
NUGGETS OF HISTORY

VOLUME 38 JUNE 2000 NUMBER 1 & 2



Sakataimeshekiakiah

By Phillip Mineff – Winner of the Rockford Historical Society
Scholarship Award for 2000

Painting by Charles Bird King

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This issue contains the winning paper in the Rockford Historical Society scholarship competition. The Society had invited high school seniors throughout the Rockford area to submit research papers on some aspect of local history. Phillip Mineff's paper, "Black Hawk" was selected as the best entry and he was awarded a \$500 scholarship by the Society.

Phillip is a student athlete at Hononegah High School. In addition to our scholarship, Phillip received a scholarship from the Rockton Chamber of Commerce. He was named a NIC-9 Scholar Athlete, and is listed in "Who's Who Among High School Students." He plans to attend Carol College in Waukesha, WI next fall and will major in Business Management.

I am the new Editor of Nuggets of History, taking over from Peggy Jensen who has resigned after doing an outstanding job for the last several years. On behalf of the entire readership of Nuggets, I would like to say "Thank you for a job well done!"

As the new Editor, I need your help. If you have a subject that you have researched, or an idea for an article that you would like to pursue, give me a call. I would like to encourage original research into some aspects of local history that have not been adequately pursued. I can be reached at 968-5055.

Thomas Powers, Editor

ANNUAL MEETING

The Rockford Historical Society annual meeting will be coming up in September. Look for further announcements when the date has been set.

BLACK HAWK

By Phillip Mineff
Hononegah Community High School

THESIS

Black Hawk, a leader of the Sauk and Fox Indians in the early 1800's, is seen by some as a great man and leader, but others see him as a villain who refused to agree to terms of the treaties that were signed with the white man. Black Hawk was a great leader who fought through many barricades, but in the end fell short to the power of the white men.

Black Hawk, a leader of the Sauk and Fox Indians in the early 1800's, is seen by some as a great man and leader, but others see him as a villain who refused to agree to terms of the treaties that were signed with the white man. Black Hawk was a great leader who fought through many barricades, but in the end fell short to the power of the white men. Black Hawk and his war, the last armed conflict north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi Rivers between whites and Indians, played a major part in the history of the Illinois and Wisconsin area for the early 1800's. "The Black Hawk War destroyed a band of 1500 Sauk and Fox Indians, created a state and killed a culture" (Kenyon np).

Black Hawk was given the name Makataimeshekiakiah at his birth. Makataimeshekiakiah translates to Black Big Chert or more commonly as Black Hawk. He was born in 1767 in Saukenuk, which is common day Rock Island, Illinois at the mouth of the Rock River. Born the son of the leader of all the Fox and Sauk tribes he had some big

shoes to fill. To become a brave in the Fox and Sauk culture you have to kill an enemy in battle. Black Hawk did this at the young age of fifteen, and was a leader of a war party at seventeen (Hodge 150). He later earned more triumphs through battle and became a great war leader and chief. Black Hawk had a wife and at least two sons (Crane np). Little is known about his family or what happened to him. [See editors note at the end] Saukenuk was very sacred to Black Hawk and his tribe who lived solely off what the plentiful Rock River supplied. Black Hawk once said, "We always had plenty. Our children never cried with hunger; our people were never in want."

(www.historychannel.com/BlackHawk np). The Fox and Sauk for the most part were quaint and peaceful people who lived off the land. Black Hawk fit well with these people because he was a man of peace.

In the early 1800's before the war of 1812 Black Hawk's tribe had a couple of altercations with the white men. In

1804 one of the Sauk's people killed an American on the Mississippi River around the end of October. He was arrested and imprisoned in St. Louis. Black Hawk sent three of his men, Quashquamo, Iashepaho, and Hashequathequi to get the imprisoned brave free. They were to go see the American Father, as the natives referred to American leaders, and to release their friend by paying for the man he killed. Once they arrived in St. Louis they met the American Father, and explained their business to him. The American Chief, another title for American leaders, wanted land. The representatives agreed to give some land on the west bank of the Mississippi and some on the Illinois side opposite the Jefferson River. Even though these men had no power in the Fox and Sauk nation, they signed a treaty with the whites in exchange for their imprisoned friend. Little did these representatives know, but that their friend had been let out. When he was released and ran, he was shot and killed by a guard. When the representatives returned they were dressed in very fine clothes and had metals. Unknowingly the Fox and Sauk gave 51,000,000 acres of their best land for \$2,234.50 and a yearly annuity of a thousand dollars (Treaty of 1804 np). The men who signed the treaty did not fully understand it. The two chiefs of the Fox and Sauk tribes, Black Thunder and White Skin, did not sign it (Cecil 46). As a result of the treaty Black Hawk and his men had to leave Saukenuk against their own will and go to Iowa. Black Hawk much preferred his homeland on the Rock River. So he returned to Saukenuk and had no problems with the white people

for quite a while. Then more white people started moving into Illinois. The white people did not particularly care to live around the primitive Indians. These people were scared of the Indians and word spread that thousands of savage Indians were coming to rape and pillage the land. The reality was there were five hundred peaceful Indians trying to go back to their old village (Gjeston).

In 1812 the Americans had a great war with Britain called the war of 1812. When word spread to the Indians several jumped on Britain's side. The Indians figured that if they helped the British that would help solve the problems with the Americans. Black Hawk was very eager to join up with the British and other Indians. Under Tecumseh, Black Hawk led his warriors to unsuccessful sieges of Fort Meigs and Fort Stephenson. Black Hawk then returned to his people and some of them were starting to think that helping the British was not a good idea. Black Hawk left the village once again to help Tecumseh in Green Bay. While in Green Bay British Chief Agent Dickenson appointed Black Hawk chief of all the Northwest natives who gathered at Green Bay to help the British cause. During the time Black Hawk was gone, the Americans were threatening and bothering the Fox and Sauk that were in the village (Josephy 227). While Black Hawk was gone this second time one man was gaining in popularity with the others in the village. The man was named Keokuk. Why would they choose Keokuk? The man had no war experience, but he was a great speaker and convinced his people to elect him chief. Black Hawk did not particularly care for Keokuk because he had no

fighting experience. So when Black Hawk returned, some followed Black Hawk and others followed Keokuk (Josephy 228). The last of Black Hawk's voyages with the British was when he helped in routing the American forces led by Zachary Taylor. Later though the British ended the war. Black Hawk was very disappointed when the British withdrew from the war (www.historychannel.com/BlackHawknp). This left him pretty much alone in his fight against the Americans.

In 1831 after many years of small fights over land the whites forced another treaty on Black Hawk making the Indians leave again. The spring after the treaty Black Hawk came back with four hundred braves and their families hoping for more support from others to no avail. With no support from the other tribes Black Hawk prepared to sue for peace, but whites murdered one of his emissaries. Black Hawk started to attack again (www.historychannel.com/BlackHawkWarnp).

The war known as the Black Hawk War started in May of 1832 when white soldiers, ignoring peace flags, killed three warriors (Kenyon np). Illinois Governor Reynolds called out the militia on April 16 of 1832. On June 15th the militia left their camp and marched to Saukenuk, and when they saw that the tribe was gone they burned the lodges of the Fox and Sauk (Hodge 151). After this incident Black Hawk said, "Our lodges were soon taken down and started for Rock Island. Here ended all hopes of our remaining at peace-having been forced into WAR by being DECEIVED!" (Josephy 224). Many

men volunteered to fight the Indians including miners, farmers and Abraham Lincoln. They wanted the Indians off their land and they outnumbered Black Hawk immensely (www.historychannel.com/BlackHawknp).

On June 27, 1832 Black Hawk visited the Birds Grove village in what is today Hononegah Park in current day Rockton. He came to Birds Grove to join with the Winnebago. Under the influence of Stephen Mack, the Winnebago decided not to join Black Hawk against the whites. Princess Hononegah was so scared for her husband Mack's life that she hid him on Webber's Island during Black Hawk's stay in Rockton ("Was an Indian Maiden" np).

During the war Black Hawk, a master of war strategy, though outnumbered severely was able to trick, escape, and kill several of the whites (Gjeston). Black Hawk tried to surrender several times with a white flag. He was ignored for the third time on August 1st when soldiers opened fire for two hours on the Indians who had no escape (Kenyon np). At this final battle at Bad Axe River most of Black Hawk's people were killed, five hundred in total, even defenseless women and children were killed at this "Battle" on the Bad Axe River (www.historychannel.com/BlackHawknp). Black Hawk though was one of the few who escaped and he fled to the Winnebago who helped Black Hawk to finally surrender.

After his capture Black Hawk was sent to Fort Monroe in Virginia for imprisonment. After several weeks he

was released and they took him back to the Mississippi River by way of big cities. In these cities he was shown massive amounts of people and artillery. Wherever they stopped there were banquets and people painted pictures of Black Hawk (Josephy 212). While Black Hawk was imprisoned the U.S. appointed Keokuk as leader of the Fox and Sauk. Black Hawk said while he was in prison, "Keokuk has been the cause of my present situation." When he heard of Keokuk's appointment by the U.S. government Black Hawk furiously said:

I do not know what object the [American] war chief had in making such a speech, or whether he intended what he said; but I do know that it was uncalled for, and did not become him I have addressed many warchiefs, and listened to their speeches with pleasure – but never had my feeling of pride and honor insulted on any former occasions (Josephy 213).

After loosing his leadership Black Hawk had little fight left so he used the whites weapon against them, the pen. He asked a government interpreter, Antoine LeClair, to write his autobiography. Before the end of 1833 an Illinois newspaper editor polished the work and had it published (Josephy 213). After all the great reception he received Black Hawk told the U.S. people, "The tomahawk is buried forever! We will forget the past – and may the watchword between the Americans and Sauk and Foxes ever be friendship!" (Josephy 212).

In the east the Black Hawk War was known as a glorious military victory enhancing the political lives of Atkinson, Taylor, Davis, Dodge, and others (TJCBH). Throughout the Midwest many schools, streets, towns, and businesses are named for Black Hawk in comparison to the few for Atkinson and Dodge. Sixteen years after the war Wisconsin became a state and it would have never happened without Black Hawk. Wisconsin was not just a part of the Michigan Territory that was only suitable for fur trapping and mining lead. It was now safe for farmers and families (Kenyon np). Many people in the area of the war have no idea who Black Hawk was or about his war. They do not know that all but 150 of the Indian tribe were wiped out. They do not know of the thousand Indians that died due to starvation or fighting and the 72 soldiers that died. They certainly do not know of the 50 miles of land the Indians lost that these people currently inhabit (Kenyon np).

Black Hawk and his warriors could not stop the Europeans from expanding and advancing. The last armed conflict east of the Mississippi between the natives and the whites was very important. "The war destroyed 1500 Sauk and Fox Indians, created a state, and killed a culture." (Kenyon np). Even though this war was so important, people do not know much about Black Hawk and the war. The fact that people know very little about this conflict is a tragedy to history. Black Hawk and the war named for him still are a big part of history whether people know it or not.

Editors Note

Black Hawk's wife was Asshewequa, or Singing Bird. He had two sons, and a daughter named Namequa who lived with him in Iowa after the war. One of his sons was Loud Thunder.

After Black Hawk returned from his imprisonment, he lived with his family in a lodge of peeled bark near the Iowa River for nearly five years. In 1838 he and his family moved to a new home along the Des Moines River.

Black Hawk died on October 3, 1838, and was buried above ground in the traditional method – sitting erect inside a small log mausoleum. His grave was soon robbed and his bones eventually ended up in the museum of the Burlington Geological and Historical Society. They were destroyed when the building burned down in 1855.

After Black Hawk's death, the Fox and Sauk were forced to move again and again. After losing all their lands in Iowa, they were moved to Kansas, then eventually to Oklahoma. In 1937 there were 987 Sauk left, mostly in Oklahoma. There were 441 Fox, mostly in Iowa.

Source: *Black Hawk – an Autobiography*. Trans. by Antoine LeClair. Ed. by Donald Jackson, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1955. 1964 edition.

Works Cited

“Black Hawk.” np. On-line. Internet 20 Feb. 1999. Available at WWW:
<http://www.historychannel.com/BlackHawk>.

This web site includes much of the history of Black Hawk's family life.

“Black Hawk War.” np. On-line. Internet 20 Feb. 1999. Available at WWW:
<http://www.historychannel.com/BlackHawkWar>.

This site shows many of the important parts of the Black Hawk War.

Ebby, Cecil. “*That Disgraceful Affair*” *The Black Hawk War*. New York: W W Norton & Company Inc., 1973.

This book gives a negative perspective about how the white men handled the situation with Black Hawk and his people.

Crane, E. B. Letter. “The Black Hawk War.” *Beloit Daily News* 15 Oct. 1891, np.

This article provided me with some good background of Black Hawk's life.

Gjeston, David L. Lecture. Black Hawk Lecture. Beloit Historical Society, Beloit, WI. 7 March 1999.

This was a speaker that I listened to. Mr. Gjeston is a man that has followed much of the life of Black Hawk and is considered an expert on him.

Hodge, Frederick Webb. *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1979. Part 1.

This book contains a lot of information on Black Hawk and how his tribe lived.

Josephy, Alvin M. Jr. *The Patriot Chiefs*. New York: Viking Press, 1961.

This book tells a lot about the rivalry Black Hawk had with Keokuk.

Kenyon, Richard L. "Hearing the Echo of Black Hawk." *The Milwaukee Journal* 15 Sept. 1991, np.

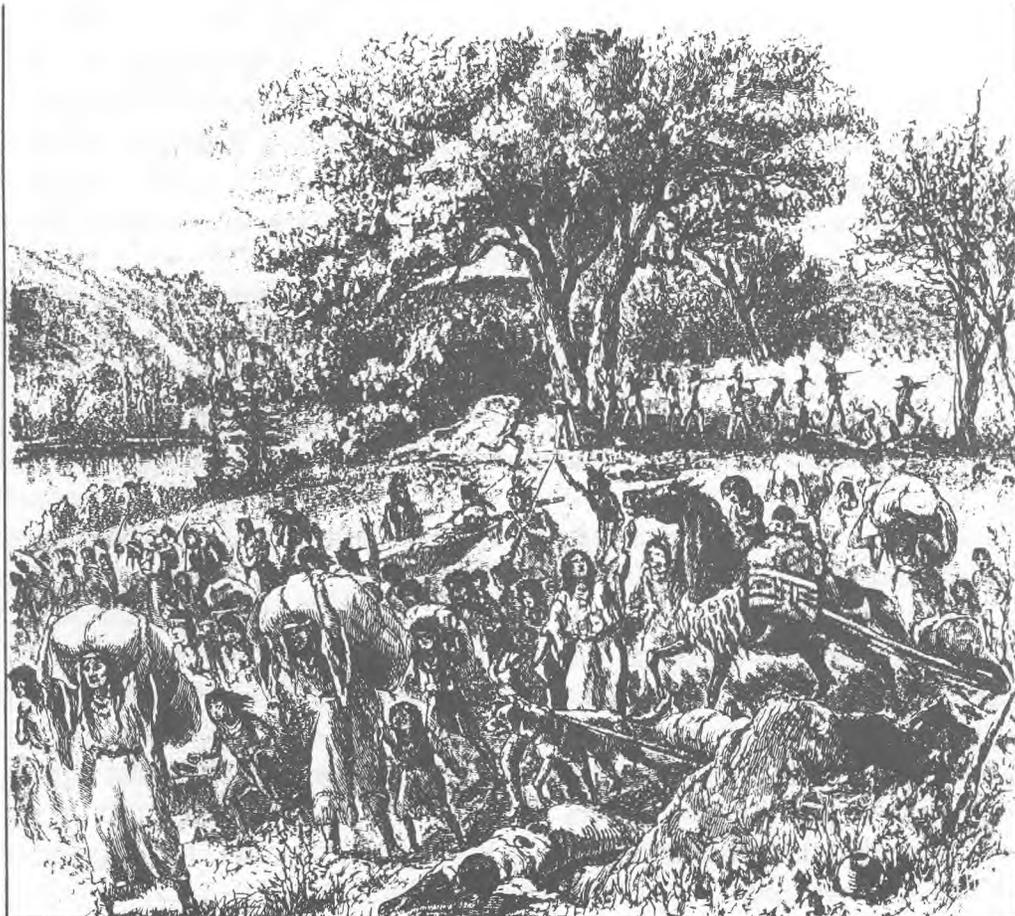
This is an article about a man who followed a path of Black Hawk's life. It includes many interesting facts about Black Hawk and his war.

"Treaty of 1804." *Wisconsin Historical Magazine* may 1893, np

This article talks about a treaty that was wrongfully signed in 1804.

Letter. "Was an Indian Maiden." *Beloit Daily News* unknown date, np.

This newspaper article talks about how Black Hawk hid at Hononegah Park and received help from Princess Hononegah.



An engraving of the Battle of Bad Axe, the fight that ended the Black Hawk War on August 2, 1832. (Library of Congress)

GROCERY SHOPPING IN EDGEWATER

By Thomas Powers

Editors Note: The Edgewater neighborhood is the area north and east of the North Main and Auburn intersection. The area was originally platted in 1890 and was best known 100 years ago as the home of the Harlem Park Amusement Park, the Riverside Park baseball stadium, and the Ingersoll Milling Machine Co. Most of the homes in the area were built between 1910 and 1930. This article originally appeared in the Edgewater Neighborhood Association Newsletter in 1995.

How many grocery stores are there within a mile of your home? How many are there in the whole city? Not near as many as there were fifty or sixty years ago. Today there are about fifty grocery stores large or small, in the city of Rockford, spread over forty five square miles. In 1930 there were well over 300 grocery and meat markets in a city that at that time covered only twelve square miles. But it was a different era and stores and shopping habits were very different then they are today.

At the turn of the century this was a largely rural area, but it was growing fast. In 1892 there were twenty six homes north of Auburn St., and east of Main St. By 1914 there were 131, including some two and four family homes. By the 1920's there were many more. The first store in the area was the Smontek Grocery & Meat Market established in 1910 or 11 at 2200 N. Main. The store lasted less than five years, but within a few years several other stores opened up. By 1915 there were four grocery stores along N. Main including one at 1438 N. Main at the present site of "Bobby's North". There would be a grocery store there for the next forty years.

By the 1920's, grocery stores and meat markets were springing up all over the area. In 1917 the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Co., came to town. The A & P, as we call it started out importing tea from England in the 19th century. They were an old established business. They opened three stores in Rockford in 1917 and in 1920 they opened their sixth store at 1313 Auburn St. in the building currently used by "Zazines". By 1935, A & P had twenty-five stores in Rockford. Another early chain was Piggly Wiggly. They opened a store at 1438 N Main in 1920. By 1930 they had eight stores in Rockford. That year there were six grocery and meat markets in the 1400 block of N. Main St., and eleven others in Edgewater or along its borders.

How did all these stores stay in business? Well, many of them didn't. In the 1920's, '30's and '40's many stores opened, closed, moved or changed hands after a few years. But others replaced the ones that closed. Refrigerators were new in the late 1920's and it was another ten years before most people had one. Many people had iceboxes, but fresh food didn't keep very long, especially meat, so you had to shop almost daily. Most of the stores were very small and didn't carry a wide range of foods. Some were

on residential streets and catered to people who needed a few items in between their trips to the larger stores, much as the "7-11's" do today. Others competed in other ways. A.W. Burr's carried a premium line of foods and meats. They catered to those who were a little better off. The Monarch Grocery and the Uptown Grocery offered delivery service. Stores carried different brands of canned goods. Some were open longer hours. Some provided better services and some had better prices. There were many ways to compete.

Most of the small stores would allow you to run a tab. You were supposed to come in at the end of the month and pay up, but that didn't always happen, especially during the depression. A.W. Burr's went out of business in the mid '30's because they could not collect enough of their tabs. Undoubtedly many other stores had the same problem. It was a difficult problem. The large stores generally did not extend credit, but they had lower prices too.

There were three grocery stores that opened within Edgewater in the 1920's. They were located at 2030 Cumberland (1922), 2203 Cumberland (1926), and 615 Ellis (1922). F.W. Carl and his wife operated the store at 2030 Cumberland until 1940 when it was sold to Bob Thornton. Bob ran the store until the mid 1950's and the store closed for good in 1958 or '59.

The store at 615 Ellis was operated by several different owners, perhaps the longest by Howard Olson. In 1942 it was known as George Johnson Groceries & Meats. It went out of business the following year.

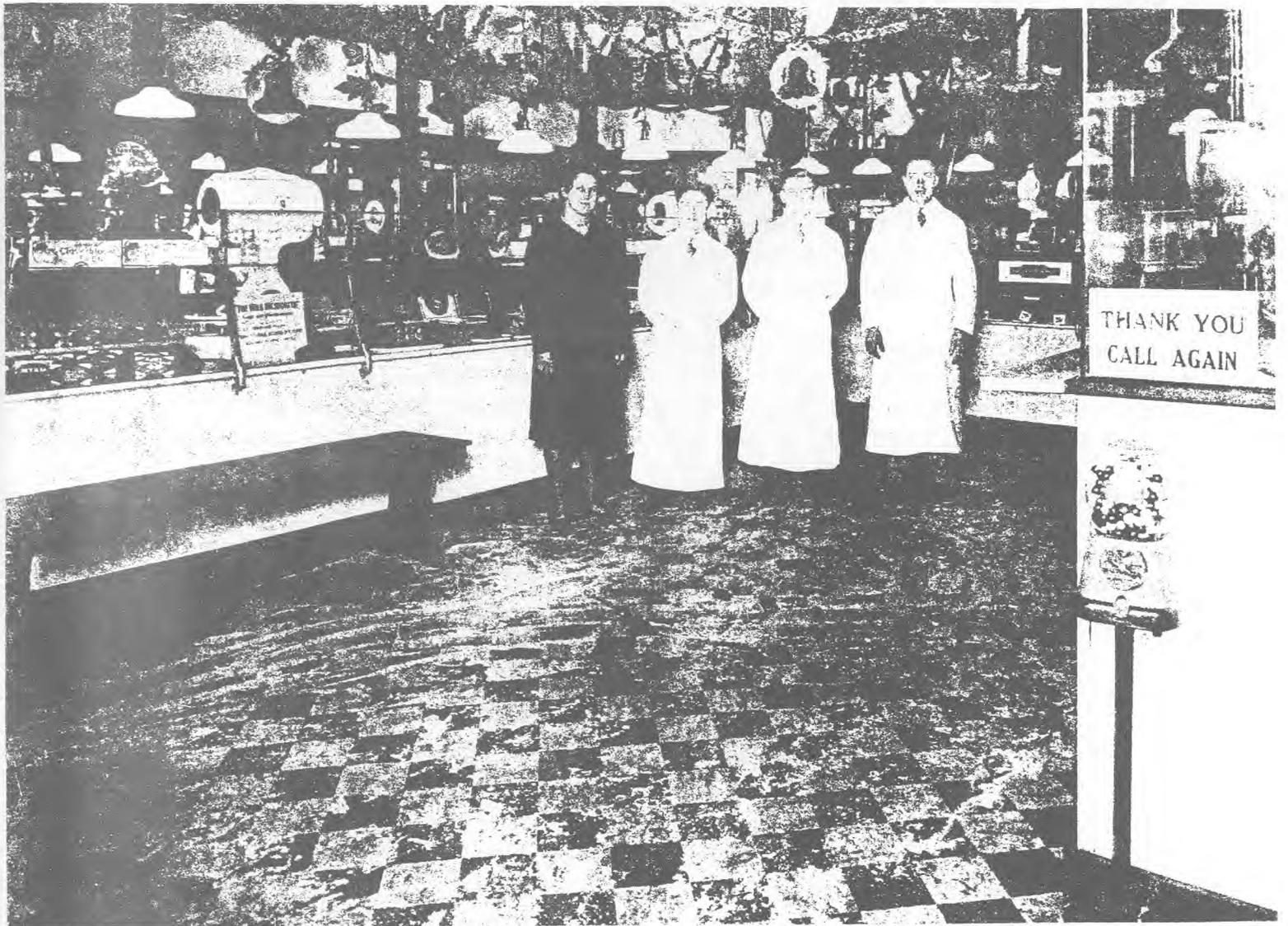
The longest lasting store was the one located at 2203 Cumberland. It too went through several different owners and the store changed over the years from strictly groceries to include a deli and ice cream parlor. It remained a food store until about 1980 when it was converted into a beauty parlor.

Over the years the large stores got larger and the smaller ones started to disappear. The A & P moved to 1407 N. Main, then to 1612 N. Main in 1938, and finally to 1417 Myott in 1950. In 1972 they closed their last store in the Edgewater area. The Piggly Wiggly, who pioneered "self-serve" grocery shopping in the late 1920's, operated a store at 1438 N. Main for many years. When the A & P vacated the building at 1612 N. Main in 1946, Piggly Wiggly moved in. They operated a store there until the late 1950's when they moved to the new North Town shopping center. One small store that is still here is Cacciatore's on N. Main. They have served their customers for over 35 years at the same location. Most of the other small neighborhood grocery stores have disappeared. They have been replaced by the huge supermarkets of today like Eagle's, Hilander's, and Logli's, but also by modern refrigeration, fast food and TV dinners.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Lyle Baie in researching this article. His knowledge and memory was very valuable and added a lot to the story. I might add that Lyle has first hand knowledge, having worked for the Uptown Market in the 1930's for \$.10 per hour!

Sources

1. Interviews with Lyle Baie, a 70-year resident of the area.
2. Interviews with Edgar and Mae Rudolph-also long term residents.
3. Rockford City Directories – from 1909 to 1980.



A typical meat market in the 1920's.

This photograph shows Joseph Zelenka, (on the right) in his butcher shop in 1929. With him are his assistants and the cashier. The store is decorated for Christmas. The floor has a layer of sawdust to absorb moisture. Mr. Zelenka worked as a meat cutter for over fifty years in Chicago. He is now 94. (He is the authors grandfather).

NUGGETS OF HISTORY, is published quarterly by the Rockford Historical Society, 6526 Spring Brook Rd., Rockford, Illinois 61114. Society members receive NUGGETS upon payment of annual dues. New rates, effective January 1, 1998: Family @ \$15, Individual @ \$10, Contributing member @ \$25, Life member @ \$150. Mail check to: Membership Chairman, Rockford Historical Society, 6799 Guilford Rd., Rockford, IL 61107.

Statement of Purpose: To enlighten and to educate people about their place of residence, to entertain with stories and fact, and to enrich lives regarding what is available to enjoy, to treasure and to honor.

1999-2000 Officers

President	Lou Suit
Vice-President	Marge Maney
Editor Emeritus	Robert Borden
Editor/Publisher	Thomas Powers
Contributing Editor	Hazel M. Hyde
Circulation Manager	Richard J. Marsh

We welcome manuscripts and photos to area historical events and personalities, for publication consideration. We reserve the right to edit and to condense. For return, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Send to NUGGETS EDITOR, ROCKFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 6799 GUILFORD RD, ROCKFORD, IL 61107

ROCKFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
6799 Guilford Rd.
Rockford, IL 61107

Non-Profit Org. U.S. POSTAGE PAID ROCKFORD, IL PERMIT NO. 320
--