third avenue in the spring of 1919, and the present church and parsonage were built, the church being dedicated March 28, 1920, by Bishop Thomas Nicholson. The value of the property is about \$60,000. Twenty-six different pastors have served the church during its eighty years existence. The longest term as pastor was held by Rev. E. J. Eliason who served 15 years. The present pastor, Rev. Gustav Erickson, came to Rockford in 1938. The membership is now a little over 300.

The Temple Baptist Church (formerly First Swedish Baptist Church) was organized September 11, 1880, in the State Street Baptist church, Rev. Erik Wingren of Chicago acting as chairman of the meeting. Twelve charter members were enrolled. As early as 1873 a few Swedes of the Baptist faith were found in Rockford and meetings were held in homes by visiting preachers from Chicago and other places. The congregation was first called The Scandinavian Baptist Church, and was incorporated under that name in 1882, the name being changed two years later to The First Swedish Baptist Church. The first pastor of the church was L. J. Ahlstrom. Meetings were held first in homes and then in an assembly room in the State Street church. Rev. Ahlstrom left in 1881, and was succeeded the following year by Rev. C. Silene. A lot was purchased in 1883 and a store building moved onto it and fitted for a meeting house at a total cost of \$1,500. As the membership increased larger quarters became necessary, and a new church was built in 1888 at Seventh street and Fourth avenue, costing \$6,500. Between vacancies the church was served by the following pastors: J. P. Forsell, 1885-87; Uno Noll Brauer, 1887-89; Petrus Schwartz, 1889-94; C. P. Levin, 1894-96; Magnus Larson, 1897-1903; C. W. Sundmark, 1903-10. In 1907 the old church was sold to the Salvation Army, a lot being purchased at Fifth avenue and Eighth street on which a new church was erected in 1908 at a cost of \$25,000, including lot. Since the resignation of Rev. Sundmark the following pastors have served the

church: J. Alfred Erickson, 1910-13; Eric Carlson, 1914-15; P. Alfred Peterson, 1915-17; E. J. Nordlander, 1918-20; Jacob Peterson, 1920-31; Eric Carlson (second time), 1932-37; Gustav A. Gustavson, since August, 1937. The church has now about 400 members.

The Elim Baptist Church (formerly Second Swedish Baptist) was organized in 1917 with about 25 charter members. Meetings were first held in a rented church building at Broadway and Eighth street. The church was built in 1923 at the corner of 16th avenue and 10th street. The following pastors have served the church: Eric Rosen, Eric Hallden, Axel C. Johnson, M. F. Jensen and Albin E. Appelquist who has been in charge since June, 1937. The membership is now about 100 with a Sunday School attendance of 120.

The Swedish Salvation Army was organized in 1891. About 40 years ago (ca. 1900) a Swedish Baptist church was purchased for a meeting place, and 20 years later an adjoining building was bought for officers' quarters. The buildings are located at 1019 Fourth avenue. The Corps has now 205 senior and 70 junior members. Since September, 1939, Adjutant George Perry is in charge of the Corps.

The Swedish American Hospital

From a small beginning which consisted of a letter to the Svenska Posten by a man named Nelson, accompanied by a contribution of one dollar the idea of a Swedish hospital in Rockford was first given serious thought. The matter was given considerable publicity by the editor of the Svenska Posten, and a meeting of all the Swedish ministers in Rockford was called to talk it over. The minutes of the first meeting held May 31, 1911, indicate that Mr. Wm. Johnson acted as chairman and Mr. Levin Faust as secretary protem. Other officers were Rev. H. P. Sjoström, vice president; Hjalmar Lundquist, secretary, and G. Adolph Peterson, treasurer. After speeches being made by a number of the ministers, as well as Levin Faust, Hjalmar Lundquist, F. G. Hogland, Wm. Johnson and others, a motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously that the Swedish-American Hospital Association of Rockford, Illinois, be incorporated under the state laws which was done June 6, 1911. A board of twenty-four directors was also elected, and a committee was appointed for the soliciting of funds.

The hospital building was opened July 17, 1918. The site was well chosen, it being located in a quiet residential section. It has a bed capacity of eighty-seven, and boasts of the finest equipment and the best of service. The hospital is approved by the American College of Surgeons and is a member of the American Hospital Association. A School of Nursing comprising approximately fifty students is maintained and is approved by the State Department of Registration and Education.

The officers elected by the Association for the year 1939-40 are as follows: Gunnard A. Anderson, president; Carl E. Swenson, vice president; Mrs. A. G. Ogren, secretary; and C. A. Rohlen, treasurer. The Superintendent of the hospital is Mr. C. N. Andrews.

Editor's note: Following the preceding material, the book contains four pages about "Swedish Societies and Clubs" and "The Swedish Historical Society", which will be printed in a later issue. This material is followed by the initials H.G.N., probably standing for Herman G. Nelson, so it is likely that this material was written by him. Mr. Nelson was a writer for the Rockford newspapers for many years, specializing in Swedish history and events.

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