

# DOWNERS GROVE

1832 to 1982



Montrew Dunham  
Pauline Wandschneider



LEGEND.

- Indian Trails
- ..... Indian Boundary Line of 1816
- +++++ Boundaries of Indian Villages
- ▲ Major Indian Villages
- △ Minor Indian Villages
- ▽ Indian Camps
- + Indian Chipping Stations
- Indian Signal Stations
- ⊗ Mills and Sites
- Ⓜ Mound Builders Trail





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One does not write history — for history has been written by the people who lived it. The task of gathering the historical data of Downers Grove was a matter of compiling the available information left by the people of Downers Grove. This work has been a privilege, a pleasure and a monumental task of searching, reading, reviewing and corroborating information from letters, artifacts, documents, records, photographs, books and newspapers and then fitting the pieces of information together into a narrative account of the history of the Village from its beginning to the present.

The records of the earliest days are sparse and much of the information was written by the descendants of the original settlers as they remembered the stories told by their parents and grandparents. In many instances, though the salient facts remained constant, details varied from storyteller to storyteller. Several stories are contradictory and it is our belief that this does not indicate that one is wrong and another right, but rather reflects the knowledge and perception of the writer. In cases of conflicting information we have attempted to confirm the data with the most valid source, either in point of time or proximity to the knowledge of the fact, or short of that, to reflect the majority opinion. In some events, we have given two or more different stories and the reader can make the judgment, or simply know that many times similar events were occurring concurrently.

We have endeavored to be correct in the spelling of names, however accuracy has been a challenge since many of the names have been taken from early records and handwritten documents. The names of the early settlers were spelled in various ways. Israel Blodgett is written in his own hand as both Israel and Isreal. The name of the first teacher at the Blodgett school is recorded both as Hiram Willson and Hiram Stillson. Early dates likewise vary from one account to another. For the most part the exact year may not be critical; however we have attempted to verify dates with the most valid primary source, or the most frequently recorded. Lists of the names are as complete as possible taken from the sources available to us.

We are indebted to all of the individuals and organizations who contributed information, source materials and pictures. We are equally indebted to those who offered encouragement and moral support.

To Bill and Joan Hannan, Barbara Bowser, Lucile Bush, Elon Wolf, Elon Staats, Hazel Staats Von Burkom, Phyllis Palmer, Florence Herrick, Donald Drew, Mildred Drew, James Freese, Gilbert Mochel, Katherine Fraher, Polly Buchanan, Jim Dunham, Frieda Humphris, Ross Johnson, Elaine Berberich, John Wander, Elmer Dicke, Hilda Ringwall, Glenn and Joyce Clark, Ray Klein, Kathleen Mehaffey, Gwen Vaughan, Bud Sherman, Ethel Duner, Karin Field, Tobey Irish, Adelyn Lyness, Charlotte Bateman, Erma Downer, Clarence Johnson, Catherine Childress, Sue Vineyard, Wayne Guthrie and all the many, many others, our thanks.

Above all, we wish to express our appreciation to the Downers Grove Historical Society whose sponsorship made this history of Downers Grove a reality. We would like to recognize the total cooperation of the Historical Society in making available their historical collection and library as well as providing funds for photography and the typing of the original manuscript.

We owe a great debt to the *Downers Grove Reporter* for its nearly one hundred years of reporting the news of the Village. The *Reporter* has been an important source of the events of the Village. Our thanks to Pat and Jack Winter and the staff of the *Reporter* for all their assistance in obtaining information and photographs.

Our appreciation to the staffs of the Downers Grove Public Library and the library at Downers Grove Community High School — South, the Downers Grove Park District, the Caroline Martin Mitchell Museum of Naperville and the Chicago Historical Society.

And to those without whom this book could not have been produced: Nancy Schwemm for the management of the project; the Heritage Fest Task Force; the Downers Grove Village Council; Loretta Rushford for her help in the typing of the first manuscript; Ed Bunting Jr. for his photography; Bob Dunham for his photography and encouragement; Carol Konkoly, Heritage Fest Coordinator, Carol Wandschneider, Faye Council and Jodi Head and Thomas Friedlund of the Taylor Publishing Company for the outstanding work of the Book Committee; and Virginia Stehney for her invaluable assistance in reviewing the material, her excellent suggestions, and the preparation of the final manuscript with a comprehensive index — our deepest appreciation!

Montrew Dunham  
Pauline Wandschneider

*Cover:* Downers Grove Historical Museum in Autumn. This house, the third on the Blodgett Homesite, was built in 1892 by Charles Blodgett, son of pioneer settlers Israel and Avis Blodgett. The first, a log cabin, was built in 1836 and the second, a clapboard house which was later moved to its present location, 812 Randall Street, was built in 1849. Photograph by Robert Dunham of Downers Grove.

Most of the photographs are from the Downers Grove Historical Society collection. The present day photographs of churches, schools and Downers Grove — 1982 were taken by Ed Bunting, Jr., as well as many of the other photographs which are individually credited.

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This book is more than a collection of pictures and recollections of past events. Our history in Downers Grove reflects true human experience. The people in this book were real. They worked and played in the same place you and I have chosen to live.

As you can see, we have been blessed with a wonderful heritage. Our present owes much to our past. Today's advantages are based on the accomplishments of people in this book.

Viewing history in perspective can be a humbling experience. Although our present is a link to the past, it is also our link to the future. Our lives will certainly impact those who follow us — just as we have been influenced by those before us.

We thank all the people who made this book possible. It acknowledges our heritage. It should make us aware of the possibilities for making our lives happy, and for meaningful contributions to future generations.

Jon D. Council  
Mayor

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE

## FOREWORD

The book you are about to read is a varied and interesting collection of dates and facts, places and things, comprising the century and a half history of our town.

But, this book is something more than words and photographs. Within its pages lies an elusive something which 50 years ago, during the 1932 celebration of Downers Grove's first 100 years, was called by its residents, "The Spirit of the Grove."

That, "Spirit," far from being a mere celebration slogan, was and is very real.

Those first pioneers from "back east" who followed the Vermonter, Pierce Downer in their covered wagons to that spot some 20 miles west of Fort Dearborn in the middle of the tall prairie grass, marked by a hillock covered with virgin Maple trees, the "Grove" which still stands as part of the Maple Grove Forest Preserve, founded more than a community.

They established and nurtured that personality which set the town to be known as Downers Grove just a little bit apart from its neighbors, made it just a little bit different, and gave it a character all its own.

That "Spirit" is composed of two simple, but very important, ingredients; the friendliness and helpfulness of its residents, one to another, to visitors and to newcomers; and the willingness of its citizens from all walks of life to actively participate in and volunteer their services for the vital civic, cultural and governmental functions which are the life-blood of any viable community.

Since its rude beginnings in a few log cabins clustered around that "Grove" of maples, Downers Grove has grown, and grown again, beyond the wildest imagining of its founders.

Yet, the truly remarkable fact is not that growth, not those unimaginable changes from small hamlet, small town to urban, sophisticated "city" in all but name; but, that the village and its residents have managed to a remarkable degree to keep those twin attributes of "Spirit," the traditions of friendliness and service, which have and do make it unique.

That "Spirit," kept alive by a majority of its residents over the years, is the reason why Downers Grove enjoys, and has enjoyed, fiscally sound, conservative, honest and responsive government on all local levels, and why its governmental bodies are repeatedly cited by state and national organizations as models for others to study and copy.

It is because of this "Spirit" that it is no coincidence that, for its size Downers Grove has perhaps had more than its share of illustrious citizens, some with prestigious international reputations, as you will note after reading the book.

The many people who have worked long and hard on this book have attempted to breathe into its pages, its dates and photographs and stories, some of that "Spirit" which those residents who call it "home" feel makes Downers Grove just a little different, and yes, just a little better than any other town.

We think they have succeeded.

Jack Winter  
Editor  
Downers Grove Reporter



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Pierce Downer  
1782-1863

## THE FOUNDING 1832-1850

A solitary horse and rider plodded along slowly as the horse stepped carefully on the deep, uneven mud ruts of the primitive trail. The pace was slow but not leisurely, as the steel grey eyes of the rider intently scanned the prairies around him. This was 1832, the month was May, and the virgin prairie was dense and untamed. The verdant, lush prairie grass was rich spring green stretching as far as the eye could see, broken only by the vivid splash of the brilliant colors of the prairie flowers.

Pierce Downer rode tall in his saddle, slim and straight. Though his hair was grey and his face furrowed, his lean muscular body belied his almost 50 years. "He was at that time a man of unusual physical powers, energetic, and capable of great endurance." He needed that endurance as he reached the end of a long journey from New York State to the Illinois prairie, nearly three days' ride west of Chicago.

Downer traveled with purpose as he sought suitable land to settle. His eyes fell upon an oak grove rising majestically from the prairie which "looked from the distance like an island, and the prairie around it like an ocean surrounding it," and he knew he had found the place.

Immediately he leaned forward and spurred his horse into a gallop across the prairie to the south. On this May evening of 1832, with the sunrays slanting into the oak opening, Pierce Downer brought his horse to a halt in the center of the grove which loomed on the flat land. And it was here he made his camp.

Alone in the wilderness, Pierce Downer stopped at the junction of two ancient Indian trails, and there are some who say Chief Waubonsee camped with him that night. Whether or not Chief Waubonsee did indeed camp in

the grove with Pierce Downer that night, he did come here many times, as this place was one of Waubonsee's favorite campgrounds. As Downer made his camp, he looked at the vast Illinois prairie, which had been described in glowing terms by earlier immigrants from the East.

Morris Sleight, one of the early Naperville settlers, had written to his wife, "The first view of a Michigan prairie is delightful after passing the oak openings and thick forest, but the first view of an Illinois prairie is sublime, I almost say awfully grand, as a person needs a compass to keep his course."

"A beautiful prairie opened to our view," another early settler, George Flowers, said as he viewed an Illinois prairie for the first time.

"All of its distinctive features were revealed, lying in profound repose under the warm light of an afternoon's summer sun. Its indented and irregular outline of wood; its varied surface interspersed with clumps of oaks of centuries' growth; its tall grass, with seed stalks from six to ten feet high, like tall and slender reeds waving in a gentle breeze; the whole presenting a magnificence of park-scenery, complete from the hand of nature."

Perhaps Pierce Downer had read these descriptions as he had contemplated traveling to Illinois to take up land. If he had, as he surveyed the land about him, the words were pale in comparison to the beauty of the prairie.

The location was ideal. The high ground of the grove, with its abundant supply of lumber for fences and buildings, was surrounded by fertile prairie as far as the eye could see.

"Nothing but fencing and providing water for stock is wanted to reduce a prairie into the condition of useful grass land; and from that state . . . the transition to arable is through a simple process, easy to perform and profitable as it goes on,"

Morris Birkbeck, an early traveler, had written as he encouraged Easterners to come west to claim the prairie land.

The setting sun cast its golden-red rays over the endless prairie and through the dark shadows of the forest, as Pierce Downer, eating his simple



The prairie!

fare, sat alone by the campfire. What plans must have filled his thoughts as he studied the terrain, the rich forest, and the sweep of the prairie! This beautiful land was his for the taking!

He sighted off the land and bent a sapling to mark his claim. And then on that night in May of 1832, Pierce Downer made his bed on the floor of the forest by the glowing coals of the dying campfire and slept under the stars in a soft, dark sky. The fragrance of the prairie grasses and flowers filled the air on the gentle spring breezes. His heart must have been filled with joy. Even his wildest dreams could not have imagined the future of this place.

The journey to Downers Grove had been a long time in the planning and a long, arduous trip in the doing. Pierce Downer was a middle-aged man with a wife and five living children, the eldest of whom were twins, Stephen and George. Originally from Rutland, Jefferson County, Vermont, as a young man Pierce had moved to Ellisburg, New York, where he met and married Lucy Ellis, a young widow. After their marriage, the Downers had remained in Ellisburg and settled down to farm and rear a family.

When Stephen reached adulthood, he left home to seek his fortune and independence in the pioneer village of Chicago at Fort Dearborn on Lake Michigan, where a lighthouse was to be built. The U.S. Engineers had recommended the improvement of the harbor, and approximately \$5,000 was obtained for the erection of the first lighthouse in Chicago. In March of 1831 the U.S. Congress commissioned the lighthouse to be built, and the work was begun. Shortly before its completion the contractor, so confident in the solid construction of the lighthouse, took several visitors up to the top of it to view the harbor. The walls were three feet thick, and the tower had been raised to a height of 50 feet when the collapse came. Samuel Johnson the contractor,



Lighthouse at Fort Dearborn

“claimed that the lighthouse was built on quicksand, which caused the building to settle and fall; others held that the cause was the defective manner in which it was built.”

Stephen Downer was one of the masons who built the 3 feet thick walls of the light-house. Living in the rude, frontier village which was to become the city of Chicago, Stephen learned about the boundless land to be had for the settling. Doubtless, he wrote to his father of the growing village of Chicago and the wondrous opportunities to claim rich Illinois farmland under the Pre-emption Law of 1830.

Pierce Downer and his wife Lucy surely spent hours talking and planning before he made that fateful decision to leave home and family in New York to look for his future in a wild, unsettled

land. Though precise records on Downer's journey are not available, he embarked at Sackett's Harbor on Lake Ontario, probably April 27th or shortly thereafter, since this was the earliest date in 1832 that the winter ice permitted the ships to ply the lake. "Early in the spring of 1832, the travel was brisk with settlers coming to the Midwest," according to a letter by Enoch Chase, "from the opening of navigation on Lake Erie till the Sac War broke out (about the middle of May) . . ."

The exact route of Pierce Downer's journey from Detroit to Chicago is unknown. The belief has been widely held that he traveled overland through Michigan from Detroit, thence to Lake Michigan where he boarded another ship which took him to Fort Dearborn. The harbor was not built until over a year later, so that if this were his route he would have had to disembark from the ship by rowboat to reach the sandy, muddy shore of Chicago.

In *Chicago's Highways Old and New*, M.M. Quaife says that the first steamboats "that ever made the port of Chicago were those composing the tiny fleet which bore General Scott's army westward to the scene of the Black Hawk War in the summer of 1832." Based on this information, if Downer crossed Lake Michigan to the port of Chicago in May of 1832, his passage would have been on a sailing schooner.

A year later, in 1833, when Eunice Peet came with a party from Benson, Vermont, their journey took them on a steamer from Buffalo to Detroit, where they hired a driver and team to carry them through Michigan. From Niles they continued on down the St. Joe River in a rowboat and then took a schooner to cross Lake Michigan. When they were about a mile from the Illinois shore, the schooner anchored while the captain rowed ashore to obtain a large boat called a "lighter" in which he rowed all the passengers up to the fork of the Chicago River on the west side.

If Pierce Downer did come across the lake, his journey may have been much like this crossing taken by Eunice Peet a year later. Perhaps it is more likely that Pierce Downer came to Chicago from Detroit on the old Chicago Road which was the great thoroughfare over which most of the early settlers traveled to Chicago. "The Chicago Road, like many another western thoroughfare, was originally developed as a military highway

connecting the forts at Detroit and Chicago."

In the spring of 1824, the Congress authorized President Monroe to designate and make surveys of roads or canals deemed to have national importance for commercial or military needs or for the purpose of carrying the mail. Thirty thousand dollars was appropriated for this work. One-third of this appropriation was spent on surveying this route from Detroit to Chicago.

This road proved its national importance in opening up the lands of northern Illinois to thousands of settlers from New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. The first link in the journey from New England and eastern New York to the west was the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, which provided easy access from the East to the ships of the Great Lakes. The next link in the journey was the coming of the steamers to the lakes for faster, safer transport to Detroit. The third link then was this "highway" from Detroit to Chicago.

Highway, indeed! The road was one of sharp curves and winding turns and bends following an ancient Indian trail. Since Indian trails followed the high ground, avoiding swamps and marshes, and fording streams and rivers at the shallowest point, the road wound and curved around deep ravines and through dense forests. One early traveler described the road as "stretching itself by devious and irregular windings" from east to west, and looking, when viewed from a hilltop, "like a huge serpent, lazily pursuing its onward course, utterly unconcerned as to its destination." The road crawled through southern Michigan to enter Indiana passing through the Door Prairie in LaPorte County and then along the lake shore from Michigan City to Chicago.

In the spring of 1832 when Pierce Downer was traveling to meet his son in Chicago, there was a stage route from Detroit to Niles, Michigan, but there is no record that in 1832 the stage route went any further. If Pierce Downer did take the stage to Niles, at that point he would have needed to hire or buy a horse to ride the rest of the Chicago Road into Chicago, or perhaps he rode the entire road on horseback.

Pierce Downer's ride through the Michigan section of the road would have been through awesome forest country which alternated with wide stretches of prairie. From Michigan City to Chicago, the road hugged the shore and the sandy shore made quite a different roadway. The

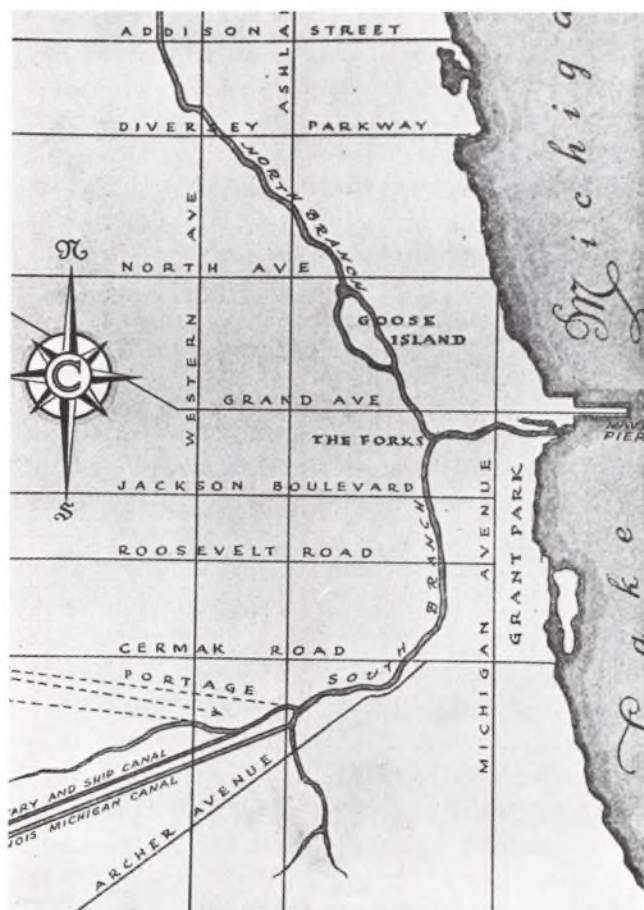
conditions of the road changed with the weather.

“While we kept at the water’s edge with gentle swells rolling in among the horse’s feet,” a traveler in 1834 reported, “the wheels of our stage would hardly leave a mark on the wet sand, while fifty feet inland the dry sand was nearly impassable.”

Another early traveler wrote,

“After a northwest storm when the sand was packed by the waves, the drive was just splendid; but when the sand was dry and loose it was just horrible. A good team would make the distance (from Michigan City to Chicago) in six hours when the way was all right, but it was a six days’ good drive when the way was all wrong.”

Whether by lake or lakeshore, upon his arrival in Chicago Pierce Downer undoubtedly sought out his son Stephen. In May of 1832 Stephen was still employed as a mason on the ill-fated lighthouse. The rude village of Chicago which Pierce Downer found, consisted of log cabins set around the forks of the Chicago River and the main-stream as it emptied into Lake Michigan. An early traveler, Charles Butler, described Chicago at that time as “a woe-begone frontier town of



A Map of the Chicago River

the lowest class, not a single steeple or chimney four feet above a roof.”

Downer spent his time in Chicago preparing for his journey to the prairie stretching to the west. He stocked up on his provisions at Robinson’s Trading House at the confluence of the South Branch and North Branch of the Chicago River, or at LaGramboise’s store at Madison Street and the South Branch, or perhaps he took his business to Mark Beaubien. He gathered information wherever he went up and down the muddy streets. No doubt he was told of the roads going westward from Chicago, and the most likely route to good prairie land which would be



Mark Beaubien’s Sauganash Tavern

his for the settling. If he had not previously acquired a horse, he bought one in Chicago to continue his journey to the west.

The first survey of the town of Chicago was made in 1830, and it was estimated that in 1831, when Chicago became the county seat of the newly-formed Cook County, which included pre-

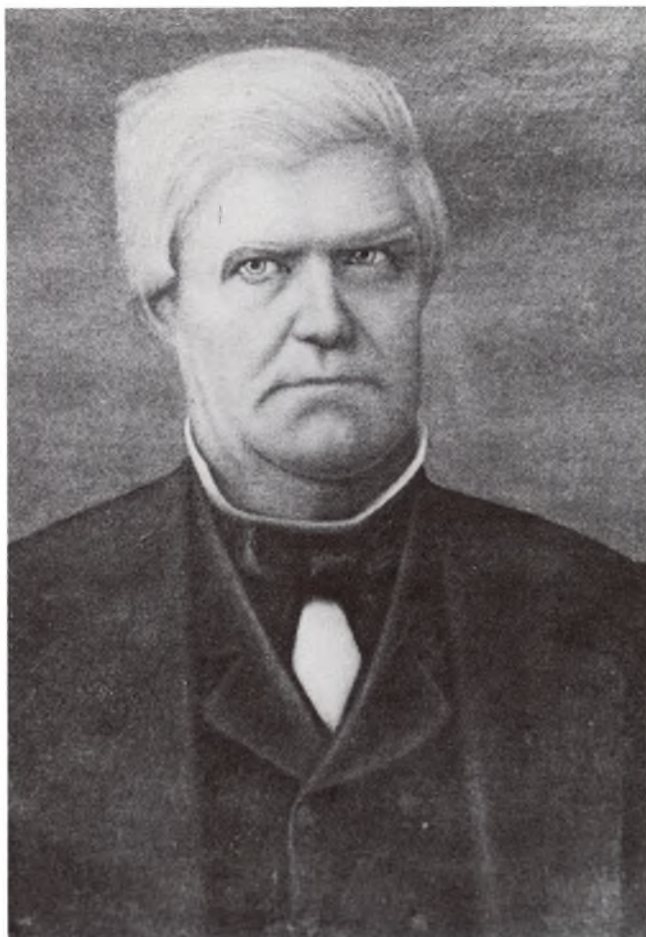
sent-day Lake, McHenry, DuPage and Will counties, the population was slightly over 40 to 50 people. In the election held for township trustees in 1833 when Chicago was incorporated as a village, the entire electorate consisted of twenty-eight men. Thirteen of the twenty-eight, who came to the polls to vote, became candidates for office. The population of Chicago was dangerously close to the minimum of 150 persons required by state law to form a corporate town!

Many immigrants had traveled to Chicago in 1831, but few remained as they continued on to the rich lands to the west to settle. The year of 1832 turned out to be an unpropitious year for a pioneer to choose to settle on the Illinois prairies of the north-eastern section of the new state for two reasons: the first was the outbreak of the Black Hawk War, and the second, the peril of cholera among General Scott's soldiers who came to fight that war.

One wonders what Pierce Downer heard of the Indian uprising as he prepared to travel to the west from Chicago. It is barely possible he did not know that Black Hawk had declared war, but more likely he heard and valiantly decided to take his chances. As it turned out, he not only did not encounter danger with the Indians, but he



Black Hawk



Joe Naper, founder of Naperville — from a portrait (Caroline Martin Mitchell Museum collection)

received hospitality and help from the friendly Potawatomies.

The road which Downer chose to take was one of the first two county roads established by the newly-created Cook County Board. Joseph Naper was one of the Commissioners who laid it out under state authority. DuPage Road generally followed the line of Madison Street to Ogden Avenue to the house and tavern of Barney Lawton (sometimes spelled Laughton), on the DesPlaines River at the present-day site of Riverside. As an Indian trader, Lawton had settled on the DesPlaines River where the Potawatomi trail to the southwest crossed the river. Thence the road followed an almost direct route along this Potawatomi thoroughfare which was known to the pioneers as the "high prairie trail" to the house of James Walker, on the DuPage River at the present site of Plainfield, and so on to the west line of the county.

Pierce Downer traveled the DuPage road, camping by night and probably fishing and

killing game for food, though he may have eaten simply of the food he carried with him. At Brush Hill, present-day Hinsdale, he chose to take the route which branched off from the DuPage Road to run westward toward Naper Settlement and thence southwest through Oswego, following the general course of the Fox River until it rejoined the DuPage Road (present-day Plainfield Road) a few miles northeast of Ottawa.

It is likely that the weather was good in May, which would have been fortunate as Downer covered the trail which traversed the vast swamp between Chicago and Riverside. It was equally fortunate if the many unbridged streams and rivers which he needed to ford were not swollen with heavy spring rains.

Toward midday of the third day of his journey from Chicago, when Pierce Downer sighted the oak opening southwest of the road, without hesitation he had galloped across the prairie to that high spot in the grove which he chose as his camping place.

Downer established his claim on the northeastern 160 acres of the 640 acre section of the oak grove and surrounding prairie, for which he subsequently paid \$1.25 an acre. "To mark the trail to his cabin he seized the branches of a small sapling and bent the tree to the ground where he secured it with a stake." It is not written, but



Waubonsee



Pioneer Log Cabin

perhaps as Downer settled in to prepare for the oncoming winter of 1832-33, he moved his camp to the site where he built his log cabin (at the present site of 4434 Seeley).

Despite Pierce Downer's claim to the land held for so many centuries by the Indian tribes in the area where the Potawatomies had their camps, the Indians were friendly. Pierce Downer made friends with Chief Waubonsee of the Potawatomies, if not the first night he spent in the grove, very shortly thereafter.

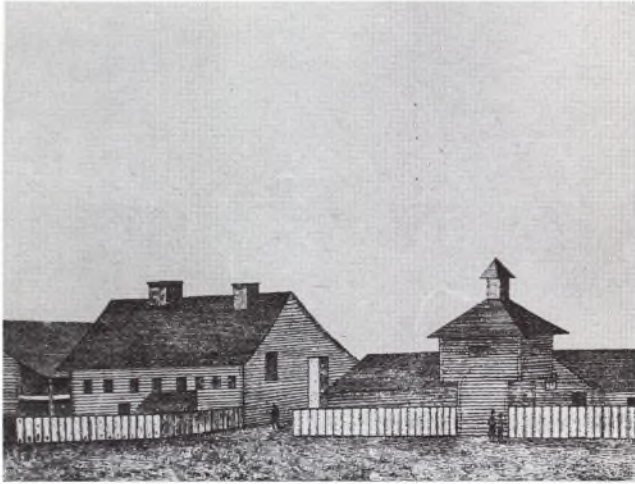
The main Potawatomi village was on the Fox River between Aurora and Batavia. Waubonsee, though, roamed the countryside looking after the interests of his tribe. Waubonsee's name meant "Break of Day" or as he said, "Day a Little". Legend has it that the name was given Waubonsee as the result of a number of brave and daring feats in the early morning as day was breaking. In his wisdom, Waubonsee recognized the advantage of cultivating the good will of the white man. Rejecting the proposals of Black Hawk to join in war on the white man, Waubonsee warned the white settlers of the hostile Sauk on the outbreak of the hostilities of the Black Hawk War.

In arriving in the grove in 1832, Pierce Downer preceded the great tide of immigration from the East to the prairies of northern Illinois by at least a year. He arrived at his campsite in the grove at approximately the same time that the earlier settlers in Naper's Settlement to the west were fleeing the Black Hawk Indian uprising to take refuge in Fort Dearborn. It is likely that Pierce Downer was aware of the Indian uprising. Possibly he was reassured by Chief Waubonsee that he had nothing to fear, or perhaps he was simply



staunch in his strong New England convictions that he would face whatever came. Whichever

connection from Lake Michigan to the Illinois River which would complete an internal water



Fort Dearborn

the case, Pierce Downer did indeed settle in the very face of the Black Hawk War.

That same spring of 1832, with the rumor and threat of the Indian War, most of the settlers of the Naper colony had taken their wives and children to Fort Dearborn for safety, though some of the men had to return to take care of their stock and farms.

Pierce Downer's settlement in the midst of the friendly Potawatomi, and indeed at one of Chief Waubensee's favorite camping grounds, perhaps insulated him from the warring Sauk. Shabbona and Waubensee, along with some 90 other Potawatomies, joined in opposing Black Hawk. It is said that the friendly Potawatomies patrolled the countryside on a regular basis to protect the few settlers who had remained.

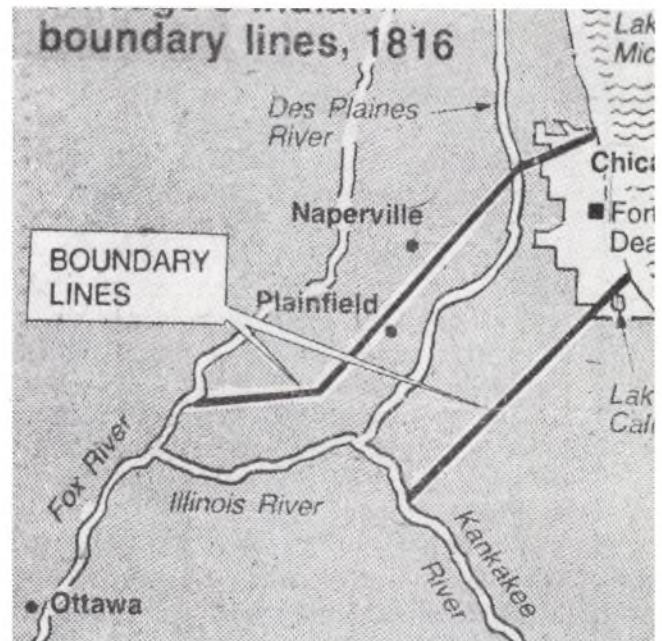
The first sale of Indian lands in northern Illinois had been made to the United States Government in August, 1816, for a ten-mile corridor\* of safe transport for both white settlers and Indians from the headwaters of the Illinois River to Lake Michigan at Chicago. (See the map for the exact location.) And by 1835, less than 20 years later, the United States Government owned all the former holdings of the Potawatomies!

More than a local highway of safe transport, this corridor of land sold to the United States Government made possible the hope of a future

\*The northern-most boundary of this corridor, the Indian Boundary, goes through present-day Downers Grove on a diagonal from the southwest at 63rd Street to 55th Street at Carpenter and on through to the northeast toward Lake Michigan.)



Shabbona



Indian Boundary

route through the United States. The earliest explorers had recognized the great importance of this low-lying portage in the water traffic of this continent. The Chicago portage was called one of the five great "keys to the continent." The inland water route from New York to New Orleans was eventually achieved by connecting the Hudson River with Lake Erie by the Erie Canal, and Lake Michigan with the Illinois River by the Illinois-Michigan Canal.

In 1818 the legislature of the territory sent a petition to Nathaniel Pope, their delegate in Washington, asking for admission of Illinois to the Union. In April the bill was introduced in Congress with two amendments which Pope had added. The bill with the amendments was passed on April 14, 1818, and was approved by the President on April 18, 1818.

The first amendment provided that 3% of the money derived from the sale of public land would be used for schools, and the second, even more important, established the northern boundary of Illinois at the 41° 30' parallel instead of the southerly bend of Lake Michigan. In support of the second amendment, Pope said that its object

"was to gain, for the proposed State, a coast on Lake Michigan. This would afford additional security to the perpetuity of the Union, inasmuch as the State would thereby be connected with the States of Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, through the lakes."

Furthermore, Nathaniel Pope stated that,

"the facility of opening a canal between Lake Michigan and the Illinois River is acknowledged by everyone who has visited the place. Giving to the proposed State the port of Chicago, (embraced in the proposed limits) will draw its attention to the opening of the communication between the Illinois River and (Chicago), and the improvement of that harbor."

This boundary, which gave Illinois a lake port and the metropolis of Chicago, made all the difference in the history of Illinois. This gave Illinois the fourteen northern Illinois counties, including the county of DuPage, the lead mines of Galena, the lake front, this site of Chicago, and a port! It also made possible the Illinois-Michigan Canal and the Illinois Central Railroad. It appears that Pope did this on his own, and very probably changed the history of the nation. Certainly it changed the history of the village of Downers Grove!

After the Black Hawk War of 1832, there was a final gathering of the tribes in Chicago for the

purpose of making a treaty for the purchase of the whole of the northeastern portion of Illinois. After many days of "palaver by the use of liquor and diplomacy" the Indian chiefs were persuaded to sign the treaty by which they sold to the United States Government the remainder of their land in northeastern Illinois, including an area of more than a dozen counties, among which is present-day DuPage County. By this treaty the Indian tribes of northern Illinois were banished to land west of the Mississippi River.

It was not until after this treaty establishing title to the land that the public lands of DuPage County were surveyed. Prior to this the pioneers had settled on government land, or perhaps more properly Indian land, before it was opened up for purchase, and then by right of the Pre-emption Law were able to claim that land which they settled, paying the sum of \$1.25 an acre as land fee entry. When the Land Offices were opened and these public lands were put on the market, nearly every acre of Downers Grove township was already held by claim-right.

In May of 1832, Andrew Jackson was President of the United States and facing a re-election. The Democratic-Republican Party, which had elected every U.S. President since Jefferson, became the Democratic Party when it dropped the Republican part of the name and held the first Democratic national convention in Baltimore. There, on the 21st day of May, 1832, it nominated as its candidates the incumbent Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren for Vice-President. Andrew Jackson, the President of the common people, was re-elected for a second term with 219 electoral votes against 49 for Henry Clay.

Doubtless Pierce Downer did not vote in this presidential election. He was far too busy building a home in the wilderness. Downer was so alone in his grove on the prairie; it is difficult to know how lonely he might have felt. That first year, other than the Indians, the closest people would have been at Naper's Settlement. He was all alone as he built his log cabin and harvested such crops as he was able to plant and raise that first year.

The following year, in 1833, Stephen Downer, with the knowledge of the availability of the fine land near the claim of his father, made a claim on the southeast side of the grove. However, there is no record that Stephen ever lived on that land.

That same year two more men did arrive, Joel Wells, and a Mr. Cooley, to make their claim at the southeast extremity of the large prairie which stretched away some three miles toward the north, five miles toward the south, and three miles toward the west. An important object of the first settlers was to secure a large amount of good timber. Therefore most of the early pioneers made their claims on the borders of the groves and forests.

The settlers marked their claims in different ways, some by bending saplings at the four corners, some by driving stakes, and some by plowing a furrow around their claim. Other settlers, greedy to gain as much as they could, claimed all they could survey at one long look in each direction! With these unorthodox means of surveying and claiming land, many disputes arose regarding land ownership. Amazing with all the available land stretching in all directions that men could come to blows over squatter's rights, but it was ever thus.

The first trouble about claims in Downer's Grove was between Pierce Downer and the recent settlers, Cooley and Wells. Downer said,

"I went to Chicago one day to buy some provisions and on returning thought I saw someone working near the northeast corner of the grove. I went home and deposited my cargo (a back load) and although very tired, went out to reconnoitre my premises. To my great surprise I found Wells and Cooley had commenced erecting a cabin on my claim. I went to a thicket close by and cut a hickory gad\* but found I had no power to use it, for I was so mad that it took my strength all away. So I sat down and tried to cool off a little, but my excitement only COOLED from a sort of violent passion to deep and downright indignation. To think that my claim should be invaded, and that too, by the only two white men besides myself then at the grove, made the vessel of my wrath to simmer like a pent sea over a burning volcano. I could sit still no longer. So I got up and advanced towards them, and the nearer I approached the higher rose the temperature of my anger, which, by the time I got to them, was flush up to the boiling point. I said nothing, but pitched into them, *shelalah* in hand, and for about five minutes did pretty good execution. But becoming exhausted and being no longer able to keep them at bay, they grappled with me, threw me on the ground, and after holding me down a short time, they seemed to come to the conclusion that 'discretion was the better part of valor' and let me up, when they ran one way and I the other, no doubt leaving blood enough upon the field of action to induce a stray prairie wolf to stop and take a passing sniff as he went that way. But, sir,

they didn't come again to jump my claim."

Pierce Downer built a log cabin on his land on the site where the subsequent house was built in 1842 and is still standing. He dug two shallow wells, one near the shelter for his cattle and the other near the house.

For over two years Downer lived in his log cabin in solitude, providing food and sustenance



The Downer Well — Elon Downer, Lucy Ann Lindley, and friends

for himself, as he carved a farm out of the wilderness. He was finally joined in October of 1834 by his 22-year-old daughter, Adeline, who came from New York State to keep house for her father, though his wife, Lucy Downer, and the other children remained in New York State. Young Adeline was the first white woman in Downer's Grove.

\*a goad, such as a sharp stick, for prodding cattle



Adeline Downer Smith

That same year a young man, whose name was Gary Smith, also settled in the grove. The young people met, fell in love, and later were married. Gary Smith made a claim, bought out Stephen Downer, and built the first frame house in Downer's Grove for his bride. This house stood for a long time on the northeast corner of Carpenter and Maple Avenue.

The news continued to travel back East about the unbelievable opportunities to settle, and in time buy good farm land from the Government. The northern water route from New England and New York through the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes became the migration route to the promised land.

"The farmers of New England . . . who could see no future for themselves in their native states, began to look to the West for a livelihood . . . Renters from farms in the East began to see that in the space of a few years they could own farms in the West by the investment of no more capital than they paid from year to year for rent, many were more than willing to try the experiment of Western life."

The constant search for a better life had always been a basic character trait of the American people, and migration was accepted as a necessary factor in reaching that goal. The increase of Western migration was affected by a combination of influences. The word of the opportunities had come in several ways. The soldiers of Scott's army had returned home with the stories of available fine farm land. Pamphlets were circulated advertising Illinois farm lands for sale, and glowing letters were received from the new settlers encouraging their relatives and neighbors back home to join them in this land of promise. The way was presented by the opening of the water route from the Northeast which provided the direction of this flood of immigrants to Chicago, the final port of the lake route, a "natural gateway to the prairies." It was this route from New England which in the end gave Eastern, rather than Southern, characteristics to northern Illinois.

In this settlement of northern Illinois, "the prairie man was primarily a pioneer of the agricultural class." Farmers from New England, New York, and Pennsylvania traveled into Illinois by the boatload on the Great Lakes steamships. Others from lower New York State and southern and western Pennsylvania traveled the Ohio route in great covered wagons in the trail to the West.

It is interesting to note how many of these original settlers were men in their fifties, willing to make a "mid-life change" with the hardships and sacrifices it required in order to better their own lot in life and that of their children.

On January 1, 1834, Dr. John Temple established the first stagecoach line which ran west out of Chicago. The stage line obtained the Government contract for carrying the mail. Colonel Warren had carried the mail in a lumber wagon from Chicago to Naperville before the stage line was established. The first stagecoach, which Temple had obtained in New York was an "elegant, thorough-brace post carriage," which had been shipped through the lakes from Buffalo. The first line ran on the "high prairie trail" which ran from Chicago to Lawton's Tavern on the DesPlaines River, to Brush Hill, then passed through Plainfield, Plattville, Lisbon, and Holderman's Grove to Ottawa.

Later in 1834, Temple established stage routes on the other two important westward routes. One was the road which Pierce Downer had traveled, later to be known as Ogden Avenue, which was identical with the Plainfield route to Ottawa as far as Brush Hill. From there it ran west through Downer's Grove to Naperville and thence southwestward through Oswego, Yorkville, and Newark, following the general course of the Fox River until it rejoined the Plainfield road a few miles northeast of Ottawa. The other route was the Chicago to Galena road, which was identical with the Ogden Avenue route to Naperville from whence it went on to Gray's Crossing, a favorable fording place on the Fox River. The road continued on to Dixon on the Rock River, where Mr. Dixon had a ferry and on to Apple River, which was twenty miles southeast of Galena, and finally to Galena, the end of the line!

The traffic on these two important thoroughfares to Naperville made that village an important center of travel, and in 1834 the Pre-emption House, which became one of the noted taverns of the day, was built. The Pre-emption House was a favored place for travelers to stop. During good weather when traveling was possible along the dirt highways from downstate and from the mining country of Galena, oftentimes there were more than fifty prairie schooners stopped for the night. Rarely did the wagon drivers sleep in the inn; usually the sleeping



Pre-emption House, near Naperville  
(Caroline Martin Mitchell Museum collection)

accommodations were taken by the passengers of the stages. The teamsters usually slept in their schooners or wagons, ate the food they had brought along, and turned their horses onto the prairie. They did patronize the tavern for whiskey at 20 cents a gallon, and they had rousing, uproarious times with their campfires glowing through the darkness till early morning light.

Thomas Andrus who lived near Cass\* in Downer's Grove Township was appointed the first postmaster there in 1834 and held the position for 15 years. Edgar Andrus, the fourth child of the Andrus family, was born in 1835, and though his exact birth date is unknown, was said to be the first white birth in the township.\*\*

Frink and Bingham, which later became Frink and Walker, bought Dr. Temple's stagecoach line in 1837 and painted their stagecoaches red with green stripes. This stagecoach line went right past the Andrus house. Thomas Andrus not only took care of the mail which he picked up from the stagecoaches, but he also kept a tavern in his new home and held dances in the dining room!

Taverns sprang up all along the early highways to take care of the weary travelers. Those early inns offered something less than total comfort, and the food left much to be desired.

\*the area which is now Darien

\*\*Eugene Farrar was the first white child born in the town of Downer's Grove on June 24, 1835, and very possibly was born before Edgar Andrus, in which event Eugene Farrar would be the first white baby in Downers Grove Township.

The regular menu of the typical tavern was bread, butter, potatoes, and fried pork.

"According to the rates established by the Cook County officials in 1831, breakfast or supper could be had for 25¢, dinner for 37½¢, and a night's lodging for 12½¢. A horse was fed for 25¢, (and) kept overnight for 50¢. The traveler could refresh himself with a pint of cider or beer for 6¼¢, regale himself on wine, rum or brandy at 37½¢, or settle down to some serious whiskey drinking for 18¾¢."

This author explains that these odd transactions were made possible by the use of currency based on the Mexican 12½¢ piece, which came to be known as a bit. This explains the slang of two bits meaning a quarter, but it still does not explain a price of 6¼¢ or 18¾¢, unless there was also a half a bit for making change for these odd prices!

A traveler in 1835 gave a detailed description of the first tavern southwest of Chicago, undoubtedly Lawton's tavern, near modern Riverside.

"It was a primitive log structure, the public portion of which comprised two rooms. In one of these were numerous guests, several of them ill with fever. Not much could be expected from such surroundings, yet the call to breakfast in the adjoining room disclosed an abundance of food. Of milk there was none, and the butter was of the worst quality. The coffee, however, was excellent, the pork steaks, 'tolerable,' and the bread both corn and wheat, was good. In the center of the table stood a huge stew from which a fragrant incense ascended. Of this all partook liberally, speculating the while as to its component elements. One guessed venison, another turkey, another prairie chicken; at length it was discovered to be stewed rabbit."

In May of 1835 the Dexter Stanley family—Dexter, his wife, Nancy, and their nine chil-



Chicago Historical Society  
Frink & Walker stage leaves terminal, Lake and Dearborn, about 1840

Frink & Walker Stage Coach Line

dren—left New Milford, Pennsylvania, for a new home in the West. This first complete family to settle in Downer's Grove arrived on June 23, 1835, where they found only three log cabins and a population of four. Their descendant, Lucile Bush, relates that the party had traveled in covered wagons, drawn by three teams, "across the southern tier of New York, touching Erie, Pennsylvania, and Sandusky, Ohio. There they embarked for Detroit, thence through southern



Helen Stanley, daughter of Dexter and Nancy Stanley, married T.S. Rogers      John Stanley, son of Dexter Stanley



Emerson Otis Stanley, son of Dexter Stanley

Michigan and northern Indiana to Illinois."

The family spent the summer of 1835 and the winter of 1836 in Downer's Grove in a log cabin on Maple Avenue. In this same rude cabin on the day after their arrival in 1835, their eldest daughter Emaline, the 23-year-old wife of Luther Farrar, delivered a baby boy, Eugene

Farrar, the first white child born in Downer's Grove. Dexter bought a large acreage which is now the four corners at Belmont Road and Maple Avenue. On the northeast corner he built their first home, a log cabin with a lean-to which later served as a schoolroom in which his daughter Nancy became the teacher. Sadly, Luther Farrar lived but a scant year, and his burial was the first grave in the family cemetery on the Stanley land, which subsequently was donated to the community as the Oak Hill Cemetery.

In 1835 there were only three log cabins in the Grove, Pierce Downer's, another near Ogden Avenue, and this cabin into which the Stanley family moved. The arrival of the Stanley family swelled the population considerably, but they were to be joined almost immediately by a number of other settling families seeking farm land and the good life.

The movement westward was in full swing, and that same year brought several other settlers to the Grove. Edwin Bush arrived in 1835, claiming 122 acres in the general area of the present Belmont Station. Some three years later he married young Nancy Stanley.

Several members of the Peet family had migrated to the Lisle Township area on the lower East DuPage River in the early 1830's. Lester Peet had arrived in 1831. In 1831, Lucy Peet, still in Vermont, wrote to another sister of Lester's trip to the West.

"Simeon wrote that they was a few hundred miles from home and that they had traveled a hundred of it on foot and the houses in some parts of the state of Michigan were from 15 to 31 miles apart and those were little log huts not better than our barn and every house a tavern. They went through prairies that were 20 miles in length with not a tree or a shrub standing. The grass was as high as a man's head with a large stalk and its head resembles our eyehead. They went Indian trail in a foot path. When they were in Lake Erie, they had a high sea and Lester (Peet), Simeon wrote us, was a sick a man as he ever saw, but now his health was much better than it had been for years. His cheeks were red and he was very hearty to eat. They were in, when he wrote, a place called Chicago, near Lake Michigan. You can find it by looking on the map. I feel sometimes as though I should never see him again—but still if we live I hope that we shall but he is a great ways from home among strangers and among strange people."

Lester's sister Eunice Peet came in 1833 to keep house for him. She and their sister Sarah had come together from New York along with several others. They had taken that lengthy

journey by canal boat from Lake Champlain to the Hudson River, another boat from Troy to Buffalo, by lake steamer from Buffalo to Detroit, by land to Niles, Michigan, and then by rowboat on the St. Joe River to the lake where they took the schooner to a point within a mile of Chicago, and then by "lighter" to the Fort. Finally then they went by team again to the DuPage River.

After a few years Lester moved to the Downers Grove area, and a short time later Eunice Peet became the wife of Daniel Narramore, who had arrived in the Grove in 1835. Narramore took up a government claim and built a log house for his bride.

On January 6, 1834, Eunice Peet had written a letter to John Adams Richards asking if he knew where her sister Lucy was and to tell her to write. Eunice encouraged her future brother-in-law, "we have some hope of your coming to Illinois, as there is a great plenty here . . . I do hope you will come in the spring." She speaks well of the climate,

"The weather has been very pleasant this fall and winter. December was as warm and pleasant as October generally is in the East. We have had no

snow till a week since, have about six inches since then. The weather has been cold but pleasant but probably will not last long."

On January 31st she continued her letter, saying,

"The reason why I have delayed it till the present time is on account of mail having taken another route for a few weeks past but as I have heard that it will run this way again next week, I am in hopes that I shall have an opportunity of sending this letter to Vermont. Chicago is a very growing place, the population increases beyond all calculations."

And she predicted, "In a few years it will be without doubt one of the first places in the western world."

This letter from Eunice to John Adams Richards, Enosburg, Franklin County, Vermont, evidently convinced him of the merits of "one of the first places in the western world," for Richards migrated to DuPage County shortly thereafter.

Lucy also migrated to that faraway place among the "strange people" near the town called Chicago on Lake Michigan. She became the wife of John Adams Richards, and their first son was born here in 1836.

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas John Adams Richards, of DuPage County, Illinois, has deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States, a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Chicago, it appears that full payment has been made by the said John Adams Richards, to the provisions of the act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An Act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," for the South East Quarter of the South East Quarter of Section Twenty three, in Township thirty Eight North, of Range Ten East of the third Principal Meridian, in the District of Lands subject to Sale at Chicago, Illinois, containing Forty Acres;

according to the official plat of the survey of the said Lands returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General, which said tract has been purchased by the said John Adams Richards.

NOW KNOW YE, That the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the several acts of Congress, in such case made and provided, HAVE GIVEN AND GRANTED, and by these presents DO GIVE AND GRANT, unto the said John Adams Richards, and to his heirs, the said tract above described: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the same, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances of whatsoever nature hereunto belonging, unto the said John Adams Richards, and to his heirs and assigns forever.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, James K. Polk

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these letters to be made PATENT, and the SEAL of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the first day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty five and of the INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES the sixty seventh.

By the President: James K. Polk



By N. F. Laughlin, RECORDER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE.

Preemption Certificate — John Adams Richards

In 1835 Mr. Wells sold his claim to Israel P. Blodgett and left the area. Blodgett built a log cabin\* and a blacksmith shop on the old high road to Galesburg which is now known as Maple Avenue. Though Israel Blodgett was a new settler in this grove, he was a veteran pioneer of the Illinois prairie, having come to Lisle Township in 1830.

As a sixteen-year-old boy, Israel Blodgett had been apprenticed to an Israel Scott of Hadley, Massachusetts, to learn the blacksmith trade. After completing his apprenticeship, Blodgett worked at the United States Armory at Springfield, Massachusetts. He was transferred a few years later to a new armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, where he became foreman of the welding room. One of the workers under his supervision was a young mulatto, a very intelligent, capable workman. After working together for a few months, the young man told Blodgett that he was a slave and that his owner hired him to the Superintendent of the Armory for one hundred and fifty dollars per year, all of which the owner took with the exception of a few dollars for clothing. The young man asked Blodgett how he could get to Canada where escaped slaves could not be returned to this country. Blodgett told him to follow the North Star and that sooner or later he would reach Canada. He cautioned him to travel at night and along unfrequented roads if he wished to gain his freedom.

Shortly after, the young man was missing, and Blodgett was abruptly discharged from the U.S. Armory at Harper's Ferry. This incident had a strong influence on Blodgett's life.

Blodgett returned to Massachusetts, married Avis Dodge, and continued in the ironworking trade until 1830 when he was "smitten with the western fever." He and a number of friends who were similarly disposed planned the Hampshire Colony, with plans to settle some place in Illinois. Blodgett and two other men were selected to go out to Illinois in the fall of 1830 to select a place for the location of the colony. A man named Jones started early and went through the lakes to Chicago, from there to the headwaters of the Illinois River and followed the river to meet Blodgett and a Mr. Spears, who were traveling the National Road through central Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.

\* (on the present site of the Downers Grove Historical Museum—831 Maple Avenue)

Spears, however, turned back before they reached the Illinois border, and Blodgett continued on to Peoria where he expected to meet Jones. Although Jones had not yet arrived, Blodgett was forced to remain in Peoria for the winter because of an unprecedented snowstorm, which left the country covered with five to six feet of snow.

In April when the thaws finally came, Blodgett made his way northward. He found Jones who had settled in at Bureau Creek, a little west of LaSalle, where he proposed to stay. Though he could not persuade Jones to make the trip with him, Israel Blodgett traveled on because he felt that the nearer to Chicago the colony could find good land, the better the location would be.

Alone, he explored the valleys of the Fox and DuPage rivers and finally settled on the East Branch of the DuPage, about five miles south of the place where the town of Naperville now stands. Blodgett made a claim and began to build a house in anticipation of his family joining him.

In the spring of 1831, his wife, Avis Dodge Blodgett, and their children came to join him. They had traveled by wagon from Amherst, Massachusetts, to Albany, New York, two weeks by canal boat from Albany to Buffalo, and then four days by steamer to Detroit. As no schooner would leave Detroit that spring, they spent four or five days getting eight teams for the party, and then three more weeks of travel to reach Chicago. "The roads were in the crudest shape; and while the smaller streams were bridged, or partly bridged, by corduroy and logs, they had to ferry across the larger rivers."

The Blodgett family arrived in the primitive village of Chicago where Israel Blodgett was to meet them. While they waited for Mr. Blodgett to come, they were the guests of Mrs. McKee. To celebrate the event Mrs. McKee gave a tea party in honor of Mrs. Blodgett and invited every white woman in the settlement. With the hostess and Mrs. Blodgett there were eight ladies!

The Blodgett family traveled the high prairie road to finally reach their home in the wilderness which Israel had readied for their arrival. They had lived in their log cabin only a year or so when the countryside was embroiled with the warring Indian tribes led by Black Hawk.

Naper's Settlement was warned of the imminent danger by Aptaksic, or Half Day, chief of one of the bands of Potawatomi, and the Blod-



getts fled along with the other settlers from Naperville to the safety of Fort Dearborn. It is said that Aptaksic rode with the white families to provide safe passage and left them only when they were within sight of Fort Dearborn.

In July, the settlers returned to their homes with the security that General Scott and the main army were between them and the warring Indians. By September, with the defeat of the Indians at the Battle of Bad Axe, the settlers were confident that the Indian uprising was at an end. The pioneers set about to build their homes and farm their land. Blodgett helped to build a sawmill which was completed and operating by the spring of 1833. He also built a blacksmith shop that fall and resumed his trade as a blacksmith. During the summer of 1834 about 80 acres of prairie sod on the Blodgett farm were turned and sown in winter wheat. Despite a killing frost Blodgett had a good harvest of wheat to sell to the incoming settling farmers who needed seed that fall.

Though Blodgett was very successful in Naper's Settlement, for reasons which are unknown he sold his farm at the fork of the



Israel Blodgett

Avis Dodge Blodgett

DuPage River in the fall of 1835 and bought the land from Wells in the southeast section of Downer's Grove and moved in January or February of 1836.

Blodgett bought a large herd of cows and young cattle since there was a wide range for cattle to the south and east. His farming for several years consisted more in cattle raising than in grain growing. As Morris Birkbeck had advised, grazing cattle was the first, most effi-

cient step in reducing prairie into the condition of useful grassland.

Blodgett worked also as a blacksmith and by his own ingenuity made the second step in cultivating the land considerably more workable by the invention of a self-scouring plow. The heavy prairie sod with its thick, tangled roots and



Aziel Blodgett

Israel Blodgett, Jr.

moist consistency was almost impossible to cultivate with the regular plows of the day. Blodgett developed a self-scouring, or self-cleaning, plow which was invaluable in cutting the virgin prairie sod, which did not have enough grit or sand in the soil to enable it to scour the share.

Some said that, though Israel Blodgett did not patent his plow, it was indeed the first to be manufactured. Blodgett's sons, however, said there were other blacksmiths who were making this same kind of plow at the same time, and made no claim that Israel's self-scouring plow was the first. Be that as it may, Blodgett's plows were a great benefit to the farmers in Downer's Grove in the cultivation of their lands.

The cabins of the settlers were isolated in the fringes of the grove and the wide-stretching prairie. The dark nights were soundless except for the occasional lowing of the cattle and the howling of the coyotes. Israel Blodgett, Jr., remembered how "the coyotes used to howl, but except that they killed some cattle, they did not bother us much." He also said, "There was plenty of deer and prairie chickens in those days, but no wild turkeys as there was in other parts of the state."

Though there were few white settlers in the grove, Israel Blodgett, Jr., wrote that there were

many Indians and they would come to Israel Blodgett's blacksmith shop to have their guns repaired.

Blodgett's wood lot was in that part of the grove which was well stocked with hard maple trees, and for years the Potawatomes of Half Day's band were accustomed to come every spring to make maple syrup. "That was the only kind of sugar we could get for several years after we came here," recalled Israel, Jr.

He continued, saying that many of the Indians were very kind and told the story of his brother Henry who was bitten by a rattlesnake as the boys were cutting corn. Israel Jr. quickly dug up some rattlesnake weed.

"As we came to the house a company of Indians were riding past. A squaw got off her horse and asked what I was going to do with (the weed). She snatched it out of my hands and threw it away, grunting 'no good'. Then she took my hoe and ran off and dug up another kind of weed. She bound a leaf of (the weed) about Henry's leg above the swelling and while the foot and leg swelled up terribly, the swelling did not go above that leaf. She made a poultice out of another kind of weed and some tea, and he got well."

One Sunday the Blodgetts, on returning from church services in the cabin of a neighbor on the north side, were surprised to find a great number of Indians collected around their house.

The Indians, were preparing for a pow-pow, and at such times they customarily selected someone to take charge of all their weapons, outside parties if they could trust them, otherwise one of their own number. This custodian was empowered to use extreme measures to protect the weapons while the Indians were dancing and under the influence of the firewater.

To the great consternation of Avis Blodgett, she was selected to be this custodian. She was terrorized at the thought, but she had little choice. The chief insisted that she had the right to do whatever she thought best while they were in the state of frenzy and that the Indians had perfect confidence in her wisdom.

It is not written where her husband, Israel Blodgett, was during this trying time. The story does not mention him. Perhaps he was away, or possibly he was there assisting his wife. In any event, Avis kept her family and all the weapons in one room, while she stood guard for thirty hours!

After the pow-pow was over, and the Indians were sober, the chief thanked her and called her

"the brave little white squaw". Avis Blodgett said that this was the most terrifying experience she ever had.

This was a most unusual event as the Indians had come frequently, and Avis Blodgett had never been afraid. The Indians often came in groups asking for food. Sometimes the Blodgett larder was nearly empty, but Mrs. Blodgett never refused them, knowing it was greater security for her family to give them food. Waubonsee, Shabbona, and Aptaksic were frequent visitors at their home for years after the Blodgetts moved to the Grove.

After the settlers had claimed all the grove, the Indians were pushed out and had to go as far as the Fox River to find a sugar camp. Though this was a grievance the Indians held against the settlers, they accepted the inevitable and remained friendly in spite of it.

After four long years of separation, in 1836 Pierce Downer's wife, Lucy Ellis Downer, and their young son Elon joined Pierce Downer in his log cabin on his farm of 160 acres.

The year of 1836 was a favored one for the settlers in Downers Grove. This was partly due to the publicity given the neighborhood by the building of the Illinois-Michigan Canal which forms the southern boundary of the township, partly due to the opening of land to settlers by the withdrawal of the Indians, but due, also, to the enthusiastic letters from the settlers to their friends and relatives back home.

Horace Dodge, the brother of Avis Dodge Blodgett, and his family had come in the spring of the year 1836. Also that year Reverend Eliphalet Strong and his wife, who was a sister of Horace and Avis, arrived from the East. The Dodges and the Strongs bought farms on the West Branch of the DuPage about three miles from the Blodgetts. Avis Blodgett wept with joy at having some of her family close by again.

It is said that Horace Aldrich and his family came to this area from Jefferson County, New York, as a result of Pierce Downer's letters telling them of the available land and rich opportunities. Downer selected a claim of timber and prairie for Horace, and it was this land that Aldrich claimed and where he built his log cabin in 1836. A curious twist to this story came somewhat later.

Other settlers in 1836 included Samuel Curtiss and his sons Henry, Roswell, and Charles,

whose claim included the business section of today's Downer's Grove; Jonas Russell Adams, a first cousin of John Quincy Adams, who bought his claim on Hobson Road with the scrip paid him as a soldier in the War of 1812; also, Walter Blanchard, Robert Dixon, Henry Puffer, Alexander French Foster, Asa and Silas Carpenter, and Levi Aldrich.

Horace Dodge and his wife settled on land north of Downer's Grove in the midst of the wild, raw prairie and started the home where they reared ten children. Here they experienced all the hardships which were the lot of the early pioneers, milling and marketing with ox teams and wagons and plowing with the old cast iron plow which they had brought with them from New York. Dodge hauled logs to Warrenville on one of these wagons to have the lumber cut with which he constructed their first house.

Horace Dodge planted an orchard from apple seeds he had brought with him and planted around the house the many shrubs which he had brought from New York. Their new home was near an old Indian campground, and the Indians often camped nearby. On one occasion Mrs. Dodge was alone with her three small children when one of the little boys ran to her calling that a large "crowd" of people was coming! When she looked at the group, she recognized that they were Indians from the nearby campground. In haste, she gathered up her babies and left the house untended, to run to a neighbor's some distance to the south. The Indians did not enter the house but camped near it for several days without harm to anything or anybody.

Though a Congregational Society had been organized in Naperville in 1833, and some of its 19 members had come from Downer's Grove, the first religious services in the neighborhood were held in the home of Horace Dodge. It was probably here that Avis Dodge Blodgett and her family had attended church services when they returned home to the Indian pow-wow. Methodist circuit riders, Reverend Stephen Beggs and Reverend Gaddis often preached here to congregations made up of the families of the surrounding settlers.

Stephen Beggs, the son of a Revolutionary War soldier, was 6 feet tall, weighed 200 pounds, and had the reputation of being the strongest man in DuPage. He also had the strongest voice! Years later Israel Blodgett Jr. wrote that Elder

Beggs "would preach so loud that we could hear him (as) great a distance as from the depot to my house, better than if we were real close. He just yelled from the start."

The Dodge's cabin in Downer's Grove was but one preaching stop on Reverend Stephen Beggs' circuit of all the settlements from twelve miles south of Ottawa up to Oswego, Naperville, Plainfield, Yankee Settlement (four miles east of Lockport), Hickory Creek, Jackson's Grove, and Reed's Grove, all small congregations reached by long, slow rides over Indian trails or over the trackless prairie.

Stephen Beggs described one warm, dry windy day as he was making his circuit. He was riding on horseback through prairie grass as high as his head and so thick that he rode through it with the utmost difficulty. Suddenly he heard a roar as if there were a mighty storm rushing over the plains.

Looking west toward the timber, he saw "the flickering blaze kindled into a fierce torrent of flames which curled up and leaped along with resistless force. The air was filled with clouds of crimson smoke, while the crashing sounds were almost deafening. Danger and death filled the air."

Reverend Beggs described the devouring march of the fire engulfing a log cabin in its path:

"The family had thrown all the household goods into one pile, covered them as best they could, closing the door and window. The people, crouching in fear within the house, were almost overcome with heat and smoke as the raging fire went racing around the house, and having consumed the prairie swept on. Parents and children flung open the door, as the fire began to blaze up through the cracks in the floor. They gathered their belongings as they could and threw them out onto the scorched earth around the cabin, and having a well of water were able to save most of their household goods, but the house was soon in ashes."

The pioneer families lived in awe and fear of the terrible devastation of the roaring prairie fires.

In 1836 there were four taverns in Downer's Grove township. Thomas Andrus had opened a tavern in his home in Cass. Samuel Curtiss kept a tavern on Maple Avenue. Levi Aldrich opened his tavern in what is now Memorial Park on Maple Avenue, and Horace Aldrich, who was not related to Levi, built a tavern on present-day Ogden Avenue.

Horace Aldrich built his tavern of logs 60 by 40 feet with doors on the north and south so that the oxen could drag in the logs for the fireplace.

Though not called a tavern, the cabin of nearly every settler was an inn for a traveler in need of a place to lay his head. Hospitality was warm, and the traveler was always made welcome. Israel Blodgett Jr. recalled,

“Wherever a traveler saw a light it was home to him. The best any of us had to eat was none too good, and the traveler was welcome to stay as long as he liked. Father used to have us put a lighted candle in the east window every night, so that anyone who was lost could find his way to our home.”

The settlement grew rapidly, extending the claims through the entire Grove. The forest land was most sought after, since every settler needed wood for fences and fuel and logs for houses. Because the wooded land was not as plentiful as



Horace Aldrich

the wide prairie, conflicts began to arise about the availability of timber.

Soon after Horace Aldrich took up his claim and built his house and tavern, he discovered that Asa Carpenter was cutting timber from his stand of trees for fencing. Some of Aldrich's neighbors joined him in trying to persuade Carpenter that he had no right to cut wood from another man's land.

Asa Carpenter stood firm in his right to take the wood he needed for his fencing. The neighbors, all of whom were concerned about the basic principle of property rights, tried to explain to Mr. Carpenter that he could not cut the wood from another man's property.

Carpenter “swore he would persist in doing so, for he had as good a right there as any other man.” The other settlers took him to task for his actions and finally threatened to force him off the land. This only made the old man more stubborn and recalcitrant.

The men of the neighborhood then decided to take the matter of squatter sovereignty into their own hands. At a prearranged time they met on Aldrich's land where they found Carpenter getting out the rails. Calmly, one man requested him to leave the claim. Carpenter ignored the request and went on with his woodcutting. Again Carpenter was asked to stop his work and leave Aldrich's land. Carpenter retorted in no uncertain terms that he would not!

With this, one of the men cut a long hickory gad, and went after Carpenter with it. After Carpenter had taken a dozen blows or so to his back and legs, he sought a respite from the fight so that he might argue the question further.

This request was granted, and the entire group got into a hot argument which reached no solution. And again the hickory gad came into play! Finally Carpenter conceded his loss and left the crowd, but totally unconvinced of the justice of the entire affair.

Oddly enough, Horace Aldrich also had a land dispute with Pierce Downer who had originally staked off his claim. Downer and Aldrich both claimed a particular quarter section. In a hearing before the Receiver of the Land Office in Chicago the disputed section was awarded to Horace Aldrich though he did not receive the patents to the land until the middle 1840's.

Perhaps an even more curious twist to the story



Samuel Curtiss

is that Pierce Downer and Horace Aldrich lived as close friends and neighbors for many years afterwards.

When Samuel Curtiss and his family arrived in the Grove from Vermont, they occupied the cabin in which the Dexter Stanley family had lived the previous year. Curtiss bought a part of Israel Blodgett's claim for one thousand dollars cash. He built a tavern and stables for the accommodation of travelers, mostly farmers, who were taking their produce to and purchases from Chicago. The house was on the north side of Maple, and the barn was across the street. Here for twelve years he kept a tavern for people going through.

From early morning until dark the early settlers toiled at the tasks and chores which were necessary for building a home, establishing their farms, and providing the necessities for survival. The first work was that of building a cabin to provide shelter from the elements and a hearth for cooking and warmth.

The log cabins were built of logs fitted as closely together as possible and plastered over with mud. The windows were placed high in the wall and covered with greased paper or hung with gunny sacks. Sometimes in the winter they were simply boarded over. The stone fireplace was used for both cooking and heating. In sum-



Log Cabin  
(sketch by Sue Vineyard)

mer oftentimes the cooking was done out-of-doors to keep the heat out of the house.

The log cabin was built, along with sowing the seed for crops, and tending their farm animals. The animals roamed the range, but they needed to be marked for identification in case they

roamed too far from home. Oftentimes the settler would feed some grain or scraps to the cattle and hogs so they would be attached to the home of their owner. Husbands and wives worked together from daybreak until as late as their strength endured, for the chores were endless.

As the pioneer man broke the prairie sod with his plow, his wife followed, dropping in the seed. Then as he was felling trees for their cabin and fences, she dug up a patch of soil for her kitchen garden.

Wells had to be dug and water carried for the needs of the family and their stock. If they were fortunate, the well was close to the house; if not, the carrying of water became a heavy, constant chore.

Though the pioneers hunted and trapped wild game, in the main they were farmers and became hunters only when it was necessary for food. As a Mr. Flint said in his advice to the settlers, "Let (your) rifle rust, and let the game, unless it come into the field, live on." The advice to the settlers included the necessity of having a good medical manual and a supply of medicines to be taken sparingly. Cora Blodgett wrote that "The most dreadful malarial fevers prevailed, so that it was fight for life until 1850." Flint also said the pioneer should have a Bible for a "constant counsel" and a few good books for instruction and amusement. It was said that Pierce Downer had an excellent collection of books.

The pioneer wife worked as helpmate to her husband in the work of survival on the prairie. She spun the yarn and wove the cloth which she made into clothes for the entire family. She knit the stockings from her own yarn. She made bed ticking with corn husks and bound up straw for brooms. If the pioneer woman was fortunate enough to have a Dutch oven, she would build a fire which would heat the bricks so hot that she could first bake her bread and then her pies and cakes. Without a Dutch oven, she had to bend almost double to tend her corn cakes in a covered oven set on the wood coals in the homemade fireplace. The fire was started by flint or steel; or if these were not available, the settler or his wife carried an iron pot to the nearest neighbor to borrow some burning embers. Matches were not patented until 1836, and then were very scarce.

At harvest time she helped gather in the grain, and her husband would haul it to the mill if he could. If not, she ground much of the meal by

hand for their bread and corn cakes.

At butchering time she made the sausage and rendered the lard. She soaked the ham and bacon in brine and then tended the fires as she hung them to smoke. From the left-overs she made scrapple and saved the bits for soap which she made in a huge kettle out-of-doors. She also made all the candles.

The settler's wife dried corn and fruit, and in her spare moments she hunted in the woods for berries; and these too she dried for winter pies and sauces. She hunted wild honey and made sugar from the maple syrup. All of her own vinegar was made from apple parings. She planted a few hop vines in order to make yeast, which she needed for her baking.

As difficult as the life of the settlers was, there was abundant food for the taking. There were wild berries, plums, grapes, cherries, and wild honey. The woods had hazel, hickory, black walnut, and sugar maple trees. There were prairie chickens in large numbers in the tall grass. Their eggs provided amply for the settlers, and the woods and prairies were filled with game.

The settlers in Downer's Grove soon found that the prairie land was much more fertile than the woodlands. However the virgin prairie sod was so tough and matted that it was almost impossible to plow. Israel Blodgett's self-cleaning plows were invaluable in turning the prairie sod.

"Pioneer farmers produced corn, wheat, rye, oats and potatoes, as well as some barley, buckwheat and garden vegetables." Corn was a favored crop. It constituted a mainstay in the diet of the Midwestern pioneers and was fed to the stock during the winter. Hog-raising was a natural consequence of the corn crop, and after the first few years the staple meat of the frontier settler was pork.

Livestock roamed the prairie and woods. Cattle grazed for miles in the open prairie and were identified by the bells on their necks. Farmers had to fence in their crops to keep the animals out.

In spite of the hardships of the settlers in building their homes and establishing their farms, they found simple pleasures with their friends and neighbors. On Sundays, in good weather, they held Bible classes and religious services and visited or entertained their neighbors. The early pioneers had spelling matches,

singing school, debates, corn-huskings, apple-parings, and barn-raising. When the work was done, they danced, sang, and told stories. The wedding of two young people provided great merriment. The men would sometimes work together to build a log cabin for the young couple while the women made quilts and food.

One of the first concerns of the Yankee settlers was education for their children. It is written that the first school in the area was the lean-to attached to the Dexter Stanley house in 1835 or '36, and likewise written that the lean-to attached to the Israel Blodgett house was the first schoolroom. Young Mary Blodgett, though she was only 12 years old at the time, since she was able to read was the teacher in the Blodgett school and was later replaced by Hiram Stillson (or Willson). Nancy Stanley was the first teacher in the Stanley school.

Emerson Stanley, son of Dexter, wrote,

"There was a subscription school held (in the lean-to schoolroom), and each pioneer paid whatever he could afford. One winter the school was in session only three weeks, as money was scarce."



Mary Blodgett

More settlers arrived in 1837 and '38: Edward Paige and his son Gardiner, J.W. Waller, Seva Dodge, John Wallace, Benjamin Prentiss, and Samuel Thatcher. Elisha and William Smart settled in the Cass area that year.

In the summer of 1838 Israel Blodgett and Samuel Curtiss decided to improve the trail which ran between Chicago and the settlement on the DuPage River (now Maple Avenue) so that travelers would be more apt to travel through this community on their way to and from Chicago, for this rough trail intercepted the trail

to Naperville. The original trail was farther south than present Maple Avenue, running approximately where Randall Street is now located.

Blodgett and Curtiss relaid the street in its present location; and hitching six yoke of oxen to a heavy oak log which they laboriously dragged back and forth for over two miles, they built the roadbed of what is now Maple Avenue. The men and animals worked long and hard to beat out a road from the prairie turf. The trail formed a roadway which ran between the Blodgett and Curtiss properties.

When the roadbed was completed, Blodgett and Curtiss surveyed straight lines and set markers at equal distances to set trees to line the roadway. Seva Dodge helped the two men with the work of digging up carefully-selected, straight young maple trees from the neighboring groves, and then the three men dug holes and set the trees on either side of the roadway.

Avis Blodgett admired the smooth roadway with its border of fine straight maple trees and asked if some trees could be planted in their yard to provide shade for their house. And so, Israel Blodgett set a row of fine maple trees in a straight line through his property due east and west by the compass, and some of these maple trees are still standing!

Mrs. Callie Bush wrote that for a good many years Maple Avenue was the only street in town. At the time of Curtiss and Blodgett's work on Maple, there were only four or five houses: the Curtiss house on the north side of the street and Blodgett's on the south side, Gary Smith's frame house at the corner of Maple and present-day Carpenter, Seva Dodge's place, and Levi Aldrich's tavern just west of the present-day Dunham Road on Maple.

And the settlers continued to come, brothers and brothers-in-law, sisters, sons and daughters, and old neighbors from the East, all encouraged by the good news of the original settlers.

DuPage County was organized in 1839, and the county seat was located at Naperville. Cook County, which had included all of northeast Illinois, had been organized in 1831 by the Illinois General Assembly, and in 1836 McHenry, Lake, and Will Counties were formed out of Cook County. On February 9, 1839, the law organizing DuPage County out of the western part of Cook County was approved. The

boundaries of the county, as specified in the first section of the act, included not only the present limits, but the north half of two Will County Townships. The same section contained a proviso as follows:

"That no part of the county above described, now forming a part of Will County, shall be included within the said county of DuPage, unless the inhabitants now residing in said part of Will County shall, by a vote to be given them at the next August election, decide, by a majority of legal voters, that they prefer to have the said county of DuPage."

At the next election the residents of the two half townships in Will County voted on the proposition to be included in the newly formed DuPage County (a nay vote indicating the desire to remain in Will County). The decision was left to the discretion of these inhabitants. There was no pressure brought to bear for either result. The proposition was defeated by ONE vote, which set the present boundary of DuPage and Will Counties.

When the election was held for the county officers of the new county of DuPage, Horace Aldrich was named an election judge and his cabin a polling place.

The County took its name from the DuPage River, which in turn had been named for an old Frenchman, whose station was at the fork of the river. It is believed that DuPage settled there just prior to 1780.

In 1839, the same year that the County was formed, Reverend Orange Lyman came with his sons Henry and Thomas and bought his claim which lay on both sides of Ogden Avenue and both sides of Highland. Henry Schumpp and Emerson Gleason as well as Henry Carpenter also arrived that year. In 1840 Emanuel Daily settled in Cass, and the following year Eldred Thatcher followed his brother Samuel and Edward Mertz arrived.

Henry Carpenter, according to his diary, first traveled to Illinois in May, 1839. Walter Blanchard, who was the brother of Henry Carpenter's wife Martha, had previously purchased 200 acres of land for a farm at Downer's Grove, and Henry Carpenter bought half of the land.

Carpenter said that he started for Illinois with a team of horses,

"with a few traps for sale, had some experience in the rough and tumble of life. In that trip, came most of the way across the country, bad roads, sparse settle-

ments and rough fare. Made the journey anything but pleasant. Downer's Grove at that time (where the village proper is at present located) contained six families, Blodgetts, Curtiss's, Blanchards, Smiths, Pages, and Wallaces. I sold my team and traps and started for home."

Evidently this was a trial run, and Carpenter made his decision to return to Downer's Grove. He then tells how he prepared to move permanently to Illinois in the spring of 1840.

"I sold my property, settled my business and made ready to start about May 1, 1840 for the great west, had a good team, wagon placed on springs with no load except clothing and provisions. We started the 3rd of May, 1840, self, wife, Walter and the old watch dog Bill."

Carpenter faced the move to the new West with great optimism, but after his arrival he recorded dismally, "I had no experience, was not physically fixed to work in the fields, and made poor progress toward getting a living." He said that his wife had a loving heart and could overlook and excuse many things that annoyed him, and he wrote that, "I was discontent and unhappy." Carpenter concluded his farming with, "Having some means I bought a lot on the street and built a small house in town." This



First Downers Grove Post Office. Henry Carpenter, Postmaster. Located at Lane Place and Maple. 1840's. Home and General Store of the Carpenters.

house still stands on Maple Avenue at Lane Place.

Honesty, integrity, and the courage to take a stand were strong in these stalwart pioneers. A story was told of Israel Blodgett's honesty when he sent one of his sons to Chicago on foot in a freezing rain on a day in 1842 to repay a debt of \$17.00. "Father told me that he had promised to pay this money that week." Israel Jr., who was 17 years old, volunteered to go. He started out about eight o'clock in the morning, and did not get to

Chicago until after dark. He did not remember the time of year, so he didn't know exactly how late it was, but he remembered well that it was dark when he got there. The son said, "I had a hard time, for I would break through the ice with almost every step, and had to pull my feet out from the holes in the ice." A long walk from Downer's Grove to Chicago to pay a debt!

In 1838 Henry Blodgett, the eldest son of Israel Blodgett, was sent back East to go to college because his health would not permit him the physical strength to become a farmer or a blacksmith. That year Grandfather Zebulon Dodge visited his family in Downer's Grove, and when he returned he took Henry with him to attend Amherst College. Henry studied at Amherst only a little over a year and had to return home because of the cost. In the fall of 1842 he became a law student in Chicago, reading law in the office of a lawyer. At that time there were twelve lawyers in the city of Chicago and two other law students in addition to Henry!

Henry Blodgett became a distinguished attorney and judge. In his autobiography Henry described the fine qualities of his mother and father, but the words would just as surely describe most of the pioneers who settled this community. He wrote that his father was

"a plain, unassuming man—a mechanic, and he was a good mechanic! He had only a common school education . . . but he was a reader of good books. He was an excellent workman, and above all, an honest man. Plain and unpretentious, he had the courage of his convictions on all questions of public interest."

In addition, Israel Blodgett had one strong conviction, which was not necessarily shared by the other early settlers in the Grove. "He was one of the early anti-slavery men, and courageous in the assertion of the sin of slavery." This conviction he had held since his early days at Harper's Ferry.

Avis Dodge Blodgett shared these strong views of her husband. Henry recounted an incident shortly after their arrival in Illinois when a man on horseback, leading two Negroes, rode up to the Blodgett cabin. Avis saw that the hands of the Negroes were tied by a rope which was fastened to the pommel of the saddle. The man asked if he could have a drink of water.

"Mrs. Blodgett took a tin pail and cup and went to the spring, which was not more than five or six rods from the house, filled the pail from the spring and gave the Negroes a drink of the fresh clear water. The man cursed her and asked her why in the devil



she was giving water to the Negroes! He said that he had asked for water for himself not them."

Mrs. Blodgett answered calmly that the spring was there and that he was welcome to help himself. Since these men could not help themselves, she was giving the water to them and not to him.

Henry wrote that Avis Dodge Blodgett was a woman of remarkable courage. Indeed she was as were all the other pioneer women who had left their homes and families in the East to travel to the unknown wilds of the West. Many of these frontier women brought several small children with them as they traveled with the many hardships of sailing the lakes, traveling in great wagons or bouncing stagecoaches over rough primitive roads. Many of the younger women were to deliver their first babies in a primitive log cabin, as did Emaline Stanley Farrar soon after her arrival.

Henry said that his mother

"was a remarkable woman, a great reader, and one who appropriated what she read to aid in her duties as wife and mother. She was an affectionate mother who took pride in shaping the minds of her children to fit them for the duties of life."

He told of her journey to the prairies of Illinois and how "when all the trials of the journey were at an end, she moved into a log house which she made very comfortable and homelike."

In the midst of these new surroundings and inconveniences the pioneer woman found time to teach her young children, "and with all, no sick neighbor was ever neglected or went without



Henry Blodgett, son of Israel

care, and no stranger was ever denied food or lodging."

The settlement was sparsely populated, but each year more hardy pioneers came to settle.

The year 1842 brought Henry Faul, Elijah Root, Henry Sucher, Chauncey Harmon, William Heartt, Aaron Farr, and Oliver Kenyon. Martin Root and Edward Goodenough arrived in 1843.

In 1844 Joseph Ives Rogers arrived with his wife and three sons, Theodore S. Rogers, J. Warren Rogers, and Frank Rogers. The Rogers brought household goods and provisions with them on that long trip. They came by boat on the St. Lawrence River to Rochester, New York, then by packet to Buffalo, thence to Chicago on the old sidewheel steamboat "Missouri". They landed at Chicago May 1, 1844, and immediately made their way by teams to the home of Horace Aldrich and his wife who was one of Joseph Rogers' sisters. They slept their first night in DuPage County at Aldrich's log tavern.

It is said that among the possessions Rogers brought was a "cherished barrel of flour." In 1846 he built a log house and stored the flour in the attic. The story was told that an ill-fated wind of cyclonic proportions came roaring across the prairie and swept the attic right off the cabin, taking the barrel of flour in its wake!

This may have been the same storm, or perhaps it was an earlier Midwestern storm, which took off the upper story of the house of Horace Dodge. The Dodge's baby daughter, who was asleep in an upper room, was carried for about 100 feet (together with the feather bed on which she was sleeping) and deposited in a pig pen. The baby was unhurt, but it certainly was a rude awakening!

In 1844 the settlement in the Grove gained N.A. Belden, the blacksmith who established his shop on Maple Avenue. Belden was driving through the village on his way to Cherry Valley where he had friends, when he met some of the men of the Grove who persuaded him to stop here as they needed a blacksmith. The first horse he shod was for Pierce Downer, who had said, "I don't suppose you can shoe a horse, but if you will nail it so it will stay on until I can get him up to Babcock's Grove, it will do." Belden shod the horse so well that Downer came to him for work ever after

In the middle 1840's a school house was built near the residence of F.M. Woods. Mrs. Emma Miller, one of the pupils, wrote:

"School was taught in a little unpainted one story building set in a clump of forest trees facing north. The door opened toward Maple Avenue, then called Chicago Road. There were two windows on the east,

two on the west and one on the south opposite the door. The teacher's desk and chair stood near the door. A small entry on the west of the entrance to the main room furnished a place for the children to hang their wraps and dinner pails.

"The small building was heated by a cast iron stove. When the stove was too full of ashes the teacher and some of the boys would take it outside to empty it. In the winter the teacher was a man and in the summer term a lady.

"Directly over the stove was a hole in the ceiling, usually covered by a board, and it was a favorite pastime of some of the boys to climb through that hole and disconnect the stovepipe which would fill the small room with smoke. As a result school would be dismissed for the day for no one could breathe in the smoke-filled room.

Sometimes the teacher would catch one of the boys who was caught in the attic and couldn't get down, and he would receive all the punishment for the others who had gotten away.

Long benches extended along the east and west wall with a long board in front of them for desks. There were two rows on each side of the stove.

The Primer class occupied the lowest seats next to the stove. The first and second reader on the next seats and on the back seats next to the wall sat the larger students . . . The boys were on one side of the room and the girls on the other.

The teachers as a rule were very strict, and no excuse was accepted for poor lessons. The teacher's word was law, backed by the parents at home. The morning exercises were singing and reading a chapter from the Bible. There was no grading of classes, a pupil was put into whichever reader was most suitable.

Across the room from the door and under the south window was a long bench, the entire length of the room, called the recitation bench. All of the classes would go to that bench when it was their turn to recite, standing with their backs to the window. The stovepipe was in the middle of the room, directly in front of the teacher's chair where he usually sat to hear the recitations. If a mischievous student tired of the lesson, or it grew overlong, the student would quietly slip out of the window, with the stovepipe blocking the teacher's view. If the skating was unusually good or the wild rabbits played too close to the building, the temptation was greater and two or three would be missing at Roll call, which was called at the close of the school day."

Henry Carpenter opened the first store in Downer's Grove in 1845. After he had sold his farm, he looked around to decide what he should do

"I had traded in different articles since I had been here and thought perhaps I could make a living in increasing the business and so decided to do. I went to the city, bought lumber and put up an addition to my (small) house, fixed up a counter and shelves,

went to the city and bought \$600 stock of groceries and began to sell to the community . . . At that time (there was) no place between Naperville and Chicago that anything could be had in the line of groceries."

Carpenter thought he could earn a living better this way than being a farmer . . . and he was right! He said,

"It was a small business, but I thought it might grow and it did. I got a few dry goods and after a time put in what was most called for, a little clothing, hardware and boots and shoes."

He soon enlarged his quarters and after a time hired a shoemaker and set him to work. However, "Customers ran sparse, money scarce." Most of Carpenter's sales were on credit. It was said that anyone smart enough to tie his own shoes could get credit at Carpenter's store.

The settlement continued to grow. Charles Venard, James Reader, and John Atwood came in 1845, and Solomon Mertz settled on the Naperville Road that year. John Oldfield and his sons, Richard and John T., arrived in 1847 and that same year Phillip Sucher set up his blacksmith shop. "He (Sucher) . . . carried the mail to Cass, Lemont and West Lyons. When he couldn't go, his wife made the trip." The year 1848 brought Ignatz Pfaff, Martin Schmitt, Dr. Franklin M. Roe, and Levi Mertz. Watts Pye and Daniel Peters came the following year. In the late forties there was an English migration to Cass: Benjamin Batterham, Jesse Oldfield, Charles Austin and his son Asahel, George Littleford, the Pitchers, John, William, Daniel, and Mary; Charles B. Austin, and William Heartt.

Lucy Narramore Stanley wrote that there were so many people migrating from the East, one after another until there was quite a settlement of people from New England. The families of the Grove became more and more intertwined as the young people grew to adulthood and marriages united the families.

"We were all neighbors . . . when sickness and sorrow came to one, all were ready to lend a helping hand, and words of sympathy," wrote Lucy Stanley. "In those years of companionship we seemed like one family."

One of the amusements of these early days served the purpose of ridding the area of wolves. The farmers suffered great losses from the roaming, destructive wolves who could destroy a whole flock of animals in a single night.

It was the custom for all the men, young and old, who loved excitement and the thrill of the hunt, to rally once a year for a wolf hunt.

A series of events which occurred in one of the last hunts was at first serious and then comic. And the story has been told and retold many times.

On a clear cold January morning in 1846, a number of the men and boys started out for a hunt.

"Wolves were becoming scarce and the party wandered off some five or six miles to the north of what was then known as the Duzenberry claim. The new settlers had commenced fencing their lands and at several places before coming to this claim the party had been obliged to dismount and remove the obstruction, but here they found a ditch fence, . . . which was built upon the supposition that the cattle could or would not go around it, consequently there was no fence on the back side.

"The snow had drifted very deep on the side of this fence opposite to the party, and although their horses had been trained to jumping, yet an attempt to leap it would land both horse and rider floundering in a deep snow bank."

Suddenly a wolf darted from a thicket and crossed the path a few rods from them. "Every man instantly wheeled into line, and as quick as thought darted on after the affrighted animal." A man called Gard led the company with his swift little pony. The chase led the men far out into the prairie where they would soon have to jump one of the ditch fences. "There were fifteen horsemen spread out in a line, every man plying the whip and spur, and every horse at the top of his speed." As they came to the fence, the wolf cleared about two rods ahead of Gard. The horse took the ditch with a flying leap, only to land in a snow bank! The horse stumbled and fell, throwing Gard over his head and the two of them were engulfed in the snow! The riders, charging from behind, took the ditch with breakneck speed. Many of them cleared over the heads of Gard and his horse. Landing safely on the nether side, each rider reined in his horse and, wheeling and circling, looked back to determine the fate of the hapless horse and rider. The first thought which ran through the group was that Gard had been killed by the fall! And then, suddenly Gard arose from the snow like Neptune arising from the sea. Soon after, his horse clambered to his feet and came scrambling out of the ditch.

Alden Stanley, wearing a buffalo coat made like a frock cut off at the knees was standing

nearby, concerned for Gard's safety. The horse looked wild-eyed as he caught a glimpse of the buffalo coat and, "wheeling he kicked at it like a flash of lightning, carrying away one entire skirt!"

At the same time someone noticed the wolf standing on a nearby hill looking at the group. And then Stanley noticed that he had lost one of his coat skirts.

The mood of the group changed swiftly from extreme fear and concern for Gard's safety to amusement at the ludicrous state of the buffalo coat, and with high spirits regained they mounted their horses to resume the chase. "And within five minutes from the time of the new start, the wolf was taken!"

The same spirit of adventure ran through the Grove with the word that gold had been discovered in California! The constant search for a better life, which had drawn the settlers to Downers Grove, beckoned again with the lure of gold. And in 1849 a number of the early pioneers set off for California. Among those who followed the gleam were Levi Aldrich, who rented his tavern to Alexander Foster, Dr. Franklin M. Roe, Amos and Albert Adams, Asa and Silas Carpenter, Capron and Laban Stanley, Israel Blodgett Jr., and Jacob Schumpp. Some never returned.



The Temple Building 1833  
A Church Building used by  
several Denominations

First Draw-Bridge  
Built in 1834 at Dearborn St.

THE TOWN OF CECILIAHO  
Population 350

Second Fort Dearborn  
built in 1816

CHICAGO RIVER

U.S. GOVERNMENT  
RESERVATION

Channel cut by  
Soldiers in 1833

THE FORKS  
1. Mark Bannister's Sangamon Hotel  
2. The First Post Office 1833  
3. Hill Tavern  
4. Sam Miller's Public House

Latitude 41° 53'  
Longitude 87° 36'  
Elevation 584 ft.



TRAIL TO DANVILLE

ROAD TO DETROIT

Sand Hills

Mail Service  
was this Road once a  
week from Niles, Mich.

M I

L A R E

## THE SECOND COLONY\* 1850 - 1890

Nearly eighty families had settled in the area of Downers Grove, Cass, and Lisle by 1850; and one by one, most of the California adventurers, who had followed the promise of gold, returned to the homes they had left. Dr. Franklin Roe, who had gone overland to California with his father and his three brothers returned in 1850. The Roes became so homesick when they did not find their fortunes that they returned as soon as they could find enough gold to pay their way. The overland trip to California had been so difficult that they returned by ship around Cape Horn to New York City.

After five years of mining in California Henry Curtiss and his brother Charles returned to the Grove in 1856. Charles, on his return, married Laura Thatcher, the daughter of Eldred Thatcher, in a wedding held in the Baptist Church.

Israel Blodgett Jr. did not return until some years later, and he, too, came by ship. The hardships which they had endured on the overland route to California made the water route an easy choice for their return home. Blodgett said,

"I returned by way of Cape Horn, and probably those who returned that way experienced but a minimum of the dangers and discomforts which were the lot of those who crossed by other routes."

He reported, though, that the storm-tossed vessel with its sparse rations of food and insipid water was none too comfortable. Ruefully he reflected that all these discomforts were suffered by those who sought a country to provide them with the comforts for the rest of their life, "little reckoning that disappointment awaited the great majority even of those who survived the toil and hardship."

Steadily the community grew as new settlers,

eager to obtain land on the fertile prairies, continued to arrive from the East. Two good roads led to Downers Grove, the Southwest Highway (Ogden Avenue), the road most of the early settlers had traveled from Chicago, and the other road (Maple Avenue) which had been laid out and improved by Curtiss and Blodgett.

Log cabins were being replaced with more comfortable clapboard houses. Israel Blodgett built a frame house in 1849 at the same location as his log house in the midst of his stand of maple trees, now 841 Maple. In 1853 Samuel Curtiss built his new frame house. It was said that he built this house earlier than he had planned because someone had emptied ashes too close to his log house, and it had burned to the ground!

A.F. Foster lived in a house west of the plot of land where the Methodist Church was built later, and the Belden blacksmith shop was just west of Foster's house. Henry Carpenter built his permanent home on the elevated site north of Maple in 1850. The few houses were beginning to cluster around Maple Avenue and the center of present-day Downers Grove south of the tracks.

Feelings of friendship and of belonging grew, and the need to band together for their mutual interests of protection or property rights, containing livestock, and the construction of roads arose. And, therefore, on April 2, 1850, the first township meeting was held in Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois.

The Minutes of the Town Meeting report that

"The first Town Meeting in the town of Downers Grove, took place according to the notice of the County Clerk upon the premises of Daniel Roberts and was called to order by Marcus B. Tirtlot, Esq. Daniel Roberts was then elected chairman pro-tem,

\*The group of families who came to the Grove after the original settlers was referred to as the "second colony"

and S.W. Franklin, Secretary pro-tem. The meeting then proceeded to ballot for a moderator for the day."

Walter Blanchard received 17 votes and Daniel B. Heartt 10; therefore Walter Blanchard was elected Moderator with the majority of 7 votes. Samuel W. Franklin was elected Town Clerk. The minutes record that since there was no convenient place at the home of Daniel Roberts for attending to the business of the day, the meeting was adjourned to the house of Alvin Lull. The polls were declared open at 10:00 AM for the purpose of electing town officers. After two hours the polls were closed for dinner and for attending to the other town business.

"The following officers were elected by a viva-voce vote. Overseers of Highways: In Jefferson Munson's district, John Marvin was elected." In Pierce Downer's district, Henry Lyman was elected. In Benjamin Fuller's district, John L. Lee was elected. In Benjamin Prentice's district, Jonathan Gilbert was elected. In Lorain Haven's district, Marcus B. Tirtlot was elected. In Orin Godfrey's district, Nelson Lee was elected. In Emanuel Dailey's district, William Heart was elected."

Minutes of Town Meeting,  
James Gore, DuPage County, Illinois, Apr. 2<sup>d</sup> 1850.

The first Town Meeting in the town of James Gore, took place according to the notice of the County Clerk upon the premises of Daniel Roberts and was called to order by Marcus B. Tirtlot Esq. Daniel Roberts was then elected chairman pro tem, and S. W. Franklin secretary pro tem. The meeting then proceeded to ballot for a moderator for the day. The vote stood

For Walter Blanchard 17 votes,  
for Daniel B. Heartt 10 do.

Consequently Walter Blanchard was elected Moderator for the day and was qualified as follows

(2d) Upon following the oath administered by M. B. Tirtlot Esq. and immediately upon the declaration of the clerk, on the part of the Town Clerk, Daniel W. Franklin was then elected Town Clerk for the day. On account of there being no convenient place for attending to the business of the day upon the premises of Daniel Roberts, the meeting adjourned to the house of Alvin Lull, and at 10 o'clock A.M. the polls were declared open for the purpose of electing town officers. At 12 o'clock the polls were closed for dinner and to attend to other town business.

The following officers were elected by a viva-voce vote.

Overseers of Highways (In the original minutes, this was written Commissioners of Highways, which was evidently a mistake.)

In Jefferson Munson's district  
John Marvin was elected.

In Pierce Downer's district  
Henry Lyman was elected.

In Benjamin Fuller's district  
John L. Lee was elected. (This is a mistake in the original minutes.)

Minutes of first township meeting April 2, 1850

The minutes continue with the first by-laws passed by the Town Meeting for the Downers Grove Township. The needs of the community were clearly presented by the restrictions legislated.

The minutes reported that the following seven by-laws were passed by voice vote. It didn't take the town fathers very long to reach their consensus on the needs of legislation of rights for the freeholders of the community. It is written that the polls were closed at 12-noon for lunch and business, and at half after one the polls were again opened for the election of town officers. So, in an hour and a half these resolute men ate their dinner and passed the basic rules for the Township.

The following by-laws are recorded as passed:

- By-law 1st Rail fence shall be lawful 4½ feet high and properly secured by staking and riding.
- By-law 2nd Stake fence shall be lawful 4 feet high and not more than six inch space between the stakes and properly secured at the top.
- By-law 3rd All neat cattle and horses (stud colts over eighteen months excepted) shall be free commoners.
- By-law 4th Any person who shall permit a stud over eighteen months old to run at large shall be liable for every such offense to a fine of two dollars and costs of suit.
- By-law 5th Any person who shall permit a ram to run at large shall be liable for every such offense to a fine of one dollar and costs of suit.
- By-law 6th All penalties collected under the provisions of these by-laws shall be applied to pay contingent expenses of the town.
- By-law 7th Sheep are prohibited from running at large.

At half after one the polls reopened for the election of town officers. One hundred and sixty-five residents cast ballots in the election. At five o'clock the polls were closed, and the canvas was conducted in public. Leonard K. Hatch was elected Supervisor over Pierce Downer with 86 votes to 79. Albert Havens was elected Town Clerk without opposition. Osias Herrick defeated George Barber 84 to 76 for Assessor. For

Collector Peter Warden received 158 votes, and Alvin Lull received a like number for Overseer of the Poor. In addition to these officers three men were named Commissioners of Highways: Silas Culver, Lucius M. Lull, and William Lutyans. Peter Warden and Joseph Boyd were elected Constables, and the Justices were Benjamin Fuller and John Marsell.

The business of the Meeting was concluded with Walter Blanchard's signed certificate that the Meeting was held and "a motion was made and seconded and passed by a viva voce vote that a tax of two hundred and fifty dollars be raised for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the town."

In 1851 the population of Downers Grove Township was shown as 957 people.

Names of town officers for the Town of Downers Grove from its organization in 1850 through 1857:

#### **SUPERVISORS**

1850-L. K. Hatch  
1851-Walter Blanchard  
1852-Walter Blanchard  
1853-Walter Blanchard  
1854-G.W. Alderman  
1855-Walter Blanchard  
1856-S.F. Daniels  
1857-S. DeGolyer

#### **TOWN CLERKS**

1850-A. Havens  
1851-A. Havens  
1852-A. Havens  
1853-A. Havens  
1854-A. Havens  
1855-C.H. Carpenter  
1856-G.S. Rogers  
1857-W.H. Dixon

#### **ASSESSORS**

1850-O.B. Herrick  
1851-George Barber  
1852-George Barber  
1853-George Barber  
1854-Lyman Clifford  
1855-Lyman Clifford  
1856-Lyman Clifford  
1857-A.H. Blodgett

#### **COLLECTORS**

1850-Peter Warden  
1851-G. Paige  
1852-H.L. Cobb

1853-E.H. Gleason  
1854-M. Walton  
1855-E.H. Gleason  
1856-E.H. Gleason  
1857-George Wheeler

#### **OVERSEERS OF POOR**

1850-Albin Lull  
1851-Albin Lull  
1852-J. Blodgett  
1853-J. Blodgett  
1854-Daniel Roberts  
1855-Daniel Roberts  
1856-John Oldfield  
1857-John Oldfield

#### **COMMISSIONERS OF HIGHWAYS**

1850-Silas Culver, W.  
Lutiens, L.M. Lull  
1851-John Marvin, A.H.  
Blodgett, G. Gilbert  
1852-E. Thatcher, K.  
Martin, H. Andrews  
1853-A. Lull, E. Thatcher,  
G. Paige  
1854-J. Craigmile, H.  
Lyon, B. Fuller  
1855-J. Craigmile, M.  
Duello, M. Sucher  
1856-A.G. Cobb, H. Lyman,  
M. Sucher  
1857-W.H. Clark, J.  
Oldfield, G. Prescott

#### **JUSTICES OF THE PEACE**

1850-John Marsell,  
Benjamin Fuller  
1851-S.F. Daniels  
1857-M.B. Tirtlot,  
S.J. Ackley

#### **CONSTABLES**

1850-Peter Warden,  
Joseph Boyd  
1851-Milton Barr,  
Peter Braman  
1853-S.W. Franklin  
1854-S.W. Franklin,  
Luther Couch  
1855-E.Gleason  
1856-T.O. Roberts

By the early 1850's there were three established Protestant congregations in the Grove.

The Methodist-Episcopal Society is said to have been the first church established with regular preaching as early as 1839. Father Ged, an itinerant Methodist preacher, came on foot across the prairies from Barber's Corners.\* He succeeded in forming a small Society at the Grove, where preaching had been regularly sustained; and the infant church grew. The Society was regularly organized in June, 1851, and built a meeting house in 1853 with the following named members: J.P. Cotes, Mary C. Cotes, Norman G. Hurd, Antoinette Hurd, Eliza Bakeman, Anne Page, Lester Hunt, and Dorcas Hunt.

Though Henry Carpenter was not a member of the congregation of the Methodist Church, he donated not only a lot for the building of the church but also subscribed twenty dollars to the building fund. In return the trustees agreed to allow him to use the building under certain circumstances in the following document.

"We the undersigned trustees of the Methodist Church of Downers Grove for the consideration of a building lot received of Henry Carpenter and also in further consideration of twenty dollars subscribed by the said Henry Carpenter to be applied in building said church do agree to and with him that if the said Carpenter should request the use of said church occasionally for the purpose of religious worship and the promulgation of the Doctrine of the ultimate holdings and happenings of all intelligent creation by ministers of the universalists in good fellowship with their association. We the trustees of said will grant the free use of the said when it does not interfere with appointments or when the house is not wanted by our own denomination for Religious worship."

(Dated at Downers Grove April 14, 1852)

TRUSTEES

Lewis Wood  
N.A. Belden  
John P. Cotes  
F. M. Roe  
John P. Howard

Most of the work on the church building was donated. Callie Belden (Bush Rogers) remembered how the children used to play in the fresh wood curls of the shavings of the timber as it was dressed down by the workmen.

\*at present-day Route 53 and Boughton Road

The pulpit was in the north end of the church with long pews in the center and short ones on either side of the aisles. The singers' seats were at



Callie Belden Bush



Henry Bush

the south end with one row built a little higher than the others.

One of the early members said that the congregation consisted of people of all denominations from all around the countryside. Mr. Belden, the blacksmith who lived only two houses west of the church, kept the melodeon at his house and carried it down to church every Sunday morning. His daughter said that she remembered her father taking wood from his own woodpile many a Saturday night for the fires in the two church stoves which stood by the doors. He then would go early on Sunday morning to start the fires so the church would be warm when the others came for services.

Perhaps the earliest congregation in the area was the Society of Congregationalists, an offshoot of the earlier Congregational Society which was organized in Lisle Township in 1833. Many members of that congregation were from the settlement at Downer's Grove. The local congregation was organized in March, 1837, as the East DuPage Church at the house of Henry Puffer. The first members were: George Parmalee, John A. Richards, Dexter Stanley, Mrs. Nancy Stanley, Mrs. Susan Parmalee, Henry Puffer, Mrs. Lucina Puffer, Elizabeth Puffer, and Hannah Puffer with Rev. Eliphalet Strong presiding as Moderator. In 1845 the congregation built a meeting house on the west side of Belmont Road south of the present-day Ogden Avenue on land owned by Mrs. Nancy Bush.



Other members included: Rockwell Guild, Daniel Narramore, Charles Parmalee, Leonard Hatch, S.L. Jackson, Luther Hatch, Daniel Thatcher, Samuel Thatcher, Israel Blodgett, S.D. Lyman, John Chapman, Joseph Blodgett, T.E. Parsons, Henry Curtiss, James C. Hatch, John Richards, Henry Lyman, and Rev. Orange Lyman, who served as the first pastor of this congregation.

A group of 17 Baptists met in a schoolhouse on the corner of Maple Avenue and Dunham Road to organize the Baptist congregation on August 5, 1851. Services were held in the schoolhouse by Rev. G.F. Holt until the fall of 1853 when the church building was completed on land which Samuel Curtiss had donated on Maple Avenue. Their early members included: Henry Cruthers, Norman and Emily Gilbert, Caroline and Josephine Gleason, Edward and Laura Goodenough, Harmon and Ann Goodenough, William Perry, Lewis and Mary Pound, G. and Sarah Smith, Philip and Emily Sucher, Antoinette Trumbull, John Wallace, Kate Fox, Emerson and Cynthia Gleason and their daughter Estella, Eli Hunt, Charles Oldfield, Mrs. Nancy Capron Stanley, and Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Prentiss and their seven children.

In the early days the Baptist church had no musical instrument. The leader used an old-fashioned tuning fork.

Eugenia Dixon wrote,

"The great event of the year was the donation party for the pastor and his wife which took place after the ingathering of the crops. Apples, potatoes, pumpkins, squash, carrots, parsnips, beets, cabbages, smoked ham, salt pork, and foods of all sorts were brought in abundance. The donors did not forget themselves either for everything was brought for a bountiful meal, including a wonderful pyramid cake, which must have been enjoyed by all."

With primitive muddy roads it was not always easy to get to church. Many of the farm people came to church in a farm wagon with one seat in front where the parents sat. The children sat on boards laid across the wagon box. When the roads and trails were buried with snow, the families came in sleighs.

The importance of a road to and from Chicago for the Downers Grove settlers was paramount. True, most of these pioneers had traveled the Southwest Highway from Chicago through the dismal swamp stretching from Chicago to Barry's Point (Riverside) and on west through

Brush Hill (Hinsdale) to Downer's Grove, but the soggy mud tracks were a peril to travel. In 1842 the Cook County Commissioners completed a turnpike of the Southwestern Road (present-day Ogden Avenue), and although it was some improvement over the primitive road, in wet weather the rich black soil turned to soft, sticky clay which seemed to draw the vehicles down into the mire of bottomless mud. In an attempt to improve the road huge stones were hauled each year and heaped along the road, but they served only to provide more hazards to the wagons with their sharp edges protruding from the rutted mud.

The answer to this nearly impossible problem of building an adequate roadway over the swamps and lowlands of the prairies came from Russia through the wilds of Canada. The Governor General of Canada, who had spent many years in Russia and had observed the practice there of building plank roads through marshy land, persuaded the Canadians to build a plank road in 1839. Within a decade over 500 miles of plank roads had been built in Canada.

The idea spread to the United States, and on January 20, 1848, the contract for the initial section of plank road was let for the Southwest Highway from Chicago to Doty's Tavern at Riverside. The plank road

"consisted of a single track, eight feet wide, made by laying down two stringers and covering them with three inch plank, the stringers were bedded in the earth so that the weight of the plank rested directly upon it."

By the end of 1851 the Southwestern Road was completed to Naperville, and there it connected with a road to Oswego. Three miles east of Naperville it also connected with the St. Charles and Warrenville Plank Road. Other roads were built from Naperville to Sycamore and from Oswego to Little Rock so that the Southwestern Road with its connections formed a network of improved roads throughout the country southwest of Chicago.

The planks were to be placed firmly on the hard roadbed so that there could be no water or even air space under the planks. With this method of construction the plank road was expected to remain in good condition for years. Of course it was recognized that normal traffic would eventually wear out the planks; however, it was anticipated that, the heavier the traffic,

the more tolls collected to pay for repairing the road.

Very soon it was obvious that this construction, or any type of construction, would not keep a roadbed free from water over an Illinois prairie. To offset this water problem, the builders dug ditches on each side of the road. The water filled the ditches and overflowed onto the road so that from ditch to ditch the water level covered the planks.

"They are improving the Southwestern Plank Road on the low prairie," noted the *Chicago Journal* less than a year after the construction of the plank road, "transforming what has at times been a raft into a road."

The Chicago newspapers praised the plank roads with extravagant eloquence, and Chicagoans saw no end to the city's growth as a result of these fine roads. The railroads were viewed with reserve. What could they offer that would be better than plank roads?

The return on the \$16,000 dollar investment for planking Ogden Avenue to Doty's Tavern was about 40% the first year! The road took in \$1,500 in September, 1848, the first month of operation. On October 9th, according to a newspaper account, 96 persons had passed through the toll gates in an hour!

In 1851 there were toll gates every 5 to 6 miles on the Plank Road to Naperville. Downer's Grove toll gate was located in a frame house built by Mr. Goodenough on the Plank Road\* and was operated by Fred Wingate.\*\* Travelers gladly paid the tolls for the privilege of riding over the improved roads. The toll from Naperville to the Cook County line was 50¢ for a four-horse post coach; a wagon or carriage with two horses paid 37¢, and a carriage, cart, or buggy with one horse was 26¢; a single horse with rider paid 10¢ while cattle were 4¢ a head, and sheep and hogs were 3¢ per head.

The problem of water under the planks soon caused the improved plank roads to become less than ideal highways! In 1853 or so a letter from Belleville, Illinois, which was typical of the complaints about all of the plank roads, implored

the road builders to devise some method for securing the planks to the roadbed. Many planks had floated away in a flood on the plank road near Belleville. Many more had been taken up and stacked in piles along the side of the road to avoid their floating away.

It did not take a flood to damage the roads. The normal amount of rain on the soft clay of the prairie roads caused puddles of water to form under the planks. With water under the wooden surface, the rolling wheels of heavy vehicles caused the planks to slip. Cavities developed which broke wagon wheels, tripped horses, and sloshed mud on the passengers. The presence of air caused the planks to decay on the underside.

And then all that money which came in from the tolls went not for repairs but for the builders to pay dividends to the investors! The consequences were obvious. In ten years the first plank roads were in a deplorable state of disrepair. The plank roads became a source of discomfort and danger rather than an advantage to travelers. Travelers reported that the Southwest Road was more often than not a floating raft. "For about one season the road was a decided convenience, but soon the hardwood planks became warped by the sun, (and) the road was as rough as the old-fashioned corduroy."

A decade sufficed to span the rise and fall of the plank road system. The name lingered on, however, and the Southwest Highway was called the Plank Road long years after it ceased being a "plank road."

"God bless the man who invented the plank roads" one traveler wrote in 1853. Ten years later his opinion would have been unprintable.

The settlers continued to come in response to the letters from relatives and friends which told of the limitless opportunities on these rich prairies, and the settlement at Downer's Grove grew. Sucher's blacksmith shop was on the corner of Maple and Union (present-day Main Street) while Israel Blodgett's blacksmith shop was east on Maple next to his home. The schoolhouse was west on Maple near present-day Dunham Road. The Methodist Church and the Baptist Church were in the center of the settlement on Maple Avenue while the Congregational Church was way out on Belmont Road. Horace Aldrich's tavern was north on the Plank Road. Levi Aldrich had left his tavern on Maple Avenue when he went to California and rented the cabin

\*Construction on Ogden Avenue in 1981 uncovered portions of the plank road about 3 feet below the present roadway. One 12-foot piece of planking was salvaged and is now at the Downers Grove Historical Museum.

\*\*on the site of the present-day Wannemaker's and previously the Tollgate Nursery

to Alexander Foster. Later the place was sold to M.L. Dunham, for whom Dunham Road was named. Andrus's tavern was in the southeast section of the township in Cass, and Curtiss's tavern was in the center of the community across Maple Avenue from Blodgett's. Henry Carpenter sold one-half interest in his store to Leonard Hatch in 1855; a year later Carpenter and Hatch sold one-third interest to Eldred Thatcher; and then in 1857 Carpenter sold out his interest to Hatch and Thatcher.

The Aldriches, Horace Dodges, and the Rogers lived on the north side of Plank Road, with Pierce Downer's place a short distance to the south of the Plank Road. The Dexter Stanley farm was at the corner of present-day Maple and Belmont Road. Of course there were settlers scattered throughout Downers Grove Township, but the center of the community developed along Maple Avenue and Union Street (present-day Main Street) with the homes of the Rev. Orange Lyman (said to be the oldest standing house in Downers Grove), Austin Richards, Israel Blodgett, Samuel Curtiss, and Henry Carpenter.

According to Harriet Strong,

"Henry Carpenter was the first man to sell off small holdings for residence or business, so (much) of the (early) town was on his forty (acres) around West Maple Avenue and Carpenter Streets."

Among the new settlers who arrived\* prior to the War between the States were A. B. Austin, Burgess Austin and A.F. Foster. From Ireland and England Jacob Jeans came to Cass in 1852, James Drew in 1854, and George Littleford in 1859. Michael Welch had come earlier, and Abram Wells arrived in 1860. The small community continued to grow with the settlers from New England, New York, and Pennsylvania along with the immigrants who were fleeing the tyrannies in Europe.

Some of the most loyal and steadfast of the citizens of Downer's Grove came from Alsace-Lorraine. Mitchell Heintz and David Kline arrived in 1853 while in 1854 came Valentine Mochel, John and Mathias Kline and Valentine Wohlhuter, along with their wives and sisters. Many immigrants fled the oppression in Germany: Fred Mueller came as a 10-year old; Andrew Dilger came in 1852; Victor Fredenhagen, a native of Micklenberg, and Simon Schafer in 1855; Michael Shump arrived in 1859, G.F.

\*The dates of arrival vary from source to source.

Prescott from Prussia in 1861; and Jacob Lehman in 1862.

Very often the pattern of these German immigrants was to find work as farm laborers, and as soon as the price of a farm could be saved through



Tenney Farm Home

the most frugal thriftiness, they bought a farm in Downer's Grove Township.

Yearly the traffic from the East increased, with immigrants travelling along the highways to settle the prairie lands west of Chicago. But there was another traffic coming toward Chicago from the south and west, not of immigrants, not travelling the roads, and not settling, but of fugitives passing through on their way to a dream of safety. They came from the South, up the Mississippi, across the Illinois flatlands toward Chicago, and northward to Canada. Escaping slaves made their way fearfully and cautiously, following the North Star to freedom. One by one or in small groups they travelled the roads and back country from one *Station* to another on the *Underground Railway* to Chicago.

The Underground Railway was not a railway and was underground only in the sense of being clandestine and concealed, with escape routes zigzagging from the Mason-Dixon Line to Canada. Abolitionists and anti-slavery men and women had been assisting slaves to freedom since the early 18th century. These routes and the system came to be known as the "underground railway," with the places of safety and refuge along the way called "stations," with secret signs and passwords to insure the safety of the fugitives.

There was a strong anti-slavery sentiment among the citizens of Downer's Grove, but that

is not to say it was the majority opinion, for this political stand was not universally popular throughout the North. A strong link in the underground railway escape route of the fugitives to Chicago was in the homes of the anti-slavery men in Downer's Grove. The active abolitionists were Israel P. Blodgett, an anti-slavery man from his early days at Harper's Ferry, David Page, Robert Dixon, Henry Carpenter, and Rockwell Guild. It is also written that Pierce Downer was thought to have been an anti-slavery sympathizer.

It was unlawful to assist a runaway slave and perilous for the persons who contributed to the success of the fugitive in reaching his freedom. As early as 1787 there was an ordinance which provided for the return of slaves who escaped to the Northwest Territory. In 1793 a fugitive slave law was enacted which gave owners the right to recover a slave simply by presenting proof of ownership. The magistrate then issued an order for the arrest and return of a runaway slave, who was not allowed either a jury trial or the right to testify in his own behalf. Free Negroes in the North were sometimes kidnapped and taken South as slaves under this law. Therefore, many of the Northern states did not enforce this ordinance, and by the middle of the 1800's the law of 1793 was no longer in force.

As a part of the Compromise of 1850 a new, stricter Federal Fugitive Slave Law was enacted for the return of runaway slaves. This harsh Act reaffirmed that the runaway had no legal rights; he could not testify in his own behalf and was denied a trial by jury. The magistrate's fee was to be \$10 if the slave was returned and only \$5 if he were freed. Heavy fines were levied against any person who interfered with the return of the slave to his owner. A federal agent who enabled a slave to escape was fined one thousand dollars. In any event, if the slave got away, with or without the help of the federal agent, the agent would be held responsible for the entire value of the slave. Any person who was convicted of helping a runaway slave to escape was liable to a fine of one thousand dollars or imprisonment for six months.

The heavy penalties, which were set for the express purpose of making assistance to a runaway slave a very hazardous to impossible business, did not result in a lessened traffic in escaping slaves, but rather a firmer resolve by the courageous men and women who were committed to their humanitarian task as well as a need

for increased caution and secrecy in their operations.

Escaping slaves came into Illinois from the South, Southwest, and sometimes from the West, usually crossing the rivers with the help of the anti-slavery people who lived along the borders of the state. Some fugitives crossed the Ohio River from the South, and others crossed the Mississippi at entry points like Quincy and Alton. Oftentimes they followed river routes, darting through high marsh grass or running along muddy banks always fearful of being apprehended. The routes were changed from time to time, and alternate routes were used. The runaway slaves went on foot from one place of safety to another, traveling by night and hiding by day. Abolitionists hid the fugitives in the beds of their wagons and covered them with corn, hay, or animal skins and drove them to the next stop where friendly anti-slavery folks would secrete them in a well-house, root cellar, or old barn until it was safe to move on.

Chicago was the destination for most of the runaways, for it was here the slaves could board the ships which would take them to Canada and freedom. DuPage County was the last link of this route to Chicago. It is estimated that over 40,000 slaves travelled through this county on their way to Canada.

Israel Blodgett was one of the early anti-slavery men and was "courageous in the assertion of his views upon the sin of slavery long before there was any Abolition or Anti-Slavery Party." The Blodgett home was a place of safety and refuge in Downer's Grove for the fleeing slaves. From Aurora to Downer's Grove was one night's trip, and thence to Chicago another night's journey.



The Blodgett Home, now at 812 Randall, moved from Maple Avenue

By dark of night a wagon would draw up at the house with a load of passengers concealed under a load of buffalo hides. Blodgett and his sons would go to the wagon and help the driver carry in fugitives wrapped in the skins, as if they were quarters of beef. It was a frequent occurrence for such a cargo to arrive at any hour of the night.

Charles Blodgett, one of Israel's sons, remembered going into the house one night and finding fifteen Negroes there. These weary people were fed and given a place to rest during the day. Mr. Blodgett was concerned that he needed help to deliver so large a group into Chicago.

Nearby, on the hill near 55th and Summit, there lived a farmer who had experienced a "change of heart" one day and on the following Sunday had spoken up in a meeting, declaring himself to be an abolitionist and willing to help the oppressed. Blodgett called upon this neighbor who had seen the light, and on the following night the neighbor's hired man arrived with his wagon and team.

The slaves were stowed away on the bottom of the wagons with loads of hay or corn stacked on them. It was an all-night's trip to Chicago because the roads were very poor.

"It was necessary of course that the greatest secrecy be maintained, for with the rewards posted on the trees along the roadsides, someone might feel it his 'duty' to reveal the contents of the wagons, or the station from whence it had come."

The slaves were in constant danger until they were safely out of Chicago, for oftentimes their masters arrived in Chicago before they did. Usually Blodgett delivered his passengers to Philo Carpenter, whose home was in the center of a square in Chicago bounded by Washington, Randolph, Sangamon, and Morgan Streets. The house was protected from view by the huge trees which surrounded it. Israel's duty ended there. Carpenter then took the responsibility to see that these fugitives were boarded on a boat which would land them safely in Canada. Carpenter took the runaway slaves out on a tug several miles from shore, where by pre-arranged plan with the captain of a steamer, they were taken aboard to be delivered at an unscheduled stop in Canada.

There were many people helping the slaves in those dangerous days. The story was told about a government official at Chicago, who was charged with the responsibility of returning runaway slaves to their owners. When he was asked about a slave he would say, "Yes, I think I know

where the fellow is, come around at nine o'clock in the morning." He did know where the fugitives were, and he would go to the Tremont House or the City Hotel, well known stations of the "underground railway" and when he found the slave, he would say loudly, "Look here, Jack, I want you. Be sure to be on hand tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. Someone has come after you and you must go back with him." By nine o'clock the next morning Jack would be a lot nearer Canada than Chicago.

Though Judge Walter Blanchard was a friend and neighbor of Israel Blodgett, politically they were bitter antagonists on the issue of providing assistance to runaway slaves. The Judge threatened Israel Blodgett with imprisonment if he ever actually discovered him harboring slaves and helping them in their escape. One morning shortly before sunup, a man and his wife stopped at the Blodgett house to ask for protection and help in reaching Chicago. The woman was a beautiful, educated octoroon\* who had travelled widely with the daughters of her master through the Southern states and Europe. Mrs. Blodgett helped the young woman change from her soiled and torn clothes into one of Mary Blodgett's gowns. Blodgett then asked Judge Blanchard to come and see him and presented the handsome fugitive to the Judge as a lady from Louisville, Kentucky. The Judge asked her many questions about Louisville and was charmed with her conversation. Blodgett followed Judge Blanchard out on the lawn as he left and said,

"Judge, what would you do if you were in my place? That woman and her husband are trying to get to Canada and freedom . . . they are slaves. One of my horses is lame and I want to send them to the city tonight, so they can take tomorrow's boat . . . will you loan me a horse?"

The Judge answered emphatically, "You can have two!" That made Judge Walter Blanchard an accomplice, and while he never harbored runaway slaves in his own house, he never opposed Israel Blodgett again.

The stories are legion of the many fleeing slaves who passed through Downers Grove on their way to freedom.

Mrs. Edward Kolor in her manuscript "Echoes from Old Slavery Days," wrote:

"In those days of turmoil and heart-aches there lived a young slavewoman and her two little children. Her Negro husband was a free man, however, and he longed with all his heart to secure freedom for his

\*one who is one-eighth Negro

wife and babies. He was employed on one of the splendid steam boats that plied the Mississippi River between St. Louis and New Orleans and he made comparatively good wages for those days. Finally he went to his wife's master and asked if he might purchase his wife and his own two children. The master agreed and a price was set upon the three human beings. It was further agreed that the husband and father was to buy their liberty by making regular payments as he received his monthly wages. No man ever worked harder or saved his money more carefully, and at last there came a happy day when only one more trip down the river and back was needed and he would make his last payment.

When the master realized that only one more payment had to be made, he sold this mother and her two babies to a slave holder down in Georgia, and the father had no redress whatever in the matter. The fact was, that the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court had handed down a decision that the Negro had no rights whatever that a white man was bound to respect.

However, before the mother and children were taken away, friends advised them to try to make their escape and get to Canada if possible. By the aid of these friends they crossed the Mississippi into Illinois and were taken from one station to another. One of the children became ill and so their journey was long delayed. When the father returned from New Orleans and learned they had started for Canada, he immediately left for the place where he expected to find them, but he was doomed to disappointment, for no one there had seen or heard anything of them. He then returned to St. Louis and took up their trail, gradually working his way up through the state and making constant inquiries. The mother and her babies finally arrived at the I.P. Blodgett home where they were given shelter and the tenderest care. Late that night as Fate would have it, a man came to the door and asked if the woman and her children were there. Blodgett hesitated, he did not want to tell a lie, neither did he want to disclose the woman's whereabouts for fear of her safety. He looked past the face of the questioning man to see the familiar face of the man from the station near Aurora who said, 'It's all right, Mr. Blodgett, he's a friend.'

He certainly was a friend, for it was none other than the searching father. His wife in the next room was awakened by the voices in the night, and listening, she recognized the voice of her husband. She rushed out and into her husband's arms. And there that night occurred such a reunion, which the Blodgett family never forgot!"

With courage and conviction these brave men and women formed a human network of aid and assistance for the escape of these human beings from their bondage. Through providing havens of safety, and with creativity in overcoming all the obstacles, they transported the fugitives to an ultimate destination of safety. DuPage County

was the last leg in the journey, and Downers Grove the last way station on the road.

The abolitionists who took the law into their own hands were a minority. Most of the Northerners preferred to follow a more conservative course and hope that, with containment, slavery would eventually die out.

Public opinion in the North changed radically when the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed by the Congress on May 20, 1854. This Act opened Nebraska country to settlement on the basis of popular sovereignty, provided for the organization of the Kansas and Nebraska Territories, and undid the sectional truce of 1850.

"By this action Congress dispelled the hope that slavery would die out gradually or could be confined to the states where it existed." It forebode that slavery might dominate the West and worse, spread throughout the nation.

Faced with these prospects, many citizens of the North demanded a new party to squarely oppose slavery in the territories. Shortly after the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, a public meeting was held in Wisconsin. At this meeting a committee made up of Whigs, Democrats, and Free Soilers was appointed to start the organization of a new party so committed.

At Ripon, Wisconsin, on February 28, 1854, an aggressive political party was born and named the "Republican Party." The choice of the name was sagacious for it was the last part of the name of popular Democrat-Republican Party, which Thomas Jefferson had founded in 1800. By 1828, the Democrats had dropped the Republican part of the name, and in 1854 the Republicans gladly claimed it.

In 1856, the new Republicans named John C. Fremont as their candidate for President, and adopted as their campaign slogan, "Free labor, free speech, free men, free Kansas and Fremont!" This same year Abraham Lincoln left the Whig Party to join the Republican Party and campaigned vigorously for Fremont.

The enthusiasm for the new Republican Party and its Presidential candidate John Fremont ran rampant. Political rallies were held throughout the county, with banners waving, bands playing, and spirited speeches.

And in Downers Grove a political organization of forty-five young men known as the "Plowboys" was formed. Captain T.S. Rogers, one of the prominent Republicans of the Grove, was

instrumental in organizing this group of young men as active, vital campaigners for the new Republican Party.

A wagon long enough to carry the entire group of forty-five men was constructed at a local blacksmith and wagon shop. The wagon, filled with the spirited young men, dressed in their handsome uniforms of white trousers, patent leather belts, red flannel shirts, and glazed caps, was drawn down the street by eight black horses. In the center of the wagon was placed a tall mast or flagpole forty feet high, so arranged that it could be lowered in order to pass under any construction. From the pole they carried the national colors, an enormous banner twenty-two



Plow Boys re-enacting the activities of 1860's

feet wide billowing in the breeze. They attended all the local rallies, visiting the neighboring towns and later Elgin, Aurora, Batavia, Naperville, and Joliet, and even made the long trip into Chicago on special occasions. As the bands played and onlookers cheered and shouted, the gala wagon rolled into town after town, with the Plowboys spreading their enthusiasm and shouting their message, "Fremont for President! Vote for Fremont!"

But Fremont lost the election. The U.S. voters elected Pennsylvania Democrat James Buchanan with 174 electoral votes to John Fremont's 114. Undaunted, the new Republicans were encouraged by the size of their vote in their very first Presidential campaign and looked to victory in the next Presidential election.

Abraham Lincoln was nominated by the Illinois Republicans in 1858 as a candidate for the United States Senate. In August, 1858, from Ottawa, Illinois, James Barr wrote to his cousin

Warren Rogers in Downer's Grove about the Lincoln-Douglas debate:

"We had in this town on Saturday last the largest crowd that I ever have seen on a similar occasion. Both parties claim a victory but in my mind neither party gained much by the meeting here. Politics are all the rage in this section. The crowd on Saturday probably numbered 15,000 in this city. Washington Park was nearly filled. It was impossible for over one third of them to hear at all. Douglas looks a great deal older than he did two years ago and Lincoln looks as though he needed a little "bologna sausage and Lager beer."

This was the first of the seven Lincoln-Douglas debates throughout Illinois from which Lincoln emerged a national figure. Lincoln was defeated in the Senatorial election, but there is little doubt that these debates in which he "manifested qualities of greatness" prepared his way to the Presidency.

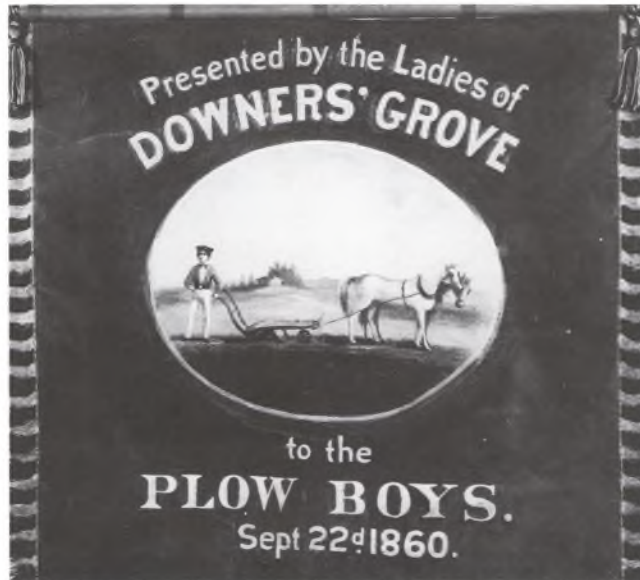
As Lincoln began his Presidential campaign, the Downer's Grove Plowboys again climbed into their wagon with their flags flying and rattled into all the towns around, campaigning for Lincoln. The massive wagon drawn by the handsome black horses bounced down the village streets. The handsome young men waved their banners proclaiming "Lincoln for President" "Vote for Old Abe!" In September of 1860 the ladies of the village made a splendid banner and presented it to the Plowboys.

This elaborate blue silk banner carried a hand-painted picture of a spirited team of thoroughbred horses attached to a wooden-beamed



Downers Grove Plow Boy painted by Maribeth Anne Schumacher, gift to museum from Plow Boy Chapter of Questers, 1980

plow at the handles of which stood a youth dressed in a red, white, and blue uniform. The flag now hangs in the American Room of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Wherever this impressive wagon went, it generated enthusiasm and excitement. All the townspeople followed the wagon, cheering and gawk-



Plowboy Banner

ing at the sight. Dogs and children followed along in the dust cheering on the Plowboys.

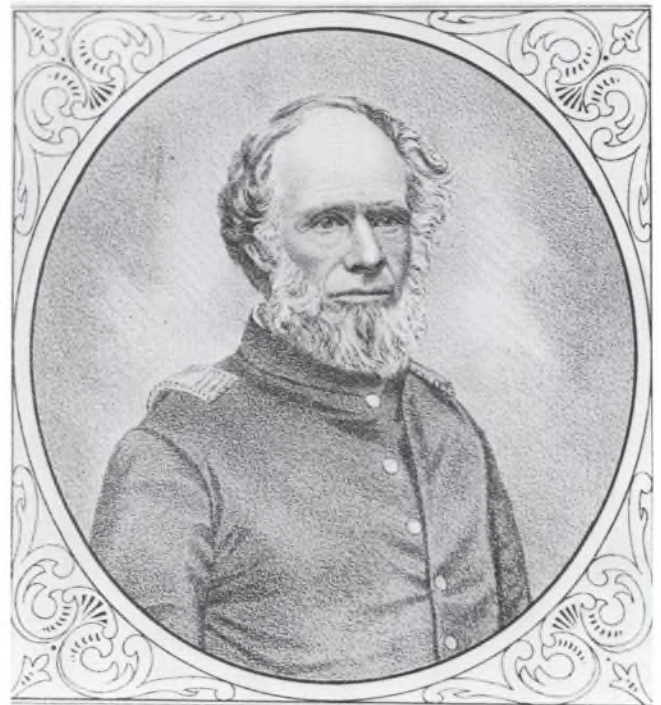
Lincoln won the Presidency, albeit with a minority of the popular vote, since three other candidates split the balance of the votes. He had scarcely taken office when the first bomb burst over Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, and the conflict began. A few months later most of the handsome young Plowboys had traded their snappy white and red uniforms for the Union uniforms of blue.

The settlement of Downer's Grove was little more than a hamlet in April of 1861. Records show that in 1862 there were eight merchants including two blacksmith shops. In 1860 the township had a total population of 1,806; and over ten years later when the Village of Downers Grove was incorporated, there were a scant 350 inhabitants in the Village. It is difficult to comprehend that this small community sent 119 men to the Union Army. The response of the men, young and old alike, to the call for volunteers to fight for the life of the Union was immediate and committed. Not a family was left untouched as the men marched off to war, and their wives, mothers, and sisters urged their men to fight for

the Union cause.

The stunning news of the fall of Fort Sumter had scarcely spread through the country when a series of war meetings were held in the Village to raise troops for the Federal Government.

Walter Blanchard, one of the earliest settlers in Downer's Grove, had brought his family from New York State in 1836 and bought a farm of 103 acres. Soon after, his sister and her husband, Henry Carpenter, had followed the Blanchards. Highly respected in the community, Blanchard had been a Probate Judge in DuPage County for seven years when he resigned that position to



Judge Walter Blanchard

enter the Army. At 54 years of age, Judge Blanchard volunteered to serve his country in preserving the Union and was commissioned Captain. He raised a company for one of the State's first regiments, the 13th Illinois Volunteer Infantry.

Captain Blanchard drilled his company, including two of his own sons, up and down Maple Avenue. There were 90 men in Company K from DuPage County, and 16 of these men were from Downer's Grove. In addition to Captain Blanchard, there were three corporals: Reu-



ben B. Pollard, Eugene W. Farrar, and Patrick Riley. Merritt Perry and James W. Sucher were the musicians, and the Privates were William Blanchard, William Balliman, Lorentz Baugerts, Charles Carpenter, Abraham C. Howard, Henry Hunt, Jacob Sucher, George Turner, John Toitlet, and Christian Walters. The Downer's Grove Company was mustered into the service at Dixon, Illinois, on May 24, 1861, a scarce six weeks after Fort Sumter.

When the second call for troops came in July of 1861, Wells Blodgett, a First Lieutenant, enlisted a company of forty men and was assigned to Company D, 37th Regiment, Illinois Volunteers, which camped in Wright's Grove on North Clark Street. When they were ordered to strike tents and move to the front on September 1, 1861, Edward Blodgett enlisted and marched away with them.

The following October, according to Cora Blodgett, the regiment was ordered west and camped in Otterville, Sedalia, Warrensburg, and Lemoine Ridge, Missouri, guarding the Missouri Pacific Railway so that troops and supplies could be sent to the front.



Wells Blodgett and his two congressional medals of honor

In September of 1861, James Barr wrote his cousin, Warren Rogers, "Everybody talks of war, thinks of war, dreams of war or goes to war—and I think we will all have to go before it is ended." On January 9, 1862, James Barr fulfilled his own prophecy by joining the 33rd Regiment, Company B. There were four other Downers Grove men also in Company B: Sergeant Forester, S. Lyon, and Privates Charles Andrews, Charles G. Austin, Jr., and Wesley Smart. The 33rd Infantry was a three-year



James Barr

Private Robert Hall Strong, from "A Yankee Privates Civil War" DGHS

regiment which saw much hard service.

During the early part of the War the response to the country's need was enthusiastic and ready. After the President's call for 300,000 more men, the people of the entire county became vitally concerned with the business of recruiting.

The first public meeting after the call for volunteers was held in the schoolhouse at Fullersburg on July 19, 1862. Meetings were held at churches and schoolhouses in all neighborhoods throughout the county, and at every one deep patriotic feeling was aroused. "Not only were men and boys deeply interested, but fathers and mothers were willing to part with their sons, and sisters urged their brothers to fight for the Union cause."

Sheriff T.S. Rogers received a commission as Captain and the authority to recruit one company of 100 men for three years' service. T.S. Rogers was one of the early pioneers of the Grove and was to serve later as its President for 14 years. However, at this time, he was living in Naperville, the County seat, while he was serving as Sheriff of the County.

By August 6th one hundred and thirty-eight men had enlisted in Captain Roger's company in which there were only one hundred openings. Most of these men were from Downer's Grove, Lisle, and Naperville Townships. A.C. Graves then began to enlist a company, which reached its full quota in only a few days. There were still so many men who wanted to enlist that two more companies were formed. As a result, four full companies were recruited in DuPage County in less than 30 days, "composed of its best and most valued citizens, farmers, mechanics, merchants and professional men." Twenty-eight of these

men in addition to Captain Rogers were from the village of Downer's Grove.

These four companies along with six companies from DeKalb County formed the 105th



Captain T.S. Rogers

Regiment Illinois Volunteers. On September 2, 1862, the 105th Regiment was mustered into service at Dixon. The regiment was almost constantly engaged in skirmishes, participating in the Atlanta campaign and taking part in engagements at Resaca, Peach Tree Creek, and Atlanta. They took part in the "March to the Sea" and the campaign in the Carolinas, including the siege of Savannah and the battles of Averysboro and Bentonville.

The casualties were heavy, and many of these eager volunteers were wounded or killed. Captain Walter Blanchard of Company K of the 13th Infantry was mortally wounded at Ringgold Gap. "He was held in great affection by his men and his last command, given to them after he fell, was, 'Don't give up boys! Fire away!'"

During the war years the citizens of DuPage County responded in every way to the war effort. Political party lines were dropped, and a Union Party was founded which continued throughout the war. "The spirit which resulted in its formation was one of intense loyalty to the Union Cause, and aided very materially in influencing people to respond with men and money." The County authorities contributed more than \$180,000 for bounties to soldiers and for the support of their families; and the town authorities appropriated as much. Thousands of dollars

were raised by the women of the County for hospital supplies and food and clothing for the sick and wounded.

The following is the list of names of men from Downer's Grove who served in the Civil War.

### MEN FROM DOWNERS GROVE WHO SERVED IN THE UNION ARMY DURING THE CIVIL WAR

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Andrews, Charles        | Gieble, John              |
| Ashley, Benedict        | Gleason, Watson W.        |
| Atwood, William         | Gumpsheimer, Christ       |
| Atzel, John             |                           |
| Austin, Charles G., Jr. | Hardsoc, Elzy             |
|                         | Hatch, Henry M.           |
| Balliman, William       | Havens, John W.           |
| Bapst, Lewis            | Hines, Fred               |
| Barrows, James          | Hines, Frederick          |
| Bateman, John W.        | Hintz (Heintz), Michael   |
| Baugertz, Lorentz       | Hintz, Frederick          |
| Berry, Charles H.       | Howard, Abraham C.        |
| Blakeman, Jacob         | Howell, Charles           |
| Blanchard, Franklin     | Hunt, Henry               |
| Blanchard, Walter       |                           |
| Blanchard, William      | Jacob, Gates              |
| Blodgett, Edward A.     | Jeffers, William H.       |
| Brown, David            | Jenson, Franz Z.F.W.      |
| Brown, Jones B.         | Johnston, James K.        |
| Bunn, Henry             | Jones, Daniel             |
|                         |                           |
| Carpenter, Charles      | Kaenig, Adolph            |
| Cheney, William         | Kingston, George          |
| Chase, Samuel B.        | Kline, David              |
| Cline, Lewis            | Kline, Jacob              |
| Coe, Samuel A.          | Kreyder, Charles          |
| Coffin, Menzo C.        | Kreyder, John             |
| Connors, James          |                           |
| Cornell, Joseph         | Lichundguth, Michael      |
| Craigmile, Alexander    | Lienbundguth, Michael     |
| Cox, Wesley H.          | Lutze, George D.          |
| Cox, William            | Lyon, Forester S.         |
|                         |                           |
| Davenport, Oscar        | Maynard, Levi             |
| Depue, Hanson J.        | McMillian, Daniel         |
| Dixon, Charles G.       | Mertz, Wellington         |
| Dixon, James C.         | Meyrs, John M.            |
| Dixon, William H.       | Mochel, George            |
| Dodge, Parker C.        |                           |
| Dunn, Joseph            | Oldfield, Joshua          |
|                         | Perry, John               |
| Edlie, J.               | Perry, Merritt            |
|                         | Peter or Petus, Frederick |
| Farrar, Eugene W.       | Pinches, William          |
| Farrar, Judson          | Pollard, Reuben B.        |
| Flisher, John           | Pool, Francis K.          |
| Foster, Alexander F.    | Porter, Alva B.           |
| Fox, Herman M.          | Puffer, George W.         |
| Freer, Theodore R.      |                           |
| Fuller, Morell          | Rehin, Andrew             |
|                         | Reynolds, Allen           |
| Gerlin, John            | Rich, Lewis M.            |
| Giblin, Henry           | Riley, Patrick            |

Rogers, Francis A.  
Ruckerick, Henry  
Rush, Green B.

Topel, Dedrick  
Townsend, Perry  
Turner, George  
Van Veltzer, Walter

Shepherd, Ralph A.  
Shepherd, William  
Shilling, Jacob  
Smart, Wesley  
Smith, Charles  
Smith, George, Jr.  
Smith, John  
Statt, Charles  
Streblov, Frederick  
Sucher, Jacob  
Sucher, James W.

Wallace, Gerry  
Wallace, Henry  
Walters, Christian  
Warren, Martin J.  
Wells, Abraham  
Wetten, Valentine  
Wheeler, Allen  
Wilson, Alexander  
Winop, Daniel  
Winterton, William  
Young, John

from Blanchard, Rufus  
*History of DuPage  
County, 1882*

The accuracy of this list is certain in that the men whose names appear on it served in the Union Army in the War between the States. It is uncertain in that the names of some of the men who served may be omitted. The names of men who enlisted for companies of regiments which were raised in other communities may not have been included in this list. Also men who were natives of Downers Grove may temporarily have been residents of another community at the time of their enlistment. A most notable example is Captain T.S. Rogers, who recruited the men of Company B of the 105th Company. At that time he was Sheriff of the County and, with the responsibility of this County office, was required to live in the County seat, Naperville. Another name which comes to mind is that of James Barr,

No.

## CLAIM OF

*John Bowman*

### FOR THE COMPENSATION OF SLAVE NAMED

*Israel S Blackburn*

I, *John Bowman* a loyal citizen, and a resident of \_\_\_\_\_, County of *Mercer*, State of Kentucky, hereby claim compensation, under the provisions of Section 24, act approved February 24, 1864, and section 2, act approved July, 28, 1866, for my slave *Israel S Blackburn* enlisted *April 16<sup>th</sup>* 1864, at *Camp Nelson Ky*, by *S Jesseuter* in the *124<sup>th</sup> Inf* regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Co. *C*; certificate of which enlistment, and a descriptive list, as required, accompany this application. That I did not acquire said slave subsequent to said enlistment, but had a valid title to him at the date of said enlistment, and previous thereto: I having acquired my title to him and my ownership over him as follows, to-wit: *having raised him from an infant and owned him previous to April 16<sup>th</sup> 1864*

In proof of my loyalty to the Constitution and Government of the United States, I present the accompanying oath, which I have taken, signed and acknowledged; to be filed with this application, in accordance with requirement of General Orders, No. 329, 1863, War Department, Adjutant General's Office.

*John Bowman*

*12<sup>th</sup> Jan*, 1867.

Document showing John Bowman's claim to Israel Blackburn as a slave, 1864!!

who at the time of his enlistment was not living in Downers Grove. Both of these men were early settlers of Downer's Grove and were leaders in this community throughout their adult lives after the Civil War. The names of other men who did not live in the Village of Downers Grove at the time of their enlistment were George Heartt; and Edward Clifford of Cass and William Beidelman and Alonzo Palmer from Lisle. There may be others with similar circumstances who served and are herein omitted.

If there were to be named the single most important influence in the developing of a village of Downer's Grove from the scattered settlement of farmers and embryonic businesses which served the farmers, it would have to be the coming of the railroad.

As early as 1831 steam trains had started to run from Charleston to Hamburg, South Carolina. By 1852 the first railway train ran from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh.

"That same year the Aurora Branch Railroad extended from Aurora to a point about 13 miles away to Turner Junction (now West Chicago) to meet the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, and the first locomotive was purchased on February 20, 1852."

The original charter was amended on June 22, 1852, and the Aurora Branch Railroad became the Chicago and Aurora Railroad Company. The charter was again amended on January 26, 1853, and the company became the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad (the CB&Q), a name formally accepted by the stockholders on February 14, 1855.

A committee of men from Brush Hill, Downer's Grove, and Naperville met to request the CB&Q to build a branch of the railroad from Aurora to Chicago to serve the southern part of DuPage County. The Galena and Chicago Union Railroad (now the Northwestern) had built a railroad some ten years earlier through the central part of the County which served Glen Ellyn, Wheaton, Lombard, and Geneva. On July 28, 1858, the committee filed this petition:

"To the President, Board of Directors and Stockholders of the Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company"

Gentlemen:

We respectfully beg leave to submit for your consideration a few facts connected with the building of an independent track from Chicago, via Naperville, to connect with your road at Aurora.

This route, which is at present deprived of railroad

facilities, is not surpassed for diversified beauty and productiveness by any section of Northern Illinois. With these natural advantages it is now for the most part thickly settled with an enterprising population.

No section of the country between Lake Michigan and the Fox River affords equal inducements to the farmer and mechanic, and no part of the West, of easy access to Chicago, presents the same attractions to families in the city who are seeking residences in the country; for, while no portion of the route is too remote, it lies through a beautiful region which is proverbial for its healthfulness.

We would add, for your consideration, the following statistics of the business transacted during the past year at the "different points on the route of your contemplated road (Lyons, Brush Hill, Naperville, and Downers Grove statistics listed)

Downer's Grove, five miles west from Brush Hill and twenty-one miles from Chicago, is also the centre of a rich farming country which is well settled. This point would draw the business of a large section, the produce of which now finds a market either at Lockport or is taken directly to Chicago by teams. The grain raised in this section of country, which would make this its depot, during the last year was 397,560 bushels.

The merchandise tonnage for the same time, to and from Chicago, amounted to 250 tons or 500,000 lbs beside lumber. That may be safely estimated at 550,000 feet or equal to 1,650,000. Total 2,150,000 lbs. freight. The passenger traffic at this point would be no inconsiderable item.

\*\*\*\*\*

The foregoing statistics, for the accuracy of which we hold ourselves responsible, founded as they are upon facts, show the actual business of the different points without Railroad facilities. We firmly believe that the business of all kinds, in the section alluded to, would quadruple within two years from the completion of your road.

No railroad leaving Chicago traverses as beautiful and well settled a section of country as would your contemplated road. We confidently believe that the business between Chicago and Aurora would be as remunerative as any section of your road of equal length. The passenger traffic alone, on this route as shown above, would be very large. Not on this part of the road alone would this be increased; but by bringing Aurora in direct communication with Chicago, by a straight line, and shortening the distance over six miles, the number of passengers would doubtless increase. As before stated, most of the grain and other produce of this section now finds market either at Lockport or Chicago direct, which would find its way to market over your road.

As representatives of the people along the line of the proposed road, we offer you their united support and pledge you the right of way between the west line of DuPage County and the DesPlaines River at Lyons,—embracing some twenty-four miles of the route—and probably the greater portion of the

distance from the last named point to the city limits of Chicago,—free of cost, provided the road is soon built.

July 28th, 1858

Morris Sleight,	(Members of
John Collins,	)Committee re-
Jos. Naper,	(siding at
George Martin,	)Naperville.
Jas. G. Wright,	(
Hiram Bristol,	)
S.M. Skinner,	(
John Jassoy,	)

H. Carpenter,	(Downer's Grove
Walter Blanchard,	)

Frederick Gray,	)Brush Hill
Benjamin Fuller	(

Stephen White	)
F.T. Sherman	(Lyons
S.T. Swift	)

\*\*\*\*\*

It was nearly six years later that the first trains ran on this road.

The belief was generally held in Downers Grove that a lawsuit held at Naperville in 1860, then the County seat, contributed greatly to the cause of the building of this section of the railroad line. Two influential Eastern stockholders of the Burlington Railroad, Mr. Corning of New York City and Mr. Rathbone of Albany, New York, had come west to help fight this case. The villagers persuaded these men during their stay of the strong need and many benefits to be had from extending the railroad from Aurora to Chicago. "The Burlington officials promised that the trains would be running within three years."

The CB&Q Railroad Company formally authorized the construction of the railroad line from Aurora to Chicago by way of the village of Naperville, at a meeting of the Board of Directors held on February 11, 1862. The stockholders authorized the building of the road at their annual meeting on June 20, 1862.

The work of the track was begun despite the high cost of materials and the scarcity of labor due to the Civil War. The winter of 1862-63 was harsh which further contributed to the difficulty of the construction. The laying of the track was difficult through the lowlands west of Chicago, but the swamp between present Hinsdale and Western Springs presented the biggest construction problem. Carloads of rock plus 50,000 cubic

yards of dirt, in addition to the estimated fill requirement, were poured into the seemingly bottomless swamp. The story was told that, after the rails were laid, a construction train, inching its way across the bog, sank slowly out of sight into over eleven feet of the quagmire!

The railroad tracks were finally completed from Chicago to Aurora, and in May of 1864 the first passenger train on the new CB&Q line pulled into Downer's Grove from the west and continued east through East Grove (Fairview), Greggs (Westmont), and on through the other villages to Chicago.

With the decision by the CB&Q to complete the line from Aurora through Downer's Grove to Chicago, it became obvious that the village of Downer's Grove would have to have a railroad station. Then came the problem of the proper location of the station in Downer's Grove. Some felt the station should be located at Belmont Road. This was influenced by Mr. Dyer's offer of land free for a depot at that site. Others felt the station should be at present Main Street; but John Coates, the owner of this property, was not disposed to sell, much less donate, his property for a depot.

Some of the outstanding citizens of the village met to decide on the proper site for the railroad station and to implement their decision. Among the men who attended the meeting were Henry Carpenter, Samuel Curtiss, R.O. Curtiss, Israel Blodgett Jr., N.K. Whitney, and several others. It was said that Judge Walter Blanchard was present at the meeting though Blanchard had left in May of 1861 for the Civil War as a Captain in the 13th Regiment. Perhaps the meeting was held at a time Blanchard was back in Downer's Grove on furlough during 1862 or 1863.\*

These men agreed that the best location for the station would be on Coates' land at present Main Street. John Coates, however, was obstinate in his refusal to sell his land for less than \$500, which was not only a very high price but conspicuously expensive since Mr. Dyer's land, a mile to the west, was offered free for the depot. The committee considered the problem, made the decision, and then raised the \$500 with which the ground was purchased for the depot.

After Coates sold his home and land to the committee for the depot, he bought a tract of

\*Though it seems unlikely, since Blanchard was in active service and died November 18, 1863.

land north of the railroad tracks extending to Ogden Avenue on Highland Avenue, which was opened through to Ogden in order that he might have access to this land. Coates built the first house on that street. The house was afterwards sold to Mr. Emigh.

The plat of Downer's Grove indicated that the property situated on part of Section 8, Town 38, Section 11, was sold on September 26, 1864, as recorded by Norman Gilbert, for the purpose of the passenger station, which was built in 1865.

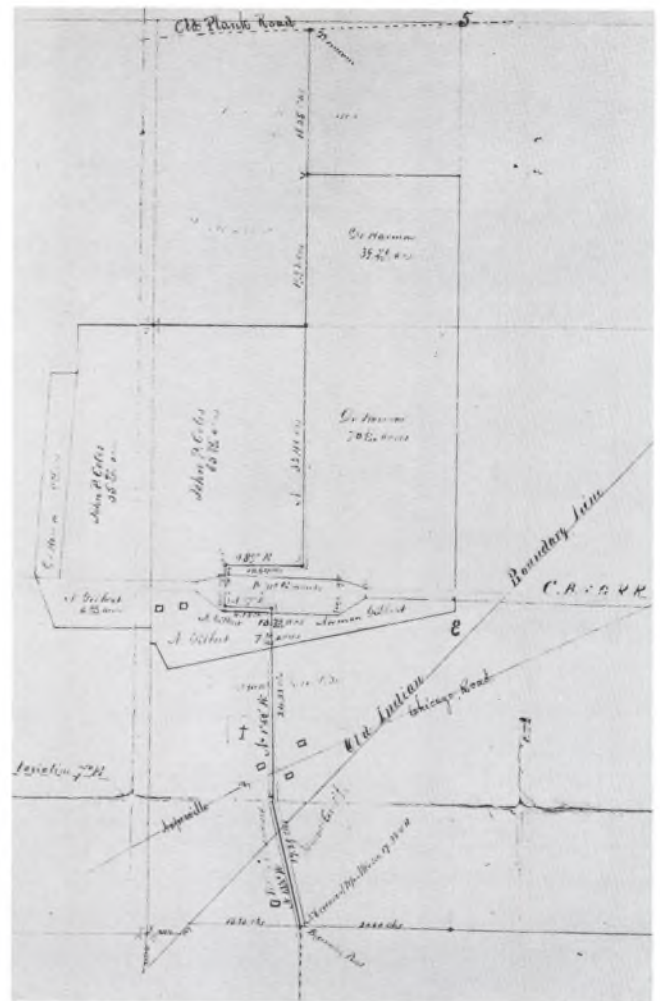
The Chicago terminal of the new CB&Q line was between Randolph and Lake Streets east of Michigan Avenue. The Burlington train reached the lake front station by travelling over the Chicago, St. Charles, and Mississippi Air Line Railroad and the Illinois Central tracks. The Burlington trains joined the Air Line tracks somewhere east of present Western Avenue, crossed the South Branch of the Chicago River, and ran straight to Wabash Avenue just north of



Original train station



Early steam train



Map of 1863 showing the CB&Q railroad and the depot

16th Street. At that point the trains crossed Michigan Avenue and swung onto the Illinois Central Railroad whose tracks, built on pilings along the edge of Lake Michigan, led to the yards and terminal south of the Chicago River.

The Burlington trains shared this station with the Illinois Central and the Michigan Central Lines from 1856 until the great Chicago Fire of 1871. After the fire, temporary quarters were used at that location until the operations could be moved in 1881 to the original Union Station at Canal and Adams.

There were many changes in the village with the coming of the railroad. Mr. Samuel Curtiss opened the first subdivision in the present business section of Downer's Grove. The plat, which is dated December 1, 1863, shows the following streets: Union Street, now Main Street; Liberty Street, now Washington Street; Curtiss Street, and Railroad Alley, now Burlington Avenue.

Lucy Downer, the wife of Pierce Downer, died on the 25th day of March in 1863, and Pierce

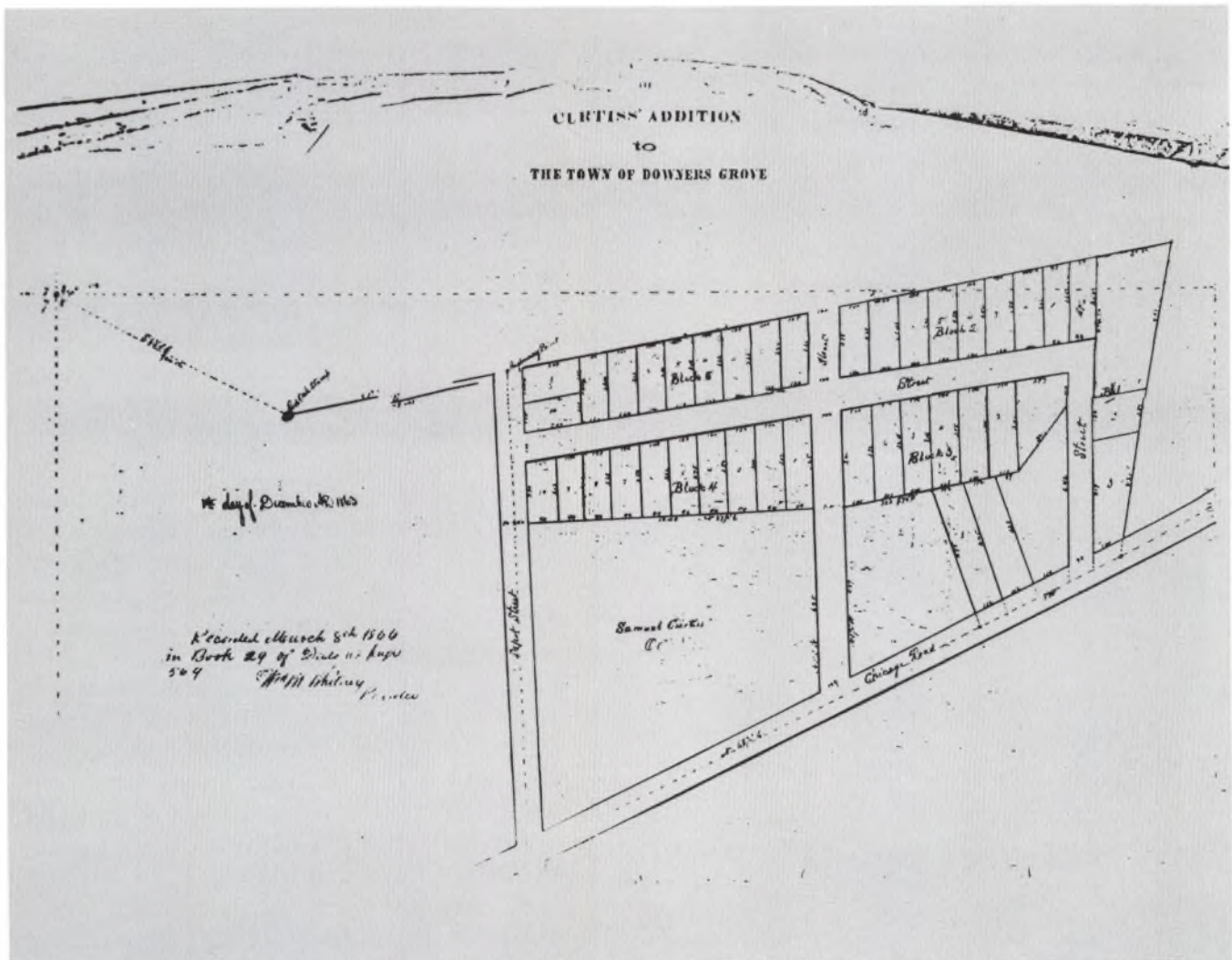
Downer joined his wife in death on the following day. It was a shocking loss to the community which bore their name. Pierce Downer was a leader among the hardy pioneers, not only



Curtiss family. House formerly located at Curtiss and Washington

because he was the first to arrive in this small settlement but also because of his exceptional qualities. He was an agriculturist of an advanced type and a man of broad education and liberal principles. It is said that his library was the largest in this area. He was posted on all public questions but refused to be a candidate for public office. "Because of his reputation for honesty and fairness, he was often made arbiter of disputes arising between early settlers when courts of law were not accessible." As an acknowledged leader, his name had been given to both the township and to the village which grew around the grove.

Their son Elon Downer, accompanied by Warren Rogers, who lived just across the Plank Road, drove their big farm wagon through hub-deep mud to Lombard, the nearest railroad station, where they took the Northwestern train to Chicago to obtain two black walnut caskets and returned home with them.



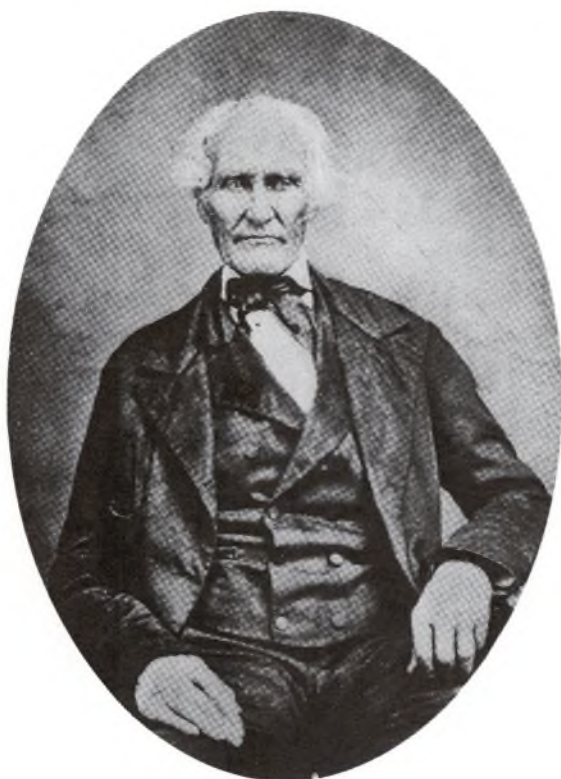
Curtiss Subdivision 1863/1866. The point of reference is the "red Oak stump" (in the center of the intersection of Forest and Curtiss)

At that time there was no bridge across St. Joseph Creek, which lay between the Downer's farmhouse and the Main Street cemetery. The creek, swollen with spring rains, was so high it was impossible to ford so there was no way to cross to the cemetery. Pierce had recognized this with the death of his wife, and he himself had made the decision to bury Lucy on their own farm on the hill where he had spent his first night. Side by side, Pierce Downer and his wife Lucy were laid to rest in the grove on that hill.

Strangely enough, civilian interests were pursued despite the total involvement of the County in the events of the war. For example, the railroad was constructed through Downer's Grove during the peak of war activity. Railways and the telegraph began spanning the continent during the war years to provide easy access through both transportation and communication.

In April of 1862 the Congress abolished slavery in the District of Columbia and a few weeks later prohibited slavery in all existing and future territories of the United States of America. The Fugitive Slave Act was repealed in June of 1864.

"In January of 1864, a resolution for an amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery throughout the United States was introduced in Congress; and about



Pierce Downer (in old age)

a year later, after prolonged discussion, it received the requisite two-thirds vote in both houses. It was sent to the States for consideration, ratified, and put into effect in December, 1865. Thus the verbal emancipation which Lincoln had proclaimed in 1863 under his war power was extended to include all slaves and implemented by the Thirteenth Amendment."

In the Presidential campaign of 1864, Lincoln feared defeat, and for a time the prospects for his re-election looked very bleak. However the Democrats received a majority of votes in only three states. Spurred on by the confidence of the voters in re-electing him, Lincoln pressed on for a conclusion to the war.

On April 3, 1865, the Union flag flew again over the Confederate capital of Richmond, and at Appomattox on April 9th General Robert E. Lee surrendered his sword to General Ulysses S. Grant. Six days later, Abraham Lincoln died a martyr's death on April 15, 1865, at the hands of assassin John Wilkes Booth! In death Lincoln was denied the opportunity to make the peace, to bind up the wounds of war, to reunite the nation.

The word of the President's death travelled swiftly. Dexter Stanley was the only person in his neighborhood who took the *Chicago Tribune*. According to Louise Stanley, when he received the newspaper with the tragic news, "He set out at once to show his copy telling the story of the President's death to his neighbors and many read it with tears in their eyes."

The mourning nation paid tribute as the somber funeral train of Abraham Lincoln made its way slowly back to Illinois. When the train arrived in Chicago, many of the saddened citizens of Downer's Grove made the pilgrimage to pay their last respects.

Frank Rogers and his mother were there, Frank straight and proud in his freshly-cleaned cavalryman's uniform of the Union Army and his mother in her prim black silk dress and bonnet. Thousands of others like them joined in disbelieving grief.

With peace, immigration surged forward. In 1870, 20% of the people of Illinois were foreign-born. By far the largest number were Germans. In Downer's Grove a large group were from Alsace-Lorraine. The village burgeoned with the incoming new settlers along with the returning soldiers from the Union Army. The Civil War soldiers were astonished at the changes in the village while they were off fighting the war. Mrs. Emma Miller remembered how surprised her





Frank Rogers



Dexter Stanley's home. Picture from 1874 Atlas

father was on his return to find Main Street cut through:

“When he left there was no street and no railroad. All the homes were along Maple Avenue then the only artery for through horse traffic. When the railroad was built Main Street was cut through from Maple Avenue to the tracks.”

And in 1865 Main Street went only as far north as the railroad tracks.

After the war, merchants and businessmen set up new businesses and enlarged the old ones to meet the needs of the community. Many business and professional men began to ride the new Burlington commuter train into Chicago to their businesses and offices in the city.

The farmers went back to tilling their crops and increasing their stock. Many farm products, or at least those of a bulky nature, such as grain, were hauled to Chicago to save the cost of shipping. Chicago was a growing market for hay and grain. Business and pleasure moved by horse power, and horses had to have grain to eat and straw on which to sleep. This traffic involved a

constant caravan of loaded wagons entering the city from all directions and empty ones leaving it. The farmer usually started with his load early in the night to arrive in the city by morning. He then drove up and down the city streets until a prospective buyer would hail him. After bargaining on price, the farmer would drive to the buyer's stable or barn and unload. While there were established markets and commission houses, this method of direct sales was more profitable.

The late summer and early fall of 1871 were uncommonly dry. Crops had suffered, and farmers had “been hard pressed to find water for their stock.” A gale of unusual violence from the southwest blew steadily for several days and nights in the early part of October. On the night of Sunday, October 8th, 1871, the villagers of Downer's Grove noted a strange orange glow in the eastern sky. It could mean only one thing! **FIRE TO THE EAST!**

It was shortly after nine o'clock that Sunday evening when the lamp was upset which was to kindle the fire which swept Chicago. The little hay-filled stable was soon engulfed in flames. By the time the alarm could be sounded, two or three other small buildings were ablaze, and within 5 minutes the entire neighborhood in the vicinity of DeKoven and Jefferson Streets “was blazing like a huge bonfire.”

An eyewitness in the city reported.

“As a spectacle, it was beyond doubt the grandest as well as the most appalling ever offered to mortal eyes. From any elevated standpoint, the appearance was that of a vast ocean of flame, sweeping in mile-long billows and breakers over the doomed city.”

Added to the spectacular elements of conflagration—the intense and lurid light, the sea of red and black, and the spires and pyramids of flame shooting into the heavens—was its constant and terrible roar, drowning even the voices of the shrieking multitude. There were rapid detonations of explosions, or of falling walls . . . The earth on which the city stands was shaken by each shock. At 3:00 o'clock in the morning the great gasometer exploded with a thundering sound. About the same hour the great bell of the courthouse fell.”

The farmers and villagers for miles around watched throughout the night with horror and sorrow. The sky grew brighter with the dreadful light until in later years it was often said, “You could read a newspaper by its light!”

The light in the sky from the Chicago fire awakened Benjamin Prentiss and his wife in



Chicago Fire October 8, 1871

their farmhouse on the south side of Downer's Grove. They realized at once that the glowing sky in the east could be only an enormous fire in Chicago. They got up and set about to do what they could to help. Mrs. Prentiss built a fire in the kitchen stove and began to bake and cook while Benjamin Prentiss loaded a wagon with bedding and other supplies. At dawn he started for Chicago along with many others who were taking supplies to help the people who were burned out of their homes.

The people of Downer's Grove had reason to be anxious for many of them had businesses in Chicago. Captain T.S. Rogers owned a meat market at State and Adams which was levelled as the fire swept through the business section of the city. The fire burned on through Monday morning until it finally burned itself out as if it were spent with the mammoth destruction it had wrought.



Benjamin Prentiss Family

Frank Rogers, concerned over the fate of the business of his brother and "a desire to learn first hand the conditions of the stricken city which he knew so well, decided to take a train from Downer's Grove station to take him as close as possible to the still burning city." Aghast at the enormity of the total devastation, Frank returned to his farm that afternoon. He had confirmed that his brother's business was a total loss, and he had seen the frightened, tired faces of thousands of people stunned with their losses.

Many Chicago residents fled to the prairies west of town and were sheltered by the hospitable residents of the neighboring suburbs. It is not written, but it is probable that the people of Downer's Grove opened their homes to their friends and relatives of Chicago. It is a matter of record, however, that after Frank Roger's return the people of Downer's Grove gathered provisions and clothing to contribute to the people of Chicago. On the night of October 10, 1871, Warren Rogers, the third of the Rogers brothers, and his partner Hiram Hall loaded a double wagon with the contributions and personally drove it to Chicago. Years later there still stood on the loading platform of a hardware store in the Village of Downer's Grove what once had been a keg of old-fashioned cut nails, welded into a solid mass, yet each nail distinct in outline; and beside this mass lay what had been a case of 8 x 10 window glass, fused like a green cake of ice, yet each pane of glass distinct in outline. These relics were obtained after the fire from the site of a wholesale house in Chicago.

People from all over the world joined to help Chicago in her rebuilding. Almost miraculously a city arose from the ashes to be bigger and better than before. As with many others, Captain T.S. Rogers rebuilt his meat market and continued his business in Chicago for over 25 years, though he continued to live in Downers Grove.

The village in the early 1870's had a population of about 350, and many of the residents felt the time had come to incorporate as a Village. Others were reluctant to support this incorporation because they feared "the taxes and regulations a new city would provide." Men like T.S. Rogers who were so highly-respected led the effort to convince the people of the advantages of the incorporation of the village.

In 1873 the residents who felt that the village should have a government, drew up and presented the following petition:

“To the Honorable M.C. Dudley  
County Judge of DuPage County, Illinois

The undersigned legal voters in the county of DuPage and the State of Illinois, and residing upon and within the territory hereinafter described, being desirous of incorporating as a village under Article 11 of an act entitled *An Act For The Incorporation of Cities and Villages*, approved April 10, 1871, certain contiguous territory situated, lying and being in said Township of Downers Grove, and known and described as follows—to wit:

All of section 8 and the east half of section 7, in Township 38, north range 11, east of the third principal meridian:

Would respectfully represent unto your Honor that the above territory is not now included within the limits of any incorporated town, village, or city, and that it has resident thereon a population of three hundred and fifty inhabitants.

Now therefore in view of the foregoing facts, and representations, your petitioners would respectfully petition your Honor to cause the question to be submitted to the legal voters resident upon and within the limits of said territory proposed to be incorporated as aforesaid, whether they will organize under said act or not.

The said village to be incorporated shall be known and designated by the name of Downers Grove,”

Signed:

D.K. Foote	D. Klein
D. Kimball	James M. Barr
Charles Curtiss	B. Randall
E.S. Beardsley	T. Popenhausen
Lester Hunt	A.B. Austin
E. Thatcher	Austin Richards
D.D. Escher	A.L. Loomis
J.W. Rogers	D.S. Richards
L.H.L. Wilcox	L. Havens
Thos. Lyman	J. Wood
F.R. Rogers	A.E. Crittenden
Thos. C. Marsh	U. Balcom
E.W. Farrar	S.C. Schofield
Charles Carpenter	R.C. Bates
O.C. Gibbs	Harmon
T.S. Rogers	. . . Goodenough
I.N. Hobart	J.H. Hill
J.H. Lyman	Israel L. Blackburn
John Stanley	Edward Goodenough

On Saturday, March 29, 1873, an order was issued by the court that an election be held at the office of Warren Rogers which was on the east side of Main Street, north of Railroad Street. “It seems safe to assume that nearly every voter in the proposed village registered his opinion at the election.”

Harriet Strong wrote,

“Old settlers who remember the election say it was hotly contested for weeks and the result was not known until the ballots were counted.

The following votes were cast:

For organization	49
Against organization	38
Majority	11

whereupon Judge M.C. Dudley issued a certificate of incorporation at Naperville, March 31, 1873. Attested by J.J. Cole, Clerk of the County Court.

The first ordinances were regulations for orderly behavior, forbidding unseemly nuisances and noisy disturbances of the peace. For example, one section ‘Forbade the annoyance of others on Sunday by dancing, fiddling, singing songs, jumping, drilling, skating, running foot races, racing horses, playing ball, ten pins, billiards, cards, marbles, or other games, wrestling, or boxing, pitching quoits, fishing, hunting, or any amusement of like nature’ and provided for a fine of not less than ten dollars.”

At an election for Officers in the Village of Downers Grove County of DuPage, and State of Illinois held in pursuance of an act entitled “An Act to provide for the incorporation of Cities and Villages” the several persons afterwards mentioned were certified by the Judges of said election as being duly elected which certificate of said Judges of said election is in words and figures as follows:

To Wit:

At an election held in the office of J.W. Rogers in the Village of Downers Grove County of DuPage



J. Warren Rogers Building — where village election of 1873 was held

State of Illinois on the fifteenth (15) day of April in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy-three (1873)—the following named persons received the number of votes awarded to their respective names for the following offices.

To Wit:

**FOR VILLAGE TRUSTEES**

	<i>Votes Received</i>
T.S. Rogers	Eighty-four (84)
A.B. Faul	Eighty-four (84)
E. Thatcher	Eighty-four (84)
John Stanley	Eighty-three (83)
Charles B. Blodgett	Eighty-one (81)
Henry Carpenter	Forty (40)
O.C. Gibbs	Thirty (30)
Thos. Lyman	Thirteen (13)
I.L. Blackburn	Two (2)
Austin Richards	One (1)
Vallentine Wetten	One (1)
Joseph Heintzman	One (1)

**FOR POLICE MAGISTRATE**

Charles Curtiss—Received Eighty-four Votes  
 E.S. Beardsley—Received One Vote

**FOR VILLAGE CLERK**

Durand Kimball—Received Thirty Votes  
 E.W. Farrar—Received Fifty four Votes

**CLERKS OF ELECTION**

Signed: J.M. Barr  
 Chas. B. Blodgett

**JUDGES OF THE ELECTION**

Signed: Jno. Stanley  
 Chas. Curtiss  
 J.W. Rogers

First Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Downers Grove April 26th

Present:

- Jno. Stanley
- T.S. Rogers
- H. Carpenter
- A.B. Faul
- C.B. Blodgett
- E. Thatcher

Attest:

E.W. Farrar, Clerk

Meeting called to order. H. Carpenter appointed chairman (Pro Tem)

Balloting for President was next in order—which resulted in the election T.S. Rogers President of the board of Trustees of the Village of Downers Grove.

On motion the Clerk was instructed to process necessary corporate deal also Blank Book in which the records of the Village shall be kept. On motion the meeting was adjourned to meet Wednesday April 30 1873 at 7:30 P.M.

Attest—E.W. Farrar—Clerk

As indicated above, Captain T.S. Rogers was elected President of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Downers Grove at the first meeting of the Board on April 26th, 1873, and served in that capacity for fourteen years.

Captain Rogers had come to Downers Grove as a 13-year-old boy in 1844 when his father,



1874 map of Village of Downers Grove from DuPage County Atlas

Joseph Ives Rogers, migrated from St. Lawrence County, New York, to settle on land north of the old Southwest Highway (presently Ogden Avenue) with his wife and their three sons, Theodore S., J. Warren, and Frank S.

T.S. said he remembered well that difficult trip and the early days in Illinois. He attended school until he was 17 and began teaching at 19

years of age in Glen Ellyn where he was paid \$13 a month and board among the people of the district. His second school was in Lisle; and then during the winters of 1851 through 1854 he taught in Downers Grove.

Rogers bought a threshing machine in the fall of 1851 and threshed during the season for eight years. In 1853 he bought a farm a mile and a half east of Downers Grove, settled on it, and continued to teach school during the winter.

Perhaps he bought the farm with an eye to the future, for on December 13, 1855, Helen Stanley, the daughter of Dexter and Nancy Capron Stanley, and T.S. Rogers were married. His teaching extended over 13 years, the last year in 1864-65 in Downers Grove after his service in the Civil War.

Rogers became an active participant in the first Republican campaign in 1856. As one of the organizers and Captain of the Plowboys, the young political rally group, Captain Rogers was one of the original Abe Lincoln Republicans and gave his hearty support in 1860. Upon his election as Sheriff of DuPage County, he was required to move to Naperville, where he lived until he went to war.

He received his commission as Captain from Governor Richard Yates on July 9, 1862, and recruited the company which formed the 105th Illinois Volunteer Infantry along with the other three companies from DuPage and six companies from DeKalb.

After the Atlanta campaign T.S. Rogers resigned his commission to return home and resume his duties as Sheriff. He "faithfully discharged the duties of that office, until he had the affairs in good order and resigned on July 1, 1866, to go into the market and provision business in Chicago."

Not only was his business burned out in the Great Fire of Chicago of 1871, but he also survived being burned out of a second location. Despite these great losses Rogers continued in the meat and provision business in Chicago for 38 years to the day.

With the exception of the short time he lived in Naperville, Rogers lived in Downers Grove his entire adult life. In 1869 he built his beautiful home, in which he took great pride.

J. Warren Rogers, a brother of T.S., was chosen as the Treasurer of the Village and served for many years. He also served as a member of the first Board of Review of DuPage County,



J. Warren Rogers

Tax Collector for Downers Grove, Township Trustee for 12 years, and Chairman of the Township School Board for 6 years. Warren had also taught school in Downers Grove for a time, though to a large degree he was self-taught. He bought 40 acres north of Downers Grove in 1856, and after his marriage to Mary Francis Freeman lived there until 1864. When he went into the lumber business, he sold the farm and bought two and a half acres in Downers Grove where his home stood for many years next to his brother's, Captain Rogers, on Warren Avenue just north of the CB&Q Railroad tracks.

The first sidewalk was ordered to be laid on the north side of Maple in October 1873. This wooden walk, four feet wide and built of two-inch planks, was laid in front of the properties of A.D. Freeman, Frank R. Rogers, the Methodist parsonage at the northeast corner of Belden and Maple, Ed Goodenough, and Woolcotts. The sidewalk extended also on the north side of Maple from Sam Curtiss' property to the northeast corner of Main Street.

About this time Main Street was extended south of Maple Avenue; and in July, 1874, Grove Street was ordered cut through to Carpenter. The damages paid the landowners for Grove Street were:

Philip Noll	\$50.00
Henry Carpenter	7.60
M. Hoffert	6.80
Charles Curtiss	14.40

In the next few years much of the business of the Village Board was concerned with building of sidewalks for the convenience of the residents. Sidewalks were built at the expense of the property owner but kept in repair by the Village.

In the summer of 1873, a small boy who was to

become perhaps the most distinguished citizen to come from the Village moved to Downers Grove with his family. Jimmy Breasted was 8 years old when his father Charles bought a seven-acre tract in Downers Grove, which he named "The Pines." Charles Breasted built a modest home on the tree-lined road called North Main Street (now Highland Avenue), and this is where Jimmy Breasted spent his boyhood.

At "The Pines" the Breasted family lived the happiest, most peaceful years they would ever spend together. Jimmy grew up during those years when Downers Grove was growing as a new Village. His boyhood was probably very typical of many of the other young boys who grew up in Downers Grove in the 1870's and 1880's.

"He milked a cow, looked after a horse, weeded the garden, collected birds' eggs and butterflies and helped raise asparagus for the South Water Street Market in Chicago. He designed and flew kites better than any other boy in the village and he learned to play the flute."

James Breasted received his early education in the two-room schoolhouse on the site of the present Lincoln Center where the James Henry Breasted Memorial Auditorium was dedicated on November 9, 1980, to honor this world-renowned archaeologist, Egyptologist, historian, linguist, writer, and founder of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. The impressive dedication ceremony was the culmination of the persistent efforts by Marjorie Wyman, public relations chairman of the Historical Society and long-time School Board secretary of Districts #58 and #99, to honor James Henry Breasted in the Village of his boyhood and youth. The memorial was dedicated on the 100th anniversary of his graduation from that two-room school!

Breasted said, "I attended the little red schoolhouse until I was fifteen and then my parents sent me to Northwestern College (now North Central College) in Naperville." During his freshman year he studied chemistry and botany and then worked at Rochelle, Illinois, in the pharmacy of his brother-in-law, a druggist named Walter Clement Powell. The following year he worked in the pharmacy of W. S. Carpenter, Downers Grove Drug Store, at the corner of Main and Curtiss Streets and continued at Northwestern College where he began to study Latin.

With his career direction set toward being a pharmacist, James attended the Chicago Col-

lege of Pharmacy for four years from 1882 to 1886 and then took a job with Walter Powell in his pharmacy in Omaha.

During this year James made his decision to enter the ministry. As a boy in Downers Grove he had attended the Congregational Church with his mother and father so when he decided to enter the ministry he enrolled in the Congregational Institute in Chicago (later the Chicago Theological Seminary). At the seminary he began to study Hebrew and embarked on his career as a scholar of the antiquities.



James Henry Breasted

Downers Grove, and indeed the world, was to hear much more of James Breasted.

The settlement of Downers Grove gained an identity with the incorporation of the Village and continued to grow, with the railroad service of the CB&Q having a major influence on the people who were moving to the Grove.

An article in *Chicago Evening Journal* of September 16, 1873, reported that the Village of Downers Grove was becoming a "favorite place of residence for Chicago people." Many of the



Dedication of James Breasted Auditorium. L to R: Jan Kopis; Dr. Donald Frost; Carolyn Livingood; Ardith Thygesen; Marjorie Wyman; Jon Council at Lincoln Center

CB&Q employees who rode the railroad daily from Aurora to Chicago, selected Downers Grove in which to make their homes as the most attractive of the villages along the railroad. According to this reporter, twenty-five new buildings had gone up in the Village during the previous twelve months, new bridges were constructed over ravines, and several miles of sidewalks had been built. Among the CB&Q employees who became residents of the Village were: A.A. Johnson, Lost-Car Agent; J.W. Tucker, conductor; Mr. Jewell, engineer; T.C. Marsh of the General Freight Office; D. Kimball, Private Secretary of General Supt. Harris; S.C. Annable, Car-Accountant; and B.F. Lewis and F.E. Hinckley in the office of the Chicago and Iowa Railroad.

The following Chicago businessmen also chose to live in Downers Grove: O.C. Gibbs, real-estate dealer; Charles Carpenter, short-hand reporter; James H. Hill, dealer in hay and grain; Robert Meadowcroft, banker; T.S. Roberts, dealer in meats; Dr. S.C. Otis, veterinary surgeon; Mr.

Whiffin of the American Express Company; Mr. Crittenden of Holister & Company Carpets; Hodgman Brothers, manufacturers of brick; R.R. Rogers, attorney; E.S. Wheeler with Schwab, McQuaid & Company; Thomas and John H. Lyman, real estate dealers; John Holland, publisher; Charles Hobart of the Telegraphy Supply Manufactor; and N.K. Whitney, O. Whitney, Mr. Wilcox and Benjamin Randall, commission dealers.

Another author described the Village in 1874 as having 90 dwelling houses, some of which were very good, three general stores, a meat market, a coal and lumber yard, a drug store, a two-story brick schoolhouse, four organized churches, and a fine hotel.

The Atlas of 1874 listed the PATRON'S DIRECTORY OF DOWNERS GROVE TOWNSHIP, with the address, date of arrival in DuPage County, their birthplaces and occupations. This is not a complete list of residents but rather a list of those who made a contribution to the publication of the Atlas:

NAME	RESIDENCE	DATE TO CO.	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION
A.B. Austin	D.G.	1844	New York	Nurseryman
Thos. Austin	D.G. Cass	1844	New York	Farmer
Thos. Andrus	Lemont	1835	Vermont	Farmer
Tobias Atzel	D.G.	1836	France	Farmer
Burgess Austin	D.G.	1844	Mass.	Ret. Farmer
Ahaz Blodgett	D.G. Gower	1842	N.H.	Farmer
C.B. Blodgett	D.G.	1840	Ill. (?)	Farmer
E.S. Beardsley	D.G.	1865	New York	Pro. Beardsleys House
I.F. Briggs	D.G.	1858	New York	Butcher
J.M. Barr	D.G.	1857	New York	Insurance Agent
I.L. Blackburn	D.G.	1866	Kentucky	Gardner
Philip Bohlander	D.G. PO/Hins	1865	Ill.	Farmer
Charles Bockman	D.G. Gower	1845	Germany	Farmer
D.O. Cole	D.G.	1865	New York	Farmer
D.W. Crescy	D.G.	1854	Vermont	Clerk
P.O. Curtis	D.G.	1836	Vermont	Farmer
Charles Curtis	D.G.	1836	Vermont	Police Mag. & Farmer
E.E. Downer	D.G.	1836	New York	Farmer
E.A. Davis	D.G.	1870	Vermont	Bridge Builder
James Drew	Cass	1848	England	Farmer
W.P. Dunn	D.G. Cass	1860	England	Farmer
Christian Dahnke	D.G. Gower	1852	Germany	Farmer
D.D. Escher	D.G.	1842	Illinois	Merchant
D.K. Foote	D.G.	1869	DG (?)	Ret.
F.B. Faul	D.G.	1842	New York	Merchant
E.W. Farrar	D.G.	1835	Ill.	Agt. CB&Q RR
George Fix	D.G.	1853	France	Farmer
John R. Fuller	D.G. (Flrsbg)	1835	Ill.	Dairyman & Farmer
John Fleming	D.G. Gower	1842	Ireland	Farmer
A.S. Gager	D.G.	1851	New York	Meat Market
J.W. Goewy	D.G.	1871	New York	Farmer
John Holland	D.G.	1870	England	Directory Publisher
M. Hofert	D.G.	1858	France	Harness Shop
James Hill	D.G.	1855	Vermont	Grain & Hay Dealer
Geo. Huxhold	D.G. Gower	1851	Germany	Blacksmith
Jacob Jeans	D.G. Gower	1852	England	Farmer
John Klein	D.G.	1854	France	Farmer
Matthias Klein	D.G.	1854	France	Farmer

Atlas of 1874  
Patron's Directory of DuPage County

NAME	RESIDENCE	DATE TO CO.	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION
David Kline	D.G.	1854	France	Merchant
O. Kinyon	D.G.	1843	New York	Farmer
Henry M. Lyman	D.G.	1839	New York	Farmer
Thos. Lyman	D.G.	1839	New York	Real Estate
John H. Lyman	D.G.	1839	Ohio	Real Estate
Philip Leonard	(DG) Lyonsville	1836	France	Farmer
Hector Lyon	D.G. Cass	1845	New Jersey	Farmer
Jacob B. Miller	D.G.	1844	Penn.	Hotel & Saloon
J.B. Mackie	D.G. Cass	1857	Scotland	Farmer
Christian Mihm	D.G. Gower	1849	Germany	Stock Dealer & Farmer
Chas. A. Mihm	D.G. Gower	1849	Ill. (?)	Stock Dealer & Farmer
Louis Marwitz	D.G. Gower	1870	Germany	Farmer
Wm. Oldfield	D.G. Gower	1850	England	Farmer
John Oldfield	Lemont	1849	England	Cattle Broker
Fred Papenhausen	D.G.	1871	Germany	Merchant Tailor
Isaac Pool	D.G.	1865	Virginia	Farmer
Frederick Peters	D.G.	1844	France	Farmer
G. Frederick Prescott	D.G.	1852	Germany	Farmer
Henry Pantke	D.G.	1860	Germany	Farmer
Benjamin Prentiss	D.G.	1837	Canada	Farmer
J.W. Rogers	D.G.	1844	New York	Hardware, Agricultural/ Implements, & Coal & Lbr.
T.S. Rogers	D.G.	1844	New York	Dir. in Provisions, Chicago
F.A. Rogers	D.G.	1844	New York	Farmer
Austin Richards	D.G.	1855	New York	Farmer
F.M. Roe	D.G.	1851	Kentucky	Physician & Surgeon
Anthony Rohmer	D.G. Cass	1843	France	Farmer
Lewis Strouse	D.G.	1846	Penn.	Hdwr. & Agri Implement
J.W. Sucher	D.G.	1847	Kentucky	Blacksmith
Elisha Smart	DG—Lemont	1838	England	Farmer
John Schuster	DG—Gower	1854	Alsace	Farmer
Warren Smith	D.G.	?	Mass.	Stock Dealer & Farmer
D.C. Stanley	D.G.	1835	Penn.	Farmer
E. Thatcher	D.G.	1840	Penn.	Postmaster & Merchant
John A. Thatcher	D.G.	1845	Penn.	Farmer
Abraham Wells	D.G. Cass	1860	England	Farmer

Rufus Blanchard in *The History of DuPage County* listed the following public officials from the Downers Grove area;

**Those who served the County  
in the State Legislature:**

1870-William M. Whitney  
1874-V. Fredenhagen

**County Clerks**

1869-76-J.J. Cole

**Sheriffs**

1860-61 T.S. Rogers

**County Judges**

1839-J.W. Walker  
1853-59-Walter Blanchard

**Co. Supt. of Schools**

1876-81-J.R. Haggard

**County Commissioners**

1839-J.W. Walker  
1840-J.W. Walker  
1841-J.W. Walker

**Supervisors Town of Downers Grove**

1850-Leonard K. Hatch  
1851-53-Walter Blanchard  
1854-G.W. Alderman  
1855-Walter Blanchard  
1856-Seth F. Daniels  
1857-Samuel DeGolyer  
1858-61-Leonard K. Hatch  
1862-L.D. Fuller

**Supervisors**

1864-J.A. Thatcher  
1865-T.S. Rogers  
1866-68-J.J. Cole  
1869-J.J. Cole  
1870-Alanson Ford  
1871-72-V. Fredenhagen



1873-H.F. Walker  
1874-75-V. Fredenhagen  
1875-76-Alanson Ford  
1876-77-Alanson Ford  
1877-82-Charles Curtiss

The activities of the Village centered around the churches, school, and a few social groups, with the churches being the most influential institution in the community. One Sunday it was reported that "The Downer's Grove Baptists were treated to a genuine Calvinistic sermon." The preacher awakened a great deal of curiosity when he said that there were "in the congregation today two persons whom he had baptized about 27 years ago, whom he had watched over for many years with feelings of sadness." Speculation was rampant in the Village to know who they were, "as Downer's Grove claimed to be quite a moral little Village."

One evening the Downer's Grove Literary Association presented a program including the readings of Miss Louise Fuller, "a young lady of rare elocutionary abilities, who has a bright future before her." The program was long and varied, covering a wide scope of literature, with music by the Thatcher quartet. The Literary Association announced that their program on the following Friday evening would be the "ancient mariner", Captain Sam Whitney, who would deliver his lecture on the North Pole Expedition. The admission for that program would be 15 and 20 cents.

Another active group was the Adelphi Literary Society. Their program at one meeting included the Adelphi quartet and an elaborate essay by Miss Ella Fox. Mr. Norman Whitney spoke using the text "Faith, Hope and Charity" but "dwelt almost too long on the latter virtue" according to the report of the meeting. Frank Puffer, President of the Society, sang the dialect solo, "Dot Liddle Yarmon Home Across the Sea", and Miss Hattie Whitney read a selection full of beautiful thoughts. Professor J.K. Rassweiler demonstrated his considerable ability as an elocutionist with the rendition of "Tom's Courtship".

Professor Rassweiler had come to Downers Grove as a teacher in 1876 after his graduation from Northwestern College (now North Central college in Naperville). He became Superintendent of the Downers Grove Schools and was most influential in the building of an excellent educa-

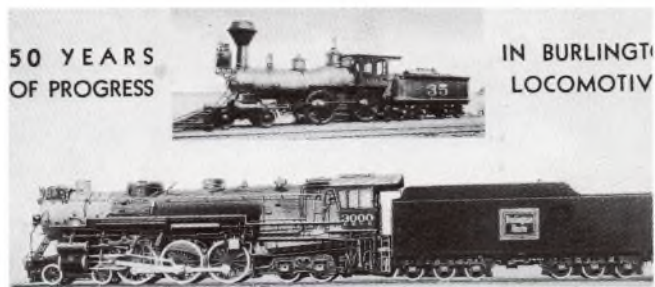
tional program and as an educator affecting the lives of the many men and women of Downers Grove who attended the schools here in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The first newspaper in the Village was printed in 1875, a three-column folio 19 x 18 inches, the Downers Grove News\*, edited by D.W. Crescy. (Note that the Downers Grove News spelled Downers Grove without the apostrophe.)

In a copy of Volume 2, No. 23, of the News there is a list of the businesses and professions in Downers Grove in the Fall of 1875:

E. Thatcher, Postmaster  
M.S. Rice, M.D., Physician & Surgeon  
Dr. E.H. LeDuc, Physician & Surgeon  
Dr. J.R. Haggard, Physician & Surgeon  
C. Smith, Maker & repairer of wagons & carriages  
J.M. Barr, Real estate & Insurance Business  
J.S. DeBolt & Co., Cisterns, wells & all kinds of earth work  
Kline & LaSalle, General Merchandising Establishment  
E.S. Beardsley & J.B. Miller, Advertised "Superior accommodations for the travelling public"  
F. Blanchard, Proprietor of a steam planing & feed mill  
J.W. Sucher, *Just* moved into his new brick blacksmith shop at the corner of Main St. & Maple where he is still located  
J.W. Rogers & Co., Coal Delivery  
A.B. Austin, Nursery Stock & Green House Plants Guaranteed to grow  
Wm. J. Beidelman, Furniture Dealer and Undertaker  
W.C. Powell, Druggist and Jeweler  
E. Thatcher, General Merchandise Business (since 1856)  
D. Dissenger, Tonsorial Artist

\*Note - Two issues of the Downers Grove News are on file in the Downers Grove Historical Museum.



# THE DOWNERS GROVE NEWS

VOL. 2.

SATURDAY, NOV. 13, 1875.

No. 28.

## THE DOWNERS GROVE NEWS

Is published every Saturday at Downers Grove, Ill., at 75 cents for the year, payable in advance. Single copies, 2 cents.

RATES OF ADVERTISING: One square (1 inch,) fifty cents for first insertion, 25c each insertion thereafter. Transient advertising to be paid for strictly in advance.

D. W. CRESCY, Proprietor.

Office at Post Office.

### Dedication.

The Congregational church, in town of DuPage, Will County—more familiarly known as Rev. J. G. Porter's church—has recently been remodeled and repaired at an expense of eighteen hundred dollars, and was dedicated October 24th. The dedication sermon was preached by Rev. Mr. Porter, the pastor. The words selected, as a foundation sermon of his remarks, are found in Hagga 2d, 9th verse: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." The sermon occupied the attention of the entire audience, and was every way worthy of the occasion.

Mr. H. C. Leland, of Chicago, who organized and successfully conducted a chorus class here two years ago, will meet his friends, on Tuesday, Nov. 23rd, at the Baptist church, and will organize two classes, if desired, one of beginners and one advanced class. Of Mr. Leland's qualifications we need say nothing, as his reputation is well established and anything we could say would only be superfluous.

—The Cornet Band were out in force Tuesday evening, and serenaded Mr. D. K. Foote, it being the occasion of the Congregational Soiree at his house. The boys were invited in and treated with great cordiality, and then cited to Mr. Powell's drug store where the segars were set out for those who enjoyed the luxury—all enjoyed.

—The wife of the Hon. James C. Claffin died at Grand Ridge, Neb., Nov. 3rd, 1875, on her way home from California, where she had been to try the healing qualities of that climate, but it was too late. Mrs. Claffin was highly esteemed, and her death will be sincerely mourned.

CHORUS.—Tuesday, Nov. 23rd—2 classes—beginning from 7 to 8, advanced from 8 to 9.30 p. m., at Baptist church. One meeting a week.

H. C. LELAND, Leader.

### Sudden Thoughts.

Honesty and happiness seem to be alike in this particular—those who have the most of either seem to make the least fuss about it.

Envy seems to be a disease that everybody has and everybody is ashamed of.

Adversity puts weapons into a man's hands to fight back, while prosperity too often disarms him.

Virtue and vice are so adroitly mingled in some constitutions that the man himself can't tell which is who.

It is more difficult to keep a friend than it is to reconcile an enemy.

The most dangerous of all flattery is the very common kind that we bestow upon ourselves.

Although love is blind it can't be fettered; it has enslaved thousands, but won't be enslaved itself.

We are never more than half as miserable as we think we are.

Broken hearts are scarce anyhow, and there are more cures for them than most any complaint I know of.

If a man is only true to himself it will be very difficult for others to overreach him.

Heroes, like Fourth of July orations, are often made to order.

A success seems to be composed of three ingredients, to-wit: good luck, energy and some more good luck.

Some folks don't seem to have any faculty to get ahead only by hanging on to the coat-tails of others; this may be honest but it is poor.

There is nothing perhaps that shows the veneration we all have for money more than the fact that the wealth of others is always overrated.

Virtue seems to thrive the best on poor soil; where the ground is very rich, if it ain't well hoed, there is sure to be two weeds to one corn.

The man who undertakes to do two things at once will be pretty sure to spill one and slop over the other.

Don't be discouraged if your children don't prove to be young miracles; plants of the slowest growth bear fruit the latest.

I would rather trust most men with my pocket-book than with a secret.

Lazy people are a great pest. They are as bad as flies, always getting into somebody's cream or molasses.

There is no grapes so sour as those we can't reach—Esop says so.

I don't care how cunning a man may be he will find it much easier to cheat himself than it is other folks.

An affected fool is a great deal more uncomfortable to meet than a natural one.

He who plays a poor hand well is entitled to more credit than he who wins with a good one.

It is the intention that makes a thing good, bad or indifferent, without any regard to the result.

It is often hard to distinguish between praise and flattery; the one may be honest, the other never is. Honest praise will strengthen any man, but flattery will weaken anything except a mule.

I know lots of folks who have got just brains enough to spoil them. If they had less they might possibly amount to something.

Weak men are the hardest kind to control. They have no more backbone than an angleworm.

It is very seldom we see a man who is too much for the business he is engaged in, but quite common to see the business too much for him.

Success is too often the only real merit that can be found in a performance.

I don't care how much brains a woman may have, there's lots of times in her life that she would-be willing to swap them all off for beauty.—N. Y. Weekly.

### NOTICE.

ALL PERSONS FEELING DESIROUS of having the Narrow Gauge R. R. pass through Downers Grove, are requested to meet at the Hardware Store of [Name] at 1 o'clock p. m., to take necessary action in the matter. A full attendance of property owners is desired.

### DAN MILLER'S

BAKERY & CONFECTIONERY STORE. Keeps constantly on hand a large variety of CHOICE CANDIES, FRUITS, NUTS, and CIGARS. Also, SARDINES, MILLER'S CAVE, and A. BOOTH'S FRESH OYSTERS. n28-6m.

FOR SALE. I HAVE TWO LUMBER and one 3-Spring Wagon, that I will sell at a bargain, and on favorable terms. Apply to PETER WERTZ. 2w.

### For Sale or Rent.

I OFFER MY HOUSE AND LOT, ON Carpenter Street, for Sale or Rent, on reasonable terms. Good rooms, pleasant location, and in a desirable part of the village. Inquire of undersigned, n28-4w. FRANCIS MILLER.

BURGLAR ALARM—CHEAP. SAFE. Durable, and Reliable, for sale by n28m-1. E. W. FARRAR.

### Mrs. Sievert,

### FASHIONABLE MILLINER.

Will offer to the ladies of Downers Grove and vicinity a large and carefully selected stock of Millinery Goods which will be sold at prices that will defy competition.

All kinds of Milliner Work done with Neatness and Celerity.

One door north of Baptist's hardware Store, MAIN STREET, DOWNERS GROVE.

Brigs & Bartle, Meat & Dried Bologna  
 F. Papenhauson, Clothing Store  
 E.W. Farrar, "Accommodating Agent of the  
 Railway"

(There were nine trains and two mails each way per day)

The Village of Downers Grove prospered with the increasing value of land, the fine transportation into and out of Chicago afforded by the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad, and the modern progress of the facilities of the Village. The real estate developers arrived.

General A.C. Ducat, a Civil War veteran, settled in Downers Grove and invested largely in its real estate. In 1885, he owned some 800 acres which were described as "splendid grove land, whose picturesque loveliness is not surpassed anywhere on this continent." General Ducat lived as a country gentleman with his family in an elegant home surrounded by lofty trees. Born in 1830 in Glengarry, County Dublin, Ireland, in a house called *Turvey Place*, General Ducat was educated in Ireland and migrated to the United States where he served in the Union Army. After the war he became an insurance magnate in Chicago. He bought a tract of land in 1870 at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, where he organized a yachting club, and then eventually he bought the 800 acres in Downers Grove.

Marshall Field, who also bought a large acreage in Downers Grove, and A.C. Ducat were close friends. The home of the caretaker for the Marshall Field estate, previously the home of David Kline, was on present-day Prairie Avenue, however facing south rather than the street. (The house still stands, in beautiful condition, currently facing Prairie and occupied by the Lowell Bollingers.)

General Ducat subdivided land south of 55th Street and east of Main Street. He wanted to make a model town of Downers Grove and offered in 1885 to put in a water system if the Village Board of Trustees would remove the front yard fences. The Village Board declined his offer.

An interesting description of the Village life in 1885 is presented in a booklet entitled *Downers Grove, Illinois on the C.B. & Q, One of Chicago's Finest Suburbs . . .* Since this booklet was prepared to persuade city dwellers to move to the suburbs, the emphasis on the most positive aspects of the Village is not surprising.

**Nov. 13, 1875**  
**Advertisement in the**  
**"DOWNERS GROVE NEWS"**

**Timetable, C.B. & Q. Railroad**

TRAINS	Lv. DOWNER'S GROVE	Ar. IN CHICAGO
Downer's Grove Acc.	6:10 A.M.	7:30 A.M.
Aurora Passenger	6:47 A.M.	8:15 A.M.
Aurora Passenger	7:40 A.M.	8:55 A.M.
Mendota Passenger	8:44 A.M.	9:55 A.M.
Downer's Grove Acc.	12:50 P.M.	2:05 P.M.
Dubuque Express	2:27 P.M.	3:40 P.M.
Downer's Grove Acc.	4:00 P.M.	5:25 P.M.
Day Express	6:22 P.M.	7:40 P.M.
Sunday Passenger	8:47 A.M.	10:00 A.M.

TRAINS	Lv. CHICAGO	Ar. IN DOWNER'S GROVE
Mail	7:30 A.M.	8:45 A.M.
Dubuque Express	9:25 A.M.	10:41 A.M.
Downer's Grove Acc.	11:00 A.M.	12:20 P.M.
Downer's Grove Acc.	1:45 P.M.	3:05 P.M.
Aurora Passenger	3:15 P.M.	4:32 P.M.
Mendota Passenger	4:20 P.M.	5:35 P.M.
Aurora Passenger	5:30 P.M.	6:50 P.M.
Downer's Grove Acc.	6:15 P.M.	7:30 P.M.
Dubuque Express	9:25 P.M.	10:38 P.M.
Sunday Passenger	1:00 P.M.	2:17 P.M.

E.W. Farrar, Ag't.

**ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF MAILS**

EASTERN	WESTERN
Arrives 11:25 A.M.	Arrives 3:00 P.M.
Dep't. 2:25 P.M.	Dep't. 10:45 A.M.
CASS MAIL	
Dep't.	Arrives
Tuesday's and Friday's,	12:00 A.M. 3:00 P.M.

The booklet states:

"Parties seeking dwellings either for rent or to own, can leave the Union Depot in Chicago at almost any hour of the day, but possibly the most convenient time would be, say 1:30 P.M. for a thorough view of the village and its advantages, and return at almost any hour thereafter. By calling for Mr. W. Amos Moore, our real estate representative, at the lumber office of J.W. Rogers and Co., opposite the depot, visitors and home-seekers may obtain all necessary information, and will receive very generous attention."

This author informed the homeseeker that good building lots, high and dry, 50 x 200 feet, could be bought from \$3 to \$10 per front foot within easy walking distance of the depot. The CB&Q had numerous daily trains to and from

"this delightful suburb and makes it possible for

residents to go in and out of the city almost at pleasure, from 5:40 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. Monthly and family tickets are sold at a lower rate than any other railroad running out of Chicago." *And according to this claim*, "when the difference in rent or ownership and other living expenses are considered, the fare is found much CHEAPER than car fare in the city."

How could anyone have resisted the description of the beautiful natural groves where the inhabitants can

"sit under the wide-spreading branches of these stately forest trees and refresh themselves with pure air, free from the odors of Bridgeport, the Chicago River, and the cold and chilly fogs of the lake front!"

The affairs of the Village are responsibly managed, according to this booklet, and therefore the taxes are very light—"merely nominal". The officers of the Village were listed as Captain Theodore S. Rogers, President; E. Thatcher, W.S. Brookings; Charles B. Blodgett, Mitchell Heintz, and J.A. Richards, Trustees; Charles Carpenter, Clerk; J. Warren Rogers, Treasurer; Gardner Paige, Police Magistrate; Valentine Wettem, Policeman; Chris Legenhausen, Street Commissioner; and John S. DeBolt, Constable. The annual election of officers took place on the third Tuesday in April, and the monthly meetings of the Village Board were held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Village Hall.

Any prospective buyer in the Village who was concerned with the quality of the schools would have been fully reassured by the account of the Downers Grove school.

"It ranks among the highest and best in the land, its graduates being recognized as possessing no mean attainments, and are readily admitted to other institutions of a higher order. But a graduate from this school is fitted for almost any vocation of life, so thorough and practical is the training given and knowledge imparted."

With a student body of about 200 students there were five teachers including the Principal, Miss Yackley. Misses Firch, Frisbie, Sneed and Stanley were the teachers. The Directors of the school were Eugene W. Farrar, President; C.B. Blodgett, Clerk; and Charles Carpenter.

The growth of the Village was reflected in the increase of the business of the post office which had nearly doubled in the previous four years. E.A. Crittenden was the Postmaster, having recently succeeded J.M. Barr who had served for the previous four years.

The following are the business people as listed

by this pamphlet in 1885:

*W.S. Carpenter*, who was raised in Downers Grove, a licensed pharmacist, owns and operates the only drugstore. It was in this drugstore that James Breasted worked as a part-time employee when he was attending Northwestern College in Naperville.

*V. Simonson*, a skilled watchmaker, is located in a portion of the drugstore.

*Mrs. Kimball*, recently opened "The Ladies Store" in Downers Grove.

*D. Kimball*, who lives in Downers Grove, is proprietor of "Kimball's Amanuensis School" at 83 Madison Street, Chicago, where instruction is given in short-hand writing, typewriting, penmanship, and general office work."

*Lyman & Giddings* is a well-known Chicago firm in real estate, mortgages, and investments, with offices at 101 Washington Street, Chicago. Thomas Lyman came to Downers Grove in 1839,



Sucher Blacksmith Shop 1875.

"Jim, play a line" a child would beg and James Sucher would put aside his hammer and reach for his fife. For Sucher, skilled craftsman in iron works, had been a fifer in the Civil War before he had established his blacksmith shop at Downers Grove in 1875. "Historic Landmarks of Northern Illinois" 1947 — Public Service Company.

and Mr. L.R. Giddings, the junior member of the firm, is his son-in-law. They own considerable choice property in the Grove.

*Col. Arthur B. Wilson* is an attorney whose office is at 95 Dearborn Street, Chicago. He has lived in the village for three years.

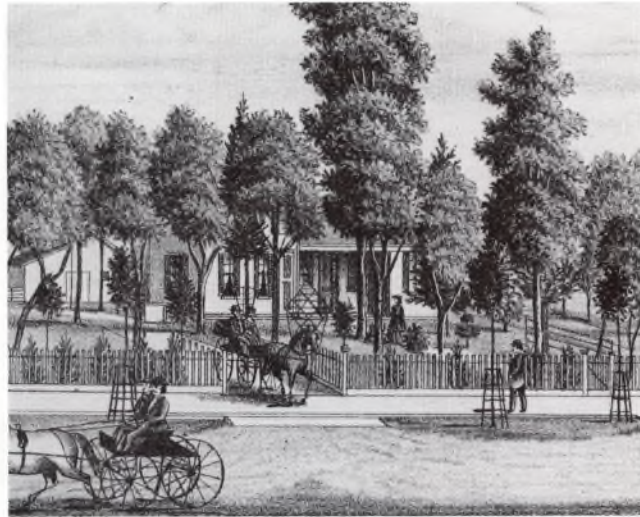
*Dr. E.H. LeDuc* and *Dr. O.W. Sherwood* practice medicine together in a newly-constructed building. Dr. LeDuc has practiced in the

Grove for a long time, and Dr. Sherwood joined him recently.

*Dr. John B. Hench* is another practicing physician in the village, having been here about three years.

*James W. Sucher* conducts the "pioneer" blacksmith and horseshoeing shop of Downers Grove. It was established by his father in 1848. Sucher constructed his present substantial brick shop at the corner of Maple and Main Street in 1875.

*P. William Mergenthal* is a carriage and wagon builder with his shop opposite the Sucher Blacksmith Shop. Besides manufacturing and repairing he is agent for the sleighs and road carts produced by the Northwestern Sleigh Co. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Henry Carpenter's home, from 1874 Atlas picture.

*Henry Carpenter* who located here in 1840, is still among us. He was the first merchant of Downers Grove. He has owned considerable real estate, but latterly has disposed of the bulk of it.

*Quirin Schmitt* is a blacksmith, wagonmaker, and the livery man of the village.

*U.H. Balcom*, an old settler, deals in and repairs all kinds of furniture and upholstery and is the undertaker of Downers Grove.

*E.S. Beardsley*, ex-owner of the Beardsley Hotel. He has a fine property just northeast of the depot, which he would sell at advantageous figures. Since he discontinued the hotel he has devoted his time to expressage and teaming.

*Walter McGary*, an excellent blacksmith and horseshoer for J.W. Sucher, is also proprietor of a bakery and confectionery which is principally managed during the day-time by his family.

*E.P. Peterson*, is a proprietor of a well equipped feedmill near Lisle depot, just west of Downers Grove.

*E.J. Miller* the florist, has one of the largest, most select and varied stock of house and bedding out plants.

*Mrs. R.C. Bates*, a milliner, has been in business a long time. "She has exhibited much taste . . . in her selections, and while her stock is not immense as those in large cities, yet is particularly complete."

*J.M. Barr*, The ex-postmaster, has lived here since 1857, and has been engaged in insurance all the time, except for his service during the war. He is now agent for the Home Insurance Company of New York.

*Israel L. Blackburn* has lived in Downers Grove since 1866 and owns some 3½ acres of fine



Charles Blodgett

garden ground. He is engaged in teaming and raising of garden vegetables. Mr. Blackburn was a freed slave who came to Downers Grove after the Civil War.

*Israel Blodgett, Jr.* came to Downers Grove as a boy in 1836. He operated a broom factory which he established in 1865. He owns and occupies valuable property near the depot in the village. He is the brother of Judge Henry W. Blodgett and Major E.A. Blodgett of Chicago and C.B. Blodgett of Downers Grove.

*Austin and Company* consists of A.B. Austin and E.A. Crittenden, known as "Downers Grove Nurseries." They have been established many years and rank among the best stocked in the state.

*Farrar & Anderson* manufacture a patented combination screen and storm door. Eugene Farrar and Charles Anderson are the proprietors.

*Charles B. Blodgett*, dairyman and farmer, owns and conducts a first-class dairy, supplying pure milk to the citizens twice every day in the year. He is a native of Downers Grove, born in 1840. He lives on the old homestead where his parents settled in 1836.

*Gardner Paige* has been the police magistrate for the past ten years. He has lived in Downers Grove over forty years.

*Melville B. Downer*, grandson of Pierce Downer, the founder of Downers Grove, is a member of the firm of Downer and Smedley, proprietors of the Union Publishing House, 164 Washington Street, Chicago.

*John Holland*, manager of the Holland Publishing Company of Chicago and editor of Holland's Standard City Directories, has lived here for nearly sixteen years.

*Mertz and Mochel*, dealers in all kinds of hardware, advertise stoves, & tinware, agricultural implements, pumps, sewing machines, paints, oils, and hard and soft coal. Also headquarters for grass seed, bran and feed . . . and manufacturers of all kinds of tin, copper and sheet-iron work.

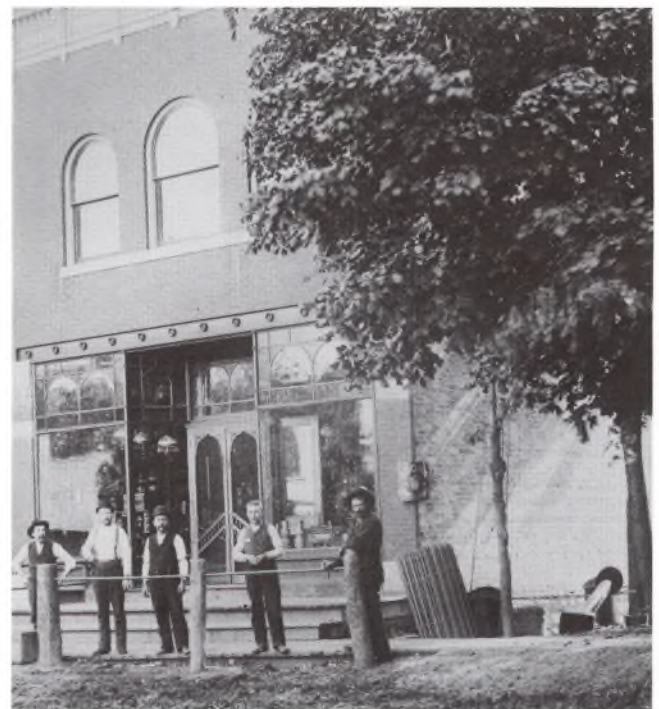
Charles Mochel and Levi Mertz opened a store on Main Street on June 25, 1884, in the same location where the Mochel's Hardware Store is still doing business in 1982. The Downers Grove *Reporter* and Mochel's Hardware share the distinction of being the two oldest businesses continually in operation and still serving the Village of Downers Grove. The *Reporter* was established in 1883, and Mertz and Mochel's a short year later in 1884; the Downers Grove *Reporter* then is the oldest business in the Village with Mochel's the oldest business owned and managed by the same family on Main Street.

Mertz and Mochel's Hardware business flourished. Merchandise which was ordered from traveling salesmen was delivered by railroad freight. In addition, several times a year Charles Mochel would make a three- or four-day trip to Chicago by wagon to buy merchandise and haul it back.

The Burlington Railroad which was so important to the growth of the Village was also extremely important to the business of Mertz and Mochel, who rented from the railroad for \$30 per year a right of way and spur tracks just west of Forest and south of the present-day tracks. Feed, salt, nails, and fencing were



Bertha Mochel Downes and brother John Mochel



Mertz and Mochel Hardware Store. The oldest business on Main Street 1890.

received by the carload and transferred to the store. This is also where the coal was unloaded, piled on the ground or put in open sheds, 40 or more tons at a time . . . by hand! There was a time limit on how long a car could remain on the

tracks, so if there were more than one car, it meant working overtime to meet the deadline. The coal was shovelled on the wagons, brought to the scale at the store, weighed, and delivered to the customer.

Charles Mochel owned the land behind the store, and on this he built a large two-story barn to house the horses, delivery wagons, and feed.

In 1922 Charles Mochel and Levi Mertz dissolved their partnership of 38 years, and Mochel formed a partnership with his son John (Sr.). The store was named Charles Mochel & Son. Charles Mochel died in 1946 not long after celebrating 60 years of business in Downers Grove. John Mochel Sr. named his son John Mochel Jr. a partner in this family business, and the name was changed to Mochel's Hardware. John Mochel Jr. became the sole owner after the death of his father in 1960 and continues Mochel's Hardware store in the family tradition. In 1982 Mochel's Hardware is still a thriving business on Main Street, with a centennial celebration in the offing.

But back to the 1880's! The Village with its railroad depot, butcher, baker, drug store, general stores, and hardware store became a central gathering place for the farmers and the villagers. Each evening as dusk fell, the lamplighter would come along with his little ladder in hand. He would place the ladder against the lamppost, fill the street lamp with kerosene, and light it and then go on to the next light. The Village had become very modern with its wooden sidewalks and kerosene street lamps.

On Saturday afternoons the farmers came to town to do their weekly buying and then stay the evening to visit and chat with friends. The villagers also came to Main Street on Saturday evening, slowly strolling along the wooden sidewalks or gathering in the doorways of the stores in the flickering lamplight.

An outstanding event in the social life of Downers Grove was held on June 23, 1885, when a festive celebration was held at the Stanley homestead in honor of the 50th anniversary of the settlement of the Stanley family in Downers Grove and also the ninety-fourth birthday of Mrs. Nancy Stanley.

"The day was beautiful, and the crowd delighted. The table was set in the grove of lofty maples in front of the residence and was loaded with everything that heart could wish, and adorned with flowers of beauty and loveliness."

The program included remarks by Dr. Hobart, Judge H.W. Blodgett of the United States Court, and also Judge H.H. Cody of Naperville. Among the old settlers who attended were the guest of honor, Mrs. Nancy Stanley, Thomas Andrus, Mr. and Mrs. John Richards, Mr. and Mrs. D.H. Narramore, Mr. and Mrs. A.D. Freeman, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Kenyon, Mr and Mrs. E.S. Beardsley, Mr. and Mrs. L.N. Hobart, George Downer, Mr. and Mrs. D.C. Stanley, Mrs. C.A. Rogers, and Mrs. Lucy Thompson.

A generation after the organization of the original Plowboys, their sons under the direction of Captain William Blanchard organized the "Sons of the Plowboys" to campaign for Benja-



Plowboys — 1888 — Benjamin Harrison Campaign

min Harrison in the Presidential campaign of 1888.

Miss Mabel Stanley, representing the young ladies of the Grove, presented a new banner to this new Republican Plowboys Club at a meeting on September 21, 1888. Mrs. H.D. Foster had done most of the work on this

"most beautiful silk banner, on one side of which was painted a unique log cabin and the name of the club and on the other side a large and handsome spray of cereals and flowers, with the inscription, PROTECTION TO HOME INDUSTRIES worked in gold."

Just as their fathers had campaigned in the villages up and down the CB&Q and even into Chicago for the new Republican Party, the new Plowboy group campaigned for the Republican Party in 1888. A Downers Grove Republican Rally was reported as being a tremendous success despite bad weather. The day had begun with a heavy rain but had cleared before noon,

and since most of Downers Grove streets were graveled, the marching route was not muddy.

The residents of the Village decorated their houses and places of business with elaborate displays of red, white, and blue. Chinese lanterns were hung from the porches of houses, through the shrubs and trees, and across the streets.

The parade formed on the north side of the tracks and started promptly at 8:30 on Friday evening. Captain T.S. Rogers, the Grand Marshall, and Harry Lyons, the Assistant Marshall, mounted on their spirited horses all decked out with ribbons and bunting, monitored the line of march.

The many clubs marched in cadence like old veterans. There were about a thousand men in line, carrying torches and lanterns for Harrison and Morton and the straight Republican ticket.

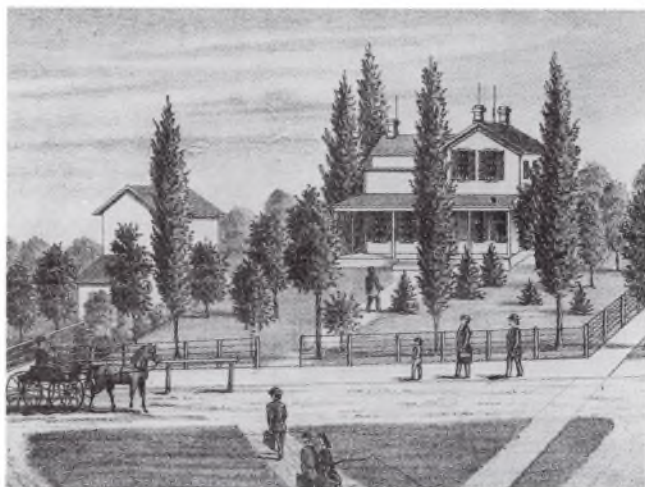
The Carrie Harrison Young Ladies' Club of Naperville, full of patriotism, marched enthusiastically along with the young men. The CB&Q Club from Aurora was in the line of march with 100 men under Captain Buck. Everybody paid attention when they shouted for Harrison.

The Plowboys of Downers Grove went clattering down the street in their huge wagon with their new silken banner flying proudly from the tall mast, as they cheered for Harrison. Three young ladies, the Misses Lou, Ada, and Bertie Stanley, were eye-catchers in their red, white, and blue dresses as they rode horseback down the street. The CB&Q Club Band playing martial music, the Harrison Zouaves, the Harrison and Morton White Plug Hat Club of Downers Grove under the command of Captain Frank Blanchard with 100 men in line, the Hinsdale Club and their band, and the Riverside Club all marched up the street, with fireworks all along the line of march.

The parade took in all the principal streets in town, and the many clubs and individuals who participated made the Rally the most outstanding ever held in Downers Grove!



J. Warren Roger's house on the left and T.S. Roger's house on the right.



Beardsley Hotel — from 1874 Atlas. Situated on N.E. corner of Main and Warren Avenue.



## A CENTURY OF PROGRESS 1890-1932

The Plowboys put away their uniforms and wagon after Benjamin Harrison was elected President of the United States in 1888, and the following year Captain T.S. Rogers completed his last term after serving fourteen years as President of the Village.

In the half century from the original settlement, a community had grown with churches, a fine school system, merchants who served the Village and the neighboring farmers, and a railroad which joined Downers Grove to the larger community of Chicago.

And then the progress of the Village struck a discordant note of conflicting interests. In September of 1890 the plat of the E.H. Prince and Company subdivision was approved, and the Village began its great growth in area and street mileage. This subdivision was opened north of the railroad track covering two hundred and twenty-five acres of land between the old Plank Road and the Burlington tracks, Highland Avenue on the east and what is now Montgomery Street on the west.

It became important then to have a main street which would go straight through the town. Prior to this time pedestrians and drivers alike cut through what later became Depot Park from South Main Street past the flagpole, to jog one block east, turn again at the Beardsley Hotel, and continue north on North Main Street (now Highland Avenue).

The obstacle to the Main Street right-of-way was the beautiful farm of Captain T.S. Rogers, which lay along the north side of the Burlington tracks. Captain Rogers had built a splendid home set on park-like grounds landscaped with many trees which he had planted. Immediately to the east of his property was the home of his brother, J. Warren Rogers, and the home of their

mother stood directly in the path of the proposed roadway!

Captain Rogers adamantly opposed the roadway at the cost of disturbing his home and property! Prince made what he considered a fair offer to Captain Rogers for the right-of-way. Rogers flatly rejected the offer.

In 1890 the Village of Downers Grove petitioned the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad to extend and open Main Street across the tracks and the right-of-way of the Railroad.

### PETITION

Whereas it is the desire of the Trustees of the Village of Downer's Grove of the County of DuPage and State of Illinois, to extend and open Main Street in said Village, over and across the tracks and right of way of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company.

NOW THEREFORE, in order to enable said Trustees so to open said Street as aforesaid, this agreement, made this twenty-fourth day of June, 1890, by and between the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, party of the first part, and the Village of Downer's Grove, party of the second part, WITNESSETH:

That the said Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company hereby grants to the said Village of Downer's Grove permission to use for a public street, the following described piece of land included within the limits of the right of way and depot grounds of said Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, to wit:

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Block number Four (4) in the original Town of Downer's Grove and running thence North One and one-half (1-½) degrees West in continuation of the West line of Main street in said Town, Three hundred and three tenths (300-3/10) feet more or less to the North line of Depot Grounds of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad; Thence South Eighty nine (89)

degrees East along line of Railroad lands sixty-six (66) feet more or less; Thence South one and one-half (1-½) degrees East, Three hundred and three-tenths (300-3/10) feet more or less to the Northwest corner of Block number Three (3) in said Town and in the South line of said Depot Grounds; Thence North Eighty-nine (89) degrees West along line of Depot Grounds sixty-six (66) feet more or less to the place of beginning, except so much thereof as is used for Depot Buildings and Platforms connected therewith.

And in consideration of the premises and of the permission hereby granted, the party of the second part hereby agrees that said street shall not be used in any way to prevent the free and uninterrupted enjoyment of the Depot Grounds and right of way by the said Railroad Company, and that said Railroad Company shall at all times have the right to lay down any other or additional tracks over and across said premises herein described or any part thereof.

And the party of the second part further agrees that it will at all times and at its own expense maintain so much of said street as is upon the right of way and depot grounds of said Company in a safe condition for public travel, and protect and save harmless the said party of the first part from, and on account of any liability which it may suffer on account of any injuries to persons, property or stock resulting from the failure of the party of the second part so to keep and maintain said street in a safe condition.

In witness whereof the said parties hereto have caused these presents to be executed by their duly authorized officers, and their corporate seals to be hereto affixed the day and year above written.

THE CHICAGO BURLINGTON & QUINCY  
RAILROAD COMPANY

BY Geo. B. Harris, President

THE VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE

BY Charles Curtiss

President of Board of Trustees

Form approved,

O.F. Price

The petition of the CB&Q was approved on June 24, 1890, and after the rejection of Prince's offer by Captain Rogers, E.H. Prince started condemnation proceedings. John Oldfield, Samuel Curtiss, and Samuel Thatcher were named arbitrators in the matter, and they awarded an amount for the property which was less than the original offer! For Captain Rogers a dear price for progress!

Because Prince and Rogers could not agree on the price to be paid for the home of the Captain's mother, which stood in the the path of the street, the house was moved to 4942 Saratoga Avenue.

Main Street was opened to the Plank Road and was platted as Rogers Street. At the same

time Highland was cut through as it is now and was known as Main Street.

The same year a walk was built on the north side of Maple from the middle of Hannah E. Strong's lots east to the Village limit for the many children who came to school that way from East Grove. Walks were also built on the north side of Curtiss Street from Main to Foote (now Forest), on both sides of Foote, and the south side of Railroad Street (now Burlington) between Foote and Main Streets.

A very special sidewalk of stone was laid on the south side of Maple between Main and Washington in front of the properties of William Mergenthal, R.O. Curtiss, Charles Curtiss, T.S. Rogers, Tobias Atzel, School District #2, the Baptist Church, and M.B. Downer. Downer obtained smooth limestone blocks from Lemont for the sidewalk in front of the school, the Baptist Church, and his own place. The Village was to pay half the cost, but not over 9¢ per square foot. After the work was done, this amount was amended to not over 10¢ per square foot.

This sidewalk drew County-wide interest, and the County newspaper the *Illinoisian* in October of 1890 noted,

"We are glad to know that there is to be a good stone sidewalk on Maple Avenue between Main and Washington Streets (south side). This is in line of a permanent improvement."

The year of 1890 was a notable year of growth for Downers Grove. The Village counted a population of 960 people, and new families were moving into the community in ever-increasing numbers.

Ernest Schultz, who was a buyer for Marshall Field and Company, moved to Downers Grove with his wife in 1890. H.J. Hawkins opened his plumbing shop and Louis Klein opened his meat market in the Village that same year. D.G. Graham, an attorney, had moved to Downers Grove with his wife, Mary, in 1889.

This was also the year that Casper Dicke moved his machine shop here to become the first industry in the Village. Dicke, born in Cologne, Germany, was a skilled machinist, who had come to the United States in 1881. After working in several machine shops, in 1886 he began the manufacture of tools in his own shop in Chicago. Dicke's shop manufactured tools of such fine quality for electrical lineman that he received a

# DOWNER'S GROVE

**FREE EXCURSIONS** AT 11:45 A. M. **EVERY DAY**  
 C., B. & Q. DEPOT

Call at our Office or send for Tickets, Plats and General Information.

**ALL TRAINS STOP AT OUR SUBDIVISION.**

**LOTS \$4.00 PER FRONT FOOT AND UPWARD.**

**EASY TERMS. IMPROVEMENTS. BUY NOW! Before Price Advance.**

10% down, balance in thirty equal payments, **WITHOUT INTEREST.** **WARRANTY DEED** and Abstract of Title furnished when payments are completed.

All the streets are graded, sidewalks built, and trees planted in front of every lot at our expense.

Our plan of small payments will enable you to secure valuable property which will be worth three or four times the cost before the last payment is made.

## OUR BEAUTIFUL LAKE.

The most prominent features of our subdivision is the beautiful lake, shown on this map. We have also added a little park at each end of the lake which will greatly enhance its beauty. These improvements alone will cost \$100,000 when completed, and we cheerfully make the contribution, trusting that you will appreciate our endeavors to beautify their homes and make the surroundings attractive.

## OUR MINERAL SPRING.

**ANALYSIS OF HYGEIA MINERAL SPRING, AT DOWNER'S GROVE.**  
 JOHN H. LONG, ANALYTICAL CHEMIST,  
 Laboratory, Chicago Medical College, Cor. Prairie Av. and Twenty-Sixth St.,  
 Hygeia Mineral Spring, at Downer's Grove, Ill. CHICAGO, August 5, 1887.  
 A. EMIGH, Esq., Dear Sir:—I have made the new tests of the water, and submit the following analysis: The water contains in 100,000 parts—  
 Sodium Chloride.....11.7  
 Sodium Sulphate.....54.3  
 Potassium Sulphate.....31.0  
 Calcium Sulphate.....960.0  
 Magnesium Sulphate.....353.0  
 Ferrous Carbonate.....53.4  
 Magnesium Carbonate.....506.4  
 Silica.....25.0-1.75  
 This water is characterized by a large amount of sulphates, sufficient to impart to it medicinal properties; and in general composition is similar to several well-known waters.  
 Yours respectfully,  
 J. H. LONG



## PRINCE & CO'S ADDITION TO DOWNER'S GROVE.

Located on the Burlington Road, 200 feet above level of lake. High, rolling ground, magnificent trees, beautiful lake, pure water and pure air.

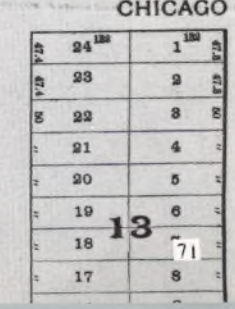
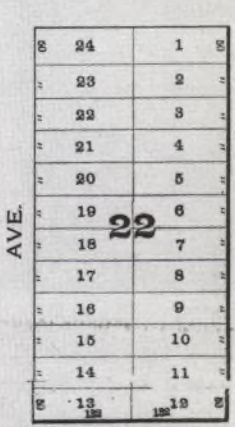
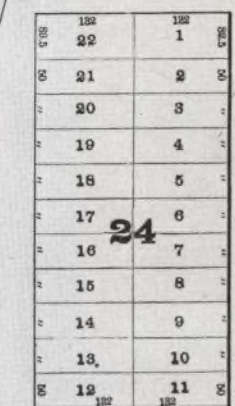
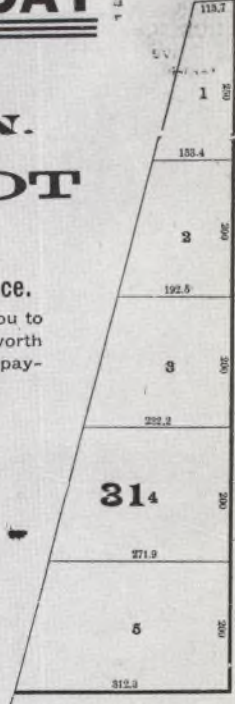
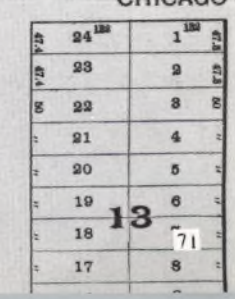
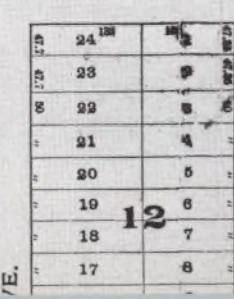
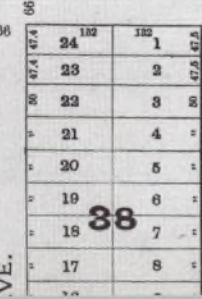
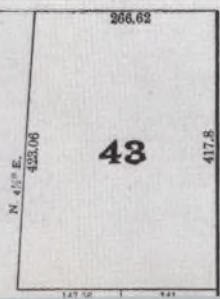
**Trains a Day—35 to 45 Minutes' Ride—Cheap Railroad Fare.**

**You Are Seeking a Good Investment---or an Ideal Home in the Suburbs of Chicago---Do Not Overlook this Grand Opportunity.**

The desirable features of a suburban home cannot be obtained on low, flat, wet ground without expending more time and money than on the high, rolling ground of Downer's Grove. A large portion of this property is shaded by a natural growth of oak, maple, and other forest trees, and includes the famous Grove Picnic Grounds, where, during the past 30 years, Chicago people have mingled in merry sports and wandered amid bowery.

**TO THIS PROPERTY IS PERFECT, AND WE GUARANTEE THE SAME TO EVERY PURCHASER.**

Downer's Grove is the handsomest suburban village anywhere near Chicago. The population is over 1,500—society first-class. No codfish, no saloons, no gambling, no roughs, or saloons. If you want an ideal home or investment, this is your opportunity. Act promptly and secure yours. \$100,000.00 EXPENDED IN BEAUTIFYING THE GROVE. We could not form such beautiful building lots or make a more beautiful landscape than nature has done without the aid of special heavy taxes, or work of man. We have churches, schools, parks, walks, graveled streets, and cozy homes. **IT WILL COST YOU \$4.00 PER FRONT FOOT TO SECURE THIS PROPERTY.** Call at our office or send for tickets, at 11:45 a. m. from Union Depot, cor. Canal and Adams. Our office is at the depot (down stairs) half an hour before train starts, or at the depot (down stairs) half an hour before train starts, or at the depot (down stairs) half an hour before train starts, or at the depot (down stairs) half an hour before train starts.



CHICAGO

JAN. 1898  
DOWNERS GROVE  
ILL.



S. WASHINGTON

S. MAIN

E. FOOTE

E. RAIL ROAD

W. RAIL ROAD

E. CURTISS

W. CURTISS

F. H. BRIDGE, LUMBER & COAL YARD

Office

Store

Warehouse

Warehouse

Central Bk

F. H. BRIDGE, COAL YARD

Warehouse

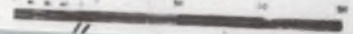
Warehouse

Warehouse

Warehouse

1898 Fire Map of Central Downers Grove  
(photo by Ed Bunting, Jr.)

Scale of Feet



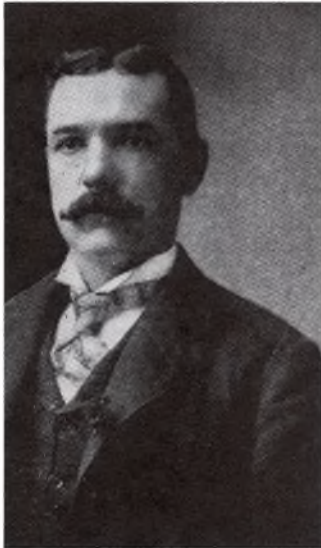
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grand prize for his products at the Paris World's Fair.

Casper Dicke, a very influential man in the growth and development of Downers Grove, recognized the need for an electric plant and



Casper Dicke

waterworks and was one of the first petitioners for paving the streets. One of his most important contributions to this Village was the Downers Grove Fire Department, which has been so closely associated with the Dicke family.

Many of the men who lived in the Village rode the trains of the Railroad to their businesses in the City. Among the daily commuters were: Guy Bush, D. Kimball, Thomas Lyman and his son-in-law L.R. Giddings to their real estate offices, John Holland to his publishing company, Captain T.S. Rogers to his meat market, Melville B. Downer to the Union Publishing House, Colonel Arthur Wilson, a Chicago attorney, and many of the employees of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad. Early morning found these commuters at the Burlington Station on Railroad Street (now Burlington) at the southwest corner of Main Street and the tracks waiting to board their train.

Across Main Street along the tracks to the east was the in-transit stockyards, a holding area for live stock being shipped to the City. It was an unfortunate day when the breezes blew from the east!

There were other problems with this stockyard. As ladies were shopping along Main Street in Mrs. Kimball's Ladies' Store, Mertz and

Mochel's Hardware Store, Carpenter's Drug Store, LaSalle's General Store, the Richards and Narramore Meat Market, the David Kline Store, or further down the street at Thatcher and Crescy's, from time to time they needed to cross the street. Oftentimes the way was blocked by a herd of cattle lowing and bawling, squealing swine, or bleating sheep as they were driven up Main Street to the stockyard by a farmer delivering his stock to market! A shock for a young woman to step into the street and find herself being stared down by a passel of sheep, swine, or cattle trotting up Main Street!

And then, after waiting for the herd of animals to clear the street, the shopping matron had to cross the street with great care to avoid stepping in the animals' residue. Shoppers and merchants alike complained of the animal traffic down Main Street, and in the heat of summer the farm-like odors of the street and the gathering flies were revolting.

One of the greatest shocks stemming from animals in the streets of the main thoroughfare,



Old Main Street depot



Thatcher & Crescy Store  
5232 Main Street

though, came one early morning as one of the first of the commuters was making his way to the station. To his horror a great long-horned steer with lowered head came charging down the street directly for him! The man ran into the depot and slammed the door after him. Word spread fast throughout the Village about the huge, charging steer barging through the Village streets.

Several cattle cars had been derailed and smashed just west of Downers Grove in a train wreck the previous night. The Texas steers had clambered from the wrecked freight cars in a stampede toward the open fields and freedom. All, that is, but this one rangy long-horned steer who simply charged up the railroad tracks to Downers Grove, where he settled into the grass of Railroad Park to graze.

Frank Rogers, on his way to work in the hardware store across from the depot, met an excited man who shouted at him to beware of the raging steer. Carefully he made his way to the back door of the hardware store. Unlocking the door, he went through the store to look out the front window, and there was the steer who had returned to the Park.

Rogers looked over at the depot where he could see the door open a crack as the commuters looked fearfully for the huge beast. Up and down the street villagers were hiding for their lives, afraid to stir onto the street. Suddenly the steer looked up, tossed his long horns, and then lowered and charged toward an unsuspecting man coming toward the Park.

Rogers seized his loaded shotgun and ran out the front door toward the animal. At the sound of the door the huge beast wheeled, lowered his head, and charged Rogers. Frank stood his ground as he aimed the shotgun. He waited until the maddened steer was within a few paces of him, then fired both barrels of the gun into its head, dropping the enormous steer almost at his feet.

The smoke had scarcely cleared when the frightened citizens ran from their hiding places to gather around the unlikely carcass in the Village Park.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century our nation's immigration pattern changed from the migrations from Germany, France, Ireland, and England, to migrating Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, and Russians. Downers

Grove's population reflected this change. A real estate developer, said to be Polish, laid out a subdivision in East Grove, which was known as Gostyn. Most of the people who settled there were Polish and many of them came from a community in Poland named Gostyn.

In 1891 St. Mary of Gostyn Church, the first Catholic church in Downers Grove, was founded in East Grove. Two trains of twelve coaches each brought Catholics from Chicago for the dedication of this church in "Gostyn's Subdivision". Headed by a band, a large group of Polish Catholics marched from East Grove station to



Railroad Park and Station



Railroad Park Fountain

the church. It was reported that the English service was good, but the Polish services were better.

In the early days the settlers raised nearly all their commodities, and those they lacked were obtained from a storekeeper in exchange for produce. As money became more plentiful, the farmers came to realize it paid them to sell for money and pay money for what they needed, and there came a need for a bank in the Village. In 1892, the Farmer's and Merchant's Bank of Downers Grove was organized with a capital stock of \$25,000 and a surplus. Charles Curtiss was elected President, Dr. W.A. Tope Vice-President, and W.H. Edwards, Cashier, and shortly thereafter the splendid bank building was built on the northeast corner of Main and Curtiss Streets.

In 1893 the Village acquired the services of a night policeman, whose salary was \$25 a month and such private subscriptions as were approved



Farmer's & Merchant's bank building

by the Village Board. His duties were:

1. To have charge of the Village Hall and calaboose\*—to keep it clean—to keep the street lamps in order and ready for use; to build the fires when required for use of Village Trustees; to have charge of all persons confined in the calaboose during his hours on duty, and discharge those who were permitted to lodge there during the night.
2. To have full charge of the street lamps on Main Street from Maple to Warren Avenue; on Warren to Foote (Forest) Street; on Foote to Belmont Avenue (now Warren Avenue); the corners

\*slang term for jail

inclusive to fill, clean, light, and extinguish. To patrol the above described route as often as compatible with other duties; to attend the late incoming trains and watch any person he might have reason to "suspect" from lamplighting time until four in the morning.

Life in the Village in 1890 was orderly and comfortable, with the breadwinners conducting their businesses as an integral part of providing necessary services to the villagers and surrounding farm families or commuting to the nearby City to engage in business.

The wives and mothers spent their days, and sometimes far into the night, doing housekeeping chores and usually keeping a garden and raising chickens as well. The kitchen chores of the housewife were complex and time-consuming. She plucked and drew the chickens, ground coffee, and baked the bread. She stored potatoes, cabbage, turnips, pumpkins, squash, and apples in her cellar. Some fruits she dried; others she preserved in heavy syrup; and more and more she began to put up jellies and preserves in small glass jars.

The Downers Grove housewife got her milk from Charles Blodgett's Dairy or from one of the nearby farms. She bought her meat from one of the neighborhood butchers, Richards and Narramore or Louis Klein's, and her dry groceries at one of the village grocery stores. She bought flour in the new paper sacks and loose beans, rice and potatoes in burlap bags. There were open barrels or bins of crackers, rolled oats, dried prunes, pickles, and molasses. If she bought butter, it was spooned out into thin beachwood boxes. The grocer bought his fruit, vegetables, and eggs in small lots from the local farmers and the rest of the groceries from the wholesale merchants in Chicago.

The families who lived in Downers Grove in this last decade of the 19th century centered their lives in their homes, their families, and their community

"where family and church, education and press, professions and government, all largely found their meaning by the way they fit one with another inside a small town or a detached portion of the city".

And then on May 1, 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition opened in Chicago; and the vistas of the villagers opened to the world!

The Congressional Act establishing Chicago

as the World's Fair City,

"An Act to Provide for the Celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, by holding an International Exhibition of Arts, Industries, Manufactures and the Products of the Soil, Mine and Sea, in the City of Chicago, in the State of Illinois",

was signed by President Harrison on April 28, 1890.

The Columbian Exposition would have been an outstanding accomplishment by any standards in the world, but the Fair was an especially amazing achievement with the recognition that it had been a short twenty-odd years since Chicago was devastated by the Great Fire. In addition, the country was in the throes of a nation-wide depression!

The residents of Downers Grove watched the preparations for the Columbian Exposition with much interest. The businessmen who were commuting to the City each day took a personal interest in the development of this Fair.

There were Easterners critical of the materialism of Chicago who predicted that the Fair in Chicago might become "a cattle show on the shores of Lake Michigan". The beauty and elegance of the Buildings of the Exposition belied that negative prediction. Though the Paris World's Fair had been lighted by electricity, the buildings of the Chicago Fair were designed "specifically for the artistic effects of artificial illumination".

The white buildings glistened on the first night, May 8th, 1893, when the lights came on, and the illumination of the fountains and the Court of Honor was breathtaking! The next day the Chicago *Herald* reported, "Words almost fail the beauties of the fantastic illuminations with which the wizards entwine the graceful outlines of the White City." A number of prominent citizens from Downers Grove were present on that first night when the lights went on.

The lighting of the Fair was not only an artistic achievement but a technical innovation. George Westinghouse won the contract for the lighting of the Fair over a competing bid by Thomas Edison. Though Westinghouse lost money on the project, it was his opportunity to demonstrate to the world the practical use of alternating current. Rumors had run rampant about the hazards of electricity and the many people who had been killed by electrocution. Prout, Westinghouse's



Art Palace — now Museum of Science and Industry. Columbian Exposition 1893.



Ferris Wheel at Columbian Exposition 1893.



biographer, wrote that very few of those who looked at the great ingenious switchboard which controlled the beautiful lighting effects could have realized "that they were living in a historical moment, that they were looking at the beginnings of a revolution". The suburban visitors to the Fair went back home to their gas lights and dim coal oil lamps and knew that they had to have electricity. And the impetus to progress began.

In June of 1893, Mr. P.S. Eustis, the General Passenger Agent of the CB&Q Railroad announced in the *Downers Grove Reporter*, that he

"would like all who can possibly attend the Fair to do so now and urge their friends to do so, as he expects by August or September to be pushed to his utmost to provide transportation for his patrons. The Fair is now complete and accommodations in Chicago are ample, and charges reasonable."

Throughout the summer of 1893 the *Reporter* had items referring to the people of the Grove and their visitors going into the City and thence to the Jackson Park Fairgrounds to see the fantastic World Exposition. One item read,

"The latch string to Downers Grove homes still hangs out inviting friends to come see the Fair. Many have availed themselves of the opportunity, judging from the number of strangers seen on our streets the past week."

The John Huling family moved to Downers Grove in 1893. Grace Huling Littleford reminisced that her father took her and two neighbor children to enjoy a day at the Columbian Exposition.

For Downers Grove, having the Fair in Chicago was like a trip to all the countries of the world and a view into the future without leaving one's doorstep. A day at the Fair was an experience of awe-struck wonder at the magnificent buildings built among the lagoons and basins on the Jackson Park shore of Lake Michigan. One could go atop the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building to view the Grand Basin, the Court of Honor, and the panorama of the entire grounds; visit the Fine Arts Building (the present Museum of Science and Industry); view the elaborate and exquisite facade and golden doorway to the Transportation Building, built by Louis Sullivan; the Administration Building; the Electrical Building with the Westinghouse exhibit, and on and on and on!

The many exhibits within these buildings revealed untold wonders to 12 million people. There were the beauties of art and architecture, culture and achievements from all over the world, and the exciting promise of technological advancement.

And then there was the gaudy excitement of the Midway advertising "The World's Congress of Beauty—forty ladies from forty nations!" The first great Ferris Wheel, 264 feet high, looming over all the buildings of the Fair, was the most popular feature of the entire exposition.

The Midway was a noisy, boisterous, and carefree place with exotic entertainments. The "Streets of Cairo" had sixty shops with peddlers hawking their wares. There were Persian, Japanese, and Indian Bazaars, a Moorish palace, and a Chinese village. Native beauties from all these strange and exotic places danced and sang their music. One of the most popular attractions was the belly dancers. The crowds flocked to see the shows!

There were French country maids making and serving apple cider, and German and Austrian beer gardens complete with waiters and waitresses in national costumes serving up Gemütlichkeit. A gypsy band played in a Hungarian cafe, and an extensive Irish display included a model Irish village.

There were also thieves and pickpockets in the crowd, and items in the *Reporter* warned visitors to the Fair to watch their purses.

One hundred native Africans demonstrated their customs in an authentic African village. There was a Lapland village, Sitting Bull's Cabin with daily war dances, and a number of typical South Sea Island villages.

Wondrous and heady experiences for all! The Midwest was never quite the same again!

The year of 1893 was a never-to-be-forgotten year for many reasons. An outstanding event that year in Downers Grove was the building of the roundhouse at the foot of Oakwood Street. About half of the suburban trains were serviced in Downers Grove and returned to Chicago through this roundhouse. The other half of the trains continued on to Aurora. The watchtower was built that year and served an extremely important function in the routing of trains in the years before the use of electric semaphores. Mr. John Griffiths, the watchman-telegrapher, was responsible for receiving the telegraph messages

which instructed him to set the signals for red or green. He also received and transmitted "the orders" to the engineers. The role of the watchman-telegrapher was critical to the operation of the trains.



John Griffiths setting signals

This year of 1893 added a number of names and products to every-day living, many of which came from the World's Fair. The name Sears, Roebuck and Company was used for the mail-order house for the first time; William Wrigley, Jr. introduced Juicy Fruit gum; Cream of Wheat was introduced by a North Dakota miller, and Aunt Jemima Pancake Mix was promoted at the Fair by a Missouri miller.

Chicago native Florenz Ziefeld began his show-business career at the Columbian Exposition, and Milwaukee's Pabst Beer won its blue ribbon at the Fair to become Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer.

C.W. Post developed Postum to replace coffee; Thomas Lipton registered his trademark for the tea which was sold only in packages, never in bulk; and Milton Hershey founded Hershey's

Chocolate Company at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, after he saw chocolate-making machinery from Dresden, Germany, at the Chicago World's Fair.

The first 9-hole golf course west of the Appalachians was opened in Downers Grove in that same year of 1893 on land owned by A. Haddow Smith. Sir Henry Truman Wood, British Commissioner to the Fair, was a golfer and anxious to find a course where he could play. James B. Forgan, a Chicago banker, J.C. Sterling of the Illinois Steel Company, a Scotsman by birth, J. Marshall Weir, a Belfast Irishman, Herbert J. Tweedy, formerly of Liverpool, were all golfers as well as Charles Blair McDonald who had learned to play golf when he was in school in Scotland.

Smith, who had located in Chicago in 1890, heard that these men were talking of forming a golf club and laid out a nine-hole course on 60 acres of land he owned at Belmont near the CB&Q Railroad. A hired man with a shovel, rake, and wheelbarrow was his chief assistant. As no regulation cups were obtainable, tin cups were used.

A. Haddow Smith invited these men to play over his course, and a little later the Chicago Golf Club was organized in Mr. Smith's home on the course. The officers were J.C. Sterling, President; J. Marshall Weir, Secretary; and James Forgan, Treasurer. Charles B. McDonald was the Club Captain.

The incorporation of the Chicago Golf Club was mentioned in the *Chicago Tribune* of July 19, 1893. The brief news account of the Club's official incorporation called for a celebration dinner at the Chicago Club. The celebrants included the four officers plus Arthur Ryerson and Robert Todd Lincoln. Mr. Ryerson later was to accompany Charlie McDonald to the historic Manhattan meeting of December 22, 1894, where the Chicago Golf Club became one of the five founding members of the United States Golf Association. Robert Todd Lincoln, the President's son, was to serve later as the Chicago Golf Club's ninth President.

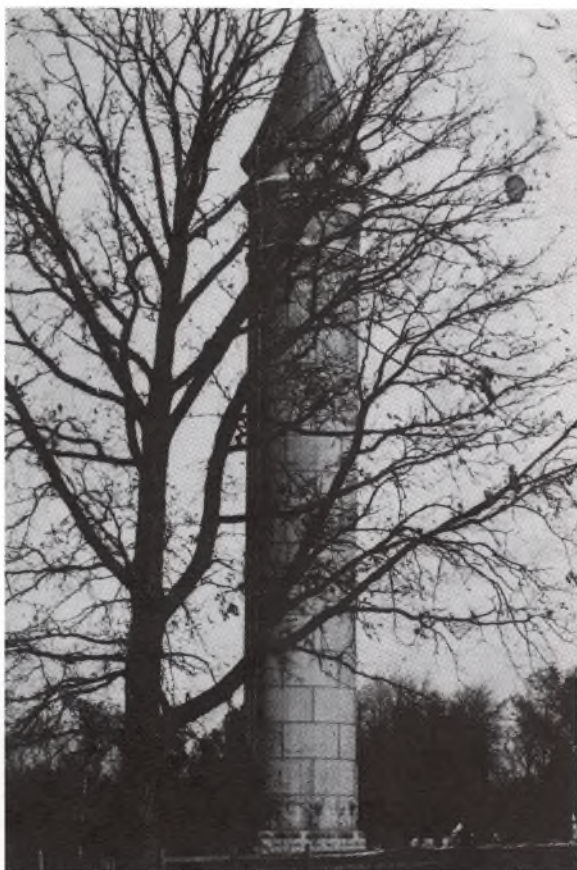
Finances for the first year to operate the course were raised by Charles McDonald, who solicited \$10 each from 30 members. Shortly before World War I, when the clubhouse burned down, the Chicago Golf Club moved to Wheaton.

The Downers Grove course was purchased by Robert and James Slepicka, who operated it under the name of Belmont Country Club until it was sold in 1968 to the Downers Grove Park District and renamed the Downers Grove Golf Course.

In the seven years from the Columbian Exposition in 1893 to the turn of the century, Downers Grove went through a period of growth and development beyond compare. The homes of the Village in 1893 had their own wells and pumps or got water from a neighborhood well and pump; used wood or coal-burning stoves for heating and cooking and coal oil lamps and candles for light. By the turn of the century the Village had a waterworks, electric lights, and telephone service! The end of the old way of life and the beginning of the new!

A special election was called on February 17, 1894, to vote on selling bonds for a waterworks system. The land for the standpipe was purchased from Marshall Field for \$250, and the water tower was built on Summit Street between Lane Place and Main Street, the highest point of land for miles.

The tower stood on a rock foundation. With its



Water Tower

90 feet in height, this giant column of water maintained the water pressure for the Village. The tank was over sixteen feet in diameter and had a capacity of 135,369 gallons.

The municipally-owned pumping station was erected on Belmont Avenue (now Warren); seven miles of pipeline were installed; and two wells furnished delicious water to the Village.

An interesting item in a February, 1895, Downers Grove *Reporter* announced that barber Archie Marvin now had a nice bathroom in his shop in the basement of the Bank building, having tapped the Village waterworks and fixed things up in good shape "for the accomodation of the public that desires to keep clean".

With the modernization of the waterworks the momentum gained strength to press for more and more conveniences.

On March 22, 1895, an editorial in the Downers Grove *Reporter* encouraged continuing progress:

"We now have as fine a system of waterworks as any town could wish, for which we have to thank our honorable Village Board. But the question is, shall we stop with first step in this direction? We would answer, no. If we wish our village to keep on growing, we must keep on with the improvements . . . We would like to see a village board elected that is in favor of giving us what we can just as well have, so long as it does not cost anything extra to speak of. There are plenty of good companies that will gladly furnish us with electric lights if they were given the privilege. What we would like to see would be a stock company organized by our own citizens granted a franchise to put in a plant. Keep the ball a rolling until we wake our officials up to a realization that we demand and want those things and we will get them.

We would also like to call the village board's attention to the Chicago Telephone Company's application for a permit to place a telephone exchange in here. They do not ask for the sole right. Some of these days some of us may find it convenient to have a telephone placed in our office or place of business, and be connected with the city exchange. As the matter now stands it would take some time to get the thing in shape to do it. We can see no harm in allowing them the privilege, then, if they have a demand for it, they can go ahead and erect their poles and place things in operation on short notice. They are only taking time by the forelock, and we see no advantage gained by handicapping them. We are not done yet with this question of improvements and we propose to keep the ball on the move until we get something more."

(F.W. Stilwell, Editor and C.H. Curtiss, Publisher)

In April of 1895 the Village Council granted

the Chicago Telephone Company permission and right of way to build a line south through the Village to Lemont, connecting with the line there which extended to Joliet. In 1895 the telephone communications from Downers Grove to the City consisted of a telephone in Carpenter's Drug Store on Main Street. In June the Chicago Telephone Company indicated that more instruments would be placed in this office. Two more circuits to Chicago connecting with Lemont, Lockport, and Joliet were placed in operation in July. Downers Grove then had four direct outlets to Chicago, while no other village between Chicago and Aurora had more than one.

"The Chicago Telephone Company is anxious to build a local exchange here and are offering a very low rate to subscribers. Eight or ten have expressed themselves as anxious for this improvement and if twenty-five could be secured they would put in an exchange here, that would be a credit to our village."

The Village Council granted a franchise for a local telephone exchange to the Chicago Telephone Company in 1897. The ordinance provided a twenty-five year franchise for the use of the streets and alleys for the construction and maintenance of the line and granted the Village the use of its poles for fire alarm apparatus and further granted the use of one telephone each for the pumping station, Village Hall, and hose houses with no charge to the Village. After considerable discussion it was moved by Trustee Root and seconded by Trustee Barr that the ordinance be passed granting the franchise. Trustee Mochel, Trustee Mayer, and President Bush voted "aye" for an unanimous vote for granting the franchise.

On December 30, 1897, it was reported that the Chicago Telephone Company had shipped poles and materials to Downers Grove for the construction of the local telephone line and had a force of men trimming and fitting the poles for erection. About twenty subscribers had been secured, and it was hoped that number would increase. The central station was to be W.S. Carpenter's Drug Store, with the rate for residences at \$18 per year and business houses at \$24 per year. Contracts were available at Carpenter's, or the company's solicitor would call.

By 1901 the Chicago Telephone Company started preparations to provide telephone service

for the farmers in the County. The June 17, 1901, *Reporter* listed the complete directory to date of the Downers Grove exchange as prepared by Miss Nellie Carpenter, the operator in charge.

## TELEPHONE

261	Ehrens, Ed .....	Grocery
173	Buschman, Conrad .....	Residence
281	Bush, Guy L. ....	Residence
7	Bush & Simonson .....	Druggists
303	Bateman, George .....	Grocery
253	Carpenter, C.V. ....	Residence
6	Carpenter, W.D. ....	Druggist
1	Carpenter, W.D. ....	Residence
6	Chicago Telephone Co. ....	W.S. Carpenter, Manager
292	Compton, A.M. ....	Residence
242	Courtright, H.P. & Sons .....	Livery
11	Cook .....	Residence
291	Dicke Tool Co. ....	Factory
221	Downers Grove Reporter .....	Printing Office
304	Dawes F.A. ....	Residence
214	Daniels, A.P. ....	Residence
262	Edgeworth, J.F. ....	Residence
8	Gourley, Wm. W., M.D. ....	Residence
223	Graves, C.E. ....	Residence
292	Hughes, C.S. & Co. ....	Hardware
284	Hughes, C.S. ....	Residence
244	Hughes, Geo. T. ....	Coal & Ice
201	Herring, J.W. ....	Residence
281	Janowiak, A. ....	
272	Klein, Jake .....	Residence
231	Klein, Louis .....	Meat Market
243	Lord, P.A. Lumber Co. ....	
233	Mertz and Mochel .....	Hardware
301	Martin, H.W. ....	Residence
234	Miller House .....	
234	Mertz, L. ....	Residence
232	Nash, J.W. ....	Grocery
211	Prince, A.G. ....	Residence
10	Prentiss, F.J. ....	Residence
4	Roberts, Susan, M.D. ....	Residence
303	Root, F.A. ....	Residence
302	Schmitt, Queris .....	Livery
363	Singleterry, L.E. ....	Residence
2	Tope, W.A., M.D. ....	Residence
7	Village of Downers Grove .....	Col. Off.
9	Village of Downers Grove .....	Pumping Station
5	Village of Downers Grove .....	Village Hall
	Village of Downers Grove .....	Village Clerk
	Village of Downers Grove .....	Village Attorney
283	G. Hoffert .....	Policeman
252	Votypke, Rev. C.J. ....	Residence
212	Waples, W.S. ....	Residence
3	Western Union Telegraph Co. ....	
254	Wetten, Albert .....	Residence
222	Winchester, Lucius W. ....	Residence
271	Wooton, E. ....	Residence
311	White, R.S. ....	Residence
211	Wermuth, J.F. ....	Residence

The progressive citizens of Downers Grove now knew the advantages of having running water available to all the homes. Communications were vastly improved with the adoption of the telephone franchise, which made a telephone in every home a possibility. The next need was for electricity for the lighting of the streets and their homes! Anyone who had viewed the wondrous display of light at the Columbian Exposition would never again be content with the feeble, flickering glow of the coal oil lamp!

There was an unsuccessful attempt in 1895 to bring gas to Downers Grove for lighting and fuel. E.H. Prince and a man named Dawes from Omaha organized a company for the purpose of furnishing the Village with gas light. W.S. Carpenter had gas lights installed in his drug store. "The light furnished is clear and bright," according to the account in the *Reporter*, which went on to say that Mr. A.E. Hall, the agent for the company, could be seen at Carpenter's Drug Store where he would be happy to meet anyone who was interested in gas lighting.

An editorial in the *Reporter* opposed gas lighting strongly, concluding that, "beyond all question electricity is the only means of illuminating, and with the exception of perhaps being used for fuel, gas is practically a dead issue." As early as 1896 the business men in town were unanimous in favoring a municipal plant for electricity. The Nash Brothers said they would install electric lights in their place of business if the Village could establish a plant. J.W. Rogers favored a municipal plant and also indicated that he would subscribe to stock. Captain Rogers was quoted, "Arc lights for street lighting and village ownership of the plant would do much toward advertising Downers Grove as a progressive town." F.A. Brode, W.H. Colville, Hughes and Gallup all were in favor of a municipal electric plant. J.B. Moss said, "You may put me down as favoring any public improvements, whether they be electric lights, sewers, or paved streets."

William Straube of the piano factory said that he wanted lights in his house as soon as possible, and if it were not too expensive, he would also light his factory. Mertz and Mochel agreed that a Village-owned plant would be the best thing the Village could do. They said they would put electric lights in their hardware store and in their homes and also offered to buy stock in an electric company.

The list of businessmen who favored a Village electric plant went on and on, including Bush & Simonson, George P. Luce, Bateman and Palmer, U.H. Balcom, W.H. Barnhart, Frank Blanchard, D.G. Graham, A.J. Thompson, A.H. Wetten, M.E. Stanger, C.F. Davis, W.H. Edwards, J.H. Miller, W.J. Herring, and George F. Steer.

Louis Klein said he was satisfied with the lights in his store, but he felt that the Village should have electric lights for street lighting, and W.S. Carpenter said, "It would be a grand good thing for the village and could be secured for but little more than we are paying yearly for twilight."

Despite all this support it was another three years of haggling and hasseling before the electric-light franchise was passed.

Several propositions were put before the Board. There were several companies who sought the franchise for the electric plant. The Village was divided between giving the franchise to one of these private concerns or building a municipally-owned and operated plant. For months the Board debated the issue. Attendance of the citizens at the Board meetings was kept up by the continuing controversy, and the need to make their positions clear since the Board seemed to be about equally divided between municipal ownership and granting a franchise. The decision was turned by the consideration of the need for street lighting, and the proponents of Village ownership won their point. It was decided that the Village would go into the business of manufacturing and selling electricity.

To avoid the legal complications of financing, several local men offered to build the plant and then turn it over to the Village. This offer was finally accepted by the Village Board under the Presidency of P.C. Gallup, and on November 27, 1899, a twenty-year electrical franchise was granted to D.G. Graham. The last paragraph read that the Village could take over the plant not more than 30 days following its completion by the payment of one dollar and the assumption of all mortgages not to exceed \$16,000.

The system was installed in 1900 when F.A. Root was President of the Board. And on March 22, 1900, Mertz and Mochel's Hardware Store was wired for electric lights, preparing for 25 lampbulbs!

The following is the list of streets on which

wires were strung for electric service to the Village. These streets were the settled part of Downers Grove, and less than half the lots had dwellings.

Prairie, Oakwood to Geowey (now Douglas)  
Franklin, Oakwood to Geowey  
Belmont, Oakwood to Foote (now Forest)  
Warren, Foote to Highland  
Rogers, Highland to Elm  
Gilbert, Carpenter to Main  
Maple, two blocks west of Carpenter to Geowey  
Randall, Church to Blodgett  
Summit, Main to Blodgett  
Curtiss, Carpenter to Mackie Place  
Grove, Carpenter to Main  
Oakwood, Middaugh, Linscott, and Saratoga,  
Belmont (now Warren) to Chicago.  
Prince, Franklin to Chicago  
Foote, Curtiss to Chicago  
Carpenter, Maple to Gilbert  
Lane Place, 1000 feet south of Maple Avenue  
Main, Summit to Chicago  
Highland, Warren to Chicago  
Church (now 55th Street), Summit to Randall  
Washington, Summit to Prairie  
Lyman, Farley Place to Maple  
Park, Farley Place to Randall  
Fairmount and Benton, Summit to Maple  
Belden and Mackie Place, Curtiss to Maple  
Elm, "Q" tracks to Chicago  
Geowey, Franklin to Prairie

Note: Belmont Avenue is now Warren Avenue west of Forest. Foote Street is Forest Avenue, and Geowey is the present Douglas Road.

A booklet published about 1895 entitled "Chicago Suburbs on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad" lauded suburban living.

"Out of reach of the smoke and grime and dust, and yet completely in touch with the city are hundreds and hundreds of beautiful homes along the C.B.&Q railroad. Trains that run to and from them during the day and night carry their residents to and from business much more pleasantly, much more quickly, and always more promptly . . . than residents within the city are carried one-fifth the distance on the street cars. And then what a contrast in the manner of travel. The train passengers have comfortable seats, plenty of bright daylight to read their papers by, pure air blowing from open field or woodlands, no damp reeking tunnels to pass through, but the groves and streams and flowers to feast the eyes on while speeding by."

This same booklet says of Downers Grove, "attractively located on rolling ground in the midst of beautiful groves of native timber. Costly

residences line its shaded streets. Downers Grove has telephone communications with the city. Saloons are prohibited, but in lieu of them there are stores of nearly every character. The time in transit to Chicago is forty-three minutes and there are twenty-five trains each day!"

The train time to the City in 1895 is striking when compared to the travel time from Fort Dearborn to Downers Grove of nearly three days by horseback a short sixty years previous, and now in 1982 the train time has not changed very much from that forty-three minutes in 1895! This is due, of course, to the increased number of stops along the way.

The Thanksgiving issue of the Downers Grove *Reporter* on November 28, 1895, listed the business and manufacturing institutions in the Village at that time.

"With this Thanksgiving issue of the REPORTER we submit to the general public a review of the business resources of Downers Grove, their success and the brilliant outlook and advantages.

The following are the businesses and professional men listed:

*P.A. Lord Lumber Company*—Established in Downers Grove in the Spring of 1890 and immediately thereafter the town grew so rapidly that the company enjoyed a boom for the next two or three years. Mr. George P. Luce, vice president of the company is in charge of the Downers Grove location. Their system of selling goods at the lowest Chicago prices with freight and cartage added has increased their trade from a small beginning to its present large proportions. Lord Lumber Company brings their lumber direct from the mills and has a very extensive and complete sash and door factory at LaGrange. They make a speciality of hardwood veneered doors, cabinets and stair work, and are ready at all times to furnish estimates on anything made of wood. They have established and maintained a reputation for strictly first class millwork that has enabled them to control nearly all of this class of trade between Riverside and Downers Grove. They have also lately added a stock of coal and are ready to fill orders in this line promptly.

*G.F. Hawkins*—Mr. Hawkins conducts a plumbing, hotwater and steam heating business. He began business in Hinsdale and came to Downers Grove in 1891. His shop is fully equipped with the latest and most improved

machinery and tools manufactured for use in his business.

*Hughes and Gallup*—Hughes and Gallup deal in artificial ice and during the summer supply the whole town with a superior quality of this article. Coal and wood is their stock in trade at this season. They purchase from the leading mines and have on hand a large stock of hard and soft coal and wood. In dealing here you are sure of getting the proper weight and the best value. They are exclusive agents in their village for the famous Pocahontas smokeless coal. Mr. Gallup is on the Street and Alley committee of the village board.

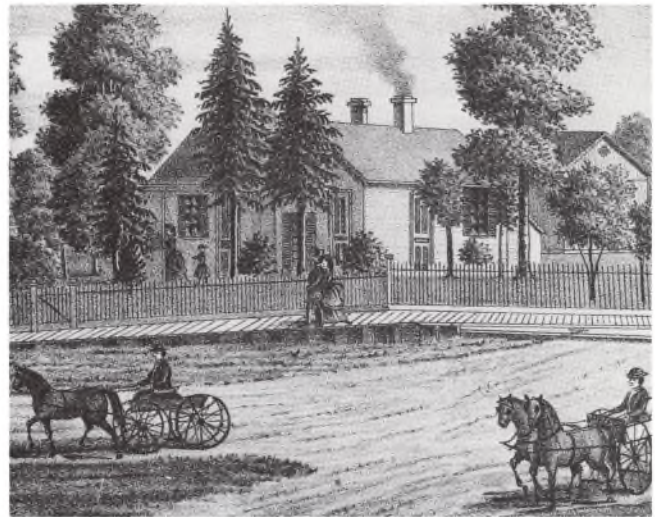
*Bush and Simonson*—This drug store enjoys the local fame of being the only building in the village that is lighted with electricity. Prescriptions are carefully prepared and filled by Mr. Simonson, who is a first-class registered pharmacist. He is also a jeweler and does a large amount of work in that line. A full line of toilet articles, perfumery, patent medicines, etc. are here. In the warm season, all their customers enjoy the soda drinks and ices at their soda fountain. Mr. Bush was a member of the finance committee of the Village board when our waterworks were secured and was largely instrumental in securing such an excellent system. He is secretary of the Downers Grove Loan and Homestead Association.

*Nash Brothers*—The Nash Bros. rank among the leading merchants of this section of the country. The firm buys to advantage from the leading markets, and the store is filled with an extensive stock of all kinds of general merchandise, dry goods, groceries, boots and shoes, hats and caps and furnishing goods.

*Van Matre and Straube's Piano Factory*—The leading manufacturing industry of Downers is this piano factory. The first complete piano was turned out on June 1, 1895. There are over fifty employees who turn out about fifteen complete pianos each week. Straube pianos are high class, rich toned, and highly finished in imported woods, including Circassian walnut, mahogany, rosewood and birds eye maple and oak, and are made in the highest skill of the carver's art. The firm's offices and warerooms are in the city at 24-26 Adams Street. Their building on Belmont Avenue (present Warren and Forest) is a splendid brick block and has been enlarged considerably since they commenced operations. Mr.

Straube is also interested in real estate and his subdivision in the eastern part of the village gives promise of becoming a popular residence section. *Dan C. Miley*—Among the latest enterprises is the laundry agency of Dan C. Miley, who represents the Naperville steam laundry. Work is called for and delivered promptly. Laundry can be left at Marvin's Barber Shop, where Mr. Miley makes his headquarters.

*Farmers and Merchants Bank*—This bank was started in January 1892 and has always done a clean, flourishing business. The officers are among our oldest and best citizens. They do a general banking and collecting business. They are located in their own handsome brick block which also houses the post office, the Reporter office, and editorial rooms of the Columbian magazine. The officers are Charles Curtiss, president; Dr. W.A. Tope, vice president; W.H. Edwards, cashier. Charles Curtiss is one of the pioneers of the village. He was president of the



Eldred Thatcher's home as shown in 1874 Atlas.

village for many years. Dr. W.A. Tope is a physician with a large practice.

*Thatcher and Bateman*—Mr. Thatcher, until recently in co-partnership with D.H. Crescy, is the oldest merchant in the village, having been continuously engaged in the business since 1856. Recently Mr. George Bateman, a son-in-law of Mr. Thatcher acquired Mr. Crescy's interest. The firm has always had the confidence of the community, and it brings to them a substantial trade.

They are constantly adding to their already large

stock of dry goods, groceries, boots, shoes, notions, etc.

*G.H. Bunge*—In reviewing the business interests of our flourishing village, the welfare of the place is so intimately connected with the C.B.&Q. RR that we wish to make special mention of its popular and efficient local representative, Mr. G.H. Bunge, who has held the position about five years. Mr. Bunge is a valued citizen, held in the highest regard by the public. He is courteous and obliging and has always discharged the duties of his office with the greatest satisfaction to the public as well as to the company. He is also agent of the Adams Express Co., and a member of the village board of trustee.

*M.E. Stanger*—Our postal facilities are conducted under the charge of our efficient postmaster, Mr. M.E. Stanger. During his term the office has been advanced from 4th to 3rd class.

*Straube Sub-Division*—Mr. Straube bought this land in September, 1890 and laid it out into blocks and lots. Owing to its high and dry location and excellent drainage, it has become extremely popular. Its streets are lined with many shade trees and is a picturesque place and a favorite with home seekers. Lots are reasonable and can be purchased on easy terms.

*E.H. Prince and Company*—The real estate firm of E.H. Prince and Company have caused the property on the north and west side of the railroad to "blossom as the rose." They have spent large sums of money excavating and fixing up the lake on their subdivision, which has materially added to its value and beauty. Fine houses and cottages, miles of sidewalks and water mains, hundreds of beautiful shade trees, good streets and broad avenues, plenty of pure fresh air makes Prince's addition a much sought after place to live, where homes can be purchased for the price of rent in the city.

*W.H. Colville*—This old established grocery store, formerly owned by P.C. Gallup, was bought out about a year ago by Mr. Colville. Mr. Colville buys from the leading markets and his store is filled with a large and superior stock of choice family groceries, provisions, fruits, vegetables, choice butter and eggs, feed and Shamrock flour. Orders are taken at your door three times a week.

*J.W. Sucher*—Mr. Sucher is the pioneer blacksmith, having worked at the trade with his father before the war (Civil War). In 1875 he moved

into his present quarters' in the brick building at the corner of Main Street and Maple Avenue. He carries on a general blacksmithing, horseshoeing, and repairing business. In connection with W.C. Bently carries on a wagon repairing business, and also new work. Manufactures carriages, wagons, hearses, etc. Mr. Bently is engaged in building business wagon bodies for three different firms in Chicago.

*J.B. Miller*—Hotel Miller is the only hotel in Downers Grove and probably no other is needed. The place is noted for its excellent table and reasonable rates. Mr. Miller has been established here a long time and owes his success to the fact that he believes in giving a person his money's worth. No one ever goes away from the Hotel Miller hungry. Mr. Miller is a dealer in oysters, celery, compressed yeast, etc. He handles the above goods in wholesale quantities.

*E. Roth*—Messrs. Roth have been established for a number of years as merchant tailors. They are competent and experienced cutters and turn out superior clothing. On hand is a nice line of samples to select from. Mr. Roth also makes a specialty of dyeing, cleaning and pressing.

*Brode and Company*—Mr. Brode is a successor to the business of J.W. Rogers. The lines handled by this firm are hardware, lumber, coal, brick, tile, sand, line, posts, cement, etc. The firm is thoroughly prepared for the coal trade, having on hand a superior stock of hard and soft coal. Brode has the contract this year to furnish coal for the public schools and pumping station. Brode will give you your money's worth and treat you right.

*George F. Steere*—The meat market now conducted by this young man was established by his father in 1884. You will find here a nice, clean market and the best meats, poultry, canned goods, vegetables, game and oysters in season, and all that you would expect to find in a well-kept market. The Steere brand of corned beef, which he makes, is famous in the vicinity.

*J.D. Bryce*—Mr. Bryce established his business here in the fall of 1891 on Belmont Street (now Warren) where he carries a large stock of paint, oils, wallpaper, picture frames, mouldings, etc. He is a practical painter and decorator and had many years of experience.

*Mr. Herring*—As builder of the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank Block, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Central Block, Mr. Herring has demonstrated his ability as an architect, a



contractor and a builder. Many handsome and costly residences erected by Mr. Herring have added materially to the picturesque beauty of Downers Grove. He now has in course of construction an elegant residence of his own on Maple Avenue, which will be one of the most attractive on that thoroughfare.

*S.A. Lyman*—Our only exclusive boot and shoe dealer opened his doors in the spring of 1894. He thoroughly understood his business and knew what kind of stock to buy to attract the public. He is fortunate to have as his assistant Mr. Tittel, one of the very best shoemakers and repairers to be found. It is a common saying, "Take your old shoes to Lyman and he will make them as good as new."

*Berens and Patrick*—This new firm has built and equipped a first class foundry and machine shop, where they make and repair all kinds of machinery, anything from a steam engine to a bicycle. Mr. Stanislaus Berens is a genius in inventions. He has taken out letters patent on the Polonia autographic register, also on a bicycle thief alarm.

*Mrs. McNaught*—Mrs. McNaught has been keeping this neat bakery for a couple of years. Because of the fine quality of her baked goods she has numerous friends and patrons who are her constant customers.

*Mr. W.S. Carpenter*—Mr. Carpenter's Central Block Pharmacy is one of the leading stores of the village. His store is the local station for the long distance telephone, where one may speak with anyone in the principal cities of the U.S. His store is lighted with a system of gasoline gas and presents an attractive appearance. The store carries a complete assortment of drugs and medicines, proprietary articles, stationery, periodicals, newspapers, etc. Prescriptions are carefully compounded. Mr. Carpenter enjoys the distinction of having been chosen as president of the village for the past two years. Of his official life it may be said that a shrewd, conservative course, in conducting matters pertaining to the public welfare, has always characterized him.

*Mertz and Mochel*—Mertz and Mochel are young men who are engaged in the general hardware, coal and feed business and stand ready to keep their name and the quality of their goods at the front. Their handsome brick store on Main street is a monument to their progressive business successes. By perseverance and honest

dealing they have built up their business from a small beginning, until now their fame reaches for many miles around and are considered two of our real solid financial men. In addition to their general hardware, coal and feed business, they do all kinds of furnace and sheet iron work, employing only the most skilled mechanic. They handle the famous Acorn stoves and ranges in all sizes, styles and prices.

*W.H. Barnhart*—W.H. Barnhart succeeded D.G. Graham in the grocery and produce business in the spring of 1891. Mr. Barnhart has had many years of experience in the business, is a good judge of goods, pays close attention to business and caters to a good trade. He is ably assisted by his son Allen in the business. He also enjoys an excellent patronage in the laundry business, being the Downers Grove representative of one of the best laundries in this state. Allen H. Barnhart is the agent for the Visitor Safe and Lock Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. Groceries can be purchased here as cheaply as anywhere and special attention is paid to prompt delivery of purchases.

*J.B. Moss*—J.B. Moss is an architect, contractor and builder, whose office is in the Club Block (the Dicke Bldg.) corner of Foote and Belmont Streets (present Forest and Warren). Mr. Moss has several large gangs of workmen in his employ, under competent foremen, and in this manner pushes to completion several contracts at the same time. One of the most beautiful residences in the village is his own house on Saratoga Avenue, erected during the past summer. He is now engaged in building three handsome residences in different parts of the village. Mr. Moss is also serving his third year as a member of the village board of trustees.

*Henry Selig*—Mr. Selig is a first class barber. He has built up a large acquaintance and good custom by his genial disposition and artistic work. He is always on hand to attend the business. He also keeps a full line of cigars and tobaccos.

*D.G. Graham*—The Exchange office is located in the Stanley building, Main Street, first door south of Central block, D.G. Graham proprietor. Renting, loans, collecting, conveyancing and fire insurance. Mr. Graham has the recording agency for six of the leading fire companies and has a large and rapidly increasing business in that, as in all other lines he represents. He is also notary

public and police magistrate. He has special arrangements for collecting in Cook and adjoining counties, a legal business at the county seat and courts, abstracts and recording can be arranged for at his office.

*A.B. Austin*—Among the staunch and firmly



Cover of catalogue Austin Nurseries

established concerns of this county are the Downers Grove Nurseries of which Mr. Austin is the proprietor. At the nurseries can be found trees, shrubs, evergreens and plants that will grow in any climate, and which are always sold at prices so cheap that it is no wonder that Mr. Austin has built up the large trade he now enjoys. He invariably gets the contracts for subdivisions and park work, and fills numerous large city orders.

*W.E. Farrar*—Mr. Farrar is a dealer in and repairer of bicycles, also dealer in flour and feed. He has built up a large bicycle trade. He handles the leading makes which he can sell as cheaply as any dealer in the county. He makes a specialty of repairing and rents wheels. Constantly on hand is a choice stock of flour, feed, meal, baled hay, etc.

*E. Wooton*—The stock farm of E. Wooton adjoins the village on the south. His business is that of supplying the Chicago hotels and markets with choice spring lambs and roasting pigs. He enjoys a large and lucrative business, necessitating his keeping constantly on hand large flocks and droves of these animals. He frequently receives telegrams in the evening ordering large numbers of dressed spring lambs or roasting pigs for delivery the following morning at the hotels in the city.

*Attorneys*—The legal business of the village is in the hands of Mr. Slusser and C.C. Carnahan, both also having Chicago offices. Mr. Slusser's office in the Village is at the Exchange office. He is also the official village attorney. Mr. Carnahan may be found evenings at his residence on Fairmount Avenue.

*Louis Klein*—Downers Grove is particularly blessed with excellent and well conducted meat markets. Among the best is the market of Louis Klein. Cleanliness is the predominant characteristic of his place and he keeps only the choicest of meats in stock. Klein has been in business about four years. Poultry, fish, canned goods, vegetables, game and oysters are sold here in their seasons.

*A.J. Thompson*—Mr. Thompson succeeded John LaSalle in the grocery business at the southwest corner of Curtiss and Main Street. He keeps an extensive stock of general merchandise, groceries, boots, shoes, notions, fancy goods, etc. *Physicians*—Though Downers Grove is proverbially a healthy place, it must of necessity have physicians. Drs. W.A. Tope, J.W. Gourley and G.A. Siddous, the latter a Homeopathist, look after the physical welfare of the inhabitants. The village is fortunate in having such well read practical members of the medical and surgical profession.

*Q. Smith*—Mr. Smith has a blacksmithing, wagon making and livery business on Grove Street. His blacksmith and wagon shop turns out only the best of work. His livery is composed of fine animals and excellent turnouts. Teaming is also done under the supervision of Mr. Smith. He carries also a general line of harness and home furnishings.

*Mary S. Diener*—Miss Diener's store carries nice fresh stock of the choicest confections, fresh bread and bakery goods, school books and supplies, stationery, etc.

*Samuel Hoffert*—About two years ago, this gentleman was burned out, but notwithstanding this calamity, he now conducts one of the county's most complete blacksmith and wagon making shops located at the southwest corner of Grove and Main. Mr. Hoffert is an expert horseshoer. With new and improved machinery and tools, he is able to turn out any class of work that may be brought to him.

*Dr. J.B. Burns*—The dentist hung out his shingle in Downers Grove about five years ago. Since his arrival there is no necessity for going to Chicago for services in that line, as the doctor possesses a full knowledge of the intricate duties pertaining to his profession.

*C.F. Davis*—Mr. Davis established this furniture store only a few years ago. He keeps a good line of furniture, pictures, mouldings, etc., and is a first class undertaker. He has also gained an enviable reputation as a violin maker.

*Alex Beidelman*—Alex Beidelman has done contracting in Downers Grove for years. He does all classes of stone and brick work and small jobs are carefully attended.

*C.H. Dicke*—One of Downers Grove foremost manufacturing concerns is the factory, foundry, and machine shop of C.H. Dicke. Mr. Dicke is a manufacturer of all kinds of lineman's construction tools and hardware specialties, including splicing clamps, climbers, shovel spoons, digging and tamping bars, pike poles, raising forks, pole supporters, carrying hooks, wiremen's and linemen's belts, pulley blocks with eccentrics, clamps, wrenches, floor groovers and sinkers, pinch bars, comealongs, pay out and take up reels, farrier's pincers and in fact a thousand and one different hardware tools and specialties. His factory on the north side is fully equipped with the very best mechanical labor saving appliances such as lathers, drill presses, forges, trip hammers, mortising machines, drilling machines of all kinds, polar machines for making pike poles and many other intricate machines. Mr. Dicke has lately added a huge and powerful machine for cutting solid steel up to three inches in thickness at an expense of about \$5000. His machinery is driven by a powerful running engine of improved pattern, and runs as smoothly and silently as a ball-bearing bicycle. A number of skilled workmen find employment here year 'round, and they can hardly turn out the products fast enough to fill orders. The tools of Mr.

Dicke's manufacture take high rank with the best manufactured. Mr. Dicke has offices in Chicago and in New York.

*John M. Wells*—John M. Wells is engaged in the real estate, loan and insurance business with offices in the Central Block. He buys, sells and exchanges real estate, writes insurance both fire and life, and conducts a general renting agency. He is also the village clerk and collector.

*H.P. Courtright*—H.P. Courtright has been established here in the bakery and confectionery business a little over a year. His is a model bakery with the best of bakery goods. His two sons A.E. and H.M. Courtright are associated with him in a livery business. The livery business has good teams, nobby rigs, careful drivers and reasonable prices. Promptness is the watchword of this firm and they are always ready to serve you at any hour of the day or night.



James Pierce Downer Dairy

*Tholin Brothers*—Tholin Bros. have been established in the merchant tailoring business on the north side for about a year. Their excellent tailoring demonstrates their ability as cutters and fitters of the modern school. Special attention is given to cleaning and repairing.

*George E. Downer*—George Downer has lived in Downers Grove all his life, a descendant of the man from whom the village receives its name, is a practical painter, glazer and paper hanger. He carries a full line of wallpaper samples and ceiling decorations.

*Henry Woelfersheim*—Mr. Woelfersheim moved here from Naperville several years ago. He has been actively engaged doing masonry ever since, and some of the largest and finest

buildings attest to the quality of his skill and workmanship.

*C.H. Balcom*—Mr. Balcom has been engaged in the general furnishings and house furnishing and undertaking business for many years. He is fully prepared to take entire charge of directing funerals. Embalming is done if desired. A fine hearse and other funeral equipment.

*J.P. Downer*—Mr. Downer has been engaged in the dairying business for a long term of years. He supplies his customers the best quality of fresh milk and cream from the highest grade of milk cows. Cleanliness is one of the secrets of this dairy's success.

*The Downers Grove Reporter*—The Reporter is now in its twelfth year and has had the usual hard struggle for an existence that has characterized nearly every country newspaper some time in its career. The present publishers are pleased to be able to state that since coming to Downers Grove, they have met with the heartiest cooperation and support, which has enabled them to slowly, but surely, advance along the pathway of improvement. They are thankful.

The Downers Grove Reporter enjoys the distinction of being the oldest business in Downers Grove, with a founding date of 1883. From that date to 1907 the ownership of the Reporter changed several times. Editors and publishers during those years included R.E. Graham, D.G. Graham, F.W. Stillwell, C.H. Curtiss, Hugh White, Harry Spears, Graeme Wyllie, and Hugh Wiley.

Christian H. Staats purchased the Reporter from owner Graeme Wyllie in 1908. From the first issue edited by Chris Staats to the present, with the exception of a few years immediately following 1910, the Downers Grove Reporter has been published by the same family. Walter Staats, Christian's son, became editor of the Reporter in 1916, and in 1918 Chester J. Winter Sr., Christian's son-in-law, also joined the Reporter. In 1924 the two younger men bought the paper from Christian Staats and operated it as a partnership for over twenty years. Walter Staats was the editor from 1916 until shortly before his death in 1946, when he sold his interest to Winter.

Chester J. Winter Sr. formed a partnership with his son Chester J. "Jack" Winter in 1949. Upon the death of the senior Winter in 1952, Jack became the publisher of the Reporter and

shortly thereafter formed a partnership with his wife, the former Patricia Keeley. In 1951 when Jack Winter was called to active service in U.S. Army Military Intelligence, Patricia Winter singlehandedly operated the newspaper for a year and a half until her husband returned to civilian life. Jack Winter continues as the publisher of the Reporter with his wife Patricia Winter as co-publisher and is joined by their sons, Craig and Christopher Winter, and their wives in continuing the family tradition in publishing the Downers Grove Reporter.



Dicke Building early 1900's — looking North at the corner of Forest and Warren.



Emma Kluge and Christian H. Staats wedding picture

From the beginning the Downers Grove community consisted of people who cared about each other, who worked together for the good of the Village, but also enjoyed celebrating and having good times together. The social life of the Villagers was active with ladies' meetings, church suppers and socials, and the organization of many clubs and lodges.

At a meeting of the Whist Club on April 6, 1892, a group of some twenty gentlemen decided there was a need for a Men's Club in the Village where "tired business men" could find congenial company and pleasant recreation. The group bought the George M. Lee house on Railroad Avenue for the Club and furnished it with a piano and billiard and pool tables as well as dining room service.

The club held its first meeting on September 3, 1892, and added about twenty members to its charter membership of twelve. Many invitations were extended to an opening reception which was held on the evening of December 17th, and as a result many new members joined the Club.

After not quite two years the Club moved to the second floor of the Dicke building, which was a very convenient location for the commuters as they dropped in on their way home from business. Captain T.S. Rogers was Chairman of the Club in 1895. The Club had frequent "smokers" where they were entertained by short, humorous speeches, presentations by their members, and music, as the cigars were passed again and again.

In the early spring of 1896, the Downers Grove Club had a most successful "smoker" with 150 guests and a program which included such diverse entertainment as a piano selection from J.W. Howles of the Chicago Conservatory, a vocal selection by a boy soprano, a character sketch by S.N. Hofheimer of Chicago, Sam Davis of the famous Weber Quartet singing English character songs with the audience joining in on his last song. A General Stubbs presented his "clever and inimitable recitations", and the list of entertainers went on, even including a three-round sparring bout!

That same week in March, the Knights of Pythias held their first annual ball at the Crescy Auditorium. Though a cruel March wind was blowing and snow was flying, fifty couples enjoyed good music as well as refreshments. The grand march began at 9:00 P.M. followed by waltzes, two steps, and schottisches. According to the newspaper account, "Everyone enjoyed



The John Oldfield Building (later called the Heartt Block)

themselves immensely”.

The first Fourth of July parade and program seems to have been held in 1896. At first a picnic was planned. It didn't seem that there would be enough interest for an entire day's program, but as the planning progressed, it was obvious that the citizens of Downers Grove wanted a real celebration!

“In consequence Downers will this year have an old-fashioned, patriotic and enthusiastic observance of this one great national holiday. The fun will begin early in the morning and last all day and far into the evening. Col. Daniel Munn of Chicago, the noted speaker, will deliver the oration. Another chief attraction will be the great parade of floats representing the merchants and various industries of the village. Great preparations are being made by the business men for this event which will prove one of the most interesting features of the day. The illumination of the village in the evening and a magnificent display of fireworks will close the day's programs.”

There was a long list of events—games, races including a ladies' egg race, foot races for all ages, hammer throw, quoits, tennis singles and indoor baseball between Downers Grove and East Grove.

In 1897 John Oldfield built a handsome Menominee pressed brick three-story building on his property across the street from the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank Building at the southeast corner of Main and Curtiss Streets. Bush and Simonson Drug Store leased the first floor, and the second floor was fitted especially for the Downers Grove Men's Club. The quarters were described as a

“paragon of elaborate conveniences, calculated to give the club the most handsome quarters of any between Chicago and Aurora. The suite consists of a reception hall, two parlors, a billiard room, smoking room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom for club mem-



Downers Grove Woman's Club, Sitting (L to R): Sarah Lancaster; Minnie Prince; Susan Foster. Standing (L to R): Imogene Kelly; Charlotte Boardwell; Clara Barnhart; Hortense VanVehlen. Women's Club 40th anniversary.

bers, besides ladies' and gentlemen's toilet rooms."

Also in 1897 W.S. Carpenter completely refitted the hall over his store with new modern furnishings, gas lights, and toilet facilities in order to meet the need for the clubs and lodges. The hall became known as Carpenter's Hall and was used by six lodge organizations: Knights of Pythias, Ancient Order of United Workmen, Royal League, Knights of Maccabees, Ladies of the Maccabees, and the Modern Woodmen.

The Downers Grove Woman's Club was organized on February 3, 1897, as a magazine club and later under the direction of Mrs. Sara Vernon Lancaster merged into the Wednesday Club. In May, 1901, the Wednesday Club held its final meeting of the season at the Downers Grove Club rooms. Henceforth the club was known as the Downers Grove Woman's Club.

"The object of the club is the mutual improvement of its members in literature, art, science, and vital interests, to extend all help possible toward civic improvement, to encourage and help all branches of Domestic Science in our public schools, to help those in need, and to cast an influence for all that is good, true and womanly."

The election of officers selected Mrs. J.C. White, President; Mrs. Cora Hancock, Vice-President; Mrs. G.A. Dawes, Recording Secretary; Mrs. M.A. Sacksteder, Corresponding Secretary; and Mrs. M.E. Stanger, Treasurer. The various committee chairmen were: Mrs. C.W. Weber, Mrs. L.H. Thomas, Mrs. S.H. Frey, Mrs. E.J. Dietz, Mrs. George T. Hughes, and Mrs. C.S. Hughes.

Several ladies of the community formed the Ladies' Library Association in 1891 as they saw the need for a library in the Village. The Association was delighted to accept the generosity of Mr. L.P. Narramore of the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank, who donated the use of a small room for the Library Room in the new bank building.

The Ladies' Library Association opened the doors of their own building to the public in 1895. The building was described as "cozy, convenient, and finely finished, with abundant room for their use, including their business meeting." The selection of books was deemed excellent.

"It is one of the leading educational and instructive features of the community. The fact that such an institution is so extensively patronized here speaks well for our community as a people of culture, education and progress . . . and the ladies deserve great credit for their untiring zeal and energy."

Bicycling was a popular sport in the 1890's as well as a convenient means of transportation, but the deplorable condition of muddy streets made riding on the streets difficult to impossible. A six-mile bicycle race, which had been long in the planning, finally took place on Saturday afternoon in September of 1896 despite the poor condition of the roads. The riders, Fred Mertz, E. Smith, William Lawson, Carl Magnuson, August Lehman, and Guy and Lynn Wheeler, started from the crossing at Carpenter's Drug Store at 5 o'clock. Ernest Smith was favored to be the winner, but Lynn Wheeler finished first in 20:15, slow time but not too bad considering the condition of the streets, with Smith coming in second.

Guy Bush and V. Simonson bought a handsome Napoleon tandem cycle which brought them little but grief. Wheeling around town, they looked very stylish and debonair on their bicycle built for two; but each time they rode out into the country, a tire would explode, leaving the dusty riders to walk their disabled bike back to town.

John DeGroot drew stares of amazement as he rode down the street on his bicycle with an enormous high wheel in front and a tiny wheel down low in the back. No one could fathom how he could mount the wheel as he rode so very high up in the world.

And then Downers Grove came to a massive dilemma in dealing with the traffic of bicycles, and the result was noted all up and down the

suburban communities of the "Q", even to a lengthy news report in the *Chicago Record*.

Downers Grove had had a Village ordinance for many years barring all vehicles except baby carriages on the Village sidewalks. This ordinance had never caused a problem until the coming of the bicycle.

In the *Chicago Record* a story began,

"In Downers Grove everybody rides a wheel, from the minister down to the grocers' boys. Even the village authorities ride, and that is where the joke comes in."

With a heavy rainy season the streets looked like nothing so much as a hog pen with deep, slick, slimy mud! "It was then a question of break the law or walk. The victims of the ruling had no choice!"

All the bicyclers were using the sidewalks illegally with their wheels. The Village Constable had no choice but to enforce the ordinance, and the Village treasury reaped the rewards!

"Deacons of the churches were soon joining the lawbreakers, and even ministers forgot to be living examples. The Reverend Mr. Moor was stopped by the constable as he sped down the sidewalk. Miss Caldwell, one of the popular young ladies of the village was likewise arrested. A pair of out-of-town tandem riders were arrested, and warrants were sworn out for nearly half the riders in town!

The villagers were righteously indignant, and demanded the village authorities to keep the roads passable if they wanted the sidewalks clear of bicycles. And then Frank Lindley, President of the Board of Education was seen breaking the sidewalk law 'on his wheel at the rate of forty miles an hour!' Soon after, the son of C.V. Carpenter, the president of the village board, was stopped for his flagrant violation, and soon after, one of the detectives was stopped for riding his wheel on the sidewalk. Lastly one of the village trustees was discovered 'violating rapidly!'

Conduct was regulated. The C.B.&Q issued



A. Forrest Nash, brother of Grant Nash in Nash Grocery truck

strict orders against card playing on their trains on Sunday, and the order was strictly enforced.

Two years later, in 1897, the Downers Grove Village Council passed an ordinance which was not repealed until 1920, prohibiting the sale of cigarettes. The penalty was a fine not less than \$50 nor more than \$200 with a further penalty of \$25 a day for each and every day the violation persisted after conviction for the first offense.

"The object of the measure is to stop the sale of 'coffin tacks' to children and will prove very effectual as it will be rapidly enforced. Every citizen approves of the law and will give it hearty support."

In the middle 1890's, \$2400 would buy a recently-built large house on a fifty-foot lot on North Main Street within one block of the depot, while \$1899 would buy another fine house advertised as conveniently located, though not quite so close to the depot.

The Nash Brothers advertised white or black men's shirts from 50¢ to \$1.00, and a suit at Tholin Brothers could be bought for \$18. \$3.50 would buy a barrel of Gold Medal flour at Nash Brothers, and a 2-lb. full weight package of Challenge Rolled Oats cost 5¢. W.H. Colville, General and Fancy Groceries, offered pure granulated sugar, 20-lbs. for \$1.00; pure maple syrup from the groves of Vermont at \$2.00 per gallon; 25 bars of Lenox soap for \$1.00; many kinds of teas for 20¢ to 80¢ per lb.; while Mocha and Java coffee was 35¢ per lb.

The local market as listed on September 5, 1895, was as follows:

Butter, per lb.....	16 to 25¢
Eggs, per doz.....	15¢
Potatoes, per bu.....	\$1.00
Oats per bu.....	31¢
Corn, per bu.....	45¢
Pork, dressed, per hund.....	\$5.50
Pork, undressed, per hund.....	\$4.75
Beef, extra, per hundred.....	\$5.75 to \$6.10
Veal, calves, per hund.....	\$2.00 to \$5.50
Mutton, per hundred.....	\$3.75 to \$4.45
Spring lambs per hund.....	\$3.75 to \$5.70
Turkeys per lb. live.....	9¢
Hens, per lb, live.....	8 ½¢
Ducks per lb. live.....	7 ½¢

The *Reporter* reflected the times in its news items and editorials. In reaction to a magazine article predicting that soon there would be no horses on the streets of the great cities the *Reporter* editor wrote,

"Bicycles, electric and cable cars, proposed carriages

propelled by various motors, may fill a large place in transportation, but a great many people, in this age at least, will still be content with horse power. It is not easy to convert everybody, even in this progressive country, to 'new fangled' ideas."

Then there were items which seemed to fit some of our present day concerns.

"John D. Rockefeller, the head of the Standard Oil Trust, is credited with having remarked a while ago that his great ambition in life is to accumulate \$500,000,000. Judging from the recent rise in the price of oil, he must have been afraid he would have to hurry up in order to accumulate it!"

There was the timeless worry about the young people of the day. Grace Huling Littleford remembered one Halloween when some older boys dragged a cow to the second floor at Lincoln



Washington School 1896, Lillian Bennett; Ralph Rassweiler; Bessie Tenney; Hibbard Green; Julia Barnard; Claudia Wheeler; Frank Briggs; Lynn Farrar; Earl Herring; Irving Heartt; Maurice Puffer; Rupert Bateman; Emma Siddons; Harriet Strong; Julia R. Kellogg; Celia Lamb; Lyra Kimball; Nettie Tenney; Lillie Devereaux; Carl Slusser; Ann Dollinger; Mabel Hatch; Bertha Prince; Minnie Johnston; Josephine Forbes; Prof. J. K. Rassweiler; Ida Bryce; Maud Cobb; Gertrude Frankel (Darnley); Harry Slusser; William Druitt; Frank Baker; John Finley; Franklin Shohr; David Holland; Nellie Johnson; Mary Augusta Nourse; Ida Smith; Mabel Austin; Ethel Edwards; Leroy Bunning; Paul Herring; Lynn Wheeler; Carrie Johnson; Cora Heartt; Louisa Spohr; Lydia Sucher; Carrie Caldwell; Adeline Mikolet; Katharine Huling and Albert Cornils.

School and then tied her tail to the rope of the bell in the belfry. Each time old Bossy switched her tail, the huge bell tolled dolefully. The neighbors, awakened by the tolling bell, were startled and then indignant. One short article regretted,

"the carelessness about some young persons that is manifest in almost everything they do, their lack of study habits and poor work attitudes."

While Dr. Talmadge prayed,

"We thank thee that the Congress of the nation has

departed, and that many of those who represented the people in public offices will no more represent them. We pray that you will forgive them for the damage they have done this nation."

In January of 1895 the Downers Grove schools\* reported a total number of pupils at 409 with the average daily attendance 382. There were 194 pupils with perfect attendance. A total of 51 students were reported tardy, and there were nine visitors during the month. The first Downers Grove High School graduation exercises were held in the Methodist Church on June 14, 1895, when a class of four were graduated. The graduating class consisted of Lee E. Stanley, Grace M. Batterham, Lizzie A. Strong, and Annie M. Herring. Two years later the graduating class had increased to twelve, seven young ladies and five young gentlemen: Cora Heartt, Irving Heartt, Paul Herring, Floyd Farrar, Lynn Wheeler, Gertrude Mikoleit, Maurice Puffer, Stella Dixon, Nellie Johnson, Mabel Smart, and Claude Wheeler.

The Downers Grove Council under the Presidency of Guy Bush voted in 1897 to place street signs at each street intersection. A bid for the work was secured from J.M. Nargney for \$7.50 per hundred for the signs. The first street signs in the village had been placed at the corner of Curtiss and Washington Streets by Charles Curtiss in front of his own house. Mr. Curtiss had two very neat street signs painted and attached them to the trees on his corner.

Guy Bush ran for the Illinois State Legislature in 1898. Downers Grove enjoyed a particular honor when Bush was elected a member of the Legislature from the Forty-first District. A Republican, Guy Bush was returned to the Legislature for six successive two-year terms. Prior to his election to the Legislature, Bush had been a prominent citizen in Downers Grove all his adult life and had just completed two terms as the President of the Village Board.

Guy Bush was born on his father's farm one mile west of Downers Grove, the son of Henry and Calla Belden Bush. His grandparents, the Beldens and the Bushes and his great-grandparents, the Dexter Stanleys, were all early settlers of Downers Grove. Bush was vitally interested in his community, working on local committees and

\*There were now two schools in the Village. In 1891 two-room Washington School was built north of the tracks.





Guy L. Bush

holding various positions, including that of Village Forester.

The year of 1898 marked the organization of the Downers Grove Volunteer Fire Department. Some years before the Village had bought a hand pumper to be used in case of fire, but this was manned by whoever was available at the time.

A number of fires within the Village had painfully demonstrated the need for an organized group of men to fight fires. In 1893 alone eight buildings burned: including the Alford Harness Shop, the Laundry, Querin Smith Livery, Sam Hoffert's Blacksmith Shop, a residence; and the Crescy Auditorium fire was contained. A fire department became feasible after the building of the waterworks in 1894. The alarm used to call the volunteers to a fire was an old iron rail bent into a triangle, which hung by the passenger depot. The first man there would grab a sledge hammer and pound for all he was worth.

By 1900 a system was set up to determine the location of a fire in the Village. When the alarm was sounded by the new fire bell, the bell tolled slowly the number of the ward in which the fire was located. The first ward was that part of the Village lying east of Main Street and south of the railroad. The second ward was west of Main Street and south of the railroad. The third ward was west of Main Street and north of the railroad, and the fourth ward was east of Main Street and north of the railroad. The fire whistle gave a series of short whistles as an alarm and long blasts denoting the number of the ward where the fire was located.

That same year, 1898, the United States went

to war against Spain. Public sentiment was stirred to an angry pitch by the sinking of the U.S. Battleship Maine in the harbor at Havana on February 15th. War was formally declared against Spain on April 25, 1898, and twelve men from Downers Grove enlisted in the armed services:

David G. Colville  
John L. DeGroot  
W.H. Edwards, Jr.  
Archibald C. Farrar  
Frank T. Krambs  
F. Sibley Mann  
Clarke E. Pomeroy  
Maurice L. Puffer  
Ernest L. Smith  
Fred B. Towsley  
Ben Weatherbee  
William R. Wells

By August 12th, the War was over with the signing of a peace protocol with Spain. Though life was interrupted for these young men who served in the armed forces and their families, and the community, concerned for their safety, was relieved at their safe return to Downers Grove, this brief War seemed not to have had much effect on the day to day living in the Village.

In January of 1900 a strike was called at the Piano Factory. The Village was proud of this factory, which employed about 75 men during its busy season. Mr. Straube, the owner, was a very active member of the community. The manufacture of pianos had gone smoothly for nearly five years when it ran into labor troubles not unlike those in Chicago. The Chicago Piano and Organ Makers' Union organized a local branch with a membership of about sixty men and called a strike. Feelings ran high. Mr. Straube slept at the factory to protect his property, and officers



Dr. Walter C. Barber and his parents in 1904 Oldsmobile on West Curtiss Street.

escorted non-union men to and from work to ward off any possible problems.

The strike was finally settled, but some time later Mr. Straube moved the factory to Hammond, Indiana. The plant manager said,



Charles Baker



Mr. and Mrs. William Herrick

“The growth of our business has made it absolutely necessary to secure more commodious quarters. The citizens of Hammond made us a liberal offer and as a business proposition we accepted it. The change is made for these reasons. Our business relations in Downers Grove have been pleasant and (we) regret having to leave the village.”

With the factory’s employment of approximately 80 men and a payroll of between \$4,000 to \$5,000 a month, the merchants of Downers Grove deeply regretted the decision of Straube to move the factory.

New families had flocked to the Grove during the last decade of the nineteenth century, and by 1900 the population was over two thousand people. The census showed 2,103, up from 960 in the census of 1890 and from 586 in the census of 1880. In a short twenty years the population of the Village had nearly quadrupled!

The changes in the Village in that same twenty-year period were incredible, with the Village waterworks and electric plant, the telephone system linking the Village to Chicago and indeed the entire Country, an organized Fire Department, the expansion of town property, and the many fine and expensive houses built throughout the Village.

Mr. George McDougall bought the first automobile in Downers Grove in 1903, and Dr. Walter Barber bought the second, an Oldsmobile, in 1904. Mrs. Walter Barber became the first woman driver in the Village in 1910 when her husband taught her to drive.

A number of new businesses came to Downers Grove early in the twentieth century, and the proprietors of the businesses became pillars of the community. In 1907 Charlie Baker opened his livery business and built the fine building in 1909 in which he housed the livery. The Baker Motor Express is still in business in Downers Grove in 1982.

William Herrick came to Downers Grove in 1900 and found employment on the Uhlhorn dairy farm north of town. In 1905 he bought what was then the Akon greenhouse on Washington Street and began his work as a florist and gardener, which he continued actively until 1947 when his son Bartle assumed management of the enterprise. The Herrick Florists are still in business on Washington Street, until only very recently managed by Bart Herrick.

In 1907 William Herrick married Ella Bartle, the daughter of William and Emily Bartle and



Joan and Bill Hannan  
Baker Motor Service

granddaughter of John and Lucy Richards, early settlers in Downer's Grove.

"If ever a man had a green thumb, Bill Herrick was the one. Year after year his sweet peas were the most fragrant, his peonies the daintiest, his roses the showiest, his tomatoes the reddest, his sweet corn the sweetest, his cabbage the whitest and his cucumbers the crispiest. For years an autumn display of the fruits of his garden in a Main Street grocery store window attracted more attention than all the bargain merchandise displays up and down the street."

In addition to the tradition of his horticulture in the community was William Herrick's lengthy and invaluable service to the schools of Downers Grove. Herrick was elected to the Grade School Board of Education in September of 1920 and to the High School Board in 1923. He was re-elected for term after term to both boards, serving for over thirty years! Herrick Junior High School was named as a memorial to William Herrick in honor of his service.

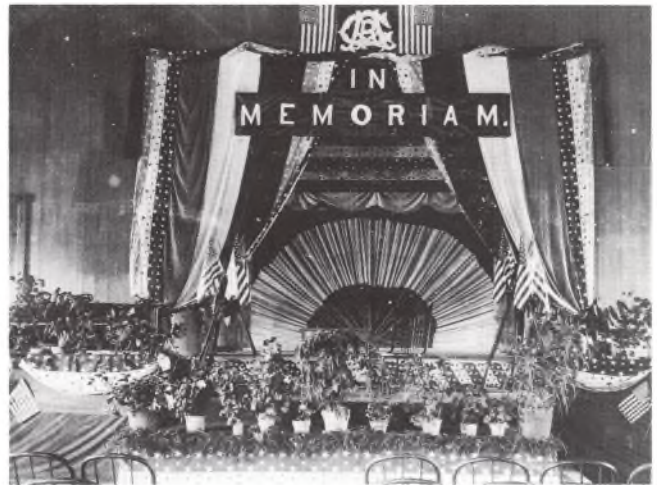
Herrick received many honors during his lifetime, including a lifetime honorary membership in the Downers Grove Chamber of Commerce.

He was designated "first citizen of the village and number one personality of Downers Grove" by the *Downers Grove Reporter* on the strength of a poll conducted by the townspeople. He was the last surviving member of the charter members of the Downers Grove Lions Club.

William Herrick's two sons, Elmer and Bartle, have been active in the community, and his daughter-in-law Florence Herrick carries on the



Crescy Auditorium 1900  
Corner of Grove and Main



Crescy Auditorium 1900

family tradition, serving as Secretary of the School Boards.

Rural Free Delivery was brought to the Downers Grove rural area in 1901, but the Village was still trying in 1905 to obtain free delivery for the houses in town. As late as 1907, when a band instrument factory was considering moving to Downers Grove into the new building on Rogers Street, one of the benefits they touted was that their increased postal business would bring the level of the post office up to being able to provide

free delivery to the householder. Evidently the factory required too many inducements from the Village; and, free postal delivery or not, the factory was allowed to go elsewhere.

"In 1902 the Arcadian Club was organized in the Thomas Lyman home on Maple Avenue. Several boys who were graduating from high school wanting to keep in touch with each other, met and formed a literary club which has had meetings and banquets, all of these sixty-eight years!"

Grace Littleford wrote in 1970,

"Each member provides a program or speaker. As the boys did not wish to take office at first, (Grace Huling Littleford) was chosen president.

When members moved away, new members were admitted. We gave plays in the old Auditorium and invited friends. We had picnics and hayrack rides.



Brick street — South Main

Mr. Edwin Pridham, inventor of a loud speaker system and co-founder of the Magnavox Company was one of the organizers of the club."

Mrs. Littleford wrote about the Crescy Auditorium, where the Arcadian Club met,

"The old auditorium built about 1890 by D.W. Crescy at the corner of Main and Grove streets, was the community center of Downers Grove. It was a frame building (which was saved from destruction in that fateful fire of 1893) with a stage and colorful curtain which could be raised and lowered. The schools held suppers for raising money. Plays, many political meetings and lectures were given here until about 1910."

Grace Huling applied to the Tenney School in 1905 and was accepted as a teacher. There were sixteen pupils enrolled who came from as far as Fairview Avenue on the east and about as far from the west.

The Tenney School was next to the old Milnes

farm on south Dunham Road, and Grace Huling lived in Downers Grove about three miles from the school. She said that she would start walking about seven each morning and arrive at school about 8:00 A.M. In the winter she had to build a fire from fuel in the shed and sweep the floor. On snowy days she stayed overnight at the Tenney home next door. Her salary was \$30.00 per month.

In 1906 a group of Catholic families in Downers Grove met to organize a new church. In the beginning they met in the hall above Thompson's grocery, with 75 to 100 people attending mass each Sunday. Then Mrs. Kate Oldfield deeded the land at the northeast corner of Main and Franklin as a site for a church, and the cornerstone was laid in 1907 for St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

In 1906 wages were 15¢ per hour on the Burlington. Main Street was a brick paved thoroughfare from Maple to Franklin. There was no need to pave beyond that since there was nothing but farmland to the north.

Highland Avenue was the main road in 1910 leading north from town, and it was graded all the way to 12th Street (Roosevelt Road)! There were only four houses between the church and the railroad, and the houses north of the church were few and far between.

The Village Board took action to secure a system of sewers to adequately serve Downers Grove, and in 1905 Contractor F.A. Mortimer began active operations on the forty-four thousand dollar job. Work was started at the filter beds near the old gravel pit on the Lyman estate, west of Gilbert Avenue. In the afternoon of March 25th Hon. Charles Mochel, President of the Board, accompanied by Trustees George Heartt and Ford Davis went to the scene of operations where they inspected the laying of the first big 18" tile, which initiated the sewer system of the Village.

On the front page of the Downers Grove Reporter in May of 1908 was a letter from W.S. White, M.D., to the Honorable J.W. Hughes, praising the fine roads he had traveled as he had passed through the Village. The comment in the Reporter was

"The doctor, of course, came through on Maple Avenue, which is a delight not only to the villagers, but to all tourists who take advantage of it. But supposing he had tried to get out of our village on the north? He would be there yet!"

The improvement and paving of the roads was an overwhelming need. In 1907 the Village Board passed an ordinance requiring the CB&Q Railroad to construct a subway in the Village where the tracks are intersected and crossed by Maple Avenue. Interestingly enough, that subway has been proposed again and again, and in 1982 the traffic still goes up and over the tracks!

The following are the stores and businessmen in the early 1900's in the downtown section of Downers Grove, as listed by Miss Lucile Bush:

**West side of Main Street from Railroad south — in order of location:**

- MILLER HOTEL—Owned by Jake Miller.
- FRUIT STORE (later became Dexter's Store) sundries.
- MR. ROTH'S TAILOR SHOP.
- DAVIS' FUNERAL PARLOR—Mr. C.F. Davis, prop.
- SAM HALLER'S GENERAL STORE—dry goods in north section; groceries in south section.
- LOUIS KLEIN'S MEAT MARKET—later moved several doors south to new building nearer Curtiss Street.
- CARPENTER'S DRUG STORE—then Mr. Modaf's, then Zindt's; at one time telephone company had space in this store; later Mr. Baker used space for clock and watch repair.
- MOCHEL'S HARDWARE STORE—hardware and coal.

**Alley**

- D.G. GRAHAM, "Judge"—Justice of the Peace and Real Estate and Insurance, in a one-story cottage; Judge Graham's home set back from Main Street.

**(Curtiss Street)**

- THOMPSON'S GENERAL STORE—A.J. Thompson, proprietor—south section was dry goods; foods in north section; Mr. Hugh Pitcher was the butcher who later bought the store.
- ANNA MEYER'S SHOP—Owner/proprietor of store selling materials for hand work and fancywork; later was a barber shop.
- GAS COMPANY OFFICE
- TELEPHONE COMPANY—occupied a small space

**(St. Joseph Creek)**

- BALCOM'S FURNITURE STORE—Mr. Uriah Balcom was also a cabinet maker and mortician; shop was over the creek.
- SHOE REPAIR SHOP—Proprietor unknown.
- VILLAGE HALL—FIRE DEPT. AND STORAGE Buildings at rear; later World War I Memorial Building built on site; horse watering trough at street in front of building.
- MAIN STREET CEMETERY
- CRESCY AUDITORIUM—(5206 Main)



Building at corner of Main and Curtiss



Uhlhorn Ice wagon



Lehmann and Michael (later J. L. Lehmann & Sons) delivery truck

**(Grove Street)**

- HOFFERT BLACKSMITH SHOP—Sam Hoffert, Owner
- HOFFERT RESIDENCE—Sam, Fred, and George Hoffert and their parents
- GENERAL STORE—Originally Thatcher and Cole. Mr. Palmer was co-owner with Thatcher—later Mr. Crescy sole owner.



George Diener — Shoemaker



East side of Main Street looking North. About 1900.



Southwest corner of Main and Curtiss



Main Street looking South — 1909



3 cylinder, air cooled 1910 Buick  
L to R: J.H. Frankenfield; Mr. Rudder; Harry Darnley; Leo Bertolin; Joe Babobsky; and Fred Larson.



Farmers' & Merchants' bank building and post office

### East Side of Main Street From R.R. South

NASH'S GROCERY STORE—J.W. Nash, proprietor;  
also sold feed and grain.

SELIG SISTERS—Clara & Laura Selig, proprietors;  
hats and women's accessories.

SELIG BARBER SHOP—Henry Selig, proprietor,  
father of Selig sisters; later became a plumbing shop.

RANG'S BAKERY  
HUFF'S PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY—later became  
Frankenfield's Plumbing Shop

### (Alley)

UHLHORN'S DAIRY—D.H. Uhlhorn, owner  
HAWKINS' PLUMBING SHOP  
BERTOLIN'S ICE CREAM PARLOR—later Fruit  
Store  
FARMERS' AND MERCHANTS' BANK—Barber  
Shop in basement; first library on second floor with  
entrance on Curtiss Street; post office at rear of build-  
ing on Curtiss Street.

### (Curtiss Street)

BUSH & SIMONSON DRUG STORE—G.L. Bush and  
Victor Simonson, co-proprietors; building owned by  
George Heartt; built by Mr. Oldfield, the father of Mrs.  
George Heartt; watch & jewelry repair station in rear.  
MOCHEL'S MARKET  
VICTOR THOLIN'S HABERDASHERY—also a tai-  
lor shop  
PFAFF'S HARDWARE—Eugene Pfaff, proprietor  
BARNHART'S TOBACCO STORE—Allan Barnhart,  
proprietor; tobacco and sundries; later became The  
Dexter Store—school supplies and sundries

### (St. Joseph Creek)

Immediately south of the open creek were six private  
homes belonging to: Hawkins, Willis, D.C. Stanley,  
Wrights, Potters, Shaler.  
PENNER'S HARNESS SHOP—Conrad Penner, own-  
er/ proprietor who bought property from G. Diener;  
now a Chinese laundry  
DIENER SHOEMAKER SHOP—George Diener, own-  
er; made shoes by hand and repaired shoes  
MARY DIENER'S STORE—Mary Diener, owner; sold  
school supplies, bakery goods, sundries  
BLANCHARD HOUSE—Stood south of Diener's store  
FRANK BLANCHARD'S SHOP—Well driller and  
windmill installer; later Evangelical Church built on  
this site.

### Florists and Greenhouses

W.D. HERRICK—Owner of greenhouse on south Wash-  
ington; Secretary of School Boards  
J.F. KIDWELL—Greenhouse owned by Kidwell and  
Ellsworth in Lisle; Mr. Kidwell served as D.G. Mayor  
CHARLES WOLF—PROPRIETOR of shop on E. Prai-  
rie and Washington Street

### Forest Avenue, North of Railroad

STRAUBE, WILLIAM—Manufacturer of furniture and  
pianos; corner of Warren and Forest  
GERWIG'S STORE—Fred Gerwig, owner/proprietor of  
this grocery; later owned by Stewart Burns, brother of  
Alex Burns; still later became Lehman's—4950 Forest

The next few years were busy years filled with  
the many activities in the Village. The village  
attended church and lectures and clubs and  
programs.

The Poultry Show, in which the Downers  
Grove Poultry Club participated, was a popular  
success each year . . . The Firemen had their  
annual Fourth of July picnic in Lyman's Wood  
. . . The businessmen of Downers Grove met to  
form an association . . . and baseball was front  
page news with the Downers Grove team leading  
the Suburban League.

"The team representing Downers Grove . . . is the  
best team we have had for years. They are a good,  
fast and aggressive lot of players, playing the game  
from the time the first ball is pitched until the last  
man is put out at the finish."

Five straight victories—what a season!

"Wilson made a couple of star catches  
the first inning. His throwing was also exc  
one stolen base being registered against  
robbed Nedrenton of a hit in the eighth  
out in short left and spearing his Texa  
Besides getting a home run and a dou  
made a couple of swell catches in left field

Patterson was called out on a strike in  
inning, which came within an inch of hitt  
the head. The umpire was awful . . ."

Nothing changes.

The annual report of the Board of  
of expenses from August 1, 1906, to August 1,  
1907, were:

For teaching—a total of \$9,182.71 salaries paid to  
19 teachers and for substitute teaching!

For Janitor services—to three men a total of  
\$1,192.40.

For Secretary services—to one man \$50.00 and  
other expenses for a total for the year of \$12,969.52.

Some things do change!

Dorothy Gardiner Klein wrote that in 1908  
the available electric service was limited. The  
lights remained on only until noon on Mondays  
and Tuesdays. She remembered that her mother  
had an electric washer and iron and had to be  
finished with her washing by noon or resort to  
heating a flat iron on the gas stove!

Shortly after this, there was enormous pres-  
sure to modernize the electric plant and the  
waterworks. Henry Gardiner, who was Doro-  
thy's father, had been an electrical engineer for  
the Burlington Railroad. About 1914 Gardiner  
went to New York where he purchased two Snow  
Diesel oil engines to run the electric plant. He  
helped install the Snow engines and stayed on

after that and ran the plant for several years.

A letter from Elon Staats described the joy of a young boy growing up in Downers Grove in 1910.

“It would take a lot of writing to describe the delights that were ours right from the first grade on up to high school.

As young kids the years on up to high school years were unbeatable. Renting a horse and buggy from Baker’s Livery for a Sunday outing, picking wild grapes, elderberries, a bag or two of black walnuts. Out Lemont road this side of old 66 there were acres of hazelnuts. I (Elon) loved thornapples and knew where the best kind were. Many times, (I) used to fill (my) hunting coat pockets for a big feast. Wild crab apples and wild plums were made into jam or jellies by Gram each fall. We had apple trees, a pear tree, two cows, chickens, ducks, etc. Big garden north of Chicago Avenue at Prince, both sides of Prince were vacant lots on Chicago.

Most of the town was vacant lots, all kinds of fruit trees, mostly apples of all kinds and kids had all they wanted for free. There was a whole row of Northern spy (apple) trees between our house and Ralstons. We wrapped each one in a newspaper and packed (them) in a barrel. It took about a month after picking to get them at best eating stage, and they had a wonderful flavor.

Ralstons lived next door south had a large yard with at least four or five apple trees of a type that produced a lot of small apples not worth much, golf ball size. The ground was almost covered with them under each tree. This was just right for an apple fight which was made up of a three or four foot willow branch cut from a tree and sharpened to a point on one end. You stab the apple, rear back and ‘wing’ it at somebody. The power created made it possible to get that apple going faster than any pitcher can throw a baseball, I believe. Some fun and nobody ever was hurt far as I recall.

In 1910 Chicago Avenue was not paved and from Chicago on Prince there were only six houses, the first one of which was directly across the street where North High School is now. From the north, two houses were on the east side of Prince just south of the ‘Plank Road’. On Main Street the one closest to the old ‘Plank Road’ was Mortons and the next was Walker Poe, a good family along with the Fenners, George Hyde, Howard O’Dell and George Canaway.

Getting back to Prince Avenue, it was just a plain one-track dirt road from two blocks north of Chicago Avenue. There was nothing from Highland Avenue west all the way to the old Downer farm (at Grant and Seeley). More than once with a big wet spring or fall the whole area from about Grant Street where North High is now, was one big lake from Highland Avenue all the way to Linscott. Saw a lot of wild ducks all over the lake sometimes. Highland Avenue was the only street you could drive to the Plank Road.

Main street and Prince were both under a foot or so of water. Forest Avenue ended about where the high school circle now is, but there was a short block from the Plank Road south with a house on each side.

There was a low spot along the north side of Chicago Avenue starting at Prince and going for a hundred feet west. Three or four foot high clumps of grass plus a few cattails grew there. A late fall heavy



Railroad Station



Main Street

rain could put a foot of water in there and if a heavy freeze came we had a place to skate maybe twenty feet wide. After so long a time the water would go into the soil. Ice hung on to the grass bunches for a bit and then started to fall in. We had much fun with our clamp skates that were put on with a key to fasten them. Plenty tough on shoe soles and bad on the heels.”

Staats described a hunting trip when he

“headed west on Chicago Avenue and went through the Downer farm gate at Chicago and Oakwood, followed the fence on west past Minnie Prince’s house to where Chicago and Seeley are now. There weren’t any streets past Oakwood then but just northwest of the present Chicago and Seeley corner was a house almost hidden in a patch of very thick brush and trees. Mrs. Ahl, who was a recluse, lived there. In the fields were doves, squirrels, rabbits, pheasants, jacksnipe, greater and lesser yellowlegs, quails and ducks.

I can easily conjure up a mind picture of what we called Keegan’s field, Jerry Keegan was a junk dealer and his home was the only one in the entire





Avery Coonley Kindergarten School formerly on Grove Street.

block of Linscott on the west, Grant on the north, except it wasn't there then—Lincoln on the south and Middaugh on the east. It was virgin prairie and had never been ploughed. Brown-eyed Susans, daisies, bird foot violets, shooting stars, purple violets, wild blackberries, strawberries, snake flowers, I just can't remember everything but it was so beautiful."

This, then was the north side of Downers Grove in 1910.

In 1912, after years of planning and waiting, the new passenger railroad station was built! The picture of this handsome brick building was featured on the front page of the *Reporter* with the whimsical fairy-tale text under it.

"Once there was a village which for years and years longed for a new railroad station. Finally it came and —no, they were *not* displeased—they were DEE-LIGHTED with it.

Not a murmur of complaint came even from those who thought it should have been placed some rods west of its final location. It was perfectly all right, thank you, and Downers Grove, for dear reader, you must have guessed what village it was, will be a brighter and a better place in which to live because of the new station.

The illustration shows the general line of the building which is constructed of red brick and enamel. Its dimensions are: length, just right, width, absolutely satisfactory, and height, correct to an inch."

Another bank joined the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank in Downers Grove in 1910. The First National Bank built the building which many years later housed the Citizens National Bank.

A new kindergarten building was completed in 1912 on Grove Street (on the present Fishel Park site). There was room in the new building for the two separate kindergarten groups of thirty chil-

dren each, and the grounds were spacious enough to include the children's small gardens with room for pets. The Kindergarten Extension Association had selected Downers Grove as the site for the second of its buildings; the first was in Brookfield, Illinois. The Kindergarten Associa-



Lincoln School

ton announced, "The teaching is entirely non-sectarian and deals only with the problems of education. There will be no tuition." This was the first location of the future Avery Coonley School in Downers Grove.

And then in 1915 the new library building, which contributed much to the pleasure and satisfaction of the citizens of Downers Grove, was built at the corner of Curtiss Street and Forest Avenue.

As early as March of 1904 the *Reporter* ran an editorial urging the citizens to vote for a free public library.

"The Ladies' Library Association has fought bravely to maintain a public library and by their own unaided efforts have secured a collection of books which will be the nucleus of an excellent library . . . The



Ladies' Library Association on steps of "new" library — 1915

association stands ready and willing to turn over the \$2000 bequest of the late John Oldfield to the village for the purchase of a library building site, and this, with the authorization of a tax for maintenance, will be all that is necessary to secure an adequate donation of funds from Andrew Carnegie to erect a building."

It was eleven years later that ground was finally broken for the new library building, made possible through the gift of building funds from



1914 Lincoln School football team



Downers Grove High School baseball team DuPage County Champions, 1916

Standing: Max Butler; Sam Bertolin; Leo Rogers; Chet Hall; Leon Stanley; Alex Burns; Paul Vix. Kneeling: Davidson, coach; Hawley, coach. Sitting: John Mochel; Grant Nash; Jorgensen.

Andrew Carnegie and the donation of money for a site by the late John Oldfield. Six months later, on October 14, 1915, the new library building was officially opened to the public. The fine brick building was designed by Frederick Lundquist, architect, of Chicago. The main entrance was on Curtiss Street with the entrance to the lecture room on Forest Avenue. The furnishings and fixtures in the library were made possible by subscriptions totalling more than \$900.

The main floor was designed for library use.

Book stacks containing more than 3,000 volumes lined three walls of the room. There were six massive fumed oak tables for the readers.

The fine public library building was a tribute to the diligence and enthusiasm of the ladies who had worked so many years to obtain a Library for the village, the Ladies' Library Association who in the early nineties organized the first Downers Grove Library.

A third important building, the magnificent new addition to Lincoln School, was built in Downers Grove and opened to the villagers in January of 1915!

And again one has to retrace a few years to see how this building was accomplished. In 1913, the Illinois General Assembly passed a Women's Suffrage Law, some six years before the Nation passed the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which gave women the right to vote. Prior to 1913, women had been able to vote only for members of the Board of Education. For the first time in the history of Downers Grove, women had the right to vote for or against a proposition to build a new schoolhouse and the issuance of bonds for that purpose. The proposition passed, and voters authorized the issuance of \$35,000 in school bonds to finance the erection of a new school building on the Maple Avenue site.

One cold Saturday night in January of 1915, hundreds of the citizens of Downers Grove accepted the invitation of the School Board to visit the new addition to the Maple Avenue School and went through the building from top to bottom. The villagers were surprised at the completeness of the building and equipment. The school was said to be the best in the country!

First, there was a commodious gymnasium with ample room for basketball, indoor ball, folk dancing, and calisthenic drills. Second, there was an assembly room with seats for 160 pupils, an excellent lighting system, and stage space large enough for the school chorus.

There were nine recitation rooms in addition to the assembly room. Several of the recitation rooms were equipped with side armchairs. The gym accommodated about 300, and nearly the same number could be seated in the assembly room when movable chairs were added to the desks already in place.

At this time a private residence on Maple Avenue drew some interest for its innovative type of construction. The contractor, building this

house of reinforced cement, maintained that it was the last word in "enduring construction". The cement was reinforced with steel bars throughout, and the eight inch walls of the building had a two and a half inch air space to insure freedom from dampness and cold. The house contained seven rooms, and its cost did not greatly exceed that of a frame dwelling with a cement coat.

As the Village grew and prospered, it became apparent to some of the more progressive citizens active in the business activities of the Village government that there was a need for a more efficient Village management system. In 1912 Caspar Dicke wrote a letter to the editor, listing the advantages of the new commission form of government. As he listed all the improvements which had taken place over the past thirty-nine years since the incorporation of Downers Grove as a Village, Dicke said,

"The commission form of government is just as far ahead of the present form of government as the new improvements are ahead of our previous way of living. It is better and can be conducted on business principles."

But in April of 1912 the voters of Downers Grove went to the polls and rejected the commission form of government. The vote was 251 against the position and 203 in favor. This narrow margin continued the old system of village government. However the pressure continued to reconsider the advantages of the commission form of government, and in September of 1915 another referendum was held.

The voters again went to the polls to consider the proposition "Shall the Village of Downers Grove, in DuPage County, State of Illinois adopt the commission form of municipal government." There were 510 total votes, of which 317 voted YES and 193 voted NO. The majority for the adoption of the new form of government for the Village was 124 votes.

The new form of government did not go into effect until 1917 so that the incumbent office holders could finish their terms. The election for the first Commissioners was held in April, 1917, when the voters selected the Mayor and four Commissioners and a Police Magistrate.

"The new form of government will change the entire management of the village. Under the old form there is a president of the board and six trustees. The trustees were placed on various committees, such as the water and light, street and alley, etc.

Under the new form, each commissioner will have charge of a separate department of village affairs, and will be responsible for that department."

These officers were to be elected every four years instead of every year under the old system, which would make for a more efficient continuity of the village affairs.

Interesting that the women were able to vote for the Mayor and Commissioners, but *only the men* had a vote in selecting the Police Magistrate!

On Tuesday night, May 1, 1917, the Village of Downers Grove underwent a transformation when it passed from the village system of government to the commission form.

J.F. Kidwell was elected the first Mayor and in charge of the Department of Public Affairs; I.G. Heartt, Commissioner in charge of the Department of Accounts and Finances; W.C. Barber, Commissioner in charge of the Department of Public Health and Safety; Delbert Austin, Commissioner in charge of the Department of Streets and Public Improvements; and Charles Haller, Commissioner in charge of the Department of Public Property.

The old telephone office next to the creek was rented for the Village Headquarters with a lease to run two years. The weekly meetings of the Commissioners and all Village business were transacted here. The office of the Collector and Treasurer were located here and the records centralized.

At the regular meeting of the Commissioners on Monday night the following appointments were made: Electrician—Harry A. Gardiner; Village Attorney—A.B. Snow; Day Policeman—Martin White; Night Policeman—John Stockenberry; Treasurer—C.F. Davis; Chief of Fire Department—George Binder.

Under the commission form of government members of the Library Board were appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Commissioners, while under the Village form they had been elected directly by a vote of the people. The following were appointed to this Board by Mayor Kidwell, and the appointments were confirmed: I.B. Wells, F.G. Lancaster, W.B. Towsley, Stanley J. Brown, T.H. Slusser, and Mrs. Nelson Perron.

During these years of adjusting the Village government to the needs of the citizens, a baffling, fearful war exploded in Europe. The first



Dicke Theatre



Dicke Theatre Playbills

reaction in America was disbelief. Except for the short Spanish-American War, the last experience in war had been the Civil War nearly sixty years before. The Midwesterners were shocked at each new atrocity laid before them, but the concept of a war in Europe seemed far removed. The Village affairs were much more real, and there was an abundance of interesting diversions.

For example, Chautauqua, a program of lectures, came to Downers Grove.

"In other years we could only read of great statesmen, orators, and preachers, and could rarely see or hear them without taking long pilgrimages. Now by means of the Chautauqua, the best and greatest talent is brought at insignificant cost to our very doors. The Chautauqua idea is one of the forces in our country."

In 1914, Downers Grove Independent Chautauqua Association held a full week of programs each afternoon and evening from July 27th through August 2nd. A season ticket to all these programs was \$1.50; adults single admission was 25¢ and children 15¢.

The programs included Lou Beauchamp ("the thinker who makes you laugh; the humorist who makes you think") and a lecture "A Russian Nobleman's Story of Siberian Exile and Escape" by Count Alexander M. Lochwitzky and on a second day the Count spoke on "The Czar's Spy System in Russia and America." Inspirational talks were given by Harold Kessinger on two different days; the Dixie Jubilee Singers, the English Opera Company, the Marshall Field Company Choral Singers, and various musicians performed. Mrs. Cole gave a lecture on Child Labor and Suffrage, and there were two or three ministers who delivered addresses. There were storytellers and young ladies who presented dramatic readings, one of whom was Frances Hughes, a Downers Grove girl who gave "Child Impersonations" in costume with music.

And then came the movies!

The Dicke Theatre had been showing reels of two and three subjects since 1907, using a hand-propelled projector, in the upper hall of the Dicke Building to viewers who sat on kitchen chairs.



The "Flu" Order from the State Department of Health forbids us opening our theatre. When the epidemic is over we will continue with the pictures that please.

BUY A BOND  
IF YOU'VE BOUGHT,  
BUY ANOTHER!  
JOIN THE PLUSES.

## Dicke Theatre

Where you see the Pick of Picture.

We Originate — Never Imitate.

Dicke Theatre — Health Department ordered closed because of 1918 flu epidemic

# DEXTER CAPRON STANLEY

1816 "STANLEY DAY" JANUARY 12th 1916  
ONE CENTURY

DOWNERS GROVE, ILL.

A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE



**Curtis Theatre**  
Downers Grove, Illinois  
DIRECTION OF HILLIARD CAMPBELL

---

FEATURE MOVIES  
And Selected Vaudeville

---

Program Attractions for  
Saturday, June 22, Tuesday, June 25,  
and Thursday, June 27

---

SPECIAL NOTICE: All the movies shown  
at the CURTIS are now on the selective pro-  
gram and will be carefully selected on each  
occasion. We have made special arrangement  
whereby we are permitted to pick the very best.

---

SPECIAL NURSERY ROOM  
And Attendant for the Babies.  
Bring Them Along.

Curtiss Playbill

Then in 1915 the Theatre moved downstairs to fine new quarters. Mr. Dicke said, "the best is none too good for the Downers Grove people," and proved his statement by signing a contract in 1915 to run the best moving pictures in his Theatre. Such names as Mary Pickford, Marguerite Clark, Blanche Sweet, Elsie Janis, Hazel Dawn, John Barrymore, Victor Moore, and Theodore Roberts. "The first of these new plays will run next Tuesday, August 31st. 'Behind the Scenes' with Mary Pickford."

In November of 1915, the Paragon Theatre, a new movie house on Curtiss Street, opened its doors for the first time to the local patrons. It was a cozy playhouse with a seating capacity of four hundred and eighty-four. The Theatre was of fireproof construction, and the interior finishing was worthy of a city. The management announced that the Theatre would have Broadway Feature photoplays and would run two performances each night except Sunday and a matinee on Saturday afternoon. The building was built entirely by local contractors, and all the finishing was done by local people.

A few months later this theater became the Curtiss Theatre. Addie Downer wrote to her sister Helen that

"They are going to open up our little theatre again . . . the one down by the post office. Peggie's father has leased it and will start it soon and Peggie says they will have good pictures."

In a later letter she said,

"Went to show . . . Had Mary Pickford in Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm at the Dicke Theatre yesterday and it was sure good. They gave Intolerance at the Curtiss Theatre and were going to charge 25¢. I expect they had a big house. Dicke's was just packed in the afternoon."

On the celebration of his 100th birthday, the entire village honored Capron Stanley as January 12, 1916, was declared "Stanley Day", and all the schools and stores in the Village were closed to do honor to this grand old man. Capron Stanley, who was known affectionately by all as "Uncle Cape", was one of the earliest settlers in the Grove.

On November 11, 1916, Woodrow Wilson was elected President on a platform which included the slogan "he kept us out of war." At first it looked as if Wilson had lost to his Republican opponent, Justice Charles Evans Hughes, but the California votes gave Wilson 277 electoral votes to Hughes' 254.

The Republican majority in Downers Grove, watching the election returns, fully expected Hughes to be declared the next President of the United States. M.B. Downer, in contrast to his

fellow townsmen, was a Democrat supporting the campaign of Woodrow Wilson.

M.B. and Addie Downer went to the Curtiss Theatre and stayed till nearly 11 o'clock to hear the returns and then walked over to the Library to join the group following the returns there. As a joke some of Downer's friends had written on the blackboard, "M.B. Downer has, it is reported, retired for the night and owing to the unfavorable news received will not be seen by his friends for several days." Just then M.B. Downer walked in all smiles. The joke was on the jokers! Wilson won, and Downer had cause for celebration!

A short five months after the election, the United States declared war on Germany. Wilson sent a war message to the Congress,

"The World must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind."

Four days later, on April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany.

And in Downers Grove a mass meeting was called for Wednesday evening, April 18, 1917, for the citizens to have the opportunity to show their approval of the action of Congress in the emergency.

Much of the Midwest had mildly pro-German sympathies, and Downers Grove was no exception, with many of her citizens from first and second-generation German families. The decision had to be made for loyalty to the United States, and the underlying affinities were torn asunder or buried so deeply they would not show.

An article in the *Reporter* reflected this,

"This should be an occasion when all the residents of the village and the surrounding country can get together regardless of divergent views which they have held prior to the declaration of the existence of a state of war and show their love of country by a hearty ratification of the words of the President and the resolution of Congress in the present crisis.

There can be no greater demonstration of our devotion to the land of our birth or of our adoption than an instant rallying around the Stars and Stripes in this hour of the country's perils."

The Loyalty Mass Meeting was a tremendous success, and out of this came the call to organize a Loyalty League of Downers Grove so that

every citizen of Downers Grove could do his/her share of the war work.

Prior to the Declaration of War, if Downers Grove had seemed to focus on its own growth and development to an exclusion of the concerns of the world, all that changed in April of 1917. During the war years the entire life of the Village was centered in the war effort. No one would remain untouched.

The Community Welfare League was organized with the tasks assigned in several departments. First there was a need to raise \$500 for YMCA warwork for a national budget of three million dollars. Under the Welfare League, "Uncle Sam's Hoe Brigade" was organized with school boys and girls distributing the enrollment blanks. A committee was appointed to locate vacant lots and tracts for tilling. Arrangements



Troop Train

were made to obtain control of a 10-acre tract suitable for the cultivation of potatoes.

The department of workers for the Red Cross met each week at Library Hall and continued the work of making comfort bags for soldiers. In addition a knitting class was organized under Mrs. Frank Kaiser. All the village women were invited.

Each day brought the news of the young men from Downers Grove who were enlisting. I. Haebich, the principal of Downers Grove High School, was one of the first young men to enlist, and he was given a "rousing send off" in the opening exercises in assembly. The young men of the Village who were in college left their studies to enlist for the armed services. Each issue of the *Reporter* included lists of names of the new

enlistees, and the headlines were directed to the war effort of the community.

**YOU ARE INVITED!  
AT THE COMMUNITY WELFARE  
MEETING-LIBRARY  
HALL-MONDAY EVENING . . .  
A GARDEN FOR EVERY  
FAMILY IN DOWNERS GROVE-MAYOR  
KIDWELL.  
PLANT, PLANT, PLANT.  
THE COMMUNITY LEAGUE NEEDS  
YOUR HELP,  
FINANCIAL AND OTHERWISE—SIGN  
UP NOW!**

On May 18, 1917, the Downers Grove men who had enlisted in the Officers Reserve Corps left for intensive training at Fort Sheridan. The *Reporter* reflected the pride of the villagers, "For a town as small as Downers' Grove to send six men to this training camp is a matter to be proud of."

The class of '17 faced a grim future as they received their diplomas. The graduates were Lucile Bush, Helen Mahoney, Julia Rowhey, Margaret Eulotte, Bertha Nelson, Charlotte Drees (later Mrs. Anderson), Mildred Potter, Raymond Schultz, Owen Griffiths, Ross Rogers, Max Butler, Hans Pahl, Fred Howe, Carol Lower, Lucile Westblade, Bernice Binder, Ruth DeWitt, Fabiola Reidy, Charles Carpenter, Hugh Brown, Clifford Davenport, and Burr Eichelman.

The Illinois National Guard was called into service which included thirteen young men of Downers Grove, several of whom came from this graduating class of 1917. Imbued with patriotism, these young men were eager to serve their country, and so their future was determined for them.

And then came the Act which affected all the men in the country between the ages of 21 and 30. June 5, 1917, was set as the day for the registration of all these men in a "Selective Draft" registration under the Bill passed by the Congress. Later the age spread was increased to 18 through 45.

In July, 1917, the Downers Grove Branch of the National Red Cross was formed, replacing the Red Cross department of the Downers Grove Loyalty League. The officers were: Mrs. J.P. MacDonald, Mrs. Guy L. Bush, J.F. Jenness,

Mrs. J.D. Gillespie, John F. Kidwell, A.B. Snow, and C.A.W. Van Beynum. Mrs. Kaiser had 80 women and girls in the knitting section. Plans were made for a big membership drive to start on August 12th.



Rainbow Division World War I  
Gilbert Lacey; George Nargney; Fred Edwards; Stewart Burns;  
Sam Bertolin; Harry Grant; Fred Sacksteder; Dwight Cox; and  
Alex Burns.

By October of 1917, 475 women had registered for Women's War Work. Permanent headquarters were provided for the local Red Cross in the rooms over the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank. The bank donated not only the rent but also provided heat, and the Village contributed light. The headquarters were kept open at night for the young ladies and women who were working in the City. Instruction was given in knitting and Red Cross sewing.

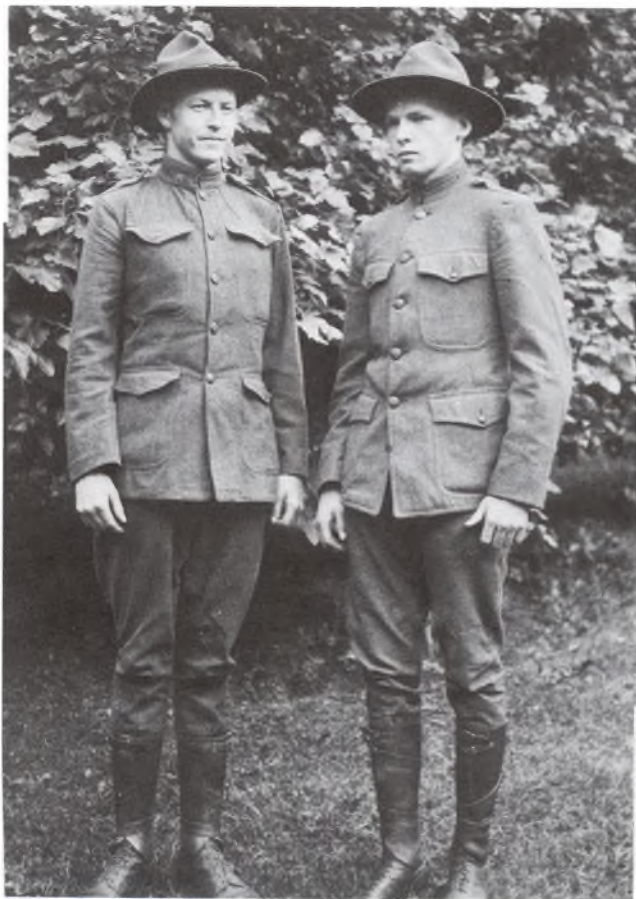
The doctors, M.L. Puffer, W.S. Bebb, and K. Hartnack, had all been called for active duty by August of 1917.

The new Illinois Home Guard was organized in that same month. Men between the ages of 18 and 45 were urged by the State Council of Defense to join the Home Guard, to take the place of the National Guard which had been federalized. The new guard was composed of men not of draft age, married men not eligible for the draft, and men who had been rejected for service with the understanding that in no event would this Home Guard be called for duty outside the State. The application blanks were at the Houseman Drug Store and the Downers Grove Fruit Store, and every patriotic man was urged to join. The Home Guard was very active,

drilling one night a week for two hours, and was made a part of the new Reserve Militia Brigade in September, 1917.

"The Council of National Defense called on the women of each state to organize a division of the Women's Committee of the Council." In Illinois this work was entrusted to the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Therefore Mrs. Jonas Foster, President of the Downers Grove Woman's Club, called a meeting of the Presidents of all the women's organizations in the Village and organized the Downers Grove unit. The Conservation Department was organized at once. Mrs. Straube conducted a class in canning, which was attended by many girls and women who learned various methods of preserving fruit and vegetables.

By September, the last of the local militia boys had gone. "The bright spots made by their khaki uniforms on the streets of Downers Grove will be missed by those they left behind." A list of the boys who had trained at Fort Sheridan included: Stewart and Alex Burns, George Nargeny, Myron Towsley, Fred Edwards, Dwight Cox,



Stewart and Alex Burns, twin brothers World War I

Grant Nash, Harry Grant, Gilbert Lacey, Sam Bertolin, Chester Hall, and Frederick Sacksteder.

For all the anxious preparations and the feverish activity of the Village in the months after the outbreak of the war, it was not until the 7th day of December, 1917, that the deep anguish of the war truly came home to Downers Grove when the villagers met to raise the Downers Grove Service Flag.



Khaki Kids Klub

Mary Curtis; Martha Shaffer; Catherine Butler; Elizabeth Shaffer; Jeanette Wells; Catherine McGregor; and Virginia Waples.

"Suppressed sobs were the only sounds that broke the silence . . . as Downer's Grove Service flag was raised. As the white flag with its red border and 100 blue stars, was flung to the breeze, tears ran down the cheeks of the mothers as they thought of (their own sons) somewhere over there, or going over there. One expected an outburst of cheering as the flag was raised but the tension was too great."

A new "Old Glory" was strung and pulled to the top of the flagpole at Warren and Main Streets. The Service Flag was strung across Main Street so that all could see. This Flag contained 100 stars, one star for each local boy or man. Spaces were left for 60 more, and 20 more stars were already needed. Before the war would end, there would be nearly 250 stars on this flag!

The ultimate in grief came in March of 1918, when the devastating news came of the death of Alexander Burns, the first DuPage County boy to be killed in action!

"Alexander Burns, the first hero of Downers Grove to lay down his life for humanity's cause died from wounds on Sunday, March 16th and now lies somewhere over there."

Alex was born in Downers Grove October 2, 1898. At the time of his enlistment in Battery C of the First Illinois Artillery in April, he was a



freshman at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. On July 9th, with other local boys, Alex had started training at Fort Sheridan and was stationed there with the regiment until September 3rd, when the Rainbow Division gathered at Mineola, Long Island, for shipment overseas.

After their arrival in France, Alex and his brother, Stewart, were detailed to the telephone school and were taught the task of reporting hits from their gun. Stewart was at the observation post end of the phone, and Alex was stationed back at the gun to correct the range.

Alexander Burns was a graduate of the Downers Grove High School class of 1916 and had the distinction of going from first grade to his senior year without missing a day or being tardy once. Always athletically inclined, he was a member of the high school track, football, basketball, and baseball squads and was captain of the basketball team in the 1915-16 season. "He was popular with his teachers, fellow students and all with whom he came in contact."

The memorial service for Alexander Burns was held at the corner of Warren and Main. The services were simple and agonizingly sad. "Hardly a man, woman or child of the hundred gathered there could keep the tears from overflowing." The grief for this young man who had so bravely given up his life and the underlying thoughts of the many more who might follow him in death were heart-wrenching.

The Red Cross work went on. Each month the local unit shipped out refugee garments, surgical dressings, socks, knit helmets, sweaters, wristlets, and whatever else was requested.

House to house canvasses were made to encourage the people to buy Liberty Loan bonds. The five Protestant churches of the Village combined their services to save fuel for the government during the cold winter months. No one building was large enough for the entire congregations so that two church buildings were used on Sunday morning, and then all combined in one building for the Sunday evening services. During the summer the United Churches of Downers Grove held their open services at the Library corner (Forest and Curtiss). Worshipers filled the street sanctuary at the Union services.

In May of 1918, there was a flag-raising at Library Square to mark the opening of the Red

Cross Drive in the Village. The flag was provided through the energy of the Khaki Kids Klub, an active, patriotic group of nine girls. The Khaki Kids Klub, garbed in white with red ties and hair ribbons, were seated in a circle around the flag. The members of the club were: Catherine Butler, Mary Curtis, Catherine MacGregor, Elisabeth Shaffer, Martha Shaffer, Barbara Skelly, Ruth Waples, Virginia Waples, and Jeannette Wells.

And then on November 11, 1918, the Armistice was signed! There had been a false report on November 7th that the war was over and Downers Grove, along with the rest of the country, had celebrated prematurely. The town had gone wild with the news that Germany had accepted the terms of the Allies.

"Every engine pulling a train through the village, as well as those in the yards, opened the steam throttle and blew the whistles. The church and firebells clanged continuously for hours."

Led by the high school boys carrying the Service Flag and a large American flag, the school children marched up Main Street. When they reached the corner of Main and Curtiss, they sang the "Star Spangled Banner," "Over There," and other songs while onlookers stood with heads bared.

The children continued their march through town, hilarious with the excitement. Men and women alike were weeping tears of joy and rushing about shouting the good news. The depot platform was crowded with women and girls who greeted every train with blowing horns and waving flags.

Rumor had it that the Kaiser had committed suicide.

This magnificent celebration was followed by a depressing aftermath of false rumors, a void of knowledge, and the awful fear that the War was not yet behind them. Then a long four days later the Armistice was signed! It must have been difficult to believe after one false start!

But the celebration began again and even surpassed the first. "Armistice day, Monday November 11th which marked the cessation of hostilities along all fighting fronts in Europe was a day of rejoicing in Downers Grove." Word of the signing of the Armistice reached the Village shortly before 3 o'clock in the morning, and factory whistles, locomotive whistles, and gun shots quickly awakened most of the inhabitants. In less than half an hour the streets were alive

with people shouting and singing! In the evening a crowd of enormous proportion assembled at Main and Curtiss Streets, with every one making all the noise they could.

The Home Guard marched through the narrow opening in the crowd. The reserves drew up in line and fired a volley to signify the ending of the War. An appeal was made to remember to help the boys over there in the long days until they could be returned home.

### Downers Grove Men Who Died in Action

Alexander Burns  
Henry Buschmann  
John V. Bryan, Jr.  
LeRoy A. Dexter  
Joseph J. Mallek  
Harry McAllister  
John J. Pozdol  
Marshall Statton

### The Record of Downers Grove Men Who Served During World War I\*

(\*This list of names is taken from the bronze plaques which were placed at Memorial Hall. The memorial plaques now hang in the Alexander Burns American Legion Home.)

Abbott, A.W.  
Agee, Robert E.  
Alderson, Manly  
Allison, Jay  
Anderson, Norman  
Andorf, John  
Axium, Clarence

Ballard, William  
Baron, Stanley  
Barre, Frank  
Barrett, Walter L.  
Bauer, Martin  
Beales, Joseph  
Bebb, Walter S.  
Bennett, R.H.  
Bently, Paul  
Berryman, Paul  
Bertolin, Samuel  
Beyer, George H.  
Biedron, Andrew  
Biedron, Martin  
Bierdon, Mike  
Binder, Melvin  
Blackburn, Godfrey C.  
Bobowski, Stanley  
Bombard, Earl  
Borman, Harry  
Boydston, Edgar  
Brady, William J.  
Brown, Hugh  
Brownlie, James  
Brunet, Leon  
Bruns, Frank  
Bruns, Roy  
Bryan, John Jr.  
Bryan, John V.  
Burek, Frank

Burek, John  
Burggarf, Ernest R.  
Burns, Alexander B.  
Burns, Stewart M.  
Burt, Roy A.  
Buschman, Alvin  
Buschman, Henry  
Butler, Charles C.  
Butler, Melvin  
  
Caird, John  
Campbell, John K.  
Campbell, Robert  
Carner, Henry  
Carpenter, Charles M.  
Carpenter, Jack  
Carpenter, Robert W.  
Chester, Arthur  
Chester, Edmund  
Chilvers, Ralph  
Clarke, Harold  
Cochran, George  
Col, Arthur  
Coles, Samuel G.  
Cornils, Edward  
Cox, Dwight R.  
Cox, Lawrence  
Curtiss, Edwin C.

Dailey, Henry  
Davenport, Clifford W.  
David, Emerson  
David, Wilson  
Davis, Charles F.  
Dawson, Ernest  
Deiner, Daniel  
Delaney, James D.  
Dent, Arthur

Dewey, Franklin  
DeWitt, Charles F.  
Dexter, LeRoy  
Dexter, Ralph E.  
Dexter, William C.  
Dicke, George  
Dicke, Grant  
Dickson, Roy J.  
Dickson, Robert  
Diener, Benjamin  
Diener, Bertha  
Diener, Reuban  
Diener, Ruth  
Dietrich, Harry A.  
Direks, Charles O.  
Dobyns, Wilson  
Dowle, Alfred H.  
Downer, Earl  
Downer, Henry  
Dressler, John  
Druettel, Theodore Jr.  
Drew, Harvey  
Duncan, Frank  
Dunnagan, Carl E.

Edwards, Fred L.  
Ehninger, Herbert  
Eichhorst, Edward  
Emerich, Edward  
Emerson, C.E.  
Engelschall, Alfont  
Erickson, Theodore

Fairchild, Weldon  
Farrar, Julie  
Fender, John  
Fender, Joseph  
Fischer, Lloyd

Foster, Lawrence  
Fraher, Harry  
Fraher, Robert J.  
Fredenhagen, Walter  
  
Gallup, Willard  
Gardiner, Alfred A.  
Giebraski, Ignatius  
Gollan, Alex  
Grant, Harry  
Gregory, Frank  
Griffiths, Owen H.  
Gullick, Charles

Haebich, I.  
Hagen, Alvar  
Hall, A.R.  
Hall, Chester  
Hammerschmidt, E.  
Handchug, Alfred  
Hartnack, K  
Hawkins, Donald  
Hawkins, Walter  
Haymond, Eugene C.  
Heal, Clarence A.  
Heal, William A.  
Hibbe, Harper  
Hills, Allan  
Hindman, Harold  
Hoffert, Harold  
Hogan, William F.  
Howe, Fred K.  
Hubbard, Walter  
Huling, Franklin

Iehl, Arthur

James, Clifford  
James, William  
Jenkins, Dennis  
Johnson, Albion  
Johnson, Arthur  
Johnson, Walter  
Johnstone, George  
Jones, Aubrey  
Jory, Phillip

Karstens, George A.  
Kean, Chester L.  
Kearney, Bernard  
Kearney, Joseph A.  
Kidwell, Arthur  
Kidwell, John  
Kidwell, Thomas  
Klein, Albert J.  
Klein, Emery  
Kopidlansky, Frank W.  
Kosla, John  
Kropp, John  
Kupke, E.H.

Lacey, Gilbert R.  
Lacey, Romanzo  
Littleford, Harvey  
Lower, Carl  
Lynch, Frank

MacDougall, Robert  
Maclean, Allan  
Magnus, William  
Malek, Joseph  
Malander, Victor  
May, Ernest W.  
Meyer, Albert  
Michalek, John  
Miles, Ballard W.  
Miley, Cecil  
Miller, Edward  
Mitchell, James P.  
Mochel, Edward  
Mochel, John  
Mochel, Rudolph  
Moore, A.R.  
Morford, Walter  
Morgan, Arthur Ray  
Morton, Roscoe  
Morton, V.J.  
McAllister, Harold  
McAllister, Harry E.  
McCollum, Edgar  
McCollum, G. Willard  
McElroy, Robert M.  
McElroy, William H.  
McKee, Donald

Nargney, George  
Nash, Forrest  
Nash, Grant  
Nelson, August  
Nelson, Fred  
  
Olson, William  
Ostewig, Osmund B.

Peterson, Arthur  
Peterson, John P.  
Pfaff, Edwin  
Pfau, Carl  
Phillips, Clarence  
Plumb, Fred  
Poe, Thomas  
Potter, Leslie  
Potter, Theron  
Pozdol, James  
Pozdol, John J.  
Prendota, Felix  
Prince, Earl  
Puffer, Maurice

Reader, William  
Rehm, Lawrence  
Reid, George C.  
Reid, D. Gordon  
Reidler, Burley  
Reissner, Jack  
Renninger, Grant  
Rice, Gordon  
Rice, Theodore  
Rice, William  
Rocke, Charles  
Roeder, Martin  
Rogers, Stanley

Sacksteder, Frederick

Sacksteder, Stephen  
Scheel, Edward  
Schlauder, Arthur  
Schultz, Edward  
Schultz, Frank  
Schultz, George  
Schultz, Raymond  
Schultz, Roland  
Schutt, Fred  
Seibert, Clifford  
Shanabrook, William  
Sheridan, Albert  
Sherman, Walter  
Sherman, Willis  
Shroka, Joseph  
Shultz, Thomas  
Slaketka, Walter  
Slusser, Harry  
Staats, Walter  
Staiger, George  
Stanley, Elburn  
Stanley, Leon  
Stanley, Logan  
Statton, Marshall  
Stoudt, Herbert  
Straube, Alfred  
Strenzel, Harry  
Stricker, Walter  
Strong, Edwin R.  
Swanson, Gordon

Tholin, Linne A.  
Timke, Edward D.  
Timke, Glenn W.  
Towsley, Myron

Uhlhorn, Arno  
Urbanski, Charles

Venard, Bert  
Vix, Albert  
Vix, Edward  
Vix, William

Waples, William  
Washburn, Gale  
Wehrmeister, Henry  
Wells, LeRoy Warren  
White, Everett  
White, Fred  
Whitney, George  
Whitney, L. Hilliard  
Wimmer, Raymond  
Winter, Albert  
Winter, Adolph  
Wolff, Charles H.  
Worley, Leon S.  
Wyllie, Hugh

Young, John

Zalipu, John  
Zaucha, Adam  
Zebraski, John  
Zebraski, Stanley

A massive celebration honoring the returning servicemen was held on a golden September Saturday afternoon in 1919 at the Courthouse in Wheaton. Each of the returning veterans was awarded a bronze medal with the inscription

“presented to our gallant sons in grateful recognition of their patriotic service to the world war.” More than 1,000 soldiers, sailors, marines, and army nurses marched in the big parade. Many activities—wrestling matches, baseball games, and boxing matches—entertained the throng throughout the afternoon, and at 6:00 a bountiful supper was served by the ladies and girls of the County.

As soon as darkness fell, a magnificent fireworks display was started. Ending the big day was a dance on Hale Street, north of the Northwestern tracks. Over fifteen hundred couples crowded the street to dance on the uneven brick surface. Ending at midnight, the dance was “a grand finale to the biggest and best day old DuPage county has ever seen!”

With the safe return of the boys, Downers Grove rolled along toward the expansive, rollicking twenties with new subdivisions, big houses, new cars, exciting politics, and even illegal activities!

New Legislation, village, state, and national, was the basis for many changes. The first referendum under the commission form of government, which had gone into effect in May of 1917, was held to repeal the ordinance (of 1897) which forbade the sale of cigarettes in the Village. The voters cast 514 votes of which 330 were for the repeal of the ordinance.

With the passage of the State Forest Preserve Act, the people of Downers Grove pushed the Board of Supervisors for a preserve within easy walking distance of the Village. In November of 1919 the Supervisors inspected the woods of the Marshall Field estate west of town with a view to selecting from 7 to 160 acres of this virgin forest as a playground for present and future needs. Prior to their inspection they were served a dinner at the Masonic Hall.

Marshall Field III offered the County as much of this land as they wanted at \$200 an acre. The price was low, and Mr. Field explained it by saying that he thought the forest preserve idea was a good one, and he wanted to do all in his power to further it. In 1920, 80 acres were purchased for the DuPage County Forest Preserve, and in 1923 an additional three acres were bought, the acreage to be known as Maple Grove Forest Preserve.

On the national scene two very important events had followed the conclusion of the War,



Lottie O'Neill

the ratification of the 18th Amendment in January of 1919 and the passing of the 19th Amendment in the summer of 1920. The 18th Amendment prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquor, and the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote.

In Downers Grove, the *Reporter* gave specific instructions to women on how to vote in a primary election and added:

“Several million new voters will cast their first ballot this fall at the presidential election to be held on Tuesday, November 2, 1920. These are the women who were granted full suffrage last week by the ratification of the 19th amendment to the constitution.

In Illinois women have been voting for a good many years first on school matters and later in almost every state office. On September 15, they will have their first chance to vote at a statewide primary.”

The women in Downers Grove knew their strength and soon put it into action. A short two years after the passing of the 19th Amendment, the DuPage County Woman's Republican Club formed an organization to support Lottie Holman O'Neill of Downers Grove in her race for the State Legislature!

Lottie O'Neill, born in Pike County in 1878, had moved to DuPage County in 1908. Her husband, W.J. O'Neill, was President of the Pyramid Company, a building materials business with a factory in Downers Grove and offices in Chicago. The O'Neills in 1922 had two sons in the Downers Grove High School. Mrs. O'Neill had several years' experience in secretarial work in Chicago, was active in the Red Cross during the War, involved with Campfire work with girls,

an officer in the Downers Grove Woman's Club, President of the Parent-Teacher Association, and a member of the Chicago Woman's City Club.

Mrs. O'Neill stated that she believed in the ability of women and the reasonableness of their fitting themselves to hold office, thereby bringing into the administration of the people's affairs the viewpoint of women and at the same time, conforming to one of the fundamental principles of Democracy in bringing about the representation of all the citizenry.

Lottie Holman O'Neill served continuously in the General Assembly from her first election in 1922 until her retirement in January, 1963, except for two years beginning in 1930 when she lost her first bid for the State Senate. Mrs. O'Neill served thirteen terms in the House of Representatives and was elected to the State Senate in 1950, 1954, and 1958.

Downers Grove was proud of the fact that it was the first community in the State to send an outstanding legislator to the State Capitol from among its women.

Mrs. O'Neill's advent in the House was a dramatic event. Special trains were chartered to carry her supporters to Springfield. Virtually all of the women's civic groups were there en masse; the florists were deluged with orders to celebrate the occasion. Special words were written; everybody sang! It was a never-to-be-forgotten day!

Her arrival in Springfield also caused some consternation, in that special facilities had to be installed in the Capitol for the one woman in an assembly of men. This little room was jokingly named "Lottie's Potty" for the first woman legislator!

O'Neill campaigned for votes as she was returned to the Legislature again and again. Never did she ask for votes on a personal basis, but rather "If you approve of me as a legislator, return me." and "Know your candidates . . . know what men and women stand for before you send them to Springfield."

Mrs. O'Neill worked ardently in behalf of women and children. It was due largely to her efforts that state aid to crippled children was gained at that time. She worked for a shorter day for working women, for the establishment of a woman's reformatory, for the women on juries bill, and for a change in the Dower Act which would place a wife on equal status with her

husband.

When Downers Grove's O'Neill Junior High School was named in honor of Senator O'Neill in 1957, she was the guest of honor at the dedication.

On January 14, 1976, a statue of the late State Senator Lottie Holman O'Neill was dedicated in a ceremony on the second floor of the State Capitol Rotunda in Springfield. She was so honored as the first woman Legislator in Illinois history and was also the first woman to be represented in the rotunda. A fitting tribute to this pioneer woman Legislator!

In 1922 a discovery of world-wide importance had special significance to the Village of Downers Grove when the tomb of King Tutankhamen (the 18th dynasty pharaoh who reigned from 1358 B.C. to 1350 B.C.) was discovered at Luxor in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. Dr. James Breasted, whose boyhood home still stands on Highland Avenue, was present at the opening of the tomb. Breasted was one of the few Egyptologists to be present when this tomb was opened, one of the most spectacular events in modern Egyptian archeological research.



James Henry Breasted

When dissension developed between the Egyptian authorities and the estate of Lord Carnavon, under whose direction the excavations were made, Dr. Breasted was appointed arbiter and drew up a program of conditions under which the Egyptian government permitted the work to proceed.

In 1890-91 Breasted had been a student of William Rainey Harper, then professor of Hebrew at Yale University. At the end of the year, Harper said, "Breasted, if you will go to Germany and get the best possible scientific equipment, no matter if it takes you five years, I will give you the professorship of Egyptian in the new University of Chicago!" James went to the University of Berlin, the teaching and research center of the world for Oriental languages and for Egyptology, from fall of 1891 to July, 1894, when he passed his doctoral exams.

Breasted came to Chicago as Assistant in Egyptology in 1895. In 1905, 1906, and 1907 he led an expedition which copied and photographed the Egyptian inscriptions of ancient Nubia. His party was the first scientific expedition to run the dangerous rapids of the fourth cataract. He soon became recognized as one of the most brilliant young scholars in the field.

Through funds supplied by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago was organized in 1919 with Dr. Breasted at its head to conduct research in the Near East.

In 1920 Dr. Breasted, in a preliminary survey for excavations at Armageddon, led the first party of men to cross the Syrian Desert after the war. Later one of the excavators dug out a block of stone on which Egyptian hieroglyphics related the conquests of Shishak, the king of Egypt who carried away Solomon's treasure from Jerusalem in the 10th century before Christ. James Breasted said,

"Instantly there rose before me the vision of a Sunday school in a little church on the far-off prairie of Illinois where nearly half a century ago a group of village boys with heads together over the Bible were struggling with the difficult proper names of an old Hebrew chronicle. It was with some emotion that one of those boys was now reading the name of the old Egyptian conqueror on the block of stone, with an account of that story."

That Sunday School which James Breasted recalled was in the First Congregational Church,

and the town on the far-away prairie was Downers Grove!\*

Downers Grove was a village of distinction as the home of the first and only woman Illinois State Legislator for many years and the boyhood home of a world-renowned explorer and Egyptologist. The residents of the Village were active and interested in a full range of civil and cultural organizations: the PTA, League of Women Voters, Woman's Club, and many others.

For the young people the Boy Scout and Girl Scout organizations were very active. The first troop of Boy Scouts in Downers Grove was organized on February 24, 1915, with eleven Scouts, and the charter for the Chicago Council was granted on February 8, 1918.



Boy Scouts

No account of the Girl Scouts in Downers Grove would be complete without the name of John Manning Wells and the story of how the Girl Scout Cabin was built in the Forest Preserve woods just east of Memorial Park on Maple.

John Manning Wells was caretaker of the Forest Preserve, and he thought the Girl Scouts should have a cabin of their own where they could have cookouts and overnights. He approached the County Forest Preserve Commission, requesting land. He also encouraged the

\*Note: the auditorium in Lincoln Center is named the James Henry Breasted Memorial Auditorium in his honor. Dr. Breasted was the author of many important books dealing with his research including: *Ancient Times*, *The Conquest of Civilization*, *The Origins of Civilization*, *Ancient Records of Egypt* (in 5 volumes), *A History of Egypt*, *A History of Early Egyptians*, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, *A History of the Early World*, *Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting*, *Outlines of European History*, and *History of Europe, Ancient and Medieval*.

women Scout leaders to raise the money to build a cabin.

Wells, himself, went to the merchants in the Village to ask for donations and found them very willing to help. The telephone company provided poles; Mochel Hardware furnished the kitchen roof; O'Neill furnished the tile floor, and Whitehead built the fireplace. J.T. Schless, a building contractor, supervised the building of the cabin. The Lions Club paid the last of the bills with a gift of \$75. Mrs. Fred Towsley bought the flag which was placed on a flagpole in front of the cabin. The cabin was dedicated on July 31, 1926.



"Daddy Wells" a Girl Scouts best friend

John Manning Wells was born in England and had migrated to this area as a young man. He married Arvilla Bond, and they had two girls and three sons. One of his daughters died in childhood, and it was in her memory that he devoted himself to the Girl Scouts. The girls all loved him and called him "Daddy" Wells!

In the 20's over 5,000 people moved to Dow-



Girl Scout cabin in forest preserve woods, Maple Avenue



Girl Scouts "Golden Eaglets" Genevieve Behrel; Eleanor Hoehn; Daphne McLeery; Mary Millsap; Esther Wachter; and Elizabeth Littleford.

ners Grove, and the real estate market was booming! The population in 1920 was 3,543 and in 1930, 8,977! Chicago people who were tired of paying rent were moving to the suburbs. According to the *Reporter* in 1920, prices were high both on old and newly-built homes.

A prospective buyer, looking to buy a house in Downers Grove, would have found that there were many fine houses available in a range of \$3200 to \$6500 or so. One could have a 6-room, well-built two-story house with all the modern conveniences, beautiful yard with flowers, fine old trees in the best part of the south side, for \$4200, around \$700 cash with easy terms. Many of the houses listed included a poultry house. For \$4000 one could buy a well-built two-story house with a very good east front and very large light rooms. The house had "all modern conveniences except electricity, good garage, handy to trains, and can be bought at a bargain." About \$1500 cash would handle it.

The Marshall Field estate, joining Downers Grove on the south and west, was subdivided by Branigar Bros. Company, a Chicago real estate firm. W.H. Blodgett obtained an option on the property at a low figure and secured the assistance of Branigar in the subdivision.

The land was divided into one-half, one, two and a half, and five acre tracts. The company sold the land south of the Village first. This was the piece lying south of the Village limits at the standpipe. The other section, known as the north side woods, would be sold later. Six hundred acres were included in this transaction, all fine

property. The south side woods, which was also a part of the Field estate, is now a DuPage County Forest Preserve tract. With this, the Bunge subdivision, and the old Fred Hoffert place, many new people bought land in Downers Grove.



Memorial Hall — Village Hall

In 1925 the new Village Hall, named Memorial Hall in honor of the World War I servicemen who had given their lives in the War, was built. The dedication ceremonies were held on the Village's seventh celebration of Armistice Day. The new building was erected on the site of the previous Village Hall. The old frame, one-story building was moved behind the Masonic Temple. Two bronze plaques with the names of all the World War I servicemen were presented to the Village and also two German naval guns.



North High School circle drive at Forest Avenue

The beautiful new Downers Grove Community High School was built in 1927 after a lengthy campaign to provide a high school for the larger community of Downers Grove and the surrounding farm area, which would replace the Village of



Masonic Temple — Built 1925



Tivoli Theatre

Downers Grove High School. The proposition was turned down by the voters of the district in 1920. Most of the opposition to the plan had come from the farmers whose land would be included in the boundary defined by the Superintendent of Schools. The opposition was based mainly on the increase in taxes.

There had been meeting after meeting, with newspaper editorials citing the advantages of a community high school, statistics from the School Board, and experts from the universities who spoke on the educational advantages. Finally in February of 1923 the voters approved the new Community High School three to one!

The Grove was building many other fine buildings at this time. The new Masonic Temple at the corner of Washington and Curtiss Streets was opened with a Grand Ball in February of 1924. The old building on the southeast corner of Main and Railroad Streets (now Burlington), which had been built in 1895 by David Kline and housed his grocery store, and later the Nash

Brothers Store, was razed to make way for a building built by the owners of the Downers Grove Kandy Kitchen. The \$75,000 building contained six stores, three fronting on Main Street and three on Railroad Street. The corner store was occupied by the Kandy Kitchen. The second floor had fourteen offices, and there were three apartments in the rear.

The magnificent Tivoli Hotel and Theatre building was built at the corner of Highland and Warren in 1928. The elegance of the Tivoli Theatre was beyond compare! Van Gunten and Van Gunten, architects, designed the building for G.H. Bunge, who was President of the Security National Bank of Downers Grove at the time. The Tivoli was the second theatre in the United States to be designed and built for talking movies. When the Tivoli Theatre opened at 1:30 P.M. on Christmas Day, 1928, there were 4,000 people waiting in line to see a "talking movie."

Downers Grove was becoming more like a big town, with the benefits and disadvantages of a big town. The villagers protested the taking down of trees with the widening of streets. In 1927, a petition was circulated to ask the Council "to do all in its power to save the trees in the parkway of East Curtis street between Main and Washington Streets." (See petition facing page)



South side of Curtiss — 1927

Young men and old men were enraptured by automobiles. Huge ads appeared in the *Reporter* for luxury cars, speedsters, family cars, and cars for any occasion. "The Nash Six Seven-Passenger car is roomy and comfortable" at \$2725! The *Reporter* even had a Special Issue on January 26, 1923, devoted to cars, with a list of automobile dealers and garages, under the headline "Buy Your Car on Your Own Automobile Row." Unfortunately the automobile brought hazards

with it, and nearly every week a news item reported a serious or fatal automobile accident.

In 1928 the *Reporter* undertook an institution which is still most popular in Downers Grove, DOLLAR DAYS! The first Dollar Days celebration was held in the fall of 1928 and has continued as a semi-annual event.

This same year Herbert Hoover was elected President of the United States with Charles Curtiss his Vice-President, and life continued on.

The Village was beginning to change, though no one event seemed to mark the difference, but the next decade was quite different from the past.

Perhaps the first big shocking event came when the DuPage County constables uncovered a bootleg operation a few blocks north of 63rd Street and just off Dunham Road!

"In an old barn, half of which is in the village limits, right next to the old trail which led into Fort Dearborn from Joliet, the complete alcohol distillery was in operation."

It was Chief Mike Venard who became suspicious of the operation when he noticed a strange odor in the air and faint blue smoke coming from a pigeon house, which in fact was covering a smoke stack.

The Wall Street crash went unnoticed in the local press. Doubtless, some of the businessmen were affected by the stock market drop, but the villagers generally seemed not to be involved. Unfortunately their lives were to be affected all too soon!

On October 24, 1929, a day to be known as Black Tuesday, an unprecedented 16.4 million shares were traded, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted 30.57 points. The liquidation of securities continued as speculators were forced to sell stock, bought on margin, and \$30 billion in capital disappeared!

On October 11, 1929, there were three banks in Downers Grove which closed for the Columbus Day holiday: the First National, Security National, and Downers Grove State Bank. On November 5, 1931, when the Downers Grove State Bank closed its doors for the last time, there were *no* banks left in Downers Grove. Troubled times, indeed!

The sequence of events leading up to the closing of the three banks is circuitous and confusing. Suffice to say, the closings reflected the financial problems of the times, and with one



#123 Jan. 17, 1927

Special Assessment file to Widen street in Business District

To The Honorable Mayor and Village Council:

We, the undersigned property owners on East Curtiss street, also citizens residing in the village of Downers Grove do respectfully petition the Council to do all in its power to save the trees in the parkway of East Curtiss St. between Main and Washington Streets.

Hazel Branta	May Dutton
* Dr. & Mrs. W.C. Barber (Margery)	Mable Noble
Ruby Woehrel	J.L. Remmers
A.J. Wurmle	S. Curtiss
* Mr. & Mrs. Ed. R. Dunnagan (Ella Mary)	Anna H. Replinger
* Mr. & Mrs. Norman Anderson	Herbert H. Rood
* Mr. & Mrs. Brubaker (Stella)	E.J. Curtiss
* Mr. & Mrs. Guy L. Bush (Anna)	E.H. Staats
Salome Binder	A.J. Meyer
Esther Gratefeld	A.R. Ralston
* Mr. & Mrs. E.J. Heintz	Harvey Littelford
Elsie Gratefeld	Nelle Maud Bateman
* Thomas & Katherine Pape	* Mr. & Mrs. R.O. Miller
Bessie Pape	* Mr. & Mrs. L. Mertz & Ella Mertz
* W.F. & Minnie & James & W.F., Jr.	* Mrs. Harald Clark
* M. & Mary W. Sellers	* Mr. & Mrs. H.T. Aldrich
W.O. Casah	Lealamore Klein
W.E. Hackey	* Mr. & Mrs. H.M. Patton
* Myron & Margaret Umback	* Mr. & Mrs. J.W. Hughes & Mary Frances
John L. Rehm	* Mrs. M.E. Coleman
Raymond Mochel	* Mrs. L.J. Felton
Eugene Pfaff	* Mrs. & Mrs. C.R. Caldwell
Miriam McPherson	* Mrs. G.J. Dewey
J. Southwith	* Mrs. J. Carpenter
Harry A. Borman	W.H. Timke
Arthur D. Iehl	* Mrs. W.D. Coffey
John W. Stough	Minnie Binder
* J.R. & Mrs. J. Foster	* Mrs. G.P. Maxfield
* Mr. & Mrs. James Raby	Maude E. Whiffen
* Mr. & Mrs. L.R. Puffer	Marjorie A. Nagel
* Mr. & Mrs. A.H. Barnhart	* Mrs. Eva N. Clifford
Chas. K. Roe	Annie M. Herring
Emma J. Miller	* Mrs. H.G. Broekar
* Mr. & Mrs. Geo. M. Lau	* Mrs. W. DeWitte Nelson
Masonic Temple-Fred Dowe, Sec.	* Mrs. A.R. Moore
Irene M. Reed	Carrie M. Herring
Percy V. Normand	Sylvia T. Millsap
Edward G. Lemon	Milicint B.C. Hanchett
W.H. Laue	* Mrs. E. Foster
Lenore Kline Schlauder	Mary E. Spore
* Mrs. W.E. Garrison	Grace E. Stover
Elizabeth Strong & Harriet Strong	* Mrs. P.S. Hayden
* Mrs. Edson Nott	* Mrs. C.H. Stewart
* Mrs. J. Eugene Grout	* Mrs. M.E. Rassweiler
* Mrs. J.D. Anthony	* Mrs. G.B. Heartt
Emma C. Fletchers	Adalaide Downer & Helen
* Mrs. P.J. Daily	* Mrs. Frank Gregory & Georgia
Mildred Daily	J.M. Nargney
Alice & Jane Bateman	A.T. Lacey
Virginia Holst	* Mrs. Irving G. Heartt

\*Though husband and wife are listed here as Mr. & Mrs., the original petition was signed individually by husband and wife as required by law.

minor exception there seemed to be no lack of integrity in the banking institutions and their officers. The one irregularity occurred in 1928 when the State Bank and Trust Company was closed, but the bank was again opened and continued in business as the Downers Grove State Bank.

The first to go was the Security National Bank, which went out of business on July 24, 1930, and its business and assets were transferred to the First National Bank. The First National Bank was closed on June 17, 1931. Various options were considered for the bank for the next few months, including the possibility of a merger with the Downers Grove State Bank, which the bank auditors would not approve. The final result was that the bank was closed permanently on November 15, 1931. Eventually the depositors received 25% on their deposits. The last of the Downers Grove banks, the Downers Grove State Bank, closed its doors on November 5, 1931.

It is difficult to reconstruct the hardships undergone by the people whose savings were lost. An editorial in the *Reporter* pleaded,

"If there is anything which can be done in the situation here to save the depositors of the closed bank all or the greatest part of their money . . . , it should be done. The sooner the greatest amount of money available in the bank is put into circulation the quicker will business in this community recover from the shock given it by the unexpected closing of the (First National Bank)."

After this was written, not only did the First National not reopen, but the Downers Grove State Bank closed. Black days in Downers Grove. And it was only the beginning.

More bootleggers were raided in the area. The equipment was invariably expensive, new, and very elaborate. The names of the men arrested were unfamiliar, and from Chicago or one of the near western suburbs working for unnamed employers.

In May of 1930 the Sheriff raided another still on Stanley one door north of a house where in November of the previous year the Sheriff had found a huge re-cooking plant which was valued at \$20,000. There were no occupants present at the time of either raid. Both houses were said to be owned by the same person. They were new brick bungalows, with the floors cut away so that the equipment extended three floors from basement to attic!

In July of 1931, Federal agents raided a still in an old, abandoned house, reputed to be haunted, at Woodward and 63rd Street. Three 5,000 gallon vats, each full of mash, were emptied, and the plant's equipment was destroyed or taken. This was believed to be the largest plant yet uncovered in this area!

Strange people rented houses. Homes were burglarized, businesses robbed, and unclaimed cars were abandoned on the streets. Unbelievable events in the Grove!

On January 23, 1930, Robert F. Shepard of the World's Fair Committee spoke to the Association of Commerce meeting about the forthcoming Century of Progress World's Fair to be held in Chicago in 1933. He said that all parts of the Fair would be held on the lakefront, contrary to rumors that some of the buildings might be out toward the suburbs. Shepard did say that

"with the tremendous number of people and automobiles, it would be impossible for Chicago alone to care for them, and that the suburbs would have to help play the part of hosts to the visitors."

In 1930 the grim spectre of unemployment came to Downers Grove. In response to a statement by William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, that 3,700,000 workers were out of employment in the month of January, the editor of the *Reporter* stated,

"As a general proposition we are willing to subscribe to the theory that this country should find employment for every man and woman who wishes to work. That is a problem, not only for governments, but for industrial concerns to solve."

In November of 1930 an unemployment registration office was set up in Downers Grove to attempt to find jobs for the jobless in the Village. Forty men and women of the community were listed as unemployed, and it was judged that this was not a total of all the jobless in the Village. Work was planned in the community to try to meet the needs of the unemployed. It was proposed that a road be built from the stub end of Burlington to connect up with Gilbert Avenue. Mayor George Bailey said that the Village had \$1500 which would be made available to pay for labor. A large ad in the November 13, 1930, *Reporter* read: **NORMAL SPENDING OF INCOME WILL BRING BACK PROSPERITY** and encouraged people to spend money to bring back normal business and employment.

The price of milk was reduced from 14¢ to 13¢ per quart, and most of the reduction in price was

passed along to the farmers. The following specials were advertised in the fall of 1931:

Bacon—4 lbs. for \$1.00  
California Hams, 6-7 lbs. average—\$1.00 each  
Veal Roast (Boneless)—4 lbs. for \$1.00  
Pork Roast (Boneless)—5 lbs. for \$1.00  
Silvercup Coffee—3 lbs. for \$1.00  
Apricots—5 cans for \$1.00  
Peaches—5 cans for \$1.00  
Salmon—Tall can—4 cans for \$1.00  
Johnson's Liquid Wax (pint jars)—2 for \$1.00

The entire community worked together in providing a local relief office, to find jobs for the jobless, and provide contributions of food and coal to those who were without. A white elephant store was set up to raise money and to contribute clothing to those in need. The employed were urged to buy and use "Work Tickets" to help with the unemployment situation. The tickets were available in denominations of \$3.50 or \$7.00. A ticket called for as much work by a man or woman as its denomination indicated.

The spring of 1932 brought a new excitement to Downers Grove and helped to at least divert the attention of the villagers from the never-ending concerns of unemployment.

The headline in the *Reporter* read:  
"DOWNERS GROVE TO CELEBRATE  
100th ANNIVERSARY JULY 4th!"

And preparations began. Mayor Barber made a proclamation asking for the observance here of the Centennial. The plan was inaugurated by the American Legion, and it was decided that the celebration would be held on July 4, 1932, and would also observe George Washington's bicentennial birthday.

The celebration of the first century of Downers Grove was declared a community project, and all the organizations of the Village were requested to send representatives to this first meeting.

The reactions of the villagers were divided. There were those citizens who felt that it was very appropriate to celebrate the Centennial, to honor the pioneers and take joy in the founding of this community. Others who were burdened with the troubles of the bad times felt that it was inappropriate to talk of celebration when there was so much misery, anxiety, and scarcity of money.

On June 16, 1932, the *Reporter* published the following editorial:

"On July 4th this community will celebrate its

centennial. This celebration will mark the first one hundred years following the settling of the township by Pierce Downer, the first permanent white settler who built his home in what is now the north-west part of the village.

It is fitting that such a celebration be held. It is one way which we, of the present, can do honor to the pioneers who braved the hardships of the early day to erect the foundation on which the permanent community has been established.

But are we today entering into the real spirit of this centennial? There are some people who do not believe this birthday party, for such it is, should be held. There are others who are lukewarm about the matter and still others who are actuated by a species of jealousy and are throwing out hints here and there that the celebration will be a failure and that 'due to the times,' it will be impossible to stage it right.

We are of the opinion that Downers Grove should do the best it can, under present financial conditions, in the celebration of its first 100 years. What if we cannot put on as elaborate celebration as Naperville did, for instance? Should that detract from the kind of a celebration we can put on?

If Downers Grove does not have a single visitor from out-of-town for its centennial celebration and 90% of the people of the village and immediate vicinity are here for the day, it should be a success. For, in the final analysis, this big party is one for the people of this community and not for visitors.

It is almost certain that we cannot get together a vast amount of money and then assure cash prizes for band drum and bugle corps. But we can, individuals, business houses and organizations, prepare floats at small cost and make our parade one the people of Downers Grove can enjoy. We cannot spend a great amount for prizes for anything, but we can have contests for the children and young men and women. We cannot rent 500 costumes for the historical pageant, but we can utilize the things we have and make this pageant one which will be beautiful to behold and depict the incidents which have gone into our history. We may not be able to proclaim to the world that we are shooting off a thousand dollars worth of fireworks, but we can take our few dollars for pyrotechnics and derive a great deal of pleasure from watching the display."

The magnificent celebration was held on July 4, 1932, to honor the first hundred years since the founding of Downer's Grove, to the delight of all the people in town, the oldsters who remembered, the middle generation who needed a celebration, and the youngsters and children who would never forget the joy of it! The history of Downers Grove, *The Spirit of the Grove*, was published in preparation for the event. Hundreds of citizens of Downers Grove participated in the planning, preparation, and presentation of the Centennial Day, including Mayor W.C. Barber,

Leslie Meyer, A.J. Stephens, A.J. Walter, George Sweeney, Edward Lacey, Mrs. H.S. Paine, Mrs. E.W. Harris, R.A. Helsten, W.H. Putnam, Oscar Reinhold, Walter Staats, Mrs. Philip Winheimer, Henry Rosenbaum, Howard Jones, Harold Clarke, Melvin Binder, Grant Nash, A.T. Witt, L.A. Goding, Mrs. Joseph Duquette, Edward Volberding, Chester Winter, Henry Larsen, Miss Helen Downer, Miss Louise Stanley, Bert Rogers, Mrs. Beulah Cole, Miss Harriet Strong, Miss Jessie Bryce, W.R. Wells, Mrs. Walter Lyman, Arthur Johnson, William Baker, Mrs. Pearl Reinhold, Charles K. Roe, Mrs. E.F. Rosewarne, Miss Grace Stover, J.R. King, Rev. Stuart White, and all the villagers of Downers Grove.

The day began with a long, colorful parade through the Village with the lovely queen, Grace

## "THE SPIRIT OF THE GROVE"



Photo by W. H. Baker

DOWNERS GROVE CENTENNIAL  
July 4, 1932

"Spirit of the Grove"  
July 4, 1932

Mochel, who had been chosen Spirit of the Grove, and her attendants, Grace Rosenbaum, Elizabeth Littleford, Ruth Barnard, and Evelyn Rasch riding gracefully on the Village float. Other beautifully-decorated floats rolled slowly down the parade route through the Village to the stirring music of the bands marching in the



1932 Centennial Queen's Court Evelyn Rasch; Grace Mochel; Grace Rosenbaum; Elizabeth Littleford; and Ruth Barnard



1932 Centennial parade

parade. Drum and bugle corps added their strong cadence to the marchers. A list of the floats in the parade would be the total of businesses and organizations in the Village. The Downers Grove Fire Department paraded its fine equipment, polished and gleaming in the sunlight, and was joined by the fire departments of the neighboring villages. There were marching groups of Boy Scouts, the St. Joseph's Catholic Church, and the Moose Lodge. In addition there was a company of 75 soldiers, a stagecoach carrying the G.A.R. veterans, a pioneer covered wagon, four

horses with riders, and decorated cars by the score!

The highpoint of the Centennial celebration was the pageant which was opened by the fanfare of a trumpet and the call: "Hear Ye! Hear ye! And draw nigh. All citizens of the village, your children and friends, neighbors and welcome guests, honored pioneers and descendants who we gather to honor today!"

With this, the prologue was read and the Spirit of the Grove presented:

"I am the Spirit of the Grove!  
 May you live together in peace and love!  
 As upright in spirit as my trees—  
 Doing your best, as the least of these.  
 Down long years has faith been kept—  
 'Neath my green arch men have sung and wept.  
 Greetings to all from the long ago—  
 Thus saith the spirit of the Grove."

With this the pageant opened with the lovely, golden-clad girls dancing across the grass, followed by the Queen, the "Spirit of the Grove," in her flowing robe of pale green and silver.



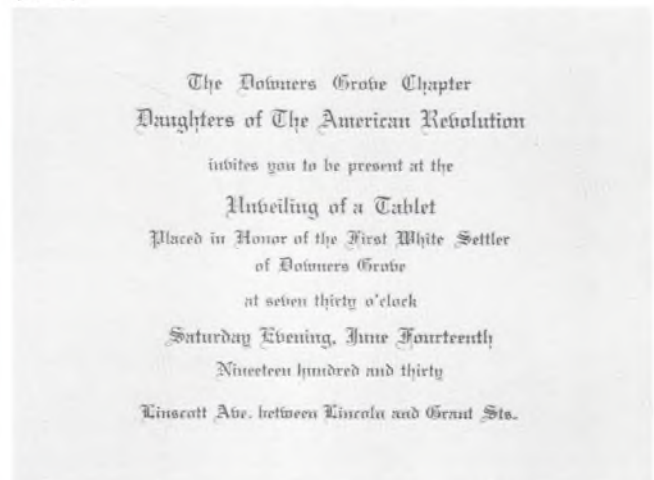
1932 Centennial — Mrs. Susan Foster and old spinning wheel

The first episode in the pageant was a colonial minuet in honor of the George Washington Bicentennial and following episodes traced the events of the history of Downers Grove. In honoring the first settlers Gwen Griffiths Vaughn sang a solo, and Indians danced onto the field to a song by an Indian maid.

Covered wagons came rumbling up the road. An Indian rider warned the settlers of dangers.



Unveiling of Downer Tablet — 1930. Prior to the centennial year celebration. L to R: Mrs. R. Feasley; Miss Helen Downer; Mr. Downer; Mrs. Ralph Shirley; and Marilyn Downer Reed (child).



Invitation to unveiling of Downer Tablet. 1930, prior to the centennial celebration.



The Avenue of Flags — Century of Progress



The Sky Ride

And the story of the Grove unfolded through episode after episode as the pageant continued through the Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I.

Mrs. Dora Cline Whidden sang "Trees," and Mrs. Jessie Woodford Lyman read the epilogue, a poem which she wrote for the occasion. All the participants in the pageant joined in a Grand March, saluting the pioneers on the reviewing stand. The evening ended in a grand climax of spectacular fireworks as an aeroplane, spotted by army searchlights, flew over the field. It is written that by evening the crowd had reached the enormous total of 35,000 people.

The Centennial celebration was an unforgettable event which, for those few days at least, lifted the spirits of the people from their daily worries and concerns.

In a like manner Chicago went forward with the planning of a Century of Progress, the World's Fair celebrating the 100th anniversary of Chicago.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President of the United States and in his inaugural speech said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." On March 5, a nation wide bank holiday was proclaimed, and by March 16th

banks with the resources to reopen had reopened. Many banks whose doors were closed never opened again. For Downers Grove, this was post facto, there were no banks here in 1933 to be closed. The fears were great and pervasive.

In 1933 the typical annual U.S. earnings were \$3,382 for a physician, \$4,218 for a lawyer, \$2,250 for an engineer, \$8,663 for a Congressman, \$907 for a construction worker, \$216 for a hired farmhand, \$260 for a sleep in domestic servant (\$21.66 per month), \$3,111 for a college teacher, and \$1,277 for a public school teacher.

On April 24, 1933, five thousand Chicago school teachers stormed the banks for back pay, after having been paid for 10 months in scrip.

Despite the unemployment, the shortage of money, the failure of banks, and the lack of paychecks for its teachers, Chicago opened the Century of Progress with flair and glory on May 27, 1933!

Arrangements had been made well in advance to house visitors in Downers Grove and other suburbs. "Traffic regulations in the city of Chicago made it almost impossible for visitors to take their automobiles into the city." Therefore, the Century of Progress officials established Fair Information Stations to encourage the visitors to stay outside the city during their visit to the Fair.

The project for Fair housing was backed by the Lions Club, and residents with vacant rooms registered their rooms with the Lions Club committee. The Village was delighted to have this part in housing the visitors to the Fair, not only for the pleasure of being involved in the total excitement of the Fair but also for the very practical economic benefits which it brought to the Village. In addition, many part-time jobs as ticket takers, ushers, stagehands, etc. opened up for young people at the Fair. After the Fair had been open a month, the Burlington Railroad's

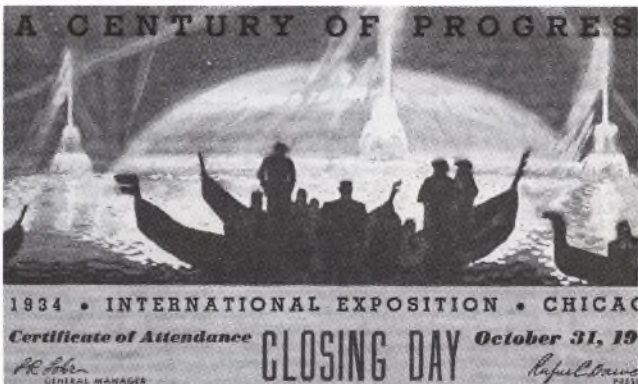
traffic exceeded the best expectations of railroad travel experts by such a wide margin that Albert Cotsworth, Jr., the Passenger Traffic Manager of the Burlington said that it seemed like old times.

"In addition to the regular equipment of our incoming trains being loaded to capacity for the first time in several years, seventy extra cars were required to handle the rush of passengers bound for Chicago, and some of our trains were separated in two sections," said Mr. Cotsworth.

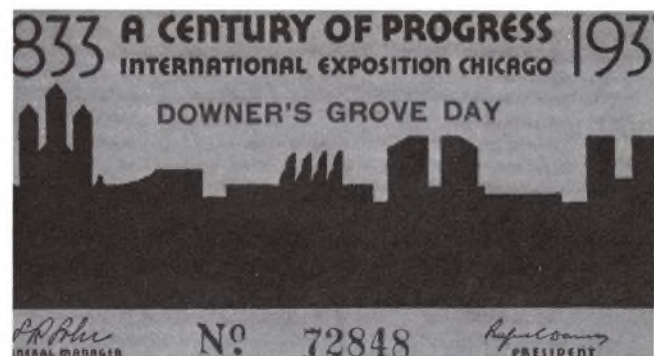
The magnificence of the Chicago World's Fair of 1933, the Century of Progress, demonstrated to the world once again the ability of Chicagoans to design and execute a superlative display of the accomplishments of the times and the projections of the future.

The sparkling buildings with their clean, crisp lines graced the lakefront. The Twelfth Street Fair entrance was lined with wind tossed green flags on magenta-red standards. The Administration Building was striking with its white central portion and wings of magenta to the north and south. The Illinois Building of white and gold facing the Avenue of Flags, which housed the rarest collections of Lincoln's papers and documents, included an exact reproduction of the parlor in his Springfield home. The Hall of Science, the Adler Planetarium, the Hall of Social Science, the Hall of Religion, the Electrical Building, the Home Planning Hall, the Foods and Agriculture Building, the majestic United States Government Building, and the unique Travel and Transportation Building with its roof supported by cables from the tops of twelve steel columns, built along the lake and punctuated with lagoons and reflecting pools were glorious! The exhibits within these buildings provided a never-ending delight and education to the visitors.

In addition there were the many buildings of



Chicago World's Fair 1933-34



Century of Progress 1933 — Downers Grove Day



Minnie H. Prince

other countries, including the Italian Pavilion, the Bendix Lama Temple, an exact reproduction of the original Golden Pavilion of Jehol, and the Maya Temple. The giants of free enterprise also had their fine buildings and exhibits—the Sears, Roebuck Building, snowy white decorated with vivid red; the Firestone Building, the Ford Motor Company Building, the General Motors Building with its 177-foot tower, the Chrysler Building in the form of a great Maltese Cross, Western Union Hall, and Kelvinator Hall.

A striking feature of the Fair was the Swift Bridge and Open Air Theater, which connected the 23rd Street Plaza with the south end of Northerly Island. An orchestra stage and band shell, where band concerts were given daily, were separated by a moat from the seating area.



Lucy Naramore Stanley (Mrs. John) and Jean Merry, great grandchild of the Naramores.



Ray and Arnold Klein  
Aug. 25, 1905

The Midway was noisy, bawdy, and compelling. There were exciting rides, strange people, strange animals, exotic villages, and shows and entertainments of many varieties; Sally Rand and her fans were made famous at the Fair.

The Sky Ride was to the Century of Progress what the Giant Ferris Wheel had been to the Columbian Exposition. A very popular and stupendous attraction, the Sky Ride had lofty observation cars traveling on an aerial cable suspended 210 feet above the lagoon between 628-foot towers, providing a breath-taking view of the entire Fairgrounds!



Anne Wilcox Bush (Mrs. Guy Bush)



## THE DARK YEARS 1932 through 1947

Along with the rest of the nation in the 1930's the Village of Downers Grove was plunged into the devastating Great Depression. In 1931 when the two Downers Grove banks failed, two thousand two hundred and ninety-four other banks across the nation also closed their doors, never to reopen. This was no comfort to the citizens of Downers Grove who had seen their savings disappear without warning. Over a period of six years or so, a percentage of these savings were returned to the depositors, but in 1931 this was an unknown. Downers Grove was to be a village without a bank for nearly a decade!

President Hoover's annual message to the Congress on December 8, 1931, recommended an Emergency Reconstruction Finance Corporation and a Public Works Administration. New terms and new concepts in this land of individualism and "endless" resources. Unemployment reached between 15 and 17 million by the end of 1932. Thirty-four million Americans had no income of any kind, and the fortunate workers who did have jobs averaged little more than \$16 per week.

The residents of Downers Grove were shocked at the financial difficulties of Chicago magnate Samuel Insull and the subsequent receivership of three of his largest companies. The financial maze of his investment strategy left the man in the street agog.

For the decade of the thirties, it was a grim struggle for farmers and businessmen to keep their own businesses afloat, much less try to help those in the community who were without any kind of livelihood. Uncertainty and uneasiness gripped everyone. Those who were without work and money were overcome with panic and hope-

lessness. Those who had businesses or owned property fought a constant battle to pay their taxes and to meet their mortgages.

In these nightmarish times the people in the Village who had always held jobs, had good homes, and had enjoyed the security of putting away a little money in the bank or perhaps investing in stocks, were stunned by the suddenness of financial uncertainty. Businessmen, who felt they had known the rules for success, suddenly felt incompetent. Overnight the rules had changed!

Thrifty citizens had saved carefully and placed their money in the banks operated by their fellow citizens. The banks closed. And their savings were gone! Some of the more financially astute businessmen had bought stock in strong, solid companies like utilities, and in the flash of an instant their investments virtually disappeared! Frugal, cautious men had bought real estate as a sound investment for the future and were not able to pay the taxes on the non-productive land. Farmers had bought land to the limit of their borrowing power, and the prices for their crops hit rock bottom. Their mortgage loans more often than not were greater than the depressed land value of their total holdings! The farmer had difficulty scraping together enough money to meet the payments on his indebtedness, and the delinquent tax lists were never-ending!

On March 12th, 1933, President Roosevelt gave the first of his "Fireside Chats" as he endeavored to allay the Depression fears and inspire confidence in the positive measures which were being undertaken to restore prosperity. The Downers Grove Republicans listened hopefully, but with reservation, to the promises of Franklin

Delano Roosevelt. And life went on.

The *Reporter* of December 18, 1933, had a front-page editorial headed:

### CONGRATULATIONS DOWNERS GROVE

"Congratulations people of Downers Grove. We doubt if there is another community in this country which has been hit as hard as Downers Grove from a financial standpoint which has done as much for its unfortunate people over the Christmas season as this community in which we live. The Reporter believes the people deserve the thanks of those whom they have helped and is taking this method of saying those thank yous which these people cannot personally deliver.

Check off to yourself the great things which have been accomplished here during the past five or six weeks which culminated in the activities of the three days before Christmas. These individual efforts to make Christmas a happy one for the unemployed and their families, when rolled into one make a huge community Christian gift to these people.

Thanks should go to B.M. "Barney" Long for his idea for the Christmas party for the children. He and his committee furnished something out of the ordinary for these boys and girls.

The members of the fire department and the operators of the local telephone exchange for gathering together and repairing the toys and dolls given to the poor. The Avery Coonley Parents' Association helped in this work and individuals delivered the packed boxes.

The organizations and individuals for the baskets of Christmas food taken to families in all parts of the village and the surrounding countryside.

The churches and Sunday Schools for their Christmas programs where the poorest children were singled out for the best.

The individuals who took care of that family near them.

And how was all this possible of accomplishment? Simply because the people of the community were called on to help and did help."

Downers Grove had many reasons for congratulations. Depressing times did not stem creativity! In 1933 an outstanding best-seller was published by a woman who had grown up in Downers Grove. The book was *Oil for the Lamps of China*. Its author was Alice (Nourse) Tisdale Hobart. As a young girl, Alice Nourse had moved to Downers Grove with her parents, her brother Edwin, and her sister Mary, when her father bought the house and seven acres of land from the parents of James Henry Breasted. Alice Nourse wrote in her autobiography,

"Something of the imaginative quality of James Breasted must have come from his parents, for the

Pines, the name they had given their home, had a character all its own . . . Along the road pines were grouped in such fashion that the house seemed secluded . . . Most of the land lay to the north of the house, away from town; here a double row of pines, set far enough apart to leave an aisle between, led to our boundary line."



Alice Nourse  
Tisdale Hobart

Alice, as an adult, recalled her high school years in Downers Grove when Mr. Searles, the School Superintendent, had been her teacher. Mr. Searles talked about books and made his students express themselves in writing. He praised their work and sometimes criticized but always showed his belief in their abilities. Alice said, "It was my first timid glimpse of an authentic creative self."

In 1908 Alice had gone to visit her sister Mary, who was a teacher in a girls' school in Hangchow, China. It was there she met and married Earle Tisdale Hobart. Hobart was with an American oil company, and they made their home in China until the Nanking Incident which forced them to leave China.

Her experience there formed the basis for her novel *Oil for the Lamps of China*, which was translated into many foreign languages and made into a powerful motion picture.

Mary Nourse, Alice's sister, was also an author, who wrote *The Way of the Emperor*. Their brother Edwin, an economist, became

\*Mrs. Hobart was the author of many excellent books. Among them are: *The Peacock Sheds His Tail*, *The Cup and the Sword*, *Their Own Country*, *Yang and Yin*, *River Supreme*, *Within the Walls of Nanking*, *By the City of the Long Sand*, *Pioneering Where the World Is Old*, *The Cleft Rock*, *The Serpent Wreathed Staff*, *Venture into Darkness*, *Innocent Dreamers*, and *Gusty's Child*.

President of the Brookings Institute of Washington, D.C.

Downers Grove was also home to other well known authors. Sterling North, the author of *Rascal*, moved to Downers Grove in 1934, and his sister Jessica North MacDonald, poet and author of *Arden Acres*, moved to the Village a year later.



Jessica North MacDonald  
(Author)



Sterling North (Author)

The North family had lived in Edgerton, Wisconsin. After the death of their mother, Jessica was faced with bringing up her younger brother, Sterling. When he was nearly fourteen, Jessica hired a housekeeper to look after Sterling in Edgerton; and she took a train to Chicago, where she got a job at the University of Chicago. Jessica Nelson North had written poetry since her childhood and continued to write and publish her poetry. For a time she was Editor of the renowned Poetry Magazine.

Jessica and her husband, R.I. Macdonald, moved to a log cabin in the woods between Joliet and Chicago Heights. It had been a model cabin built to help sell lots, but with the Depression, the owners of the subdivision had been unable to sell the lots for homes. Before long very peculiar people had moved in all around their log cabin. Mrs. MacDonald wrote,

“There was no zoning and they lived in box cars, corn cribs, shacks, anything they could haul in. Tragedy and comedy mixed in the life of the settlement. A tarpaper hut burned one night and sixteen fur coats were dragged out by the owners, also a pile of jewelry, though much more melted. Of course those neighbors were burglars.”

Every day outrageous events were happening, and Mrs. MacDonald said, “Of course I had to write it up.” The result was her novel *Arden Acres*\* . . . and also their subsequent move to Downers Grove.

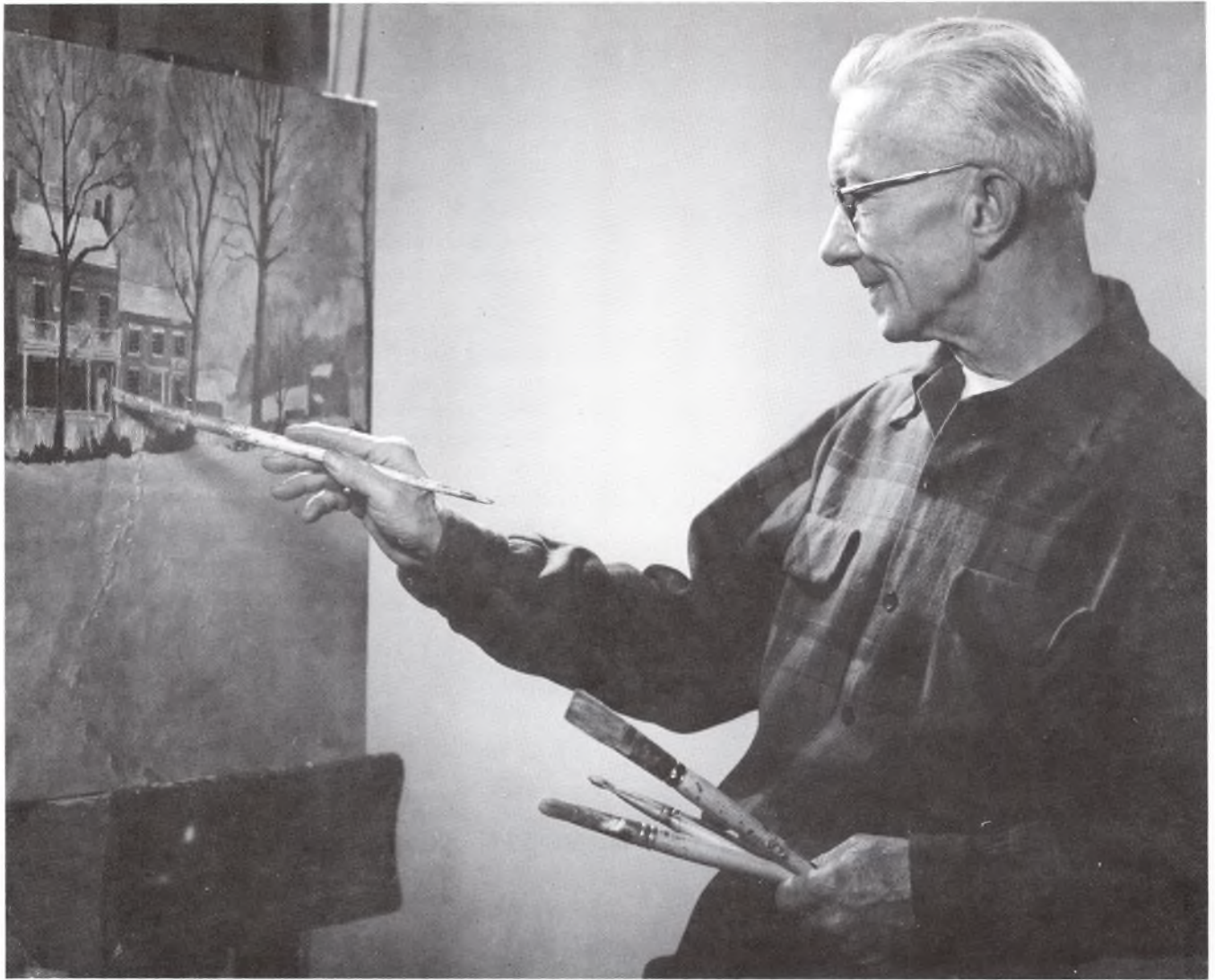
Jessica North MacDonald’s neighbors had recognized themselves in the book, and they were furious! They threatened, vandalized, and terrorized! So the MacDonalds sold their log cabin and bought a house in Downers Grove.

Sterling North had gone to work for the *Chicago Daily News* as a cub reporter in 1929. Remaining with the *Daily News* for fourteen years, he wrote a book each of those years. During this time, in 1934, he and his family moved to Downers Grove. Sterling North chose this Village because he wanted his children to have the advantage of attending Avery Coonley School.

\*Other books by Mrs. MacDonald include: *The Long Leash*, *Morning in the Land*, *Dinner Party*, and *The Giant’s Shoe*.



Don Lawson (Author)



Lane Newberry

The North family lived in Downers Grove until 1943 when Sterling North became literary editor of the *New York Post*. Among his many writings\*, one of the most favorite stories is *Rascal*, which was made into a movie by Walt Disney. Downers Grove has honored Sterling North by naming a park in the Village in his memory.

A young man growing up in Downers Grove in the 30's and who graduated in the class of 1935 from Downers Grove High School, Donald E. Lawson, was also to become a well-known author. *A Brand for the Burning* was his first

\*Sterling North's other titles include: *So Dear to my Heart*, *Night Outlasts the Whippoorwill*, *Captured by the Mohawks*, *Abe Lincoln*, *Log Cabin to the White House*, *Young Thomas Edison*, *Thoreau of Walden Pond*, *Hurry Spring*, and *The Wolfing*.

novel,\*\* based on life in the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's in a small Midwestern town very like Downers Grove.

Lane Newberry, an outstanding artist, lived in Downers Grove from 1933 to 1958. His paintings have been exhibited widely in the Chicago area. Newberry, of Mormon descent and tradition, set the task of recording on canvas the sojourn of the early Mormons in Illinois and followed their trail westward. This led to the painting of other historic locales. Some of Newberry's paintings are: *Indian Signal Station*, *Bald Knob Signal Station*, *Wilford Woodruff Home*, *State House Vandalia*, *From Grant's Home at Galena*, *Por-*

\*\*Donald Lawson also wrote: *The Lion and the Rock*, *The United States in World War I*, *The United States in World War II*, *The War of 1812*, *The United States in the Korean War*, *Famous American Political Families*, *Young People in the White House*, and *Frances Perkins*.

tage Trail, Mericach Hill, Winter's Eve, Mill at Fullersburg, Castle Inn Fullersburg, Pre-Emption House, Naperville, Lincoln's Home, In Coles County, Hobson's Tavern, Terrapin Ridge, The Rawlings House, Shawneetown, The Church at Cahokia, Branton's Tavern, and Rutledge Tavern. The school district bought six of these paintings, and a number of them are now hanging at North High School.

The 18th Amendment, prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages in the United States, ended on December 5, 1933, when Utah became the 36th state to ratify the 21st Amendment which repealed the 18th Amendment. When Illinois voted for the ratification of the 21st Amendment in June of 1933, Downers Grove voted almost 2 to 1 for the repeal.

After the sale of beer had been legalized by Congress on April 7, 1933, the Village Council approved an ordinance in June of 1933 to allow establishments to sell beer in Downers Grove upon the payment of a fee of \$200 a year.

June of 1933 was extremely hot! On Monday, June 5th, the thermometer reached 90 degrees. Businessmen with open collars and discarded ties looked worn down by the heat. The shoppers on Main Street walked in the shade of the buildings and trees to avoid the steamy rays of the sunshine. The fortunate few who could, joined the youngsters in the clear waters of either Oak Knoll or Belmont pool. Spring, that year, had been unusually late, and the heat wave had descended on the villagers without forewarning.

Late afternoons and evenings found friends and families sitting on porches and under trees sipping refreshing beverages. Sleeping was nearly impossible in the humid, hot bedrooms. Mattresses were slid downstairs, and beds were made on the floor with doors ajar to catch such small breezes as might be stirring.

The year 1933 brought an entirely new vocabulary to the nation in recovery alphabet agencies. Such letter combinations as CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps), NRA (National Recovery



Council Meeting, l to r: Herbert Gratefeldt; Ed Volberding; Frank Kidwell; Walter Barber; Carl Staiger; Robert Dickson; Charles Hitch and Win Knock.

Administration), AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Agency), WPA (Works Progress Administration and later Work Projects Administration), NYA (National Youth Administration) began to have real meaning for the residents of Downers Grove. Men who had no choice but to accept relief funds in order to feed their families, now were to have an opportunity for government work. Unemployed men registered with the National Re-Employment Service. The registration office in Downers Grove was at the Masonic Temple. In November of 1933, more than 200 men from Downers Grove were employed under the Federal civil works project on jobs in and around the Village. Half of the men employed were taken from the relief rolls, and the other half were unemployed men who had not yet been forced to resort to relief. Pay for these workers was set at 50¢ an hour for common labor and \$1.20 per hour for the skilled trades, carpenters, masons, and so on. The work week was five days of six hours a day.

There were the predictable delays in getting the project in operation; but finally in the middle of December Walter Rogers and Edwin Dewey, who were in charge of the project here, visited the homes of those men who had been hired to tell them to report to work. Santa Claus could not have been received more heartily by the men who had been waiting anxiously for word of a job! Unfortunately single men, whether or not they had dependents, were not eligible to work on the Village and Sanitary District CWA projects, according to the Federal regulations.

Downers Grove benefitted from these Federal programs in two ways. The men who were put to work were able to earn money which went into the local businesses in the Village. Secondly, many projects were completed in Downers Grove for the schools, the Village, the Sanitary District, and on the streets. Parking places were cleared and graded, trails cut, fireplaces built, and benches and tables were erected in the county forest preserves.

Mr. Chance Hill, the Director of the project, said,

“The work being done at ‘Rocky Glen,’ southeast of Downers Grove will make this preserve one of the prettiest in the Chicago district. Trails through our own preserve will make it easier for visitors to gain access to the more remote parts of this bit of woodland.”

The Village and the Sanitary District applied in March of 1934 for approval of additional projects in this community because the appropriations were almost depleted. Everyone in the Village hoped that the approval would come. Not only the men on the jobs hoped that their work would continue, but all of the villagers appreciated what the CWA had meant for everyone in the Village.

The CWA was phased out, and in its place came a new Federal program of work which was under the supervision of DuPage County. Charles Dunham of Downers Grove was appointed Chairman of this program. The scale of wages set was 60¢ an hour for common labor; helpers for expert tradesmen, 80¢ an hour; expert tree trimmers, \$1.00 an hour; and carpenters, brick layers, cement finishers, etc. \$1.20 an hour.

The population of Downers Grove did not increase during the decade of the 1930's. For the first time since Pierce Downer had camped at the intersection of the two Indian trails in the Grove, there were very few if any people moving to Downers Grove. The population in the census of 1930 was 8,977 and in the census of 1940-9,526. An increase of only 550 people in a ten-year period!

Families combined households in order to survive. Unemployed family members moved in with their relatives in order to have a place to live. Perhaps a few of those 500 who moved to the Village were brothers, sisters, or children from other areas who moved here to find a home with relatives. It was not uncommon for a man with a house and a job to have not only his own immediate family under his roof but also married children with their families and/or jobless relatives with their spouses and children.

Very little real estate was sold, and because of the doubling up of families there were many empty houses for rent. For example, in August of 1934, one could rent a 6-room bungalow with a 2-car garage near the high school for \$25 a month! Also listed were: a six-room bungalow with a garage, also near the high school, for \$30 per month; a six-room brick house, 2-car garage, with hot water heat, at \$45 per month; and a 5-room bungalow with a garage at Belmont for \$15 per month.

Six months later the same realtor listed three houses for rent at the same prices. Could have

been the same houses, still unrented! Another realtor listed a 7-room house with 4 bedrooms for \$20; a 7-room house with 3 bedrooms and 3-car garage for \$25; and a 7-room bungalow near Avery Coonley School was available for \$40 per month!

The people of Downers Grove continued their activities, their friendships, and their warm, caring relationships with each other despite the burden of economic hardships. Mrs. Avery Coonley offered the use of the lower part of the kindergarten building on Grove Street for the use of young people in the Village for meetings, dancing, and social events. The central committee of the Associated Leisure Groups enthusiastically made plans for the use of the building on designated afternoons and evenings.

The *Reporter* carried a full page ad congratulating "Charley" Mochel for his fifty years in business in one establishment.

"That's a record to be proud of . . . Fifty years . . . half a century . . . what wonderful changes have been made in that time. And yet here is a man who has managed to keep a wholesome outlook on life through wars and famines, disasters, and 'prosperity.' What a record!"

And all of Downers Grove joined the *Reporter* in congratulating this uncommon man who played such a vital part in the growth of this Village.



Charles Mochel, merchant and community leader

Operating a business through the difficult Depression years was a fragile balancing act. It became very difficult to turn away a customer who had no money, and yet the expenses of the business had to be met. Katherine Fraher, a long-time employee of Mochel's Hardware, said,

"I remember more than once when I said to Mr. Charles Mochel that there were children in the family, and that always got them the coal, even if there were no money."

With no banking facilities in the Village the businessmen had to do their banking in one of the nearby villages, and many of the businessmen went into Chicago once or twice a week to bank. An awkward time-consuming effort in order to conduct a business in Downers Grove!

It took a large measure of persistence, strong survival skills, and resourcefulness to remain in business through these lean years, but some businesses not only endured the Depression but through the ingenuity and hard work of the owners eventually became successful despite the adversities. Ambrose Poulin, who had a feed store, said that in the early 1930's many weeks he had only \$3 profit after his business expenses.

Mrs. Charlotte Brossman opened a little popcorn stand on Ogden Avenue in 1933 to supplement her husband's Depression-level income. Little by little as her business increased Mrs. Brossman, an excellent cook, added chicken, baked beans, and barbecues to her menu. And then she baked pies in her home and sold them from the stand to customers who either took them home or ate them in their cars. From this small beginning The Last Word Restaurant was built. It became one of the outstanding restaurants in the Chicago area, endorsed by Duncan Hines and the public! Mr. and Mrs. W.F. Beckman bought The Last Word in 1944. Anna Beckman, like Mrs. Brossman a born cook, and W.F. Beckman continued the tradition of The Last Word as a fine restaurant for many years.

Another depression-era business which thrived was the Prince Ice Cream Castles, originated by Earl S. Prince. Thirty-seven Prince Castles were opened during the decade of the 1930's. At first they sold only ice cream in either cones or containers, but in 1934 "one-in-a-million" malted milkshakes were introduced. Later Castleburgers were added to the menu, and year-round curb service was provided. The Wal-

mark Manufacturing Company was founded in Downers Grove by Prince Castles to invent and manufacture equipment for the business.

The Memorial Day programs were planned by the members of the Alexander Bradley Burns American Legion Post. The Legion also held Youth Week with elaborate programming in the early spring and sponsored the annual fall carnival on Burlington Avenue just west of Main Street. The *Reporter* carried an editorial in October of 1934 commending the Legion for their fine community service. "The Legion enters into community life in Downers Grove in a manner which leaves little to be desired." Traditionally the Legion took the leading part in the Memorial Day and Armistice Day observances. Youth Week was instituted in 1932 and was continued each year to call the accomplishments of boys and girls to the attention of adults.

The Legion sponsored and organized many public meetings for the benefit of Village concerns, including the organization of the Centennial Celebration of Downers Grove. It also organized the Fourth of July celebrations in the Village. In 1934 the Legion conducted a Safety Week.

The Village of Downers Grove was certainly a better place as a result of the leadership in the community of the men and women of the American Legion Post and the American Legion Auxiliary.

The many activities of the villagers continued with or without money. The churches, the lodges, the clubs, school games and plays, concerts, lectures all provided an interesting and vital



Maiden Voyage of the Burlington Denver Zephyr, 1934

social life.

One outstanding event was the day in May of 1934 when the Zephyr, the new streamlined CB&Q train, streaked through Downers Grove on its world record run from Denver, Colorado, to Chicago. Hundreds of Downers Grove people lined the tracks to see the train. Warning had been given weeks in advance to keep off the railroad tracks as the new Zephyr would speed through town. Every grade crossing in the more than 1,000 miles between Denver and Chicago was guarded by at least one crossing guard. In Downers Grove, police, firemen, and railroad men were placed along the tracks from the railroad yards to Fairview Avenue. And more men were stationed from Fairview Avenue east.

Miles of bell cord had been sent out from the Railroad weeks before, and this was strung on each side of loading platforms and the right-of-way to restrain the curious. Gates were lowered for at least five minutes before the arrival of the Zephyr.

Cheers went up from the waiting crowd as the Zephyr came speeding through Downers Grove at 85 miles an hour. Heads turned as the stainless steel train flew past, almost in a blur, it travelled so fast! In one 2-mile stretch in eastern Colorado, the speed was estimated to be 112 miles per hour! The trip was made in 13 hours at an average speed of 77½ miles an hour. It was not only a speed record but also a record for distance without a stop.

The people of Downers Grove took pleasure in the benefits of nearby recreational opportunities. In 1934 the will of Joy Morton stipulated that income-producing securities should provide for the maintenance and improvement of the beautiful Arboretum, world-famous for its beauty and the variety of trees and shrubs in this Museum of Wooded Plants. In the summer of that same year the Chicago Zoological Gardens at Brookfield were opened to the public for the first time.

Life in Downers Grove was unique in its special quality despite the problems and frustrations of the baffling economic climate. The column **RANDOM RAMBLINGS AROUND THE GROVE**, which appeared on the front page of the *Reporter* each week, is one of the examples of the relationships enjoyed here in this Village. Written by Walter Staats, it was casual and informal, like a friendly conversation.



## Random Ramblings Around the Grove

We were talking with Tom Wood the other day about various subjects . . . He's the man who raises mink in captivity . . . Also does the work for Dr. A. R. Moore, who started him in the business . . . Tom is an outdoor fan . . . And a real one . . . Likes to hunt and fish . . . Spent several seasons clamming . . . Which means gathering the things from the bottoms of rivers and searching for pearls . . . He found a number of them . . . But made more money from the shell . . . Which is made into buttons and other things . . . If you want an interesting half hour go out and see this mink farm of Dr. Moore's and Tom's . . . You'll see some of the prettiest fur in the world . . . Of course the fur is still walking around . . . But you can get an idea of what it would look

like made up into a coat or a throw . . . There's a great pair . . . Tom and Roy (Dr. Moore) . . . They're both ready to go fishing at any time they can get away . . . And if they can't actually go, they'd just as soon talk about it . . . Or hunting, or talking about the habits of fur-bearing animals . . . And to top it off, Doc. plays a mean game of golf at times . . . Shoots cross-handed and follows through on his shots . . . If you can imagine such a thing . . .

Writing of these things naturally brings to mind others with like propensities . . . There's Elon Staats, for instance . . . Who happens to be our younger brother . . . But this doesn't keep him from trimming us at golf . . . Or anything else he sets his hand to . . . Throws a mean bowling ball . . . Can cast with the best, and actually catch fish . . . Is an accurate shot with rifle, shotgun or revolver . . . Plays tennis, and baseball, swims and dives, rides . . . Can row a boat or paddle a canoe but

prefers to let the old outboard do the heavy work . . . Which is rather a family trait.

And we never think of fishing . . . Or hardly ever . . . That we don't think of Stewart Burns . . . Who doesn't live here now . . . Lives down east, in New Hampshire . . . But what a fishing companion he was . . . Or anywhere else for that matter . . . He'd fish at any time of the day or night . . . And work hard all the time . . . He also was a hunter and a golfer when he lived here . . . And suppose he still is . . . Alexander Bradley Burns post, American Legion, is named for his brother "Alex," . . . Who was the first Downers Grove boy to lose his life in action . . . A wonderful family . . . Mrs. Burns was the first woman ever to serve on the local school board . . . This is "rambling," all right but mostly in the past . . . But we know the old timers, at least, will forgive a few reminiscences . . .

At a Village Council meeting in June of 1934, Benjamin Diener, former Commissioner of Finance, represented the Downers Grove Improvement Club, one of the groups of the unemployed. Unemployment cut through all levels from company presidents, engineers, accountants, and lawyers to stock boys. This group had banded together to work collectively on their problems as unemployed. Diener requested the cooperation of the Council and other organizations in the nationwide movement to have the Federal government finance the unemployed of the nation in prospecting for gold and silver!

After his presentation Diener continued to talk about the situation of the unemployed in Downers Grove. He said that the unemployed people in the Village had been quiet and orderly and wanted to remain so but that they meant to see that their families were clothed and fed and that they were working to find a way to earn better than a mere existence. The unemployed group suggested that the mining of gold would be a way to do this. They felt that the price of gold was so high that the Government could well afford to pay the men to mine the gold and still be able to coin it at a profit.

Diener digressed to say that the members in his group reacted strongly to the new provision of the Council for the feeding of stray dogs. He

asked the Council how they would feel, if they were unemployed, about 50¢ a day being paid to feed stray dogs when unemployed human beings were allowed only one dollar a week for each person in the household and one quarter extra for good measure!

Diener also said that he found himself in a very sad position in talking to his own sons about getting jobs when he himself was unable to get work to provide for his family.

The Councilmen listened soberly to the remarks made by this very competent man. Each of them knew none of them was invulnerable to the same plight.

The Village itself had deep financial problems.

In June of 1934 the Village Council asked the assistance of businessmen of the Village to help work out a budget for 1935 which would reduce the Village's annual expenditure by \$13,000.

Until the closing of the banks in the Village, the Village Government had always been in excellent financial condition. The Village sued the Directors of the Downers Grove State Bank on the basis of the Directors' bonds which had been signed to guarantee the Village deposits in the bank. In November of 1933, the suits were settled out of court for slightly over a total of \$15,000. Had the banks not closed, the Village would not have been in a position where it was forced to issue tax anticipation warrants to meet

expenses.

The Village was in much the same condition as the merchants who had been struggling for the previous three years or more to meet expenses with the severe reduction in their income. The revenue to the Village had dropped sharply. A part of this reduction was due to the residents being unable to pay their taxes. In addition, other sources of revenue had been reduced severely. One of these was the Water Department, which had more than \$6000 in outstanding accounts. The Village vehicle tax, which had netted another approximately \$6000 annually, had been discontinued.

The committees named to work out the solution to the budget problem were:

Finance—Frank Kidwell Commissioner; Edward F.

Lacey, J.F. McAlpine, and F.D. Lindley

Health and Safety—Edward A. Volberding, Commissioner; Albert Ward, Stanley J. Brown, Charles Mochel, and William Finger

Water—Robert Dickson, Commissioner; I.M. Hoagland, George Sweeny, and C.L. Siebert

Streets and Alleys—Carl Staiger, Commissioner; Rev. A.J. Pitman, Chance Hill, and Peter Halkier

The committees set to their task. The committee members were experienced businessmen, and many of them were former members of the Council. The task was formidable, and after careful consideration the committees concluded that Downers Grove would have to operate in the red for a time, as were most other cities and villages in the country.

Survival through these trying years was uppermost in the thoughts of individuals, businesses, and villages! In January of 1935, the relief load reached a peak in the County of DuPage. According to the records, about one out of every seven or eight people in the County was receiving help!

The citizens of Downers Grove worked together and individually to try to meet the unending problems of no jobs and no money. At the end of the year of 1934, Downers Grove started a "Better Housing Campaign" under the aegis of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to encourage people to improve their housing and, at the same time, provide jobs for the unemployed. The campaign was originated in Downers Grove by the Lions Club. Fred H. Neill, President of the Club, was Chairman of the committee, and Charles J. Dunham was the Executive Secretary. Nationally, the Federal

Housing Administration required no collateral, and the loans for housing improvements would be made through local banks and building and loan associations.

Gilbert Mochel and Richard Hawkins chaired the committee to register the men who were available for work. These tradesmen registered at the information booth or with one of the committee members, and there were no restrictions on who could register.

The individuals who then signed up to have work done on their homes could select the tradesmen they needed from a list provided by the committee.

The Mayor issued a proclamation for the Better Housing Program:

### PROCLAMATION

"For those who live in houses, those who repair and construct houses, and those who invest in houses . . .

WHEREAS, there is in progress a National program making it possible for the owner of real property to:

Better the living conditions of his FAMILY

Increase the efficiency of his BUSINESS

Enhance the value of his INVESTMENT

Stimulate the morale of local CREDIT and LABOR

Improve the standards and civic pride of his NEIGHBORHOOD.

NOW, THEREFORE, Be it known that plans have been perfected for launching a BETTER HOUSING PROGRAM in Downers Grove, beginning Friday, December 15, 1934. This date to make the opening of the BETTER HOUSING CAMPAIGN, the purpose of which is to stimulate repairs, alterations, and improvements to houses and business properties.

This worthy and vital movement can and should serve a two-fold purpose, thus being of benefit to the entire community. The property owner benefits because bank credit is made available, the use of which prevents the depreciation of his property, and enhances its value and usefulness. Every property owner who puts men to work and creates a demand for building materials and services will find himself repaid many times in personal as well as community benefits.

Your participation in the BETTER HOUSING PROGRAM means better business, better surroundings, and better living for every citizen of this community. The opportunity and the challenge are yours! I call upon you to act.

(signed)

WALTER C. BARBER,  
Mayor of Downers Grove

A corps of volunteers, most of them members of the Alexander Bradley Burns Post of the

American Legion, made a canvass of every home in the Village to explain the FHA to the house holder and take pledges for work to be done if the resident was willing to participate in the program.

Model housing exhibits were presented during the drive with attendants to explain the various home improvements. In June of 1935, General Electric started construction on a model home in the Lindenwald estate, just west of Brookbank Road on Maple Avenue. This house was one of the houses built in General Electric's national housing campaign. Built for resale by the J.T. Schless Construction Company, it was estimated that the complete house, including lot, landscaping, automatic heat and air conditioning, electric stove, icebox and dishwasher, would sell for under \$15,000.

There is no record of how many homeowners remodeled or updated their homes with the benefit FHA. Whatever the results, the leaders of the Village worked very hard to upgrade the local housing, with the attendant benefit of providing jobs for the jobless.

Some issues in the Village seem changeless. In 1935, the Village Council and the merchants engaged in a controversy concerning the parking problems on Main Street. This controversy centered around whether diagonal parking or parallel parking afforded more parking space and also around the advisability of having a two-hour parking limit.

In the new year came the new model automobiles. Owners of local automobile agencies who were proud of their new cars were Harry Borman with Chrysler and Plymouth; Dick Hawkins, the Nash-Lafayette and Terraplane; "Duke" Schlauder of the Baker Motor Sales with Dodge and Plymouth; Mr. Putnam of Chevrolet Sales; and Ed Volberding with that beautiful new V-8 Ford. It seemed incredible in those moneyless times when Ed Volberding reported that he had sold 25% of his entire 1935 year quota in the first fifteen days of the new year!

Walter Staats reported news of the Pridham boys who had grown up in their home at the corner of Prairie and Prince. Grenville Pridham had started a newspaper in Downers Grove years before and then went on to spend his career in the newspaper business. His brother, Edwin, who lived in Oakland, California in 1935, was the inventor of the first radio loud speaker, the

Magnavox. He also collaborated in the invention and perfection of the public address system.

Dr. James Breasted had come to Downers Grove in 1934 to present his film "The Human Adventure" at the Methodist Church. It was an outstanding privilege to have this eminent archeologist as a guest in the town of his childhood. In January of 1935 Breasted made a gift of copies of all his books to the Downers Grove Library. Before the year was out, Dr. Breasted was dead. The national newspapers carried his obituary on their front pages with bold headlines DR. JAMES BREASTED VICTIM OF EGYPTIAN CURSE. Breasted had been among the first to enter King Tutankhamen's tomb, with the legend of death to any who should enter. Several of the entering party had died, and with each death the old curse was recalled. Dr. Breasted himself had explained that the curse was nonsense. And even if it had been authentic, he would not have been included since his role in the investigation was in no way sacrilegious to the dead Tutankhamen.

Dr. Breasted's loss was felt keenly by the intellectual community as well as by his friends and family. A memorial service was conducted at the University of Chicago Rockefeller Chapel, and over 2,000 people attended! The music for the service was provided by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

In February of 1935 in the primary election for Mayor, Henry Dicke led over Mayor Walter C. Barber, and in the school board election the residents voted overwhelmingly against providing free textbooks in the grade and high schools.

The old State Bank Building at Main and Curtiss was sold at auction in August of 1935 to Justin Dart of Hinsdale for a price of \$24,050. During the 1920's the building had been carried on the books of the bank at a value of over \$80,000.

Rumor had it that Walgreen's Drug Store was looking for a location in Downers Grove, and this corner had been considered one of the best locations on Main Street. The rumors were true, and on March 13 and 14, 1936, Walgreen's Formal Opening was held in the old State Bank Building. The store was one of the largest and finest drug stores in the Chicago suburbs!

As a result of the sale of the bank building, the Downers Grove State Bank paid a third dividend of 5% to its depositors. This windfall came as a

welcome surprise! The deputy receiver of the bank, Al Lytle, personally delivered many of the checks in the business district. Checks not delivered in this way were mailed. This dividend brought the total to 25% paid to the depositors.

There was also a dividend for the depositors of the First National Bank in 1935. This 7% dividend was the fourth paid by Charles Knapp, the receiver of this Bank. The first was 25%, the second 12½%, and the third 7½%, making a total of 52% of the deposits.

Any amount of money was welcome, and the possibility of money in large sums was tempting. It was this allure of the fantastic acquisition of money which thrust the Chain Letter fad upon the entire country. Downers Grove did not escape! Hundreds of local people received chain letters, many from people they had never heard of. The letters seemed to move east from the West Coast. The simple pyramid, which would reward the letter writer with the marvelous sum of \$1,562.50 in the dime letters, required that nobody break the chain!

The scheme worked this way. The letter which was received had six names at the top with addresses. The first thing was to send one dime to the person whose name was at the top of the list. Then the receiver had to write five letters to five other people. The top name was dropped, and the letter writer added his name at the bottom of the list. Presumably this chain continued with the top person receiving the dimes, and new names being added at each step in the mailing, until finally the writer reaped the reward of over \$1500! Though it is possible that some Downers Grove residents reached the pot of gold at the end of the chain, there is no record that anyone did.

But for these few bright spots, the wearisome financial conditions continued. More government alphabet agencies appeared to prop the sagging economy. The first WPA project in the County and second in the entire State was the paving of Highland Avenue. Officials were present from all over the County as well as a delegation from the Downers Grove Lions Club. Fred W. Neill, President of the Club, assisted in the groundbreaking ceremonies, which was the culmination of a long fight of 13 years to provide Downers Grove with a paved highway north to Roosevelt Road. The credit for this accomplishment went to the Lions Club, who year after year had worked to achieve this goal.

G. Orson Downer, the Commissioner of Streets, made application to the Works Progress Administration (WPA) for the re-laying of all brick streets in the Village, and the project was approved. The work started in December of 1935 when 71 men, taken from the relief rolls, began the task of re-laying the brick work on Maple Avenue. The next street to be improved was Main Street all the way through town. The job continued all through the winter except for those days which were colder than 10 degrees above zero or when the snow was too deep.

In addition, the WPA provided other very different services to the community, including a recreation program which was held at the "Community House" as the old Avery Coonley kindergarten building on Grove Street had come to be known.

Further, an excellent history of DuPage County, 1831-1939, was compiled and written in the American Guide Series by workers of the Federal Writers Project of the Works Project Administration. A section of this county history was devoted to the history of Downers Grove as well as general information about the Village.\*

The WPA in conjunction with the local boards of education provided an adult education program. A class in any subject was offered providing ten or more adults signed up. Courses were offered in elementary subjects, naturalization, homemaking, commercial art, typing, shorthand, and many other subjects. The program was designed to provide employment for teachers and to provide educational opportunities for adults.

\*Note: Copies of this County History may be read at the Downers Grove Public Library or Downers Grove Historical Museum.



Mural in local post office. Painted in 1940. Sponsored by government agency, similar to WPA

Another Federal agency, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), provided training and work for young men. The eligibility for enrollment was:

1. The age limit for junior enrollees was from 17 to 23 years inclusive. Applicants had to be unemployed in need of employment.
2. Honorable discharge juniors were eligible for re-selection after a period of six months following the date of their discharge.
3. Applicants with dependents had to make allotments to their families. Applicants without dependents were permitted to establish deposits with the U.S. Army Finance Officer. Priority in selection was given applicants with dependents eligible to receive allotments.

Downers Grove as a community endeavored to meet the needs of relief and welfare work in the community.

“On the principle that relief and welfare work done in this community can best be conducted with individuals, organizations and agencies in the community, there was established after five months of careful study and planning a Downers Grove Community Service.”

Its work was defined as a supplement to Emergency Relief and the activities of other groups engaged in welfare work and was not intended to interfere in any way with the other organizations.

There was an increasing feeling that Federal control of work project and emergency relief funds was not the answer, and public opinion was growing that funds could be better administered at the State level and that communities could provide self-help. It was in this vein that the Community Service was organized, and the community was canvassed for contributions to this work.

Grant Dicke opened an Oldsmobile Sales and Service Agency in Downers Grove in 1935. Dicke was one of the oldest automobile garage men of the Village; he had started as a mechanic in the rear of his father's tool factory years before.

That same year Adolph Heinze of 4816 Main Street was one of six artists to exhibit his work at the Chicago Galleries on North Michigan Ave-



Grant Dicke

nue. Mr. Heinze was well-known for his paintings of Glacier National Park.

The following year the Village installed a “trickler” in the water meters of delinquent customers. These devices allowed only a very small amount of water to trickle through the pipes, barely enough for sanitary needs. Delinquent customers were forewarned that this device would be installed and given an opportunity to pay their bills. Al Modjeska reported that more than \$1700 in delinquent bills was collected as a result of this warning.

Another matter which came before the Village was the safety of villagers at the railroad crossings. Mayor Henry C. Dicke reported that an agreement had been reached with the Burlington Railroad to have a flagman on duty at the Fairview Avenue crossing from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. daily, for the protection of school children who crossed the tracks as well as for the automobile traffic. At the Main Street crossing the gates and wigwag signal were to be in operation 24 hours a day. Prior to this, the gates at Main Street were in operation only from midnight to 6:00 A.M. with a flagman on duty the other hours. In addition, a flagman was stationed at Washington Street crossing from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. as well as the wigwag, but after 7:00 P.M. the crossing was blocked and closed to all traffic.

In 1936 the housewives of Downers Grove could buy a beef pot roast for 21¢ a lb. and round or Swiss steak for 29¢ a lb. If you liked bacon with your liver, you could buy 1 lb. of beef liver with a ½ lb. of Armour's Star sliced bacon, both

for 47¢. Beef short ribs were only 15¢ a lb., veal shoulder steak was 23¢, and summer sausage was 29¢ a lb.



Fairview railroad crossing and depot — 1939



Main Street crossing in 1930's looking South



Both depots looking West at Main Street crossing

Federal programs were still helping the Village. The PWA approved a grant of \$26,818 to build a new water tower to replace the old one, which had been in use for 40 years and was in poor condition. The estimated cost of the entire work was \$51,500. The Federal Government furnished more than half the cost from the new

“pump priming” bills which had been passed by the previous Congress. Appropriate use of a pump priming bill!

The Board of Education of District 99 announced that it had made application for a PWA grant for building a gymnasium addition and reported that the program involved a building cost of approximately \$120,000. Though the building had to be approved by the people in the



Old and new water towers side by side — old tower erected in 1894, new tower erected in 1938



Grant Nash Grocery Store

school district, there would be no issuance of bonds nor any increase in the tax rate. The district's share was \$66,000, while the Government's share was \$54,000 or 45% of the total cost, an outright gift of the United States Government.

The residents of the Grove were delighted with the new Woolworth Store on Main Street. It was estimated that over 5,000 people visited the store at the opening. At the end of the day the sales clerks were so tired that they did not even check up their sales for the day!

Mrs. Albert Simon, President of the Board of the Downers Grove Public Library, announced that the downstairs room was to become the Children's Library, and Miss Frieda Rawcliffe (later Humphris) would be the Children's Librarian. This had been a hope of the Library Board members for many years, and all the friends of the Library were pleased when the Children's Room became a reality.

A less erudite pursuit in the Village were the dances at Frenchy's Tavern at 61st and Dunham Road. Frenchy's Tavern was operated by Casimir Sigalkowski, who with his beret and goatee was called "Frenchy." His Saturday night dances, with admission 25¢ for gentlemen and ladies free, attracted patrons from all over town.

Many of the villagers were tuning in on radio station WGN at 2:45 P.M. on Friday afternoons to hear Robert Thompson of 4525 Highland Avenue in a series of educational programs. Thompson played the part of a dentist in a series written by Dr. Wallace Kirby, local dentist, and sponsored by the Chicago Dental Society. Bob Thompson, who had recently graduated from the Goodman Theatre Dramatic School, had been in

a number of radio shows on several Chicago stations.

The big news for the residents of Downers Grove in 1938 was the sale of the First National Bank Building to Ed Volberding and the organization of a new community bank after seven long years without a bank in the Village!

Application was made to the Illinois Banking Department in June of 1938 for a permit to organize a state bank in Downers Grove. In the forefront of the organization plan was a committee of the Retail Merchants Association, William Lehmann, Henry Besser, and John Mochel along with Charles J. Dunham, President of the Lions Club.

Ed Volberding of Downers Grove Motor Sales bought the First National Bank Building along with most of the equipment of the old bank with the idea of holding it for the new state bank. For a short time the sale to Volberding was in jeopardy when one of the unsuccessful bidders, a man from Riverside, went to court to obtain a stay in the sale so that he could enter a higher bid. After a continuance and weeks of great anxiety for the future of the new bank, which would have been bleak without the bank building, the purchase of the building by Ed Volberding was approved in Judge Woodward's Federal Court in Chicago. The old bank building had cosmetic surgery in the form of a sand blast job, which erased the grime of the years. The freshly-cleaned stone and brick were painted, and the interior was refurbished. The old building then looked brand new!

An active stock-selling campaign was initiated to seek many share-holders for this state bank. William P. Lehmann, Chairman, said that the committee in charge of the organization of the Citizens' State Bank was seeking Downers Grove homeowners to buy one or two shares of stock. It was the intention of the committee to stage a stock-selling campaign among the small investors in the community. Henry Besser, speaking for the Retail Merchants committee, said, "We are confident, after talking with many people who understand modern banking, that a bank here would be very successful from the day it opened its doors."

On September 14, 1940, after years of planning and organizing, the Citizens National Bank of Downers Grove opened its doors in a blaze of



Robert Thompson, actor and Margaret Porter Thompson, violinist

glory, with flags flying and bombs bursting! Hundreds of people stood in line to make deposits. Six hundred and eleven customers opened accounts totalling \$100,000!

The year 1940 was a year of transition and change from the painful economic woes to a country gearing up for war. The *Reporter* headlines of 1940 tell the story of the Village community events which highlighted the year.

### January 4th

1940 welcomed by local people with noise and parties; Downers Grove given first chance to acquire Newberry's "Lincoln" series of paintings. The J.P. MacDonalds hold pleasant "Open House" on Christmas.

### January 11th

Retail Merchants Association elects and installs new officers. (County) Treasurer Youngberg says delinquent personal property taxpayers will be sued. Below zero and snow follow New Year's. First 1940 baby a daughter, arrives at home of Mr. and Mrs. J. William Hermann. J.M. Schmidt retires from Daily News after 46 years of newspaper work. Trojan cagers beat Mooseheart in two close games.

### January 18th

Wrecking former Avery Coonley kindergarten building on Grove Street. Seek WPA approval for park, playground project here. Village closes six streets for protection of children coasters.

### January 25th

Many engagements of local young couples announced. Slippery streets cause many accidents. F.B.I. starts school at Wheaton for police of county.

### February 1st

Downers Grove tax rate drops 8 cents. Council decides to keep liquor law as is.

### February 8th

Programs for Boy Scout Week include many activities. Tivoli Theatre installs new projection and sound equipment.

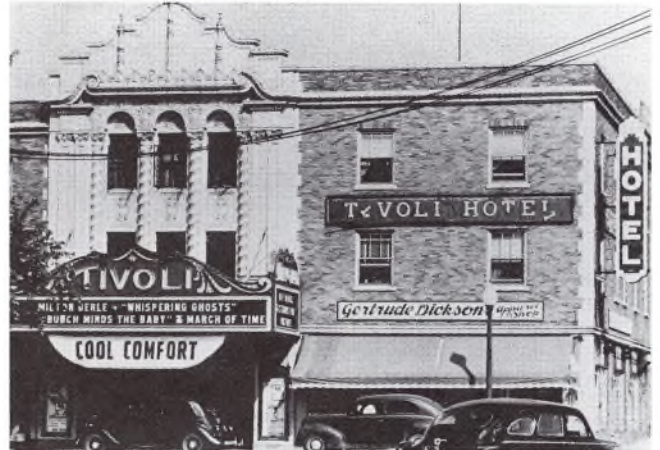
### February 15th

Merchants feature special bargains for Dollar Days. Enjoy one-act play at meeting of Woman's Club. School bands give second concert of season.

### February 22nd

Opposition for only two offices in Dupage County

primary election. Ice disappears from streets for two days, then comes back. H.S. P.T.A. thanks those who assisted in tuberculin testing at H.S. Youngberg, County treasurer, says people cooperate on delinquent tax collecting drive. Dr. A.R. Moore moves dental office to old P.O. building. Little Theatre's first play of season a success. Miss Pollack and Mrs. Paine talk at Business and Professional Woman's Club.



Tivoli Theatre and Hotel

### February 29th

Annual Lion Minstrel Show opens at H.S. Propose vehicle tax here as economic cure. Candidates for school boards file petitions. New H.S. cafeteria used for first time Thursday. Old girls and boys locker rooms are remodeled into modern eating place.

### March 7th

Residents of flooded areas of village storm Council meeting. March comes in like a lion as thunder rolls. Girl Scouting grows 300 per cent in village in past year. Lion Minstrel Show makes hit. Newberry "Lincoln" paintings presented to schools.

### March 14th

\* Harry Borman buys old Main Street eyesore next to garage and tears it down. Sterling North, literary critic and author of Downers Grove, talks at Woman's Club.

### March 21st

Local churches prepare programs for Good Friday and Easter. Lions enjoy trip on new Zephyr to LaCrosse, Wis. Many watch installation of new bowling alleys here. First nice Sunday of year finds highways crowded with automobilists.

### March 28th

Local taxing bodies again combine in effort to collect delinquent taxes. "Spring" weather keeps householders busy shoveling coal.



### April 4th

Council borrows from special assessment fund to pay village debts. Real spring weather arrives to delight everyone. Western Electric bowling league, Bill Gaertner shoots 703, year's high series.

### April 11th

Carrier boys now distributing the *Reporter* assuring early delivery of the paper. Announce interesting program for Youth Week in village sponsored by American Legion. Terry Westhafer makes honorary society at U. of I. Indian exhibit attracts attention at Children's Library. Local engineers and wives have dinner at White Fence Farm. Red Cross unit exhibits work done in Grove.

### April 18th

Light vote cast at annual school elections; no opposition. Grade school band again wins first division recognition in state contest.

### April 25th

Fine six for starting prairie fires without permission from Fire Department. Eastern Star chapter observes Friends Night. Christy moves barber shop across street. High school band wins honors at state contest. Mrs. Helen Case elected President, Business and Professional Woman's Club.

### May 2nd

Engineer Nagel reports to Council on storm water sewer problem. Threaten D.G. milk wagon drivers in union controversy. Announce names of National Honor Society at H.S.

### May 9th

Real estate men look for building and selling boom. Lions name July 4th parade committee. Many participate in Youth Week parade as thousands watch.

### May 16th

Road builder tells Lions present highways are obsolete. Expect government approval for park WPA project here. Cloverleaf Dairy starts series of ads in *Reporter*. Many visit Hinsdale Sanitarium on Hospital Day originated by the late Matt Foley of Downers Grove. Mrs. Emerson Pugh named to head League of Women Voters.

### May 23rd

H.S. band wins national championship honors at regional contest. Christian Science Church here was dedicated. Elmer Dicke, local paid fireman, has big part in state fire school.

### May 30th

Four-day spring ends with chilly weather. 280 seniors, record class, receive D.G.H.S. diplomas while 169 leave the Junior High in graduating exercises.

### June 6th

Avery Coonley School to graduate class of 19. St. Joseph's School graduating class numbers 34. Many building permits issued here during May.

### June 13th

Council budgets 1940-41 income. L.A. Doty elected as President of Lions Club. Legion Post's committee busy with July 4th carnival plans. Hold memorial services for



Art Chester (1899-1948), brother to Conrad Chester, an early racing pilot



Corner of Fairview and Maple Avenue

Miss Lucia B. Morse, Director of Avery Coonley School. Influence on Village told by Mrs. Minnie Prince. Lane Newberry, local artist, has exhibit of work in New Jersey. Mrs. Lottie Holman O'Neill, local legislator, reports on special session.

### **June 20th**

*Reporter* delivery boys in contest for cash prizes. New lights installed at Roosevelt Highland highway intersection. Safety Council asks for cooperation over the Fourth. Women of Moose install officers.

### **June 27th**

Raise appropriation ordinance, postpone final election. Legion announces opening of annual carnival on July 3. Summer ushered in with heat wave of 45 degrees. L.A. Doty installed as President of Lions Club. Fire near Belmont Road causes traffic jam.

### **July 4th**

Council passes appropriation ordinance of \$138,489. Thomas Trayer wins *Reporter's* contest for delivery boys, turns in 44 new subscriptions. Big parade to be staged as opening of local celebration of the Fourth. High school band members do well in solo contests. Soap box derby to be run today.

### **July 11th**

Preliminary census figures for Grove set at 9470. McGraw brothers sweep soap box derby on July 4th. Lions Club reports on Fourth parade prize winners, biggest in history of Village. Perfect weather and big attendance make annual Legion carnival best ever. Congregational and Methodist churches to hold joint morning services during summer months. Western Electric workers leaving for vacations as plant has annual summer shutdown.

### **July 18th**

Village makes plans for elimination of noxious weeds. Depot park improvements are progressing. Twelve local boys travel to Glen Ellyn for soap box derby.

### **July 25th**

Hottest days come in first heat wave of summer. Insure removal of old freight depot at Council meeting. New community flagpole towers 60 feet into air. Local Baptists attend summer assembly at Williams Bay, Wis.

### **August 1st**

Wells Engineering Co. of Geneva authorized by Council to furnish plans for park work here. Community band planning summer and fall concerts. George McGraw and Dale King win county soap box derby races at Glen Ellyn. Police Department pops with all kinds of action. Water pumping stations here report all-time high gallonage furnished residents.

### **August 8th**

Volunteer firemen and families hold picnic. First real rain in weeks falls, reviving gardens and lawns. Water pipe bursts in DuPage building, flooding basement.

### **August 15th**

Community band in first concert tonight. Meet Aug. 30 to name first directors of new Citizens State Bank here. Council passes ordinance for sale of water to out-of-town people. First National Bank pays final dividend. Garden Club head says D.G. official flower is the petunia, ends controversy.

### **August 22nd**

Many from D.G. among 600 people who attend Willkie notification ceremonies at Elwood, Ind. last Saturday. Council seeks estimates on widening Main Street between Stephens Building and Chicago Avenue. Geo. E. DeWolf, Superintendent, issues instructions for opening of public schools. Marc Ogden and John Bolton home from pioneer cycling youth hostel trip.

### **August 29th**

Bank stock subscribers meet to elect directors and officers.

### **September 5th**

R.C. Brogmus of DeKalb named as cashier of new Citizens State Bank; opening set for Sept. 14. Police issue many parking violation tickets in business district. Grade school enrollment rises, H.S. drops slightly as schools open. Warren Wood, Representative in legislature, speaker at annual welcoming luncheon of Lions Club for public school teachers.

### **September 12th**

Patriotic societies dedicate new flagpole. Enrollment of public schools rises during first week of school. Frank Greenburg buys and remodels store on Fairview Avenue for news agency. Many attend Matrons and Patrons Night of Eastern Star here.

### **September 19th**

Flags flying and bombs bursting signal opening of Citizens State Bank. Crowds stand in line at opening to make deposits. Police solve three burglaries here. Classes start at Avery Coonley School with 20 on faculty. The Rev. A.J. Pitman is Constitution Day speaker at Lions Club. Women of Methodist Church perfect new organization. Safety Council again sponsors safety poster contest in schools. First issue of "High Life" for new year is published.

## September 26th

News agency carriers have great time at annual picnic. Local P.T.A.'s open season. Officers of the American Legion post and Auxiliary unit are installed. Fourth Division of D.A.R. meets in Downers Grove; many prominent women attend. *Reporter* issues annual directory of college and university students; record number attend college.

## October 3rd

Village to tear down old freight depot with relief village labor. Lions hear cashier of new Citizens State Bank. Killing frost comes early. List of delinquent real estate for township published in *Reporter*. League of Women Voters opens 19th year.

## October 10th

Many visit the *Reporter* office at "Open House." County Clerk issues information for registration of voters. Willkie Club opens headquarters here. Open House at H.S. arranged by P.T.A. is great success, attracts many visitors. Infantile paralysis case at Westmont causes furor. Local people contribute to British War Relief.

## October 15th

*Reporter* issues free special edition to give information for the registration of all eligibles for the new draft army. Details were not released until after previous paper had been issued. DuPage County school teachers to act as registrants for those from 21 to 36. Superintendents of schools in charge of the registration.

## October 17th

Tom Verdenius of Portland, Ore., former local resident, thrills Lions with Americanism talk. Two Downers Grove men, Newell Fishel and B.F. Nesbit, named on draft board for township. Many local couples are married. Men of draft age register in local schools. Schools in DuPage subdivisions faced with crowded conditions. Registrations indicate record vote in November. Second session of *Reporter's* annual cooking school held at Tivoli Theatre.

## October 24th

No conscientious objectors found as young men register here for draft. Break ground for WPA park here. People may burn leaves in gutters by consent of Fire Chief.

## October 31st

*Reporter* publishes draft numbers of all local and Westmont registrants. Few local numbers drawn in first hundreds. Routine business transacted by Village Council. Lottie Holman O'Neill talks at meeting of

business women. Beautiful new bowling alleys are installed in the basement of the Tivoli building.

## November 7th

Roosevelt re-elected as DuPage County casts biggest Republican vote in history. All GOP candidates elected in Illinois but one.

## November 14th

Trojan heavies beat Maine 39 to 6 in season's last game and win West Suburban Conference championship for first time in history; go through season undefeated; students, fans, and players stage impromptu parade after game. Gale does much damage here Nov. 11; wind reaches velocity of better than 75 miles an hour, blows in first snow and winter from west. Many attend 1940 Guest Night of Woman's Club. Congressman Reed is speaker as Lions entertain Legion members in annual Armistice Day luncheon.

## December 12th

Lions present new ambulance to Village; presentation made by Henry Larsen, Vice-President, at Council meeting. Police close five streets for coasting. George Bunge named as part-time State's Attorney.

## December 19th

Hundreds inspect ambulance given Village by Lions Club as it is displayed on Main Street. Members of Club on duty all day explain and show new equipment. Council considers bid of \$75,000 for special assessment bond issue. Traditional Yule music program to be presented at high school. Garden Club's winter flower show a great success; many exhibit.

## December 26th

*Reporter* presents annual Christmas messages of local ministers. Pastors write sermons which are worthy of being saved for re-reading. Lions invite people of community to sing Christmas carols on Christmas Eve. Impressive ritual at installation of Masonic officers at public ceremony. Supervisors discuss second annex to County Courthouse; decide money is lacking; old and new buildings are crowded. Christmas greetings extended by local business and professional men and women to community through medium of the *Reporter*. And that's that for 1940. 52 regular and one special issue of the *Reporter*.

For the first time in the history of the United States a President was elected for a third term! And shortly before that election the first peacetime military draft in this country's history began on October 29, 1940.

All the precincts in Downers Grove were canvassed house to house by the workers for

Wendell Willkie to attempt to reach every voter before the election on November 5. Frank Murphy, the President of the Willkie Club, said,

“Although this is a very strong Republican community, it is absolutely essential to bring out every vote in town to counter the heavy machine vote of Cook County. Every American citizen who believes in the principles of freedom and independence must do his duty as a citizen.”

A full-page ad in the *Reporter* shouted,

## WAKE UP AMERICANS

Save America!!

The Time to Hesitate and Doubt is Past  
After November 5th it May be too Late.

Stop the Third Term.

Because it opens the door to Dictatorship and  
violates safeguards recommended by Washington,  
Jefferson, Jackson and Cleveland.

Stop the Third Term.

End poverty and want in America by JOBLESS  
millions who have been idle for over seven years.

Stop the Third Term.

Save America from War. Elect a man who will keep  
America's men at HOME.

Downers Grove did not elect Franklin D. Roosevelt for the tradition-shattering third term, but the country did. Franklin Delano Roosevelt won 54 per cent of the popular vote.

Clark Fishel, a Downers Grove boy who was a journalism student at the University of Illinois, sent to the Downers Grove *Reporter* his coverage of the third inauguration ceremonies of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President.

The January day was cold but sunny. President Roosevelt had originally planned to drive in a closed car but changed his plans with the beautiful weather. “Wearing his personable, infectious smile, he waved his hat continually to crowds lining the way to and from the ceremonies.”

Fishel reported that the 12-minute speech mustering the spirit of the people to the maintenance of democracy and America from disruption from without was broadcast in six languages. “The President seemed especially concerned with impressing . . . the people (of the country) with the peril of inaction.” The appearance of the many military uniforms on the

platform was perhaps a forewarning of the future. Roosevelt was escorted to the rostrum by his son James, arrayed in the full-dress captain's uniform of the Marine Corps. The members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, almost without exception, were dressed in formal morning attire; however, most of the members of the Diplomatic Corps were in military full dress and sat immediately behind the President during the ceremony.

The economic climate of the country began to shift. Almost imperceptibly at first, with more and more armament contracts unemployment began to diminish, and money started to flow.

In Downers Grove there was cautious optimism. It was obvious that private business in the Village would benefit from the vast program of government spending, and with the young men being drafted into the Army there were more jobs for the older men.

Training programs were offered to prepare employees to work in the defense plants. The Illinois Institute of Technology offered tuition-free, college-level evening classes as a part of a nationwide engineering defense training program sponsored by the United States Office of Education. Among the courses offered were: design of tools and testing equipment, welding engineering, testing and inspection of concrete, design of bombproof shelters, diesel engines, production and planning, industrial management, and metallurgy.

Though the beginnings of prosperity were welcome, there was an undercurrent of anxiety about the base of the prosperity. The future was unfolding all too clearly, but no one wanted to read the future. If there were to be a sudden peace in the world, there would be nothing to stand in the way of a return to hard times . . . and yet, what would be the price of continuing hostilities?

The President of the National Association of Manufacturers spoke to a group of manufacturers in New York City with his analysis of the defense situation. His speech ended,

“American industry has repeatedly pledged its wholehearted support to the defense program. It has moved to meet all the demands which have been made by the government . . . Much as they abhor war, American manufacturers will take full part under any and every circumstance.”

Draft registration had begun in Downers

Grove on October 16, 1940, and the young men were drafted for a year's service in the peacetime army. The registration was held at the schools with the teachers serving as registrars. Shortly after the first of the year in 1941, the first men from this draft district were inducted. On a cold Tuesday morning in January, the first fifteen men left here for their army service. At the depot to see them off were the members of the Selective Service Board, families of the boys, and the American Legion represented by Harvey Littleford and John Mochel, and Mrs. Mabel Webster, Mrs. Vera Iehl, and Mrs. Jerusha Gwinn of the Legion Auxiliary.

The year 1941 rolled on. The American Legion canvassed the Village as a part of the National Defense Program to catalog all ex-service men for possible civilian service in a national emergency. Other than this canvass and the induction of the draftees, Village affairs went on much as usual.

Howard Pippenger, owner and manager of the Fairview Pharmacy, was elected President of the Retail Merchants Association, and the group set February 20 as the semi-annual Dollar Day. Prices stayed much the same. In May of 1941, one could still buy chuck roast for 17¢ a lb., pork loin roast for 16¢ a lb., picnic hams at 17¢ a lb.; and 25¢ a lb. for fresh-dressed spring broilers, 3 loaves of A&P bread for 25¢, and a Holland-style coffee cake at 18¢ each!

A study was released by the Illinois Education Association in 1941 which reported that 2% of the public school teachers of DuPage County were receiving less than \$100 per month. In the study DuPage County was cited as having one teacher receiving below \$700 per year, and no teachers with less than two years of college training.



Howard and Gladys Pippenger

In October of that year Gustav Bunge, dean of the DuPage County Bar, died as the result of auto accident injuries. Mr. Bunge had come to Downers Grove in 1891 and served here as station agent for the CB&Q until the year 1899, during which time he had studied law at night school. He was admitted to practice law in Illinois on April 6, 1899, formed a law partnership and practiced in Chicago until 1925. After 1925 he devoted his entire time to his law practice in Downers Grove.

Bunge was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Village for two terms and also served for one term on the Board of Education. For many years he served the Village of Downers Grove as its Attorney. He organized the Downers Grove Sanitary District and was its Attorney until 1927. Bunge was active in many businesses, was President of the Downers Grove Building and Loan Association; and he also built the Tivoli Theatre and Hotel Building.

The Village was pleased to welcome the Rite-Rite Company, a manufacturer of mechanical pens and pencils, which planned to move its plant and office from Chicago to Downers Grove. Their building was to be located on Rogers Street. The Company planned to employ between 100 and 115 people in the office and the factory, 85 of whom would be women assembling the Company's product.

The local Draft Board, consisting of Newell Fishel, Chairman; Bernie Nesbit, Secretary, both of Downers Grove; and R.B. Thomason of Hinsdale, continued its work through the year, meeting in the Board's office in the Kandy Kitchen building.

The year or so of gearing up for military production, the subtle shift from the unemployment of the Depression to steadily-increasing employment and training opportunities, the unreal awareness of young men marching off in a peacetime draft suddenly culminated in the cruel reality of war!

At 7:50 A.M. on the 7th of December, 1941, came the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by 360 carrier-based Japanese planes, sinking the battleships USS ARIZONA, OKLAHOMA, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA, AND WEST VIRGINIA, damaging three other battleships, three cruisers, and three destroyers, destroying 200 U.S. planes, and killing 2,344 men! The

American public was told only that the USS Arizona had been sunk and the USS Oklahoma capsized.

The attack on Pearl Harbor had come without declaration of war. In an address to the Congress on December 8th, President Roosevelt named December the 7th as "a date that will live in infamy!" The Congress voted for a Declaration of War on Japan, with the Senate vote 82 to 0 and the House vote 388 to 1. The sole dissenting vote was that of Congresswoman Jeanette Rankin, who had also voted against the Declaration of War in 1917. At 4:10 P.M. on December 8, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Declaration of War.

On December 11 Germany declared war on the United States, with Italy following. The United States then declared war on Germany and Italy.

The pain of this war, the second world war, came swiftly to Downers Grove, with the word that D.G. Marine Bernard A. Weier had lost his life on the USS Arizona in the surprise Japanese bombing on December 7th at Pearl Harbor! The people of the Village were stunned as the sad news spread "like wildfire" through the community.

The Downers Grove Reporter of December 11, 1941, carried a front-page editorial entitled "The UNITED States," which reflected the sentiments of the community.

### EDITORIAL

#### The UNITED States

News that Japan had bombed United States army and navy airfields in the Hawaiian Islands blasted out of American radios on Sunday, interrupting accounts of football games, broadcasts of dinner concerts, of quiz programs and other entertainments. This news also blasted the American people into a determination to avenge the deaths of service men and civilians caused in this undeclared war.

If we are any judges of the American character the manner in which Japan started hostilities, without warning and while representatives of the government were conferring with Secretary of State Hull, it means that we are again the UNITED States of America, standing shoulder to shoulder against a common foe.

If Japan had tried she could have chosen no better, or more effective method of solidifying American public opinion against her than of bombing helpless soldiers, sailors and civilians, without warning. By no other means could she have united all factions of this great country into a determination to fight this war

to a finish and a finish which means the fall of Japan as one of the world's great powers. For once aroused the people of this country will devote every resource, and our resources are many to gain what we believe are the right objectives.

Had the war come through the breaking off of negotiations . . . and then a war declaration, we doubt if public opinion in this country would be as strong for all-out battle. Coming as it has we have no doubt of the ultimate result."



Marine Bernard A. Weier, killed at Pearl Harbor

On December 9th, Mayor Carlyle Stair presided at the organization of the Downers Grove Civilian Defense Council in the Village Council chambers. The Council was set up with the following committees, but with the expectation that every man, woman, and child in the community would be drafted to work in some phase of the civilian defense program. The following committee chairmen were named:

- Chairman: Mayor C.B. Stair
- Vice-Chairman: Tom Arndt
- Coordinator: Robert Beak
- Secretary-Treasurer: Elmer G. Geissert
- Civilian Protection: Ivan Webster
- Cooperation between Civic and Independent Groups: W.H. Staats
- Labor Coordinator: G.W. McCollum

Finance and Auditing: Edward Narramore  
 Legislation and Legal Rights: C.E. Hacklander  
 National Defense Bonds: B.L. Kellogg  
 Publicity: Fred Ebersold  
 Agriculture: Walter Otto  
 Public Health: Gilbert Mochel  
 Women's Work: Mrs. Robert Kendall



Stair Park which was on the South side of Burlington at present 1029 Burlington (next to the alley) named for Mayor Carlyle B. Stair



Red Cross Canteen — 1944  
 Dorothy Bellows; Jane Morton; Gwen Vaughan; and Irene Cooke.

The Red Cross called for additional workers, and the Lions Club made the first Red Cross war donation of \$25. Air raid wardens were named by the Defense Council. The first home nursing classes were so over-crowded not all the women who registered were able to get into the first classes, and additional classes were formed.

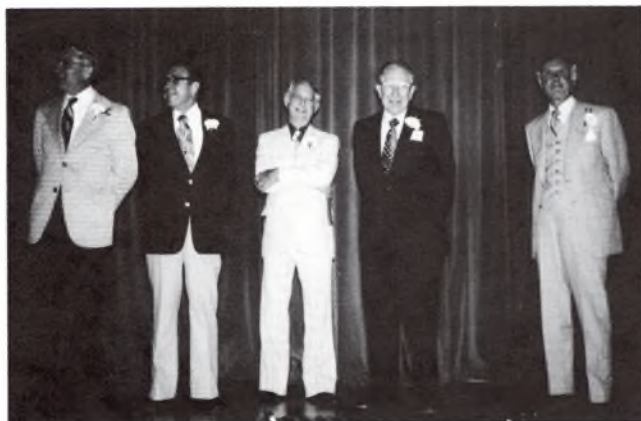
The Village Council passed an ordinance "authorizing blackouts and air raid protection orders" of the same type as was being used in other parts of the country for civilian protection. The third draft registration was held in Downers Grove Township on February 16, 1942, at desig-

nated registration places, which included the local schools, Village Hall, and Selective Service headquarters. There were 2,102 men between the ages of 20 and 44 who registered. From the previous registrations there were 2,785 men already on the books. The schools were closed for the day, and the teachers acted as registrars in their buildings.

The high school continued to educate the young people of the Village, with their activities shadowed by the ghastly realities of war. The teachers of the high school for the year 1942-43 were:

George E. DeWolf .....	Supt. of Schools
Clarence W. Johnson .....	Principal, Dean of Boys
Mrs. Charlotte Andersen ..	Asst. Principal, Dean of Girls
Ralph H. Abbas .....	Spanish, History
Elsie E. Adams .....	Orchestra
Herbert Adams .....	World History, Athletics
Mildred Bales .....	History, Civics
Orman R. Barkdoll .....	Mathematics, Athletics
Hester Barry .....	Latin
Thomas Batell .....	English
Myna Beck .....	Nurse
Pearl Blackwell .....	English
Helen G. Brown .....	English
William R. Cleveland .....	Drawing, Industrial Arts, Visual Education
Ralph Cressey .....	Mathematics, Athletics
Fred C. Daigh .....	Biology
Velma Dickson .....	Art
Margaret Fluent .....	Girls' Physical Education
Corinna Fronk .....	History
Nellie Ann Frush .....	Commercial
Wayne T. Guthrie .....	Chemistry, General Science
Grace M. Hennis .....	English
Everett E. Holt .....	General Science, Biology
R. Blanche Howland .....	French, Spanish
Donovan Ingles .....	Printing, General Shop
Lettie Judkins .....	Commercial
Orville Krughoff .....	Boys' Physical Education, Athletics
Delmer Kimberling .....	Science
Kenneth Lage .....	Woodwork
Dorothy Lee .....	English
Clark Mahr .....	Commercial
Argent Marks .....	Home Economics
Celia Natzke .....	Librarian
Edward L. Paine .....	Mathematics
William G. Pohlmann .....	Vocal Music
Marguerite Poole .....	English
Ivan L. Rehn .....	Sociology, Debate, Algebra
Katharine Reuter .....	American History
J. Frank Riddlesberger .....	Industrial Arts
Esther Rygg .....	Commercial
C.J. Shoemaker .....	Band
Julian Taylo .....	Mathematics

Harry Trygg.....English  
 Vivian C. Vifquain.....Home Economics  
 Earl C. Wolfe.....Physics  
 Catherine Wood.....Speech



Honoring those who are retiring — Wayne Guthrie; Herb Adams; Ken Lage; Edward Paine; and Donovan Ingles

In March an enthusiastic defense rally was held at the high school to a standing room only crowd! And again the residents of Downers Grove were united in an all-out war effort, which recalled the days of World War I when Downers Grove was one of the most committed communities of the State.

Throughout the long dark war years, the total commitment of the Village was toward the war effort. Victory gardens, air raid wardens, gas defense classes for the air raid wardens, a victory center on Curtiss to provide information to the women of the Village on meal planning and conservation of resources, and scrap drives filled the time and energy of the residents of Downers Grove.

The Downers Grove Artists Guild had been organized in September of 1941, with Lane Newberry, President; Edward Leverens, Vice President; and Mrs. Minnie Prince, Secretary. "It was agreed among the members that the main aims of the Guild would be to create, to educate and to maintain an interest in art among the citizens of Downers Grove." The Guild planned a formal showing of the work of its members in the Public Library in the spring of 1942. The first annual exhibition of the Artists' Guild opened on May 3 at the Library. It was a welcome display of beauty and art in the dismal world of war.

The young men of the Village continued to leave for army duty, sent off with flair and fanfare. The Chicago *Daily News* had a feature

story on May 8, 1942, on the honor paid the young selectees by the Village of Downers Grove, saying, "That's the way every town and community in this man's country should send its men to war." This farewell was under the joint auspices of the Lions Club and the American Legion Post. Led by the American Legion colors and guard, the high school band played stirring music as the men marched to the depot where they boarded an early train for the induction center in Chicago.

The home folks learned to accommodate their lives to sugar rationing, coffee rationing, food rationing, fuel oil rationing, tire rationing, and car rationing. The government levied ceiling prices on groceries and rents. Landlords had to register their buildings, and the rent charged was controlled.

The sacrifices of the folks at home were as nothing to those of the young men whose lives were on the battleline. A letter from First Lieutenant Jack Lyon of the Marine Corps received by the Editor was printed on the front page of the *Downers Grove Reporter*.

June 7, 1942

Editor, Reporter:

Yesterday was a happy one for my outfit as our mail finally caught up with us . . .

In my mail I had eleven copies of the Reporter, which again gave me news about my old home town. Some of the news was good, and then again some bad, especially when I read of Lt. Harold "Rat" Fraser's death in England. He and I played three years of basketball together and from it came a good friendship. War plays no favorites and gives no warning when death strikes . . . sometimes you can't sanely reason why some go into the blue and others are left to bear the pain of friendship.

From your paper I gather views which add to facts I face every day and I know that the people of Downers Grove are doing their part. But there is one thing some people can't seem to realize. Just buying defense bonds won't do the trick. Our nation has money but you can't throw dollar bills at a Jap plane and expect to see him go down in flames. You need material and man power in great quantities to win."

At home people can feel certain pangs of the war but none of them have to duck into a fox hole while bombs scream near you. You go to bed completely exhausted mentally and physically, not knowing what the next day will bring and you don't much care because you are too tired.

People who have never faced the music of a war can't honestly appreciate the beautiful country they live in."

Jack Lyon, a Marine Corps pursuit pilot, lost his life when his plane went down "somewhere in



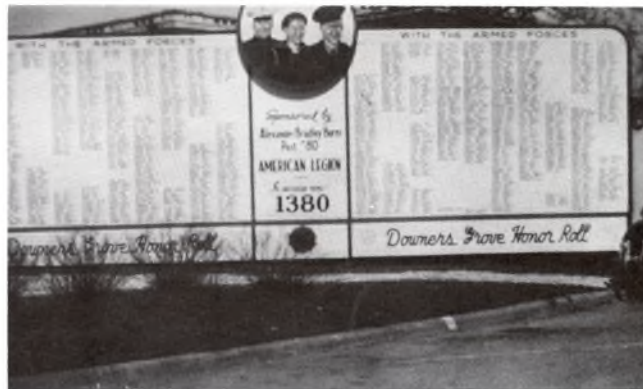
the South Pacific” just a little over a month after he wrote this letter.

The toll in the loss of life of the young men from Downers Grove was tragic. A plaque hanging in the American Legion Hall lists the names of these men:

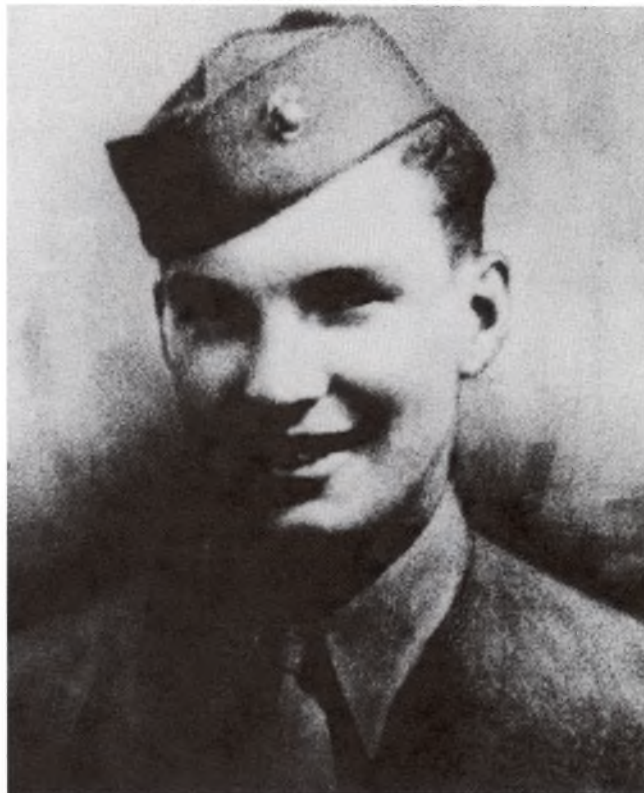
### IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE IN WORLD WAR II

Harold Andres  
Harry Beggs  
Edward A. Bruce  
Clifford Campbell  
Carl W. Eichorst  
James Forst  
Harold Frazer  
Elmer E. Fox  
Raymond E. Gansborg  
Allan A. Gregory  
Richard Grotefeld  
Arthur Haase  
Justin Hamilton  
John A. Harkness  
Richard S. Henderson  
Burton C. Huntly  
Arthur L. Johnson  
Joseph P. Johnson  
Robert L. Jones  
John W. Lesniak  
Frederick F. Lester  
Jack Lyons  
Edward D. Lloyd  
Theodore L. Malacha  
Richard W. Mansfield  
Stewart A. Millsap, Jr.  
Vincent Mondello  
Kenneth Pearson  
Donald Reed  
Russell Reid  
Richard Roit  
Edward W. Ruff  
Francis W. Schrank  
Ernest B. Sterka  
Robert D. Stull  
William G. Swartz  
Arthur Toft  
Richard Vorel  
George P. Warner, Jr.  
Lester C. Weber  
Bernard A. Weier  
Karl E. Wetzl  
Anthony P. Witek

The Alexander Bradley Burns Post posted the Downers Grove Honor Roll Memorial at the park at Main and the Railroad, with the list of the thousands who served.



World War II Memorial Honor Roll



Fred Lester awarded the Medal of Honor in World War II

Ten years after the end of the war, the United States Navy named a destroyer escort after Fred Lester, a Downers Grove boy who lost his life June 8, 1945, in action with the 22nd Marines against Japanese forces at Okinawa-Shima.

For conspicuous gallantry beyond the call of duty, Fred Faulkner Lester, hospital apprentice first class, was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor,\* the nation's highest citation for bravery.

\*Note: Wells Blodgett had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in the Civil War. He was probably one of the very few men to have two medals of Honor. The original medal had been cast in bronze and some years later the U.S. Government decided to replace that medal with one of gold. Wells Blodgett declined, choosing to keep his original medal. The Government sent him the gold medal even though he wouldn't relinquish the one of bronze.

The war seemed interminable as the fighting went on and on. The villagers gathered rubber, aluminum and steel, tin and paper in scrap drives. They contributed in war bond drive after war bond drive. The Red Cross manned a mobile blood unit, and the residents of the village contributed again and again. The Red Cross organized a canteen unit for feeding crowds in an emergency situation. The local ham radio operators provided a radio communications set-up for the office of Civil Defense in Downers Grove.

The Downers Grove Reporter sent a paper to each person in service until print paper was rationed, and it was no longer possible to continue this service. With a little ingenuity and a great deal of cooperation, the service was continued with the help of the Service Mothers' Club. Residents of the community were asked to save their *Reporters* and return them to any one of the several dropoff points, to be mailed to the service lists. A total of 533 copies of the May 13, 1943, *Reporter* were mailed by the Service Mothers' Club to the members of the armed forces. The *Reporter* was able to furnish about half of these papers. The rest were saved by subscribers and

returned to the office for mailing!

By March of 1944 the danger of bombing attacks became more and more remote, and the air raid wardens were invited to join the squads of auxiliary firemen and policemen.

The need for workers in war plants was still critical. Curran Chemical Company opened a child care center, where children from 2 to 12 years old would be taken care of while their parents worked to further the war effort.

The brightest moments of bleak existence came when the servicemen were home on furlough. The *Reporter* listed these young men and women from a list provided by the rationing board office, where they had to apply for rationing coupons while they were at home. The week of November 9, 1944, found the following servicemen on furlough for varying lengths of time:

- Cpl. Glenn C. Andrus, R. No. 2
- M.M. 3/c Hudson C. Bailey, Kenilworth Apt.
- Pvt. J.C. Bretiner, 5221 Benton Avenue
- A.S. Dal Campbell, R.R. No. 2
- Ensign E.J. Haggerty, 4818 Prospect
- S/Sgt. Jack W. Harris, 724 Randall St.
- S/Sgt. Ernest R. Hogden, R.R. No. 2
- Pfc. Robert Hayne, 4611 Stanley

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

159919 CR

**WAR RATION BOOK No. 3** Void if altered

Identification of person to whom issued: PRINT IN FULL

Ruby MAY ELLSWORTH res.  
(First name) (Middle name) (Last name)

Street number or rural route College Ave R#1

City or post office DOWNERS GROVE ILL.

AGE	SEX	WEIGHT	HEIGHT	OCCUPATION
35	FEMALE	110 Lbs.	5 Ft. 1 1/2	Hous & Wife

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
(Person to whom book is issued. If such person is unable to sign because of age or incapacity, another may sign in his behalf.)

**WARNING**

This book is the property of the United States Government. It is unlawful to sell it to any other person, or to use it or permit anyone else to use it, except to obtain rationed goods in accordance with regulations of the Office of Price Administration. Any person who finds a lost War Ration Book must return it to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it. Persons who violate rationing regulations are subject to \$10,000 fine or imprisonment, or both.

**LOCAL BOARD ACTION**

Issued by \_\_\_\_\_ (Local board number) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of issuing officer)

Book II

OPA Form No. R-130

-  RATION STAMP NO. 4
-  RATION STAMP NO. 8
-  RATION STAMP NO. 12
-  RATION STAMP NO. 16
-  RATION STAMP NO. 20
-  RATION STAMP NO. 24
-  RATION STAMP NO. 28
-  RATION STAMP NO. 32
-  RATION STAMP NO. 36
-  RATION STAMP NO. 40

World War II food ration book

Pfc. Ernest Kraus, 5303 Belmont  
S 2/c Howard Mann, 1123 Curtiss  
S/Sgt. H.J. Nemecek, 4505 Highland  
Sgt. LeRoy Nielson, 5749 Main St.  
Pvt. Edward Plumb, R.R. No. 2  
Lt. Elmer Pollack, 4946 Linscott  
A.S.D.B. Robbins, 4101 Glendenning  
Pfc. Irwin Seeley, 5907 Sherman  
H.A. 3/c F.K. Stewart, 929 Summit St.  
BM 2/c Bill Turnell, 55th & Lindley  
Lt. Joseph C. Turner, 1336 Gilbert  
Pfc. E.W. Welch, 5602 Middaugh  
Lt. Emil Wencil, 406 Ogden  
William Whiting, 6224 Middaugh  
Sgt. Don Widler, 5625 Dunham  
Cox A.V. Winter, 1314 Gilbert

The community was beginning to look at the adjustments which the returning servicemen would be facing when the war was finally over. The National Association of Manufacturers met to study the employment problems of the returning veterans. The American Legion provided information on the "GI Bill of Rights."

There were very few community concerns other than the winning of the war and the safe return of the young men and women who were fighting in the war. The Lions Club bought the Grove Street Park from Avery Coonley School and deeded it to the Village for park purposes. The community gathered to decide how best to use this land. It was a consensus that this park should be dedicated as a memorial for all of the local people who served in World War II.

The local Parent-Teacher Associations were told, when they pushed for salary increases for the grade school teachers in the winter of 1943-44, that under the existing rate of taxes this was impossible. From this came a referendum in April of 1945 on the proposition of raising the tax rate for educational purposes in the local schools. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the tax boost! The raise enabled the School Board to increase the salaries of the grade school teachers in keeping with those of nearby districts.

Memorial services were held in towns and villages across the nation when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage at Warm Springs, Georgia, on April 12, 1945. Vice President Truman was sworn in as the Chief Executive of the nation by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court at 7:08 P.M. April 12th. A memorial service was held in Downers Grove at the high school on Friday morning, and Mayor N.H. Fishel presided at another memori-

al service on Sunday afternoon also at the high school auditorium.

The beginning of the end finally came with the surrender of the Germans to the Western Allies and Russia at 7:41 P.M. Chicago time on May 6, 1945. There was very little celebrating in Downers Grove on the Victory Day in Europe.

"There were more tears than laughter, more heartaches than jubilation in Downers Grove when President Truman officially proclaimed that Germany had surrendered unconditionally and the war in Europe was over. The tears and heartaches were for the boys of the community who had answered the last call on the ancient battlefields of Europe."

In everyone's thoughts was the fact that the war was only half over. The war in the Pacific still had to be won.

Church bells were rung when it seemed certain that victory in Europe was a reality. At the end of President Truman's speech the American Legion Post fired a bomb salute and the fire whistle was blown, but there was no cheering, no gathering of crowds, no celebration.

Arthur Haase, Downers Grove Marine, was killed on Iwo Jima on February 25, 1945. His death was reported in the April 5th issue of the *Reporter*, and the following week Edward Ruff, John Lesniak, and Stewart Millsap, all members of the Marine Corps, were reported killed in the same action on Iwo Jima.

At last, after nearly four years of war, the end came when Japan sued for peace on August 10, 1945, and President Harry Truman proclaimed V-J Day on August 14, 1945.

Downers Grove went wild with joy that this awful conflict was finally over!

"Peace, that word which American people have thought about for almost four years and almost despaired of ever hearing again, came at 6:00 April 14th when President Truman announced that the Japanese Emperor had accepted our unconditional surrender terms."

By November the veterans were returning in large numbers, and the adjustments began. The delight of having families reunited pervaded the village. Young men returned to their families' homes or with their young wives sought apartments or small houses to begin their lives again. The State of Illinois voted a bonus for the returning veterans, and the G.I. Bill provided many benefits to help the servicemen and women rebuild their lives. In December the nation cele-

brated its first peacetime Christmas in five years!

The community affairs of the village swung into high gear. The Community Calendar of weekly events filled a full column on the front page of the *Reporter*.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### American Legion

Sat. May 23, 6:30 p.m. Legion Birthday party and pot luck supper. Legion Hall.

### American Legion Auxiliary

Mon., April 15, 8 p.m. Legion Hall.

### Artist's Guild

Third Sunday of each month, next meeting, Sunday, April 21.

### Avery Coonley School

April 13, Sat., Play given by the parents of the school. Assembly Hall 8 PM April 25, Thursday, "Men's Night" sponsored by the parents of the school. Barbeque dinner and meeting Campus, 6:30PM May 12, Sunday, "Blossom Time Musicales" sponsored by the Home and School Association. Assembly Hall 3 PM May 24, Friday, Graduation dance for parents and members of the eighth grade and faculty. Assembly Hall 8 PM June 6, Thursday, Graduation Program, Assembly Hall 8 PM.

### Belmont Community Center

March 25, 8:30 PM Belmont Community Hall

### Civic Theatre

Mon., March 25, 7:30 PM 4533 Stanley

### D.A.R.

Tues., April 9, 12:30 box lunch, home of Mrs. J.T. Schless, 4101 No. Main St.

### Fairview Home Owners Ass'n.

Mon., 7:30 PM April 1. Association Hall

### Garden Club

Fri. March 22, 1:15 PM, Lincoln School

### Girl Scouts

Friday, April 5, 1:30-3:30, Leaders' Association meeting. Episcopal Parish house, Council meeting. Thursday, April 4, 1:30-3:30, Girl Scout office, Ross bldg.

### League of Women Voters

Tues., March 26, Avery Coonley School, 8 PM

### Lincoln P.T.A.

Thursday, March 21, 8 PM Lincoln School

### Lions Club

Tues., March 26, 12 noon Tivoli Hotel

### Masons (Blue Lodge)

Fri., March 15, 7 PM (degree work)

Fri., March 22, 8 PM, at Masonic Temple

### Modern Woodmen

Fri., March 22, 8 PM, Odd Fellow's Hall

### Moose, Auxiliary

Mar. 21, Moose Hall, Warren and Forest, 8 PM, 1st and 3rd Thurs. of month

### Music Club

Mon., April 8, 8 PM, Mrs. Rome P. Jette, South Main St.

### Newcomers Club

Tues., March 26, Gilmore home, 4316 Washington Street

### O.E.S. Vesta Chapter

Thurs., March 21, 11:30 to 2, Masonic Temple, luncheon

### Pan Hellenic

Tues., April 2, 8 PM

### P.E.O.

Tues., 8 PM, Mrs. Charles Knob, lunch, 4907 Elm Street

### Plan Commission

Wed., April 10, Village Hall (2nd Wed. each month) E.G. Geissert, secretary

### P.T.A. Council

Monday, May 13, Installation of officers, high school cafeteria

### Retail Merchant's Ass'n.

Mon., April 8, 8 PM, Tivoli Hotel

### Royal Neighbors

Fri., March 22, 8 PM, Odd Fellows Hall

### Safety Council

Tues., April 2, Village Hall

### Trillium Club

Sat., March 30, 7 PM, dinner at Prairie Schooner

### U.S. Spanish-American War Veterans Auxiliary

Tues., April 9, 2 PM, Engstrom home, 4939 Parkway

### Veterans of Foreign Wars

Aux., Fri., March 15, Moose Hall (2nd and 3rd Friday of the month) 8 PM

### Village Council

Mon., March 25, 8 PM, Village Hall

### V.F.W. Auxiliary

Fri., April 5, 8 PM, Moose Hall

### Washington P.T.A.

Tues., April 16, 8 PM Washington School

President Truman appointed Edwin Nourse, a former Downers Grove resident, Chairman of the newly-created Economic Advisory Council, which would administer the "full employment act". The three-man Board was established by the Act passed February, 1946, which aimed to promote conditions to provide "useful" employment for all who wanted to work. President Truman said,

"The Council will be in a position to present to the nation a clearer and more comprehensive analysis than we have ever had regarding the economic state of the nation and all factors which tend to retard prosperity."

Mr. Nourse, brother of Alice Tisdale Hobart and Mary Nourse, said after his appointment, that he was "an advocate of retention of the private enterprise system." Nourse had gradu-

ated from the Downers Grove Community High School in 1901.

Employment opportunities were many as the community shifted to meeting peacetime needs. Loans to build or buy homes were readily available for veterans through the G.I. Loan. And the membership of the American Legion swelled to a total membership of over four hundred!

The peacetime draft continued, however, and all 18 and 19 year old men were required to register with the local draft board.

In a light vote in June, 1946, the people of Downers Grove voted in favor of a Park District and five Park Commissioners, and Otto H. Hummer was named President of the District.

As government controls were relaxed or lifted, the businessmen and landlords in Downers Grove pledged to keep prices stable. In July of 1946 when the Office of Price Administration was discontinued, the local merchants predicted not only that the prices would not rise sharply but also that many commodities would come out of the black market and back onto the shelves.

The Retail Merchants' Association considered changing to the Chamber of Commerce. This change would enable the group of more than 50 merchants to include professional men in the association for a more representative group of the village.

The Village of Downers Grove was settling down into a new kind of normalcy with the flexibility this Village had always shown in meeting the needs of its residents.

Then one spring night in 1947, the resources of the Village were again mustered into immediate action.

On Thursday night, April 3, 1947, the activities of the people of Downers Grove were very much like any other spring evening in 1947. Two police officers were parked in a radio-equipped squad car in the driveway across from the depot; Jack Kidwell was at the Masonic Temple; the Tivoli Theatre had a good crowd enjoying the film "City of Conquest"; Dr. Glen Ehrler was in his office later than usual; and Mrs. C.M. Draper, who usually worked until late in the Burlington office at the railroad station had already gone home. There was no one in the depot.

At 10:41 P.M. the Twin-City Zephyr, on schedule from Minneapolis, St. Paul was speeding through Downers Grove from the west at its'

customary 70 miles an hour when it hit a 14-ton International Harvester caterpillar tractor which had fallen from an east-bound freight train just seconds before. A deafening roar like a sustained roar of an explosion filled the air as the big diesel locomotive, bursting into flames and spraying sparks, ploughed through the tracks, splintering ties and ripping up rails for over 300 yards of right of way! The diesel engine, swaying wildly from side to side, spun over on its side, skidded past the depot, and sprawled grotesquely across the three main tracks. The first and second coaches jackknifed and crashed against the deserted brick and concrete railroad station, smashing the west canopy, the west waiting room, and filling the ticket office with wreckage.

The police officers watched in horror as they saw the locomotive, engulfed in flames, plunging down the tracks. Bricks and debris peppered their car as railroad ties and rails were thrown up out of the roadbed like match sticks. The locomotive had scarcely come to rest when the officers radioed for emergency help and leaped from their car to assist the injured. Seconds later, it seemed that twelve or fifteen stretchers came out of nowhere. Among the first rescue teams to arrive was the Downers Grove Fire Department, whose members quickly extinguished a fire in the locomotive and then proceeded to the other cars to help take out the injured.

Jack Kidwell, an employee of Electro-Motive Corporation, rushed from the Masonic Temple to the depot. When he saw a fire in the first coach, he ran to the locomotive to turn off the switch on an auxiliary motor used to generate electrical power for lights.

Roy Chrisman, manager of the Tivoli Theatre, in his office which was not sound-proofed like the auditorium, heard the thundering crash of the locomotive and coaches piling up not 100 feet from his theatre. He, too, ran to the locomotive to try to open up the cab. When the Fire Department came so quickly and smashed the heavy glass in the doors, which freed the crew, Chrisman hurried back to the theatre. He halted the film and used the theatre's public address system to appeal for any doctors or nurses in the audience to go to the wreck. His announcement emptied the theatre, but the film was resumed and the shadowy figures on the screen moved on meaninglessly to an empty theatre.

As Chrisman ran back outside, he was met by

Commissioner Gilbert C. Mochel of the Department of Public Health and Safety, who asked him to open his lobby to all survivors of the wreck and ask them to register their names and addresses.

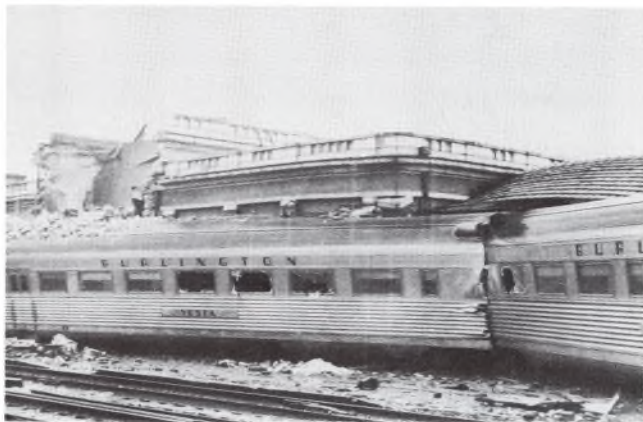
Dr. Ehrler gave first aid to 11 of the injured in his office at 1101 Burlington, across the street from the accident. Some 65 of the passengers gathered in the theatre lobby where first aid was also administered. Most of the injured were taken to Hinsdale Sanitarium. Two of the passengers were fatally injured.

The American Legion Hall was open from 11:45 Thursday night to Friday night, feeding the stranded passengers and the many workers helping in the emergency. Grant Nash supplied a large amount of coffee, cold meats, and bread to feed the hungry workers at the Legion Hall. Six hundred feet of rope, strung around the wreckage to hold the crowds back, were loaned by John Mochel. Mike Sheber took all of his taxicabs off regular service and transported passengers to the Hinsdale Sanitarium without charge.

Work trains arrived from Chicago about midnight with two huge derricks and track crews and began to lay three new tracks immediately. A switch track south of the depot was quickly reinforced to carry heavy trains, and through-freight trains and passenger trains crept over it all through the night.

By the following day normal train traffic had been resumed on the rebuilt three tracks through the Village, and work was begun shortly thereafter to rebuild the shattered west canopy and west waiting room of the Downers Grove Station.

## Downers Grove Depot Takes a Beating



Twin-City Zephyr wreck — 1947

## VILLAGE OF TODAY 1947-1982

The population of the Village grew by leaps and bounds in the years immediately following the end of World War II, and the quiet little village was awakened forcibly to the many needs and concerns resulting from its growth in both population and geographic size. City dwellers were choosing the good life in the tree-lined streets of Downers Grove. Large corporations and governmental agencies were transferring executives into the Chicago area, and these men and their families were selecting homes in the suburbs. Older homes were bought by young parents with growing families, and new homes were built throughout the village and in the new subdivisions being developed for the hordes of new residents who were coming to the Grove. And then there was the post-war baby boom!

From the beginning, the growth of the Village of Downers Grove had been an upward spiral, but the most recent thirty years have brought an unprecedented growth from a population of 11,865 in 1950 to 21,154 in 1960; 32,715 in 1970 to an all-time high of 42,560 in 1980. In three decades the village of 11,000 has nearly quadrupled!

The rapid increase in population overtaxed every system in the Village. The most basic Village services of water, storm sewers, sewage, garbage disposal, streets, and police and fire protection were overloaded, and the school system was faced with providing a quality education for the mushrooming enrollment without enough space in existing school buildings to even house them!

The residents of the Village met squarely the need for adjustments in the Village facilities and

services to continue providing a good quality of life for Downers Grove residents. The concerns and choices were discussed and debated in open forum. The answers were not always clear, and the debates were often hot and acrid with the clash of differing opinions. There was a basic concern to find the best solution for all the people in the Village. On that there was no quarrel. The differences came with the decisions on how best to solve the various problems of the growing Village.

The strong New England influence stemming from the descendants of the original settlers made for a conservative approach and most certainly a concern for fiscal responsibility. This same New England influence likewise explains the strong value placed on education. Newcomers to the Village were inclined to the same values, many of them having been drawn to this community for these very reasons.

In 1960 there were over 6,000 dwellings within the Village limits, and in 1980 there were almost 16,000 dwellings! A survey of DuPage County in the early 1960's reported that as a result of the extensive homebuilding during the 1950's and 1960's, half of the homes in the County were less than ten years old!

The changes within the Village were amazing, and the changes without the Village which had a direct effect were likewise incredible. New houses were built on almost every available lot in the settled, older section of Downers Grove. Small sloughs and swamps were filled in, and new homes erected. Homes were placed which blocked natural drainage areas. The natural water runoff patterns were disturbed, causing

new flooding problems and need for storm sewers. Streets were laid through corn-fields as farms became subdivisions. And with the new subdivisions came the questions of Village services, the considerations of annexation, and many bright-faced youngsters to attend the schools.

Eventually a prime concern for the school districts was space for all these children, but the most critical need at first was for qualified teachers.

In 1946-47, the average salary of the Downers Grove High School teachers was \$2,637! The minimum salary was \$2,050 and the maximum \$3,275. Thirteen teachers were in the \$2,050-\$2,350 range, eleven in the \$2,400-\$2,700 range, ten in the \$2,750-\$2,960 range, and there were nine teachers at the top range of \$3,000-\$3,250! With a blanket \$300 raise in 1947-48, the maximum salary became \$3,575 for men and \$3,130 for women.

It became obvious to the residents of the Village that the salaries of the teachers would have to be increased in order to be competitive with nearby communities. As a result, a tax referendum to raise the educational tax rate was scheduled for September, 1947.

The propositions on which the residents voted were:

*District #99:* "Shall the maximum tax rate for the Educational Fund of School District Number 99, DuPage County, Illinois, be established at .425 per cent on full, fair cash value instead of .285 per cent, the maximum rate otherwise applicable to the next taxes to be extended?"

*District #58:* "Shall the maximum tax rate for the Educational Fund of School District Number 58, DuPage County, Illinois be established at .55 per cent on full, fair cash value instead of .337 per cent, the maximum rate otherwise applicable to the next taxes to be extended?"

The Downers Grove Reporter published its "Editorial Comment" in favor of the educational tax increase on the front page of the issue of September 25, 1947.

## Editorial Comment

### A VOTE FOR COMMUNITY BETTERMENT

Will Downers Grove Community High school and its grade schools next year and in years to follow be financially able to hire teachers of the highest calibre, or will they be financially unable to bid in the competitive teacher market and be forced to employ teachers of the lowest qualifications?

That, essentially, is the question to be voted on at tomorrow's school tax referendum by the tax payers of Downers Grove. The question as it appears on the ballot is phrased in more legal terms, but the meaning is identical.

With taxes already at a high level, it is admittedly a ticklish venture to attempt to place an added burden on Mr. Taxpayer, but when a tax increase directly and indisputably benefits one's children, family and community as this one will, it loses the aspect of an actual increase in taxes and takes on the nature of an investment in community betterment.

All of us have read in recent years of the appalling low salary level of school teachers in America.

It is a shameful commentary on a country with the world's highest standard of living that the men and women who mold the minds and characters of our children during their most impressionable years are struggling on salaries not even comparable to laborers' wages.

Downers Grove, at least, can do something about it tomorrow at the polls.

We urge all qualified voters to go to the polls tomorrow and vote "YES" in the school tax referendum. If, when you mark your X, you feel a slight twinge in the vicinity of your wallet, remember that you are taking the only possible course to insure that teachers in the Downers Grove public schools will continue to be selected from the best available.

The voters of Downers Grove went to the polls the next day and by a majority of three to one voted to raise their taxes!

During the next thirty years, the residents of the Downers Grove school districts went to the polls again and again for this same purpose of raising their own taxes in order to provide schools



and teachers for the education of the children of this community.

On February 20, 1947, it was announced that 3,645 acres south of Downers Grove had been acquired for the location of the new permanent facilities of the Argonne National Laboratory for research and development in the field of atomic energy.

Though the location of this facility was not within the Village of Downers Grove, the residents were greatly concerned about the effect the proximity of this facility would have on the Village.

An open meeting was held by the Village Council on March 3, 1947, for the purpose of enabling the residents of the Village to meet with Dr. H.L. Hull, the Associate Director of the Argonne National Laboratory of Chicago. Feelings ran high as many people of the Village bombarded Dr. Hull and his fellow scientists with sharp questions.

The principal objection raised by the residents of Downers Grove had to do with the safety of the facility. Dr. Hull replied that the Argonne National Laboratory had been in operation since 1942 without a single accident. Discussions continued in meeting after meeting.

Mayor Fishel was an enthusiastic supporter of the benefits which he felt would accrue to the Village through the location of the Laboratory nearby. Fishel said that he thought business would be stimulated with this new facility and that our Village would benefit from the chemists, physicists, and other researchers of high caliber. How right he was that the intellectual climate of this Village would be greatly enriched by the many Argonne National Laboratory scientists and their wives, who chose to move to Downers Grove with their families!

In the early winter months of 1948 construction was started at the Argonne National Laboratory; the third annual Downers Grove Ice Carnival was held; the Don Cossack Chorus performed on January 18 under the auspices of the Downers Grove Community Concert Association; and a special bond issue election for \$750,000 additions to Longfellow, Washington, and Whittier Schools was scheduled—and lost. In March of 1948, a torrential cloudburst flooded basements all over town, and the over-taxed storm sewers could not carry off the water fast enough. And the minimum charge on water

usage was increased 50% in order to accrue reserves to provide for the repair of old equipment and to purchase new equipment to meet the increased demand for water service.

In December of 1948 unemployment was down, and the number of unemployment compensation claimants was 32% less than the first week of the year.

The average American steelworker had \$3000 a year to spend after taxes in 1949; according to the *People's Chronology*, the average social worker had \$3,500; a high school teacher \$4,700; a car salesman \$8,000; and a dentist \$10,000. One could buy a new Cadillac for \$5,000, a gallon of gasoline for 25¢, a man's gabardine suit for \$50, and a 10-inch table television set for \$250.

In 1948 and 1949, realtors in Downers Grove were listing acreages available for building. For example, there were several 2½-acre pieces on Dunham Road south of 75th Street at \$800 each. Ten acres of rolling land were available at \$4,500. An 11-acre site with a 6-room cottage on a hill, an extra room, furnace, gas, bath, electric, small horse barn, garage, and tool shed, fruit trees, lots of shade, was listed at \$15,000. Forty acres, mostly level black corn land, two and ⅓ miles from the Fairview Station, without buildings, were available at \$310 per acre. A number of acreages were listed at \$200 to \$300 per acre.

Houses in the Village were listed for sale with prices from \$11,500 for an income home, a five-room residence with a three-room apartment on the second floor, furnace heat, insulated, near schools; to an eight-room air-conditioned brick colonial, four bedrooms, sunken living room, carpeted, automatic gas heat, powder room, full bath up, cabinet kitchen, attached garage, in Denburn Woods, at \$26,000!

Supermarkets that year were advertising Oscar Meyer wieners at 43¢/lb., chuck roast at 49¢/lb., pork loin roast at 39¢/lb., and a standing rib roast for 63¢/lb! Velveeta Cheese was advertised at 2 lb. for 78¢, Parkay oleomargarine at 32¢/lb. Dean's Ice Cream was 25¢ a pt., and in the summer season one could buy cantaloupe for 15¢ each and a Texas red ripe watermelon for 5¢/lb.

After 17 years as School Superintendent George DeWolf resigned on June 30, 1949, and M. Jack Elzay was selected as the new Superintendent. Kiwanis held their annual Pancake

Day; "Little Women" was showing at the Tivoli; and Mr. Roe Milnes, tenor, gave a recital at the home of his parents Mr. and Mrs. James Milnes.

Every summer the fear of polio was renewed with each new case of a child or young person being struck down with the dreaded disease. In August of 1949, which proved to be an epidemic year for polio in the Chicago area, the Downers Grove Fall Festival was postponed to September, after the wave of polio had reached its peak.

That year, the Hinsdale Sanitarium became the fourth hospital in the entire Chicago area which would accept an acute case of polio. The hospital set up to take care of 12 patients, which was thought to be adequate to handle any outbreak of polio. At one time during the epidemic of 1949, there were thirty polio patients in the Sanitarium at one time, requiring one whole wing of the Hospital. During the entire season there was a total of seventy polio patients at this Hinsdale hospital!

The urgent need for a larger community hospital facility was recognized by the leaders of several west suburban villages, and a campaign for funds to build a 200-bed capacity Hinsdale Sanitarium and Hospital was embarked on by seven villages: LaGrange, LaGrange Park, Western Springs, Hinsdale, Clarendon Hills, Westmont, and Downers Grove. The Seventh Day Adventist Church, the operators of the Hinsdale Sanitarium, pledged \$500,000, and matching funds of \$1,500,000 were expected to be made available from state and federal sources under terms of the Hill-Burton Hospital Construction Act.

The people of Downers Grove participated actively in the campaign during 1950 to raise \$1,000,000 to help finance the new \$3,000,000 brick and concrete, fireproof Hinsdale Sanitarium and Hospital. Gordon Metcalf and Grant Dicke of Downers Grove were named as members of the Civic Advisory Council for the Hospital, along with seven other members representing the various villages. The first meeting of this nine-member group was held January 15, 1951. Quarterly meetings were scheduled with the Hospital Board of Trustees to counsel and advise the Hospital administration in formulating and carrying out policies.

The number of students entering the schools of Downers Grove increased each year as many new families moved into the Village. School enroll-

ment would continue to increase as children of the "baby-boom" years would be reaching school age.

In October of 1949, it became evident that it was necessary to start a process of counting children and predicting the school population for the years to come. As a result of this Public School Census, the following data were collected. (See opposite page)

On June 9, 1951, after months of enthusiastic campaigning for the needs of the schools in order to educate the children of the community, Downers Grove residents went to the polls to voice their support of the public schools by passing propositions to increase the educational tax rates.

The people of Downers Grove went to the polls in referendum after referendum to vote for propositions to raise their own tax rates to increase teachers' salaries and for propositions on bond approval for new school buildings. The passage of these referenda was not always easy. There were times when the voters voted on the same proposition two or three times before it was passed. Dedicated supporters worked long and hard in order to make the educational needs known to the community.

During the next twenty years, the community of Downers Grove built nine elementary schools, two junior high schools, one new high school, and twenty additions to those buildings and to the older existing schools!

In spite of all the time and energy spent in working on the changes and adjustments of the Village to meet the needs of its residents, there was time as there always had been to seek cultural pleasures.

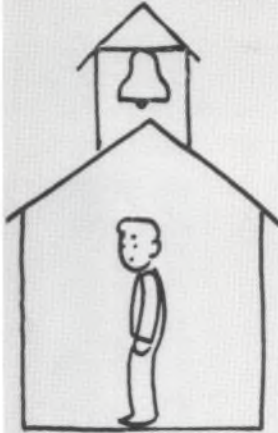
The Downers Grove Music Club, originally a women's organization, was founded in 1927, affiliated with the National Federation of Music Clubs in 1932, and two years later extended the privileges of the Club to associate members. At the Fall Festival of 1948, the Club presented an outdoor program of music by two of their members, Margaret Porter Thompson, violinist, and Madeline Mochel, soprano, assisted by Don Whitaker, trumpeter.

The members in 1949 included:

Helen Allaway, Mary Anderson, Maud Antkoviak, Esther Binder, Marilyn Bowers, Maude Brouillette, Esther Coutre, Dorothy Craigmile, Zella Creswell, Caroline Eddy, Pearl Fairchild, Adelaide Farrar,

# The A-B-C of Our School Situation"

FIRST FACTS AND FIGURES AS REVEALED BY OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL CENSUS



1940

● In 1940 we had 9,500 people in Downers Grove (U.S. Census figures).



1945

● Now we have not less than 13,000, about a fifty per cent increase.



1950

● In that time we have done NO SCHOOL BUILDING AT ALL.

**TWENTY YEARS AGO WE BUILT A SCHOOL!**  
Our most "recent" grade school building in Downers Grove done TWENTY YEARS AGO!  
This was a section added to Washington school — in 1930.  
The new high school building was authorized by referendum in 1927.

The main building, finished in 1928, and the wings, FINISHED in 1935 and 1939 respectively, relieved some space for GRADE PUPILS. The last of that was ten years ago.

We have not done any school building in ten years — and NO GRADE SCHOOL BUILDING IN OVER 20 YEARS.

**HERE ARE THE RESULTS**  
CHART BELOW SHOWS INCREASE IN PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN SINCE 1941

	1941-1942	1942-1943	1943-1944	1944-1945	1945-1946	1946-1947	1947-1948	1948-1949	1950	Percent Increase to date since First starting to school
Kindergarden									218	See Note Below
First Grade								257	290	12
Second							247	251	252	1
Third						182	244	224	239	31
Fourth					171	208	217	210	205	20
Fifth				92	132	129	163	147	196	113
Sixth			79	116	100	110	122	141	169	114
Seventh		89	93	119	115	102	140	193	198	122
Eighth	149	168	151	154	146	154	188	164	174	16

Total in schools (as of last September - more now) **1941** | **Av. 53.6% INCREASE**

**NOTE:** The 218 figure above is our present kindergarten enrollment — and many mothers have kept their children at home because we are forced, by lack of space, to our kindergarten and first grade classes IN SHIFTS in Downers Grove.  
We are holding classes in rooms in the METHODIST ARCH!  
We are holding classes in CONVERTED WORKSHOPS!  
We are holding classes in the JANITOR'S TOOL ROOM IN THE BASEMENT!  
We are holding classes in a CONVERTED LIBRARY ROOM!  
We are running our kindergarten and first grade classes IN SHIFTS!  
We have forty-five\* class rooms for a total of over 1,941 elementary school students.  
IAT is eliminating the make-shifts.  
IAT is over FORTY-THREE per room.  
There is no class room for more desks without increasing already serious fire hazard and eliminating what little necessary activity space we have in some rooms.  
The authorities say:  
For recent grade school education the top number per room should not exceed:

Recommended:

Upper Elementary—27-30 per teacher.

Primary—20-30 per teacher.

Intermediate—25 per teacher.

Eliminate the make-shifts, and

WE have—43 PER TEACHER.

\*This figure includes four classrooms in the old (1890) section of Washington School. Because of safety hazards, these rooms must be eliminated.

**LET'S LOOK AHEAD**  
OUR COMMUNITY IS GROWING  
AND WILL CONTINUE TO GROW  
**THE CHILDREN ARE HERE NOW**

The School census showed:

Age	Children Who	Will enter school in
0-1	250	1956
1-2	250	1955
2-3	370	1954
3-4	350	1953
4-5	315	1952
5-6	285	1951

And that makes no allowance for any continued growth of Downers Grove.

\*These statistics are provisional figures on the recent census.

Parochial and private schools provide for approximately 24 per cent of the total grade instruction.

from the Downers Grove Reports April 13, 1950

Louise Flood, Esther Geissert, Mary Goddard, Margaret Haggerty, Flora Janssen, Catherine Kay, Elaine Kotraba, Ida LaMon, Marion Lower, Mercedes Lueders, Adelyn Lyness, Clara Lyon, Lillian Michel, Thelma Milnes, Madeline Mochel, Mirna Mosher, Edna Pohlmann, Lillian Powell, Bernadine Rigsbee, Harriet Smith, Mildred Stephenson, Barbara Thomas, Margaret Thompson, Hazel Weinheimer and Dora Whidden.

In addition there were forty or so associate members.

The theatre group of Downers Grove gave their first post-war play at Downers Grove High School (now North High) in the season of 1945-46. Each year the group presented two or three plays for the community. In July of 1952, the Downers Grove Civic Theatre filed Articles of Incorporation. Their first Board of Directors included Jane Jacobus, Frank Brockway, Margaret Burger, Francis Erickson, Ralph Erickson, Virginia Harris, Charles Hanson, James Robinson, Eleanor Schmidt and Elon Wolf. The group's purpose was to foster and promote the art of drama and stage technique for the mutual entertainment and education of the members

and the people of the Village of Downers Grove and the surrounding community.

The incorporation formalized the theatre group which had been giving plays since 1936! That first year the group called itself the Grove Players Guild and by the season of 1938 the Downers Grove Little Theatre. Those first few



Thelma Roe Milnes



Sherrill Milnes

years a struggling young group presented a number of plays under many handicaps, and the group disbanded early in the war years.

Three of four shows were presented each year from the 1948-49 season on. By 1959 the group was unofficially called the Grove Players, and in 1979 the change was made official.

Ron Holous, who had been President of the Grove Players and very active in the progress of the group, resigned in 1979 to form another local theatre group, The Downers Grove Guild, to present Broadway's hit musicals.

Choral singing had been a community venture since the early 1900's in Downers Grove. The Choral Union, one of the earliest choruses, was organized in about 1910 under the direction of Edward Eilert. The West Suburban Choral Society was conducted in the 1920's by Thomas A. Pape of Downers Grove, with Marion Lower organist and Thelma Roe accompanist. Members of local church choirs frequently joined together to perform "The Messiah". By 1925 the annual performance of this oratorio had become

a tradition, first under the direction of Mrs. Mabel Rassweiler and later under William Pohlmann. In 1948 Thelma Roe Milnes became the director of the "Messiah Chorus" which formed the nucleus of the Downers Grove Oratorio Society.

The Oratorio Society, under the direction of Thelma Roe Milnes as conductor and Donald Drew as accompanist, consisted of as many as 85-100 voices and gave two performances a year.

After the death of Thelma Roe Milnes in 1969, Margaret Bollinger was appointed conductor of the Oratorio Society and continues to provide outstanding musical leadership for the group.

No history of Downers Grove would be complete without a tribute to Thelma Roe Milnes and her family. Mrs. Milnes was a descendant of Dr. Franklin K. Roe, one of the earliest settlers in Downers Grove. The Roe family was distinguished for its many members who had made outstanding musical contributions to the community.



Margaret Bollinger



Sherrill Milnes, directing, Donald Drew, at piano.

The musical tradition extended to the two sons of James and Thelma Roe Milnes; Roe, a tenor, who showed great promise as a young man but chose to remain in the community, and Sherrill, the baritone, who is applauded by musical audiences all over the world for his operatic performances.

Sherrill Milnes' first influence in music was his mother, as she taught her students on the piano in her living room. Thelma Milnes saw that Sherrill had piano and violin lessons and received vocal training. Sherrill first sang in the First Congregational Church choir under his mother's direction. He attended Drake University, where he studied both instrumental and vocal music. He sang with the Chicago Symphony Chorus and during that time also made singing commercials. Milnes toured with the Opera Troupe of Boris Goldovsky for five years. Then in 1964 he joined the New York City Opera, and the following year Sherrill Milnes made his Metropolitan debut! An article in *The New Yorker* stated "the upper reaches of his voice have a brilliance of sound that has not been heard from any baritone in a generation."

In December of 1969, after the death of his mother, Sherrill Milnes conducted the Downers Grove Oratorio Society in a performance of "Elijah" in her memory. On the tenth anniversary of her death, he returned again to conduct a memorial performance of "Elijah" with the Oratorio Society.

The Milnes family contributed more than half the building fund to the Indian Boundary Y.M.C.A., and the building is dedicated to James and Thelma Roe Milnes. The Sherrill Milnes Room is a community center for drama, recitals, and many other activities. Sherrill has given benefit recitals at this Y.M.C.A. as well as returning many times to the church where he sang in the choir as a boy.

Long-time residents and newcomers alike participated in the many performing groups, and they also cooperated in bringing outstanding personalities to the local platform for the interest and pleasure of all the villagers. The Downers Grove Village Forum presented its first season in 1948-49 and every year for some twenty years continued to present a program series. The sole purpose of the Downers Grove Village Forum was to bring outstanding personalities from diverse fields for their presentations in person.

A Board of seven couples selected and contracted for a program of five lectures or films by well-known personalities and were assisted by many residents who served as patrons. Season tickets were sold at minimum rates to all who wished to attend the Forum presentations. Over the years many outstanding figures were presented by the Forum:

Norman Thomas, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., Cornelia Otis Skinner, Burton Holmes, Joe E. Brown, Emily Kimbrough, Charles Laughton, Arthur Treacher, General Mark Clark, Ogden Nash, Carl Sandburg, Basil Rathbone, William Fulbright, Harry Golden, Lowell Thomas, Jr., Constance Bennett, Bergen Evans, Ralph Bunch, John Gielgud, Vincent Price, C. Northcote Parkinson, Joy Adamson, Bennett Cerf, John Griffith, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Vance Packard, and Joyce Brothers.

The Downers Grove Community Concert Association held its first season in the Village in the winter of 1947-48 and is still bringing outstanding concert presentations to the community in 1982. In the membership campaign for the concert season of 1949-50, 800 tickets were placed on sale for \$6.00 for the four presentations of the season. The Board of Directors for that season were:

Mr. and Mrs. G.N. Askew, Mr. and Mrs. B.A. Benson, Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Boyd, Mr. and Mrs. D.J. Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Churuti, Mrs. Jean Dewey, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Drew, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Flood, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Humphris, Mr. and Mrs. F.P. Kehoe, Miss Alice Katherine Kaut, Mr. and Mrs. H.M. Lindstrom, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lyness, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert C. Mochel, Mr. Glenn Olney, Mr. and Mrs. V.A. Revert, and Mr. and Mrs. J.S. Tennery.

In 1947 there were three events in Downers Grove which were significant in the trend of human relations in the Village:

- The Downers Grove Kiwanis Club was organized.
- The first project chosen by the new Club was support of the organization of a Youth Center for Downers Grove teenagers.
- The Community Council, a not-for-profit organization, was started—and is still functioning in 1982.

The Kiwanis Club held the first Fall Festival in September, 1947, at the Downers Grove Community High School, with all the profits to go toward a new Youth Center. Mr. Clarence Godshalk of the Kiwanis Club was the General Chairman of the committee, which consisted of representatives from the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Garden Clubs

(both Men's and Women's), the League of Women Voters, the Artists' Guild, the Moose, Parent-Teacher Association, the Police and Fire Departments, and many others.

The newly-incorporated Downers Grove Community Council had met in July of 1947 to act on providing a recreation center for the young people of the Village. As a result of their efforts a Youth Center, furnished with donated recreational equipment, was opened at 1007 Curtiss Street in October of 1947.

The Community Council was identified in a term paper written by Marion Cannon for a university course and published in the *Reporter*. Cannon described the Village in 1947 as a residential community having a total population of 11,300, of which about 15% were Polish and a large number were descendants from early German and English settlers. She listed the industries of Downers Grove as Schafer Bearing Company, Zollinger Plastic Company, Curran Manufacturing Company, Dicke Tool Company, Precision Steel Warehouse Company, and McCollum Hoist and Manufacturing Company.

She wrote at length about the Community Council:

"The Downers Grove Community Council, Inc., is a non-profit civic organization whose main objective is to maintain a wide representation among the civic organizations of the village. The Council is governed by a board of directors. Representatives from the Kiwanis Club, Lions Club, American Legion, Business Association, Woman's Club, Pan-Hellenic Society, P.T.A.: Council, Recreational Board, Park District, Community Chest and the Village Council participate in the Community Council's activities. The Community Council operates on a budget, obtaining its funds from the Community Chest and other contributions from village organizations. This money is used for the purchase of equipment, facilities and for the general operating expenses. Leadership for the program is entirely voluntary, except for the paid . . . director and . . . assistant director of the Youth Center."

Ten years after the organization of the Youth Center, a building was completed at 1180 Sherman for the membership of some 850 young people with Murray Delloff as director of the Center. Hundreds of young people enjoyed the social activities of the Youth Center for nearly twenty years.

In the fall of 1950 the Downers Grove Community High School Board of Education instituted a new Adult Evening Classes, directed by



Youth Center on Curtiss Street — late 1940's. (formerly Curtiss Theatre)

Clarence Johnson and assisted by a Citizens' Advisory Committee including E.J. Beaulieu, Mrs. Raymond Bush, Russell Grant, LeRoy James, Charles Makemson, Miss Dorothy Weller, and Charles W. Wyman. Fifteen courses were listed on the curriculum, meeting on either Tuesday or Thursday evening for a ten-week period. The fee for each course was \$5 plus a \$1 registration fee. This very popular Adult Evening School continued for many years, serving thousands of adult students, until its role was assumed by the College of DuPage adult evening classes.

The shadow of war had fallen over the Village again when President Truman had ordered U.S. air and sea forces "to give the Korean government troops cover and support" after the North Korean forces invaded the Republic of South Korea on June 25, 1950, and the Korean War continued until July of 1953. Many young men from Downers Grove were drafted to serve in this war, and the servicemen who had continued in the military reserve forces were recalled to active duty. Two Downers Grove men, Fred Aeschlieman and Delbert Austin, lost their lives in the Korean conflict.

In the fall of 1951 there was a plea for substitute teachers to meet the need in the schools. The Board of Education approved a higher rate of \$10 per day for substitute teachers. Superintendent Elzay said that it was imperative to have an adequate substitute list in order to staff the schools. Elzay stressed that it was the duty of any qualified teachers to apply for substitute teaching.

It was also announced that 17 certified teach-

ers would be needed when the new schools opened.

Teachers were informed that a state examination would be given in the County seat on November 9, 1951, for any persons who had not kept their certification current. Applicants had to have completed 60 semester hours of college or university work to be eligible for the exam. Certain consideration was also given to those who had completed a minimum of 35 hours!

The Downers Grove Business Association officially changed its name to the Downers Grove Chamber of Commerce in February of 1951 and applied to the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce for membership. The president of the group was Leroy James; Donald E. Howell was vice president, and the secretary was John W. Mochel, Jr.

The Arcadian Club held its fiftieth annual banquet at the Tivoli Hotel. It was a festive group gathered together in celebration of a half century of friendships. Mrs. Grace Littleford gave a talk on "Now and Then." She recalled the early hayrack and bobsled rides, the plays in the old Crescy Auditorium, the picnics at Brush Hill, and the boat rides among the water lilies on old Salt Creek. Mrs. Thelma Roe Milnes sang three well-chosen solo numbers, accompanied by Mrs. Adelyn Lyness.

September 26, 1952, was a landmark date which marked the last day of operation for the Downers Grove suburban train yard, as well as the last day of steam operation of the suburban trains on the CB&Q. With the all-diesel operation of the Burlington, the Downers Grove terminal operation for half of the suburban trains was



Arcadian Club — Dot Wheeler Rogers; Edith Snyder; Walt John Stone; Laura Heintz; Pierce Butler; I. Dussler; W. Heintz; Josephine Grey; John Grey; Myrtle Heintz; Kitty Cramer; Agnes Dunn; W.F. Heintz; Molly Watts; Sam Kennison; Jean Carlson; Irene T. Ward; Earl Carlson; Harry Case; Edith B. Case; I. Dussler; Lucy Reyner; Flossie Druttell; Harry Rayner; Ted Druttell; Harry Rayner; Ted Druttell; Edna Fitch; Helen B. Case; Harvey Drew; and Ray Cramer.



moved to Aurora, where all the suburban trains would then originate and terminate.

The tax base in the community became an issue for concern; and quite obviously the higher the valuation of property in the Village, the more public funds generated from the tax rate. In the early 1950's there was a continuing discussion of the advisability of allowing industry to settle within the limits of the Grove with the benefits of tax revenue and the disadvantage of industrial facilities.

Pepperidge Farm was one of the industries which settled in Downers Grove in the early 1950's. Feelings ran high on the advantages and disadvantages of this large baking industry locating a plant near the Fairview Avenue station.



Ground breaking for Pepperidge Farm Bakery — July 24, 1952 — Mayor Absher officiating

Problems of taxation, problems of Village government, problems of adequate schools, problems of zoning, all the problems of the growing Village were confronted by the residents! With every problem which presented itself to Downers Grove, the people of the Village were concerned, informed themselves, and became active in resolving the problem. If there is one word which would characterize the collective personality of the residents of Downers Grove, it would have to be "involvement"! Groups were formed, information exchanged, directions decided, and then together the groups worked actively on educating the citizenry on the issues. Differences of opinion were respected; and the outcome of the decision of the majority, whether by referendum or community decision, was accepted for the good of the Village and its people. That is not to say that many times differences of opinion were not sharply drawn or positions strongly held!

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union

launched Sputnik I, the world's first man-made Earth satellite, and by this triumph influenced a new scientific emphasis in the education system of the United States and an urgent onward thrust to the Space Program in this country.

"The 184 pound sphere, Sputnik I, orbited the Earth once every 90 minutes in an elliptical orbit, and was followed in November by Sputnik II which weighed more than 1000 pounds and carried a live dog."

Main Street in Downers Grove was brightened in December of 1958 by the new mercury vapor lights which went on up and down the business section. The lighting project had begun in 1952 and became operative after six years of work by many people. Initiated during the term of Mayor Clyde Absher, the project was completed under the administration of Mayor Ben H. Groves.

An editorial in the *Downers Grove Reporter* said:

"The bulk of congratulations should go to the Chamber of Commerce. It was a Chamber project from the beginning. Much of the initial work took place under the administration of the past Chamber president, Raulin Wight Jr., and the honor of seeing the job completed fell on the out-going Chamber President Noah Levy."

In April of 1957 the League of Women Voters of Downers Grove published a booklet *DOWNERS GROVE TODAY*, which provided comprehensive information on the village for the citizens of Downers Grove in the hope that it



Ruby Heckel

would "promote increased political responsibility by helping to understand the government."

The Downers Grove Junior Women's Club of 59 members was organized in the spring of 1959 with Ruby Heckel, a member of the Downers Grove Woman's Club, as their sponsor and mentor. The women who were in the original organizational group were Joan Ebersold, Beverly Goodlow, Lois Greenfield, Shirley Tolbert, and Edris Borth. The group was incorporated in September, and Shirley Tolbert became the first president. Their projects through the years and their contributions to the Village have been many and great. Among their major projects have been the Children's Reading Hour at the Downers Grove Library, Youth Center, Fall Festival, Santa's House, Indian Boundary Y.M.C.A., Glass Recycling Project with the Kiwanis Club, the Pediatrics Department at Good Samaritan Hospital, and many contributions to Youth and Senior Citizen projects.

By the end of the 1950's it became clear that the Village was in need of a new form of government which could more efficiently meet the needs of the many residents of the Village, the ever-increasing complexity of providing services to the Village's residents, and the herculean task of administering a several million dollar a year budget.

The first effort to change the village form of government had gone down to defeat. The Jaycees had initiated and backed the proposition of Manager-by-statute. In April of 1955 the voters soundly defeated the proposal.

Some five years later, an aldermanic form of government was proposed by the Citizens Representation League. In September of 1960 the Village Council voted 4 to 1 against an ordinance setting an election day on October 22, 1960, for a proposed referendum on an Aldermanic form of government for Downers Grove.

In November of 1960, Ben Groves, the former Mayor, presented a petition to the Village Council requesting the Council to consider passage of an ordinance which would create the position of a Village Manager. Groves said that he was speaking on behalf of a group in the Village. The former Mayor stressed that, "we are operating under the initiative rights peculiar to the Commission form of government in presenting this petition."

Groves said in his preliminary remarks,

"People will say that a manager won't work under the Commission form of government, that you can't abrogate your powers; we say you can't abrogate, but you can delegate your powers and you are doing it now. It is time, it is due, and it will work, if you gentlemen will support it."

It was nearly two years of concerted efforts by many people dedicated to the cause before the Managerial form of government was approved by the voters.

Meanwhile during those two years there were many other events and issues before the villagers. In the fall of 1960 the Village Commissioners established a "Forestry Advisory Committee" by a unanimous vote. The motion setting up the new group was made by Commissioner of Streets and Improvements Frank Houck. All of Downers Groves's forestry program, including the controversial problem of the control of Dutch Elm disease, reforestation, and pruning would fall under the scope of this group. Houck said the "purpose of the committee will be to give advice to the Council, study and make recommendations on all forestry problems." Members of the committee were A.H. Bowers, Mrs. R.E. Chandler, A.S. Rouffa, John Skok, and Mrs. Pauline Wandschneider. Forester H.C. Johnson was an ex-officio member.

Houck said no spraying (for Dutch Elm disease) would be done until the foliage was gone and the birds had flown south. "Spraying is only one portion of the control program," according to Houck, "which also includes sanitation and destruction of dead wood to curb the beetles, to retard the spread of the disease."

Spraying of the elms remained a controversial issue for a number of years, with the dilemma of concern for the birds on the one hand and the concern for the elm trees dying from disease on the other.

In 1960 the Congress Expressway was completed, and its opening changed the life of the villagers of Downers Grove in ways they could not even guess. The Expressway was one four-lane highway extending from DuPage County to the shores of Lake Michigan, which opened up a direct route for automobile traffic to the Loop! The building of this Expressway, which made driving into the center of Chicago an easy, fast trip, opened an alternative to taking the train to the City. The predictions of the consequences of

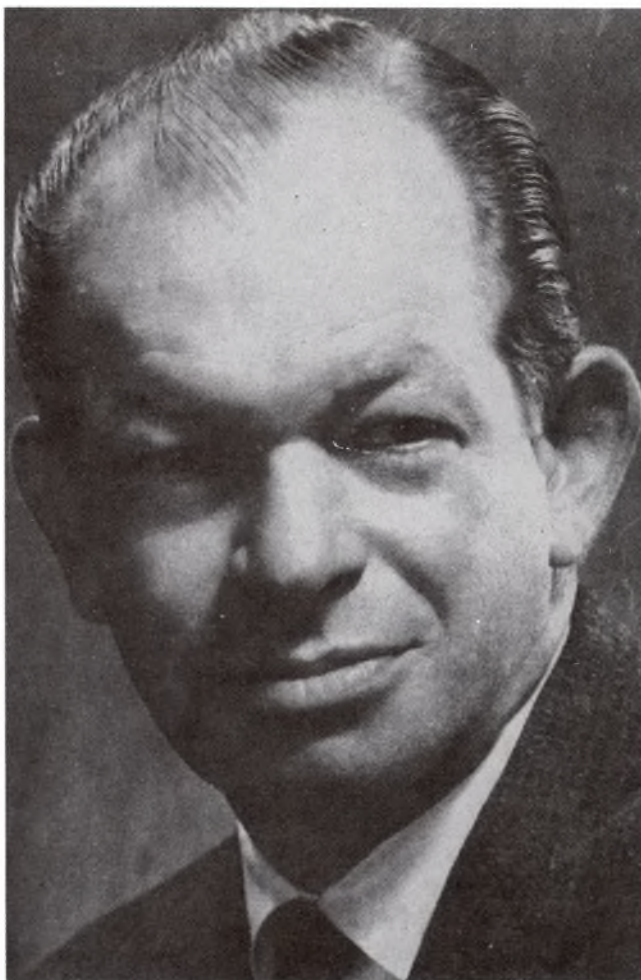
the East-West Tollroad/Congress Expressway were unbelievable in 1960—but totally believable in 1980—for not only were the predictions fulfilled but exceeded.

In 1960 the engineering consultants predicted that the largest industrial development probably would be at Oak Brook, where Marshall Field was planning to construct a shopping center. Many companies were already constructing buildings in the Oak Brook area for offices, training centers, and mail order centers, and construction was scheduled to begin on a new hotel, Drake-at-Oak Brook, at the corner of 22nd Street and York Road.



Fire on Main Street

Christmas week of 1960 was marred by an enormous fire on Main Street, which raged for nearly nine hours on Thursday, December 22, before Downers Grove firemen were able to bring it under control. The stubborn, smouldering fire completely gutted Thompson's Store for Men and the Citizens National Bank Building next door to the north. Philip Behoff's Downers Grove Department Store suffered extensive smoke and water damage. According to Fire Chief Grant Dicke, it was Downers Grove's



"Shorty" John Powers

worst fire in terms of the financial loss.

All over the nation, television had become the eye to the world in every home. On May 5, 1961, the people of this country sat at home and watched the first United States manned space flight as U.S. Navy Commander Alan B. Shepard Jr., circled the earth in the Mercury 3 Space Shop. Lt. Col. John A. "Shorty" Powers, who had grown up in Downers Grove, was the voice for the flight. His live audio commentary on the return to earth of the ship originated the term "A-OK". Shepard's Mercury-Redstone Space Capsule hit the water safely, but the craft and parachute were out of range of the television cameras. Reporters fired questions at Powers, who simply waited until he had the facts and then responded calmly, "It's A-OK."

"Shorty" Powers became a national celebrity, the voice of the astronauts for the early NASA manned Space Flights. A graduate of Downers Grove High School in 1940, he was remembered as an enthusiastic, energetic cheerleader, who

was small but mighty. Powers served as pilot of troop carriers in World War II and flew a B-26 bomber during the Korean War. He received many honors, including a Bronze Star Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross. In 1958 Powers directed the U.S. lunar probe information efforts and was named Public Affairs Officer for Project Mercury in 1959. "Shorty" Powers was the Voice of Mercury Control for all of the Project Mercury manned space flights, including those made by Shepard, Grissom, Glenn, Carpenter, Schirra, and Cooper. Arthur Snider of the *Chicago Daily News* wrote, "His prime qualifications are his knowledge of space and his ability to articulate well."

On June 2, 1962, the Managerial form of village government was finally adopted by the voters of Village of Downers Grove in a special election on the proposition, "Shall the Village of Downers Grove adopt the managerial form of municipal government?" With this approval, the Manager form of government could be instituted by May 1, 1963. A manager would assume responsibility for the administrative details of running the various Village departments responsible to the Council. There would still be a Mayor and four Commissioners, with two Commissioners up for election every two years instead of all four seats every four years.

The hard-won victory came as the result of the diligent efforts of the Jaycees and the League of Women Voters to explain as thoroughly as possible the benefits of the Managerial form of municipal government, as well as the work of the Citizens for Village Manager Committee to bring information to the voters.

In February of 1962 a group of some thirty-five leaders of the Village had met to work for the Village Manager form of government. David Gooder, who was elected Chairman of the Committee, said,

"Downers Grove Village Government is big business with an annual budget of more than \$3,608,000. We need a full time, professionally trained chief administrator to serve the Village Council just as our school boards are served by the Superintendent of Schools. Since we now have a population of more than 20,000, Illinois statutes require the Commissioners elected in 1963 to spend a minimum of 30 hours a week at their village duties unless the Village adopts the manager-by-statute plan. We cannot ask or expect men, who must earn a living in addition to serving as Commissioners, to devote such time to village affairs."

The Committee, with the defeat of the proposition in 1955 in mind, worked long and hard to bring this information to the residents of the Village. The result—the voters cast 1835 votes in favor of the proposition and only 669 votes opposed.

After the election Mayor Behoff appointed a seven-person committee to make the initial selection of a candidate for the Village Manager to be recommended to the Village Commissioners. The members of that committee were David Gooder, Alan C. Hultman, Glen Lackey, Dr. Douglass Carroll, Donald Roberts, Peter Hands, and Mrs. Marion Woll. And in October of 1962 J.R. Castner was appointed the first Village Manager.

The early 1960's found the wave of the increasing student population reaching the high school with record enrollments. In the fall of 1961 a record high of 2421 students enrolled at Downers Grove Community High School with a future enrollment of some 2,900 students expected within four years! And a University of Chicago Survey had set the capacity of the high school at 1,900 students!

The imminent need for a second high school in District #99 became obvious to the school administration and the school board. Therefore they requested authorization to set a referendum on the proposition of acquiring acreage for the site of a second high school.

In the referendum held in February of 1961 the voters approved the purchase of a 48-acre site for a proposed new high school at the southwest corner of 63rd Street and Dunham Road. At the same referendum the residents also voted for three new elementary schools and one addition in District #58.

Clarence Johnson, Principal of Downers Grove Community High School, was awarded a special citation in the 1962 Secondary Principal of the Year Competition. Johnson was selected by a panel of nine judges based on a written nominating statement submitted by the high school classroom teachers, who wrote, "He has been a force for educational progress within the school, within the county, within the state and within the nation." Under Johnson's leadership his staff had developed such programs as the core curriculum, a three-year program for terminal students, a foreign language laboratory, honors courses for the gifted, airborne television, a



Clarence Johnson

school materials production center, and a research department.

The student body at Downers Grove Community High School again reached a record enrollment in the fall of 1962, up nearly 200 students from the previous year. Every possible space was used for classrooms. Overflow groups were using the foyer of the auditorium and the foyer of the balcony for classroom space. These classes were scheduled to move into the two-classroom portable which was being erected adjacent to the Main Street entrance.

School officials predicted that even further critical overcrowding would occur the following year as more students would be entering high school. The projection, based on the students who were in the grade schools at that time, indicated a student body of about 2,800 students in the fall of 1963.

The plans for the school year of 1963 included the use of two more portable rooms and five classrooms rented at the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, located on Main Street opposite the High School.

Then by the year 1964, when the enrollment was predicted to be approximately 2,900 students, the Board of Education hoped that the new high school at 63rd and Dunham Road would be completed. A referendum for this building was called for Saturday, November 25, 1962, at which time the voters approved the building of a second high school at a cost of \$4,050,000.

There were referenda and referenda—for the Village, for the Sanitary District, for the parks! It seemed there was no end to the propositions put to the voters for increasing taxes, enlarging services, providing for the increased population's

needs. The schools returned to the voters again and again to meet the needs of educating the children of the Village. And it became increasingly difficult to convince the voters that more money should be voted as taxes.

In May of 1963 School Superintendent Glenn Pickrel announced new salary schedules, emphasizing that higher rates were essential if the school system were to remain competitive in the market for good teachers. He stated that the change would keep salaries sufficiently attractive so that the Downers Grove Schools could remain selective in hiring new teachers and would be able to retain present competent teachers. The new beginning pay for a grade school teacher was \$5,150.

In September of 1963 the voters rejected a referendum proposing a 21¢ increase in the educational tax rate! Nine cents of the proposed 21¢ would have gone for operating the second high school; the rest was earmarked for an improved salary schedule.

After this backset the High School Board of Education examined the budget cuts which would be necessary to operate within the budget of the tax rate which had been in effect without a raise since 1958. Again the Board took a referendum to the voters for a 21¢ raise and on February 15, 1964, the voters again defeated the tax hike!

The "Post Mortem" editorial in the *Reporter* reported a confrontation of residents who had voted against the proposal with members of the School Board.

"Two facts were generally agreed upon by all present at the meeting. 1. Illinois needs tax reform, some method of supporting schools other than property tax, and, 2. There is a lack of communication between the school board and the people of the district."

"We can sympathize with the board in a way. These people devote long hours at no pay to provide the best education possible for our children. Board Members pay the same taxes as you and I. They do not, and have not, squandered the taxpayers' money recklessly."

A third referendum on the increased tax rate of 21¢ was finally passed by the voters in March of 1965!

During those years hundreds and hundreds of citizens, committed to the importance of excellent education, worked to make the residents of

Downers Grove aware of the logical necessity for the increased tax.

An enthusiastic group of citizens who were interested in quality education joined together to form an organization known as SOS, that is, Save Our Schools. For many years SOS members informed the public on school matters and worked to pass referenda.

Qualified members of the community were encouraged to run for school board posts, and the School Board Caucus organized in 1953, which was composed of members from many organizations in the Village, carefully screened school board candidates and then endorsed candidates. All the candidates, both caucus-endorsed and independent, were introduced to the community by the American Association of University Women or by the League of Women Voters so that voters would be better informed.

Wayne Guthrie was named Principal of the new South High School, which was dedicated on November 8, 1964. Superintendent Glenn Pickrel, his administrative staff, President of the Board Winston Manning, and all the Board members who were responsible for the building of this new high school were congratulated by many who visited the new school. The economical cost of the school was considered marvelous, at a cost of \$12.34 per square foot, well below the average cost of secondary schools in this area.



Glenn E. Pickrel

Through these turbulent years of the 1960's it seemed that as soon as one problem was solved, another cropped up. South High School was no sooner occupied than it was predicted it would be over capacity in only two years! In 1966, the grade schools announced that it would be necessary to rent space. And on it went! New schools



Wayne Guthrie and Charles and Berneice Elmlinger

were built, and existing schools required additions!

Additions were built to both Herrick Junior High School and O'Neill Junior High School in 1967, and a large new addition was built at the new South High School in 1969.

With increasing numbers of students in an expanding community, with increasing enrollments projected, it seemed the need for new buildings for schools would continue indefinitely. So the School Board acquired the site for a third high school at Woodridge and Center Drives in Woodridge. A referendum to build a school on that site was defeated by the voters.

This was the last referendum for school building; for the end to burgeoning enrollments *did* come, and when it did, the trend suddenly turned downward . . . and school closings came. But that was far in the future from the expansions of the 1960's.

In July of 1962 the Downers Grove Civil Defense Unit was organized, with Stephen Ucherek as Director. Practice alerts were held, and Civil Defense Shelters were marked. Among the designated shelters were the Post Office, the Moose Hall, and the Citizens Bank, which were to be used in case of disaster.

And life went on. The Newcomers Club with its many members was very active. The Hostess Club lived up to its name in providing warm, gracious hospitality to the teachers in the Village. Downers Grove residents started using the new zip code on July 1. Giesche Shoes held its 3-day Open House celebration in its brand new building on Main Street, and Colonel "Shorty" Powers rode in the 1963 4th of July Parade.

In May of 1963 the "Best Food Buys" were listed as chuck roast at 29¢ a pound at the A&P at 5100 Forest Avenue, fresh whole fryers at

Kroger's at 5207 Main Street for 25¢ a pound, fully-cooked smoked ham, shank portion, for 25¢ a pound at the National Tea Stores at 5329 Main and 1101 Ogden Avenue. Reynolds Foil Wrap was 25¢ at Grant W. Nash Foods at 5109 Main Street; a two-pound can of Hills Coffee was \$1.19 at Chuck's Meat Market on Curtiss, and bananas were 10¢ a pound at Lehmann's at 4952 Forest.

At a Village Council meeting in 1963 the Council approved four appointments to Village boards and commissions. Robert F. Nootbaar and William Lockett were appointed Plan Commission members for four-year terms. Fred Kuczowski was appointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a four-year term. Raulin B. Wright Jr., was appointed to a permanent post on the Architectural Commission. Mayor Philip Behoff reported that these appointments filled all the vacancies.

The invocation was given by the Rev. Edgar Cook of the First Congregational Church. The Council invites a different Downers Grove minister each week to give the invocation.



Reverend Edgar Cook

On June 3, 1963, the Downers Grove Village Council increased the size of the village appreciably by the annexation of 262 acres of land in the area of Dunham and 63rd Street.

The new high school site and the site of the new grade school at Norfolk, later to be named Kingsley School, were included in the acreage. The two school sites were annexed at the request of the County Board of School Trustees, which held title to the land.

The *Reporter* devoted a page of its October 16, 1963, issue to "Main Street—Then and Now" with a picture of Main Street in the early 1920's

along with a picture of 1963 Main Street, and included a listing of the merchants on Main Street and surrounding business areas.

The businesses listed were:

***SELIG SISTERS 5113 Main Street***

One of the earliest business establishments opened on March 1, 1900. Originally a millinery shop, it became a dry goods store in 1933. Clara Selig managed the store and has lived at this address for 80 years.



Miss Clara Selig and Mr. Sid Fey

***MOCHELS HARDWARE***

*5122 Main Street*

The name Mochel has been on this fine hardware store since the earliest days of our village. The business was opened in 1884 by Charley Mochel. Throughout the years the store has been run by Charley Mochel, John Mochel Sr. and now by John Mochel Jr.

***THOMPSON'S STORE FOR MEN***

*5112 Main Street*

Stanley Thompson started this fine men's wear store in 1937. When he retired in 1956, his two sons, Stuart and Howard, took over the business, and it is now being managed by Howard's son Gene.

***LLOYD'S 5127 Main Street***

This outstanding family store is owned and run by Mitzi and Laurie Handelsman and has been in operation over ten years.

***GIESCHE'S NEW SHOE STORE***

*5150 Main Street*

One of the truly outstanding shoe stores in the west suburban area, this shoe store, owned by Herman Giesche moved into a new modern building this past spring.

**CITIZEN'S NATIONAL BANK**

*5110 Main Street*

This fine banking institution has been in operation in Downers Grove since September of 1940 and was recently remodeled after a disastrous fire.

**COMMUNITY PASTRY SHOP**

*5124 Main Street*

This modern bakery celebrated its 25th year in business last May. Stu Jenkins has kept the bakery goods flowing to his customers through the years, and recently his son Bud has joined him in the business.

**NASH GROCERY 5109 Main Street**

Grant Nash's grocery store is one of the oldest businesses in Downers Grove, opening in April of 1892. Grant joined his father in the store shortly after World War I and has carried on the fine tradition of customer satisfaction through the years.

**LONGWELL PAINT COMPANY**

*5121 Main Street*

Dorothy and Larry Longwell opened this paint store in 1933, which took a good deal of courage in that depression year. The Longwells worked hard and built one of the finest businesses in the village.

**MURIEL MUNDY STORE 5135 Main Street**

Mundy's came to Downers Grove about 25 years ago and has always carried the select in women's apparel.

**KAY HOWARD SHOP 5104 Main Street**

Years ago this store was known as Stella's Dress Shop; it was later known as Ruby's and in September of 1960, the store became one of the Kay Howard Shops.

**BEHOFF'S D.G. DEPARTMENT STORE**

*5114 Main Street*

Phil Behoff is now in his eleventh year as owner of the D.G. Department Store. Throughout the years this store has operated under various names. Today the store carries on the tradition of offering quality merchandise at budget prices.

**H.G. HEINKE JEWELRY 5151 Main Street**

Hal, a lifelong resident of Downers Grove, has been in business for 15 years.

**MAIN PHARMACY 1012 Curtiss Street**

In March of 1951, Jim Ferguson and Bill Siebert opened the Main Pharmacy on the southeast corner of Main and Curtiss Streets. In December, 1955, they moved into one-half of their present location at 1012 Curtiss and in March of

1961 took over the entire building.

**GILMAN JEWELRY 1005 Curtiss Street**

Harry and Rita Gilman opened their store in October, 1957. Gilmans take pride in their excellent selection of fine jewelry and watches.

**PETERSON'S CHILDREN SHOP**

*1001 Curtiss Street*

Originally known as the Rambler Shops and located on Curtiss Street west of Main, this shop was purchased by Phyllis and Walt Peterson and moved to its present location. Peterson's shop is known for its extensive line of children's apparel.

**J.L. LEHMANN & SONS GROCERY**

*4954 Forest Avenue*

John and his brother Bill built this fine independent grocery which has been in business for 135 years. Since Bill's death John has carried on the fine standards of this market.

**LANG'S STATIONERY AND CARD MART**

*4930 Main Street*

In January of 1956 Marsh and Edith Lang opened this stationery and card mart. Two years ago their son Fred joined them in the business.

**THE MUSIC SHOP 1025 Burlington Street**

The Music Shop has been at its present location since March of 1950 and was purchased in August of 1959 by Marie Kopsis. This shop is well-known for its wide selection of records of all types.

**MARI-LEE FABRICS 1029 Burlington**

Vi Pollack opened this fabric store on March 2, 1961, with the latest in fabrics and fashion patterns.

**ROUND THE CLOCK SNACKTIME**

*1002 Warren Avenue*

Chuck Krueger's Snacktime is now in its seventh year in Downers Grove and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with good food and quick courteous service.

**F.W. WOOLWORTH COMPANY**

*5120 Main Street*

This Woolworth Store has become a favorite shopping center on Main Street.

**LARRY'S BOOKS AND GIFTS**

*1015 Curtiss Street*

Larry Pagenkopf took over the Old Grove Gift Shop on South Main Street in July of 1958. He moved to the Curtiss location in July of 1961 and carries one of the largest selections of paperback books in the area.



## *GEORGE E. LEE FURNITURE*

*5147 Main Street*

This furniture store was founded in 1934 by George Lee, and in 1946 Erwin Lee took over the store from his father.

## *REINHART APPAREL 5111 Main Street*

Five years ago Jerry Reinhart bought this shop, known formerly as the Florence Fashion Shop, and carries on the Reinhart tradition of quality merchandise.

## *HERBERT'S 5123 Main Street*

Herbert's has been in our village for 23 years, offering the latest in men's and boy's clothing for every budget.

Zoning of the Village was a prime concern. Downers Grove zoning laws had been adopted in 1925 and were sadly in need of revision. In October of 1964, the Village Council appointed a new zoning commission to prepare a comprehensive zoning ordinance. Members of this commission were Glen Lackey, Glenn Tappenden, Jack Moller, F.W. Wandschneider, Robert Engle with Mayor Behoff as an ex-officio member.

A previous commission which had been appointed for the same purpose had held hearings on a proposed law, but had been disbanded the previous spring.

A struggle had been going on between residents who wanted to preserve single family dwelling neighborhoods and builders who wanted to plan apartment buildings and shopping centers—and the struggle continued for years.

—In 1961 A Senior Citizens Housing Project was proposed; it was to be a high-rise hotel-type facility for 4,000 to be built on 63rd Street. It was strongly opposed.

—In December of 1965 the Council deadlocked on requested rezoning of property at Saratoga and 41st Street. Attorney Jack E. Bowers, representing the Jewel Tea Company, the property owners, told the Council that the rezoning would upgrade the property from business to a type of residential housing.

—That same fall plans were announced for the Prentiss Creek housing development at 63rd and Woodward.

—Robert Larson, representing a homeowners' group, reported that a poll taken at the time Orchard Brook Apartments were being considered, showed that approximately 90% of the Village residents were opposed to the building of apartments.

Some selected quotes from an editorial on Apartments of the Downers Grove Reporter

described the dilemma:

"Since the public hearings on the new zoning law were held a few years ago, the demand for apartments in and near Downers Grove has increased tremendously. . .

Councilman William Freibert has stated repeatedly that the majority of citizens who attended those public hearings were 'opposed to more apartment buildings in Downers Grove'. . .

Just one indication of how great the demand for apartment construction is can be found in land values in and around Downers Grove.

Not so long ago, property zoned 'business' commanded a greater price on the market than any other type of property. This is no longer the case. The value of property upon which apartments can be built has zoomed like an Atlas Missile taking off from Cape Kennedy. . .

Like it or not, and despite the objections registered at those public hearings, apartments seem to keep cropping up like crabgrass in the Merion Blue. As the pressure mounts and the demand for apartments continues to increase, the citizens of this village had better begin to review their thinking on this subject. There are logical and convincing arguments on both sides of the question. If local public opinion now favors more apartments, well and good. If large groups of people are still opposed to apartments, or more opposed, now is the time to make these feelings public."

Clearly multiple units and shopping areas have been included in the plan for the community but with regard for single family homes.

Many residents were alarmed over the new routes for Highway 53 being considered by the Illinois State Highway Department. One route would go roughly down Cornell between Lee and Stonewall north of the CB&Q tracks and between Lee and Sherman south of the tracks. The other route would go between Pershing and Belmont. Both routes would have interchanges of about 60 acres each at Ogden, Maple, and 63rd Street.

About January 1, 1964, a State Highway consultant delivered a final report on a study of the project, after which a public hearing was held to consider the final route. The highway as proposed would sever the west end of town from the rest of the Village. Residents were shocked and stunned at the prospect!

The Illinois State Highway Department predicted that the project would not be completed for five to ten years.

On November 22, 1963, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated in an act of violence which shook the nation. The people of

Downers Grove were shocked and horrified at the tragedy of the young President's death—as was the entire world. The flags of the Village were lowered to half mast within an hour after the news was received.

In disbelief, people watched the news on their television sets, as the tragic events were shown again and again. The Friday evening social events were cancelled and forgotten as the Village grieved along with the rest of the nation.

The Alexander Bradley Burns American Legion Post 80 organized a Memorial Service on Sunday afternoon at the Boy and Girl Scout flagpole located at Main and the railroad tracks. A large crowd gathered to hear the eulogy, a prayer by Msgr. L.J. Kiley of St. Joseph's Church, the plaintive notes of Taps, and the sharp reports of the 21-gun salute by the Post's rifle squad.

The schools, the post office, banks and Village offices were closed on Monday, and local businesses were closed from 9:00 to 2:00 on the day of the President's funeral.

The Village Council cancelled its regular Monday night meeting. Mayor Behoff issued a proclamation Monday proclaiming a 30-day mourning period for President John F. Kennedy, and the Council authorized a resolution on behalf of the Village, formally expressing "shock and sympathy."

The evening of the assassination Lyndon Baines Johnson was sworn in as President of the United States in a somber ceremony aboard the plane returning to Washington.

Gradually the nation, shaken by the tragic assassination, resumed the ongoing tasks and challenges.

Early 1964 found a controversy in Downers Grove on the benefits and/or disadvantages of adding fluoride to the water. At this time the Council decided not to hold a referendum on the issue but two years later approved fluoridation 4 to 1.

On March 22, 1964, every Downers Grove individual could receive a dose of oral polio vaccine at a cost of only 50¢ a person. The program was sponsored in DuPage County by the DuPage County Medical Society, the DuPage Pharmaceutical Association, and the DuPage Health Department, with volunteer help. What a wondrous benefit to be protected against the fear of poliomyelitis!

That same year the Downers Grove *Reporter* spoke for the entire community in its editorial, WELCOME GEORGE WILLIAMS, saying: "The news that George Williams College has decided to annex to Downers Grove is, we feel, cause for rejoicing."

With the increased number of churchgoers in the growing village, many of the existing churches built additions, and new congregations organized and constructed their buildings. The First Congregational Church held the groundbreaking for a three-story addition, the groundbreaking was held for the new Immanuel Lutheran Church at the corner of Grove and Carpenter Streets, and a new addition of 26 to 30 classrooms was proposed to the First Methodist Church. Shortly afterward, St. Luke's United Presbyterian Church broke ground for their building at the site immediately south of the intersection of Main and 39th Street. The following churches\* were listed in Downers Grove in 1965:

- Assembly of God, 4816 Fairview  
Rev. Royce M. Shelton, minister
- Baha'i, meetings held at 310—4th Street
- Belmont Community Church, Belmont Road north of Maple Avenue.  
Rev. Joseph Dedic, pastor
- Church of Christ, meetings held at Hummer Field House, 4833 Fairview
- Community Bible (formerly Southtown Bible), 64th & Carpenter  
E.L. Hartley, pastor
- Downers Grove Reformed Church, meetings held at Hillcrest School
- Faith Evangelical United Brethren, 432—59th Street  
Leonard L. Sukut, minister
- First Baptist, Maple & Washington  
Rev. W.H. Sinclair, pastor
- First Christian Church of Downers Grove, meetings held at O'Neill Jr. H.S.  
William Crowl, minister
- First Church of Christ Scientist, 1101 Curtiss
- First Congregational, 1047 Curtiss  
Edgar A. Cook, Victor H. Keiser (ministers)
- First Methodist, 1032 Maple  
Dr. Farrell D. Jenkins, Rev. Robt. J. Campbell (ministers)
- Rev. Douglas P. DeGraff, minister of education
- Rev. Frank D. Winterholter, minister of youth
- First United Presbyterian, Fairview & Fourth Street  
Rev. W.J.B. Tate, minister
- Gloria Dei Lutheran (Lutheran Church of America), Main & Grant Streets  
Rev. Jack W. Berry, pastor
- Grace Baptist (an American Baptist Church) meetings held at Kingsley School

\*from "Church Notices" of the Downers Grove *Reporter*

David L. Rieder, pastor  
 Immanuel Lutheran (Missouri Synod), Grove & Carpenter  
 Rev. John E. Lutze, pastor  
 Jehovah's Witnesses, D.G. Congregation, 1030 Grove Street  
 North Fairview Bible, 3838 N. Sterling Rd.  
 Rev. A.W. Johnson, pastor  
 St. Andrew's Episcopal, 1125 Franklin  
 Rev. Geo. B. Williams, rector  
 Rev. C.R. Stinnette, Jr., asst.  
 St. John's Lutheran, 75th & Cass  
 Rev. E.P. Schwanke, pastor  
 St. Joseph's Catholic, Highland & Franklin  
 Rt. Rev. Msgr. L.J. Kiley, pastor  
 Rev. F.T. Golden, Rev. Edw. F. Poff (assistants)  
 St. Luke United Presbyterian, meetings held at Highland School  
 Kirby R. Wahl, pastor  
 St. Mary's Catholic, Douglas & Wilson  
 Rev. Edmund Szott, pastor  
 Rev. John Moriarity, asst.  
 St. Paul's Evangelical & Reformed (United Church of Christ) 5739 Dunham Road  
 Walter W. Lauer, pastor  
 Seventh Day Adventist, meetings held in Lester School Auditorium  
 C.L. Turner, pastor  
 Society of Friends, Quakers, meetings held at 5710 Lomond Avenue, D.G.

On August 7, 1964, Congress approved the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which authorized President Johnson "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression." This resolution was the result of an action in which North Vietnamese PT boats allegedly fired on a U.S. destroyer in the international waters of Tonkin Gulf, 30 miles off the coast of North Vietnam. President Johnson ordered retaliatory action after the second alleged attack. And the Vietnamese conflict was underway.

This conflict was the most divisive issue to enter the national life since the Civil War.

For the adults of the nation who had accepted the burden of war when it had been thrust upon them, risen to the occasion, and drawn together in a strong protection of national pride, it became difficult to reject the call of the nation to arms. On the contrary, thousands of young people who were expected to bear arms had developed a consciousness of their own values in what they saw happening. A generation who had been reared seeing the events of the world on television

as they happened, was thinking independently. The conflict and strife within the nation was devastating.

The young people of Downers Grove who were on college campuses returned home with independent ideas. This independence encompassed their whole lives, their dress, their behavior, and their own values.

The gap widened between the young and their parents who had been reared with the patriotic World War II survival needs of a nation. The protest of the young started on the college campuses but soon spread to their younger brothers and sisters in high school.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was gunned down on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, and race riots broke out all over the country, including Chicago. On June 5, 1968, Robert Kennedy was assassinated in a Los Angeles hotel, after leaving a victory celebration in his bid for the Presidential nomination.

The Democratic Party convention in Chicago became the battleground for a bloody confrontation between police and demonstrators, and the action was on every newscast on the TVs in every living room. No one could escape the reality.

Downers Grove was affected by the tragedy of the times, as was every other village in the country. Young men and women marched off to war. But without fanfare. Other young men and women became conscientious objectors and refused to go to war. The feelings of protest and the widening of the gap between the young and the "mature" spread to almost every area of communication.

The corridors of the high schools began to look different. Dress codes were out; ragged jeans were in. The length of hair became a point of argument between the generations. The Downers Grove Schools recommended the expulsion of a student who refused to cut his hair, and the incident made front-page news in the Chicago papers.

Schools throughout the area became more flexible in scheduling. Partly because of the overcrowded schools, students were allowed more free time and were able to take part-time jobs which fit in with their school day. Involvement in school extra-curricular activities dwindled.

The Youth Center ceased to be an "in-place" to go and gradually changed, to become a drop-in

place for alienated young people. The community endeavored to meet the needs of the youth. The First Congregational Church opened a "drop-in center" where young people could go, listen to music, talk with young adults, with each other, or just sit, if they chose. The "Two-Way Street" has been an active part of the ministry to young people and in 1982 is still a drop-in center.

Louis Fulgaro, who was to become the Acting Chief of Police, at the time he was the Juvenile Officer on the Downers Grove Police Force, proposed the establishment of a Youth Development Service (YDS) to attempt to meet the needs of young people with problems. (Fulgaro was also the moving force behind the organization of the local Drug Abuse Council.) The YDS was established by a Resolution of the Village Council in April of 1965, with its purpose defined as

"The coordinating of the efforts of all voluntary groups, school authorities, and juvenile officers in studying, guiding and advising methods of handling juvenile problems arising in the community."

Some of the community members who served on the YDS Board through the years included: Frank DuFour, Rick Chandler, Laura Jackson, Evie Sperling Corrigan, Rev. Kirby Wahl, Dr. Charles Mitchell, Rev. Leonard Sukut, Chuck Kehoe, Fr. E. Poff, Marvin Vollmer, Jean Jerousek, Montrew Dunham, Edgar Vondersmith, Robert Wanucha, Fr. Tony Taschetta, Rev. Walter Lauer, Louis Fulgaro and Larry Nielsen.

This service evolved into the Health and Human Relations Commission, which directs the work of the Village Department of Health and Human Resources located at 842 Curtiss Street.

The Youth Development Service sponsored the Storefront, a drop-in and counseling center for young people, and the Community Council endeavored to direct the programs of the Youth Center to meet the needs of the youth of these troubled years. Though both the Storefront building on Burlington and the Youth Center went up in flames, the work of the YDS and the Community Council continued.

Downers Grove can take credit for seeing the need for a service such as the YDS in 1965. It was over two years later that the need for such a committee was brought to the attention of the public nationally in a report from a President's



Youth Development Service, L to R: Rick Chandler; Laura Jackson Reynolds; Montrew Dunham; Bob Wanucha; and Nancy Coleman



Youth Development Service Projects

Commission.

In 1965 a comprehensive zoning ordinance and master plan were adopted by the Council. During the year there had been a great deal of discussion but very little action toward building a new Village Hall on the site at the southwest corner of Washington and Burlington which had been purchased previously. The first bid on the building, which came in at \$297,000, was unanimously rejected by the Village Council, and the second bid at \$252,000 was rejected by a 3 to 2 vote. And Village Manager Eash started to talk about making necessary repairs to the Main Street Village Hall.

Nearly two years went by before the Village Council solved its housing problem by voting unanimously to buy the old Shafer Bearing Company building on a 5-acre tract at 801 Burlington. The move of the Village offices to the new facility took place in January, 1969, and an Open House was held the following July.

The good news came in January of 1966 that the State was recommending a westerly route for

the super highway which earlier had threatened to cut Downers Grove in two. The announcement, which came from the State Director of Public Works, was welcome news to the people of Downers Grove who had worked so hard for over 28 months explaining the Downers Grove viewpoint on the proposed highway route. And the villagers of Downers Grove gave a collective sigh of relief!

A Community Development Committee under the sponsorship of the Downers Grove Chamber of Commerce met early in 1966 and voted to adopt the U.S. Chamber of Commerce program called "Total Community Development." This program was developed to meet the needs of communities in dealing with problems of growth and expansion. Members who were present at the pilot meeting were:

Chairman Gerauld Hopkins, Citizens National Bank; Robert Bartlett, Citizens National Bank; William Westrup and Warren Camp, Downers Grove National Bank; Mayor Philip C. Behoff; Councilman David Gooder; Village Manager C. Harold Eash; Asst. Village Manager Wayne Barfels; Village Attorney Gordon C. Bunge; *Reporter Co-*

*Publisher Jack Winter; Edward Penn, Hi-Liter; William "Bud" Sherman, Downers Grove Park Board; Chamber President Fred Huebner, Schaub-Magnetrol; Postmaster Milan Gjundjek; Paul Hartmann, Howard Johnson's; and Chamber Executive Vice-President Walter Lindamann.*

McDonald's on Ogden Avenue announced the "new-n-big McDougle Hamburgers" for only 28¢, and on Wednesday nights Howard Johnson's Restaurant in Downers Grove served all the fish you could eat for \$1.00. And homes were advertised in the winter of 1965-66 in a range of \$14,000 to \$33,500. For \$14,000 one could buy a 15-year old two-bedroom brick ranch, with a large living room, kitchen, and utility room only two blocks to shopping and the Burlington Station. A massive English Tudor home was listed at \$33,500. Located just steps from Avery Coonley School, it had a slate entry hall, carpeting throughout the spacious living room with bay window and fireplace, formal dining room, and sun room; the kitchen had a range and dishwasher, large cabinet work area with ceramic counter, and a dinette; three bedrooms with ceramic bath, and ceramic powder room; an attic, a huge



Village Hall in 1968 — 801 Burlington Avenue

panelled recreation room in the basement, and a jalousied back porch and attached garage!

Year in and year out many dedicated adults worked to provide wholesome, healthy growing experiences for the youngsters of the Village. There was always the loyal core of Scout leaders for both the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts, who spent years in providing active scouting experiences for hundreds of boys and girls.

The YMCA Indian Guide and Indian Princess programs were run by fathers with their sons or daughters, under the guidance of the YMCA

recreation director.

Summer after summer boys and girls have enjoyed the park district programs, swimming programs, day camps, church vacation schools, and various other athletic programs, including football and baseball.

Spring and summer found the young boys of the community at the baseball diamonds in the parks playing Little League baseball. Family dinner times were moved earlier or later so that mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters could cheer for their favorite baseball player. In July of

Read Chart Across I

COMMUNITY			POPULATION			SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND			
Name	County	Date of First Incorporation	1950	1960	1966 Estimate	Median Age of Population	Median School Years Completed by Persons Over 25 Years	Median Family Income	Percentage of Employee Persons in White Collar Occupation
Clarendon Hills	DuPage	1924	2,437	5,885	6,587	32	13.0	10,000	72.2
Downers Grove	DuPage	1873	11,886	21,154	25,189	31	12.5	8,889	66.0
Elmhurst	DuPage	1881	21,273	36,991	43,568	32	12.6	9,868	69.6
Glen Ellyn	DuPage	1892	9,524	15,972	20,146	31	13.0	9,959	75.6
Hinsdale	DuPage	1873	3,676	12,859	14,149	35	13.1	11,318	68.9
La Grange	Cook	1879	12,002	15,285	17,667	34	12.7	10,560	68.8
La Grange Park	Cook	1892	6,176	13,793	15,944	36	12.6	10,501	71.0
Lisle	DuPage	1956	N.A.	4,219	5,110	26	12.0	8,093	43.5
Lombard	DuPage	1869	9,817	22,561	28,948	28	12.4	8,539	62.5
Naperville	DuPage	1857	7,013	12,933	18,143	27	12.7	8,551	64.4
Oak Brook	DuPage	1958	N.A.	324	3,300	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Villa Park	DuPage	1914	8,821	20,391	25,858	27	12.2	8,640	54.9
West Chicago	DuPage	1873	3,973	6,854	8,150	27	12.1	7,054	50.7
Western Springs	Cook	1886	6,364	10,838	13,173	35	13.2	12,257	80.5
Wheaton	DuPage	1859	11,638	24,312	27,264	25	12.9	9,227	66.1

1966 the Downers Grove American League All-Stars won the area Little League Tournament by defeating Clarendon Hills 7 to 0. The members of that team were listed as: Conlee, Haws, Bob Walker, Farrell, Schwander, Dillon, Ron Walker, Skoog, Patterson, Callan, and Whittington.

The year 1966 saw the beginning of the construction of Yorktown Shopping Center at Butterfield and Highland, which became part of Lombard. Shortly after the first of the year the Village Council heard petitions asking for annexation to Downers Grove of a 853-acre tract

lying between Highland and Route 53.

Frank Wander was named Fire Chief effective January 1, 1967, succeeding Grant Dicke, who had been the Fire Chief for 41 years and now became the Fire Marshal. Dicke had joined the Department in 1911 as a 17-year-old volunteer and was elected Chief in 1925.

A book, *Profiles of Chicagoland: The Western Suburbs*, published by The First National Bank of Chicago in 1966, provided the statistics shown below:

#### EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Colleges	Name	Public High Schools				Public Elem. & Jr. High Schools	Parochial & Private Schools		
		Number of Students	Student-Teacher Ratio	Percentage of Teachers Holding Master's Degrees	Percentage of Students Entering 4-Yr. College	Student Teacher Ratio	Catholic High Schools	Catholic Elementary & Junior High Schools	Other Parochial & Private Schools
George Williams College	Hinsdale Township Central & South	3,142	18:1	50%	70%	Dist. 181-23:1 Dist. 57-32:1	0	2	0
	Downers Grove Community North & South	3,396	19:1	60%	60%	25:1	0	3	1
Elmhurst College	York Community Willowbrook	2,939 2,938	19:1	63%	59% 50%	24:1	1	3	2
	Glenbard East & West	5,166	19:1	59%	62%	Dist. 41-26:1 Dist. 89-21:1	0	1	0
Lyons Branch, College of DuPage	Hinsdale Township Central	2,425	19:1	50%	70%	24:1	0	1	3
	Lyons Township	4,514	16:1	71%	78%	Dist.102-19:1 Dist. 105-23:1 Dist. 106-20:1	0	2	1
	Lyons Township	4,514	16:1	71%	78%	19:1	1	3	0
St. Procopius College	Lisle Community	516	20:1	33%	45%	25:1	1	2	0
	Glenbard East Willowbrook	3,029 2,938	19:1	52% 63%	58% 50%	Dist. 44-26:1 Dist. 45-25:1	0	3	2
North Central College	Naperville Community	1,991	19:1	53%	64%	26:1	0	2	2
	Hinsdale Township Central	2,425		50%	70%				
	Downers Grove North	1,719	19:1	60%	60%	9:1	0	0	0
	Willowbrook Addison Trail	2,938 1,608	19:1 18:1	63%	50% N.A.	Dist. 45-26:1 Dist. 48-22:1 Dist. 4-33:1	0	2	0
Wheaton College	West Chicago Community	1,109	16:1	32%	45%	27:1	0	1	1
	Lyons Township	4,514	16:1	71%	78%	Dist. 101-19:1 Dist. 106-20:1	0	1	1
	Wheaton Central & North	2,686	21:1	54%	63%	26:1	1	3	4

(Continued on Following Page)

Downers Grove along with the rest of the Chicago area was paralyzed by the great blizzard of January, 1967. The heavy white flakes fell lazily at first, settled into a normal, winter snowfall, and then progressed to a raging blizzard which dumped two feet of snow on the ground and then swirled and swept it into drifts which reached to the eaves of garage roofs.

The Village was encased in the glistening snow stretching as far as one could see, unmarked by human tracks. All activities ground to a halt. School was cancelled, and businesses closed. It was a pleasure for most people who were at home when the blanket of snow fell and a misery for those unfortunate few who were stranded at the airport or on the highways.

And for a few short days, families were forced to enjoy simple pleasures together. Soup pots bubbled and simmered as parents and children played cards or games and talked with each

other.

Neighbors joined together in a cooperative effort to shovel out one driveway at a time, and sleds were drawn out to make emergency trips for supplies. Necessary groceries were lent and borrowed. The few emergencies of illness and the birth of babies were met by the concerted efforts of Village crews and neighbors and friends.

The days of isolation because of the snow were reminiscent of the assistance and interdependence of families and friends in the early days of Downers Grove. Few who lived through that mighty blizzard have forgotten their activities of those few snow-locked days, though they have since been rivaled by the blizzard of 1979 and the deep freeze of January, 1982!

There are many personal relationships in Downers Grove which do evoke feelings not unlike the early friendliness of the small village. One distinctive group of people, many of whom

COMMUNITY  Name	TRANSPORTATION			Price Range All Homes	HOUSING  Average Prices		Tax Rate Per \$100 of 1966 Assessed Valuation	Number of Apartment Units, 1966	Fire Protection Rating	GENERAL HOSPITAL  Name
	Miles to "Loop"	Driving Time to "Loop" (Minutes)	Com- muter Train Serving Areas		New Homes	Older Homes				
Clarendon Hills	19	35-45	CB&Q	20,000 60,000	35,000	27,000	4.501	111	5	
Downers Grove	23	40-50	CB&Q	17,500 80,000	35,000	25,000	5.153	738	5	Bethany Brethren (construction)
Elmhurst	17	35-45	CNW	17,500 80,000	37,500	23,000	5.124	911	6	Memorial Hospital of DuPage County
Glen Ellyn	24	45-55	CNW	17,500 80,000	37,500	30,000	5.472	1,141	6	
Hinsdale	18	35-45	CB&Q	20,000 150,000	50,000	40,000	5.112	251	6	Hinsdale Sanitarium and Hospital
La Grange	15	30-40	CB&Q	20,000 70,000	40,000	32,500	5.340	679	4	Community Memorial
La Grange Park	15	30-40	CB&Q	20,000 70,000	40,000	32,500	5.170	1,142	6	
Lisle	25	40-50	CB&Q	14,000 35,000	25,000	17,500	4.547	52	8	
Lombard	22	40-50	CNW	15,000 40,000	30,000	18,500	5.446		6	
Naperville	30	45-55	CB&Q	16,000 50,000	37,500	22,000	4.902	414	7	Edwards
Oak Brook	18	30-40	CB&Q nearby	25,000 150,000	60,000	N.A.	3.547	None	8/9	
Villa Park	19	35-45	CNW	15,000 40,000	25,000	22,500	5.222	988	6	
West Chicago	33	55-65	CNW	10,000 40,000	25,000	20,000	5.381	148	6	
Western Springs	16	35-45	CB&Q	21,000 60,000	40,000	27,500	5.463	62	6	
Wheaton	26	50-60	CNW	17,500 80,000	37,500	25,000	5.307	1,367	6	



went to high school here, have met regularly through the years to talk about the events of today and yesterday and to make predictions for tomorrow. They are the regulars, dubbed the "Geritol Set", who had gathered around the counter of the Main Pharmacy each morning for their coffee and rolls. From the early 1950's local residents and businessmen met each morning. "Everybody knows everybody. If you don't—you get to know them. We get together. We decide all of the day's problems here. This is old Downers Grove . . . It's the meeting place in Downers Grove," said Helen McAlpine. In late 1981 the counter was closed, but the group has continued to meet.

In December of 1971 an eternal flame was lit in Downers Grove by a former prisoner of war on behalf of the 1,700 U.S. men missing in action or held prisoner in the Vietnam War. The flame was to burn until some resolution was made to their fate. The residents of Downers Grove were especially concerned about S/Sgt. Timothy Bodden, a Downers Grove man who had been in action in Laos since 1967.

On January 28, 1973, the ceasefire in Vietnam ended the direct involvement of U.S. ground troops in the hostilities. The Downers Grove men who lost their lives in this conflict were:

John J. Adduci	Fred Kovarik
Alan S. Boor	Hans D. Lange
Ivan Broeffle	Dennis A. Ormond
Dennis M. Dicke	Howard E. Querry
Gerald Dowjotas	Alan Timmerman
Donald L. Elza	Scott Alan Wright
Raymond G. Hengles	

On October 21, 1970, the Citizens National Bank announced plans to locate in a new building on the northeast corner of 55th and Main Streets. The three-story building would have eight drive-up windows and parking for 300 cars. This new complex was to have been built in 1971, but the angry area residents thronged to the Council meetings to block the building, and the Village Council ultimately refused the bank's request for rezoning.

The Citizens Bank stated that they had never intended leaving the downtown area but rather, had hoped to encourage the Village to expand the business district.

The Downers Grove National Bank, which had opened on the first floor of an old building on

Curtiss in September, 1955, built a glass and white structural concrete building at the corner of Main and Curtiss in 1970.

And in 1979 Citizens National built a three-story brick headquarters at the corner of Main and Burlington Streets.

Though the physical improvements in the Village have been outstanding with

- the many new school buildings
- improvements to streets and roads
- improvements in lighting
- the remodeling and updating of the railroad station to a fine transportation center
- the landscaping and beautification of the parking areas in the village
- the building of a new library building
- the remodeling and new building in the Village Center complex
- the remodeling of Lincoln School into a fine Center for community activities
- the many park sites which have been developed, as well as



Southwest corner of Main and Curtiss Street — Late 1968



Original National Bank building

—the extensive private construction in the Village, the most striking characteristic of the work of the Village and its residents has been the concerted effort to meet the needs of the people in the community.

In 1973 a group of dedicated citizens including Rev. Herb Knudsen, Leslie Miller and others under the leadership of Rick and Carla Chandler, set about to raise funds for a foster group home in Downers Grove, as a result of a study indicating a need for foster care for teenaged youth. Funds were raised from the people of the Village, the churches and the business community. The group home became a reality in 1976. A house, which serves six girls at any one time, was bought in a residential community. The group home, located at 4936 Highland Avenue, is administered by a board of directors and has two full time house parents.

During the past three decades, the service groups in the Village worked together to provide a Youth Center and youth programs for the young people of the Village. The people of Downers Grove have opened their purses year after year to support the Community, and later the United Fund, for the organizations supported by these funds. The villagers joined together to raise funds for the YMCA, worked to build a hospital, and provided programs for their senior



Main Street Depot — 1981



New Belmont T



Main Street looking south — 1981

citizens.

The Downers Grove Area YMCA was established on September 1, 1959, to serve the residents of Downers Grove, Westmont, Clarendon Hills, Woodridge, and Lisle. Originally the YMCA planned to build a facility at Washington Street and Burlington, but after a thorough study a committee recommended a larger site; and in 1961 the 17-acre property at 711—59th Street was purchased. Although the YMCA had no building, during the 1960's the organization continued to expand its programs with activities for children and adults, using facilities such as parks and schools.

In 1965 Jerrold Borg was named General Campaign Chairman to raise \$1,500,000 to erect a YMCA building. At this time the name of the Y was changed to the Indian Boundary YMCA to better describe the area served. Borg recruited a campaign team which included

John Mochel, Jr., Robert Saar, Dr. Floyd Mizener, Carol W. Jones, James Hill, Marvin Mitchell, Marvin Hendron, Robert Bartlett, Joe Wurth, Dr. Henry Luckhardt, and E.E. Osting.

The first residential campaign was led by Jack Melin and the second by Mrs. Helen Mochel.

Many corporations, small businesses, organizations, and individuals pledged funds to insure the success of the campaign. Gifts from the James and Thelma Milnes family totalled more than half a million dollars, and Irving G. Heartt, Clara Lacey, Mrs. John W. Mochel, Sr., and her son John W. Mochel, Jr. contributed \$130,000 toward the building fund.

The present YMCA facility was built in 1969 and opened in November of that year with Burton Dike, Jr. as Executive Director.

The building has a 6-lane swimming pool, saunas in the men's and women's dressing rooms, a pre-schoolers' gym, men's weight room, women's fitness center, dance room, and the Sherrill

Milnes Music Room.

At the present time the Y offers more than 150 programs for children and adults of all ages. Richard Stotz is Executive Director, and Jim Rowland is Program Director.

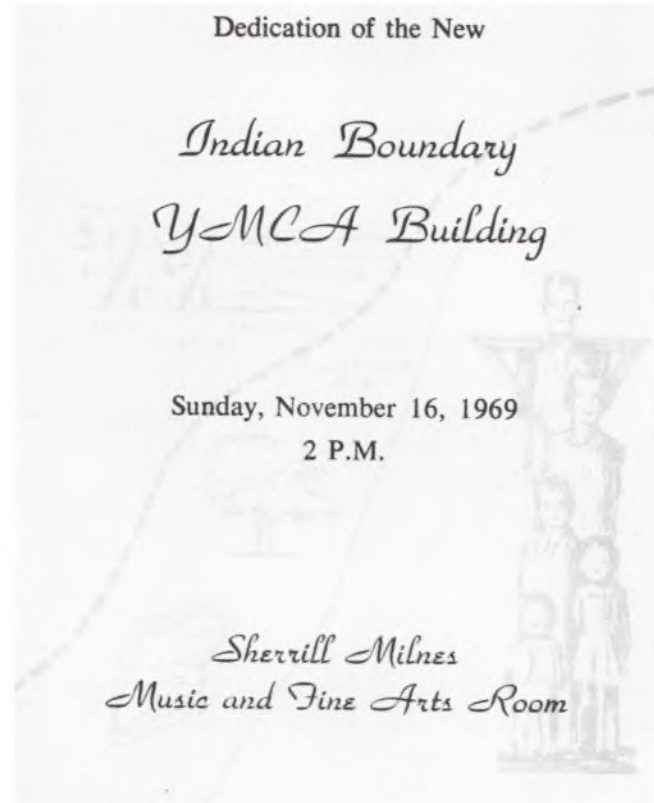
In January, 1981, the Capital Campaign to build a multi-purpose field house addition to the present facility was kicked off with Dan Kelly serving as Campaign Chairman.

In the spring of 1964, it was announced that at the invitation of the Downers Grove Area Hospital Association, Inc., the Board of Trustees of the Bethany Brethren Hospital voted to be the sponsoring agent for a new hospital to be built in the Downers Grove area. The Trustees signed a contract for the purchase of land on Highland Avenue just north of 39th Street for the hospital site. An active fund-raising campaign was launched, and a Women's Service Guild, organized under the leadership of Pauline Wandschneider, Helen Mochel and Ned Houck, soon had over 80 members from the area.

Though many citizens worked enthusiastically for the cause of a hospital in the Downers Grove area, the fund-raising drive was dropped in May of 1968 for lack of large contributions.

A year and a half later the Evangelical Hospi-

tal Association of Oak Lawn and Chicago announced plans for the construction of a hospital in Downers Grove on the 52-acre site on



Dedication Program Indian Boundary YMCA



Indian Boundary YMCA Ground Breaking — From Left: Irving Heartt, Clara Lacey, Thelma Milnes, James Milnes, Adelyn Lyness.

Highland Avenue and 39th. And in October, 1976, the doors of the Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove opened a 33 million dollar full-service hospital facility.

The intervening years have found many involved volunteers in the community working toward the completion of this Hospital. Members of the Hospital Development Campaign Committee included Ray E. Wachter, C.J. Gauthier, E. Stanley Enlund, Reverend Walter W. Lauer, Duane Borst, George Ray Hudson, Dean Spencer, Edward J. Shaw, and Dr. Morgan M. Meyer.

The first general meeting of the Good Samaritan Hospital Auxiliary was held on March 22 of 1973. Mrs. Harvey Kling, Mrs. Harold Bicek, Mrs. William Grotefeld, and Mrs. Walter Lauer were among the first members. The Good Samaritan Club, which was comprised of friends of the Hospital, also worked for the Hospital's benefit.

At the time of the dedication in October of 1976, the Executive Council consisted of: Rev. Walter W. Lauer, Chairman; Lester J. Bergmann, Secretary; G. Howard Glassford, M.D., Donald W. Jacobus, Harvey I. Kling, Margaret K. Morton, Paul F. Umbeck, D.D., and George Unverzagt, Judge. The ex-officio members were Stephen F. Kasbeer, A. Kenneth Peterson, and Rudolf G. Schade.

A. Kenneth Peterson was the Hospital Vice-President and Administrator with Philip Moore as the Asst. Administrator and Elizabeth Weseling, R.N. Asst. Administrator and Director of Nursing. The officers of the Medical Staff were G. Howard Glassford, M.D., President; Morgan Meyer, M.D., President-Elect; and Jaroslaf Fencel, M.D., Secretary-Treasurer. The officers of the Auxiliary were Mrs. Harold Bicek, President; Mrs. Donald Didrickson, President-Elect; Mrs. George Kirkpatrick, First Vice-President; Mrs. William Baier, Second Vice-President; Mrs. James Rossiter, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Robert Singer, Treasurer; Mrs. Donald Neuses, Financial Secretary; Mrs. Gerauld Hopkins, Corresponding Secretary; and Mrs. Paul Umbeck, Immediate Past President.

On March 25, 1974, the Senior Center, sponsored by the Downers Grove Park District, opened the senior citizens program at the Masonic Temple at 921 Curtiss Street. Central to the activities was the luncheon program spon-



Good Samaritan Hospital 1981



Portrait Presentation at Good Samaritan Hospital — L. to R. George E. Hedge, Harvey Kling, Rev. Walter Lauer.



Local Kiwanis greeted "Miss Peanut" to promote Kiwanis Peanut Day. From Left: Byron Goetz, Len Bennett, Herb Adams, Roy Klett, Harry Haberman with Roseleen Browne 1980.

sored by the Metropolitan YMCA and Title VIII, Older Americans Act. Hot, balanced lunches were served at the Center Monday through Friday to any citizen over 60 years of age at a minimal charge. Hot lunches were also delivered to homebound seniors by volunteers from FISH, an interdenominational group of

volunteers who provided transportation to doctors' appointments, companionship for shut-ins, as well as babysitting, food, clothing, and temporary shelter.

In addition to the the luncheon program, recreation programs were offered, including: oil painting, table games, arts and crafts, and bridge lessons as well as informational programs. The first Director of the Center was Roy Cripe.

The Park District continues to operate the Senior Center at the Lincoln Center, which is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Any person over 55 years of age is invited to participate in the many activities which include education, creative arts, recreation, health, nutrition, and social service. A community effort, the programs of the Senior Center are made possible through the contributions of the following organizations: Downers Grove Public Library, Village of Downers Grove, Downers Grove Chamber of Commerce, Downers Grove FISH, DuPage County Health Department, and the Indian Boundary YMCA. Special financial support is received from the Downers Grove Kiwanis Club, Junior Women's Club, and the Divine Savior Church.

The Senior citizens also contribute to the Center as volunteers in the program, preparing a Senior Newsletter, working as hosts and hostesses, serving the noontime meal, helping with parties, showing movies, and running their own bowling league.

The YMCA Third Age Nutrition Program of DuPage County, a co-sponsor of the Downers Grove Senior Center, continues to serve noon meals each weekday on a reservation basis at the Center, and meals are delivered to the homebound elderly by Downers Grove FISH volunteers.

Transportation by bus is made available each week on Wednesdays and Fridays. The Friday bus provides the opportunity for Seniors to go to local shopping centers immediately after lunch so they can do their marketing and return home by bus.

There is also an outreach program available to assist Seniors who have financial, legal, physical, or personal problems.

The people of Downers Grove have long had a strong sense of the history and traditions of the Village. However, it was not until 1966 that six or eight women gathered at the home of Mrs.



D.G. Historical Society Board Members at dedication ceremony marking historic Breasted home Nov. 16, 1980. From Left: Joe Robbins, John Elbe, Pauline Wandschneider, Ann Estelle Robbins, Marge Wyman, Ar-dith Thygesen, J. Walter Scott, Catherine Scott, Lockwood Martling, Bill Hannan, Jan Verveer.



Plaque presented by D.G. Historical Society Nov. 16, 1980 marking historic residence at 4629 Highland Ave., Downers Grove owned by J. Walter and Catherine Scott



Ed Bunting, Jr., Professional photographer, and photographer for the Downers Grove Historical Society

Roger Goding to organize a group for the purpose of "studying and researching history today, so that we can better understand tomorrow." Several months later the Downers Grove Historical Society was organized, and the Illinois State "not-for-profit" charter was granted May 16, 1968. Some of the early officers were Mr. and

Mrs. Roger Goding, Pauline Wandschneider, Grace Brown, Shirley Sullivan, Mrs. William Antonoff, Jr., Mrs. Louis Verveer, and Miss Lucile Bush.

The first historical museum was on the second floor of the Village Hall in 1969. A house at 842 Curtiss Street, which was purchased by the Downers Grove Park District in the fall of 1973, was used as a museum for several years. The present Historical Museum is at 831 Maple Avenue, which was the family homesite of the Israel Blodgett family. The first Blodgett home was a log cabin in the side yard of the present house. The Blodgett home which is now the Museum was built by Israel and Avis Blodgett's youngest son Charles. The grand opening of the Museum in this delightful home was on a cold, icy 30th day of January in 1977. Over three hundred people visited on this day.

The current officers of the Historical Society, 1981-1983 are Ardith Thygesen, President; Marcia Jolitz, First Vice President; Barbara Bowser, Second Vice President; Grace Dicke, Recording Secretary; and William Hannan, Treasurer. Mrs. Pauline Wandschneider is the Curator of the Historical Museum.

The Downers Grove Historical Society has worked diligently and with enthusiasm in preserving the historical artifacts and historical places, and in disseminating historical facts and information in an interesting way. Some of the services and accomplishments of the group are:

—a slide show, "Old Downers Grove," available for all age groups including the schools

—an historical one hour bus tour designed primarily for school children, although it is also available to adult groups, transportation must be furnished by the group

—special tours through the Museum for Scouts or church groups

—a sign at the entrance of the Pierce Downer Family Cemetery at the driveway at 4534 Linscott Avenue

—a bronze marker placed on the former home of James Henry Breasted, famous Egyptologist, at 4629 Highland Avenue, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Scott. The Auditorium in Lincoln Center was officially named the James Henry Breasted Auditorium in a formal dedication May 3, 1981 and marked with a bronze plaque

—the microfilming of all the issues of the Downers Grove Reporter through the State of Illi-

nois, copies were placed in the Public Library and given to the Reporter

—cooperation in planning for the Illinois Sesqui-centennial, including the preparation of a booklet as a souvenir and program

—assistance to the Junior Women's Club in furnishing the old Carpenter house at the southeast corner of Maple and Lane Place as a "General Store and Post Office" during the Bicentennial celebration

—the collection of data and the pictures of all the Mayors or Village Presidents for a display which hangs now in the main office of the Village Hall

—a reference library of local information as well as a file of historically significant information and pictures maintained at the Museum, cooperating with the Public Library in an exchange of information and serving as a resource for the Chamber of Commerce, the Village Hall and the Reporter

—Heritage Fair, held annually in Wandschneider Park at the Historical Museum

—sponsorship of the writing and publishing of a book on the history of Downers Grove, including providing historical information and pictures from the files of the Historical Society.

On Saturday, June 6, 1970, the Downers Grove Area Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) held their 12th



League of Women Voters 60th birthday celebration, L to R: Florence Teal and Carol Steckmesser.

annual book sale on Main Street. Co-chairmen for the sale were Mrs. Roberta Corbin and Mrs. Richard Sprietsma. Year in and year out, Roberta Corbin collected old books anyone wanted to donate any time at her house and then produced them at book sale time with the help of her committee.

The AAUW is an organization of the alumnae of qualified colleges and universities who unite to increase their effectiveness in working on social and civic problems in the community. Miss Lucile Bush was the charter President of the local AAUW in 1949. The proceeds from the book sale benefit the AAUW Fellowship Fund for American and foreign women. The book sale



Frank Houck

has continued and is still a traditional annual event.

In 1971 the League of Women Voters celebrated their 50th birthday in Downers Grove. In 1971 as in 1921, the League emphasized voters' service: to inform the voter of the mechanics of registration and elections, qualifications of candidates, and issues to be resolved, along with the principle of non-partisanship. Some of the officers and committee chairmen of the League in 1971 were: Mrs. Darrell G. Taylor, Mrs. James Koutny, Mrs. Robert Buchal, Mrs. Sarmukh Brar, Mrs. John Simmons, Mrs. Alexander Pawlowicz, Mrs. Rose Thro, Mrs. Thomas Mullen, Mrs. Gary Sitcer, Mrs. Thomas Craven, Mrs. Anthony Castino, Mrs. J.P. DeVries, and Mrs. Lyle Cheever.

Downers Grove as a Village prospered during the decade of the 1970's. A new Mayor, Frank Houck, was elected in 1971 and returned to office in 1975 and was succeeded in 1979 by Jon Council, who is the present Mayor in 1982.

New as Mayor, Frank Houck had served on the Downers Grove Plan Commission and had years of experience as a Village Commissioner.

The Bicentennial year of 1976, the long-anticipated 200th birthday of the nation, did not provide the most desirable set of circumstances for all-out celebration. Unemployment was high and inflation threatening. And yet, there was promise for the future. The nation was at peace and had survived the crisis of the Presidency.

Nationally, the planners of the Bicentennial had decided the celebration was to be a hometown affair. "The most important Bicentennial undertakings would bring . . . neighbors and friends together in common purpose."

In Downers Grove Mayor Frank Houck appointed a five-person Bicentennial Commission: Virginia Stehney, chairman; Elaine Reiman, JoAnn Nelson, Harry Haberman, and Douglas LaVinn, with the goal "to encourage many small celebrations by various groups in town; to facilitate communications between these groups, and to urge groups to cooperate in planning the celebrations."

The Bicentennial Commission published a newsletter *The Bicentennial Observer* on a regular basis throughout the year to make residents aware of the events in the Village. In the first issue, the Chairperson Virginia Stehney wrote:

"The celebration of the Bicentennial offers us as Americans an excellent chance to look at what is unique in our country's experience—the freedoms that we enjoy and prize, the strengths our form of government has in withstanding various abuses, the opportunities for achievement available to our citizens. This is a time to give thought to what we hold dear and want to protect and strengthen in our form of government and how it can be done. No one has ever said that a democratic way of life is easy; if we value it, we must work to keep it.

"Your local Bicentennial Commission members hope that the Bicentennial celebration will help bring people together. We urge organizations to open up their festivities to others, if at all possible, and to involve many people in the planning and implementation. Let's try to end the Bicentennial celebration feeling better about ourselves, about new friends we have made, and about our contributions to organizations to which we long, to our community . . . and to our country."

The events of the Celebration in the Village were interesting, informative, delightful, and varied. Schools, churches, and many organizations planned special programs, concerts, musicals, plays, improvisations, colonial dinners, ear-

ly crafts, festivals, fairs, fashion shows of garments of “yesteryears”. Included among the projects were:

—a beautiful Bicentennial Quilt, depicting Downers Grove history (now hanging in the Historical Museum), prepared by a group of 40 women, designed by artist Edmund J. Bingle, work coordinated by Janet Bingle, who has taught quilting in the Adult Evening School

—a magnificent mural painted on the office building south of Maple Avenue by art students of Downers Grove South High school, under the direction of Dan Modzelewski; also a poster designed by students, copies of which were sold

—“An Evening with Mr. Lincoln” slide presentation by Thomas Dyba and a showing of Dyba’s historically perfect replica of Lincoln’s house in Springfield (¼”-1’), which he has created to the minutest detail, including 105 handcarved wooden pieces of furniture with lace and floral bedspreads fashioned by Mrs. Dyba; (NOTE: this replica is now in the Lincoln Home Visitors Center in Springfield, under the National Park Service)

—an historical marker erected by the Y’s Men’s Club marking the original Indian Boundary, on the northwest corner of Wandschneider Park (where the Historical Museum is located)

—a slide presentation on the Burlington Railroad and its effect on the growth of Downers Grove, prepared by Roger and Evelyn Naser

—an Oral History Seminar

—the Oratorio Society’s special Bicentennial Concert

—the theme “Our Heritage” for the Woman’s Club 1975-76 year

—decorative fireplugs, resulting from the “Paint-a-Plug” project sponsored by Citizens National Bank

—a suggestion from the Garden Club “Let’s celebrate through our gardens”

—a program of Ukranian Concert and Folk Dancing, arranged by St. Andrews Ukranian Church

—“An Evening of Americana” by the Grove Players

—“Heritage Days” activities including an Artists Guild show, historical tours, an old-fashioned “Family Day in the Park” coordinated by the Park District and Jr. Women’s Club

—participation of Terry Cox, teacher at North High, in the re-enactment of the 1681-82

LaSalle expedition called LaSalle: Expedition II; during 1976-77 when Cox was on leave from the high school

—a “General Store and Post Office” in several rooms of the old Carpenter House at the southeast corner of Maple and Lane Place, a project of the Junior Women’s Club assisted by the Historical Society

—“American Women in History” materials prepared by the AAUW

—a commemorative book containing 120 pages of Downers Grove historic photographs; conceived and designed by Bob Manning, graphic designer and professor at Institute of Technology, assisted by his wife Mary Manning, a freelance commercial artist, and Ross Johnson, who helped with financing and printing

—arrangements for a concert by the London (England) Schools Symphony Orchestra, through contacts by local resident Brian Mosley, very hard work by Alan Roselieb and the Parent Boosters for the Downers Grove South High School Marching Mustangs Band; this orchestra gave concerts at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, the Granada Theater in Santa Barbara, the Masonic Auditorium in San Francisco, the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles—and the South High auditorium in Downers Grove!

—a Bicentennial scrapbook record of Village and organizational events and projects kept by Hazel Broadus and presented to the Historical Museum; Hazel Broadus and her husband Gene were responsible for the fine quality of the newsletter, the **Bicentennial Observer**.

Though prices were kept low for the commemorative book and posters, some profit was made. The money was donated to three projects which would have long-term benefits: continued

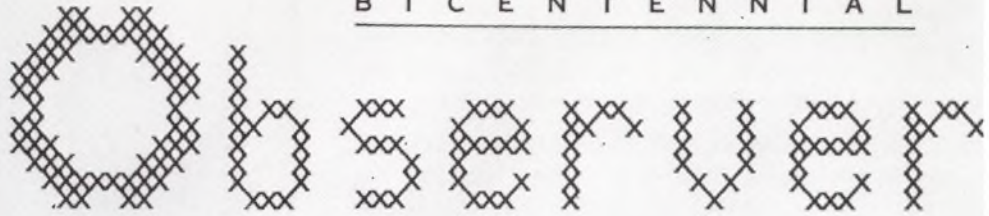


Bicentennial Fireplug Photo: Robert Dunham





B I C E N T E N N I A L



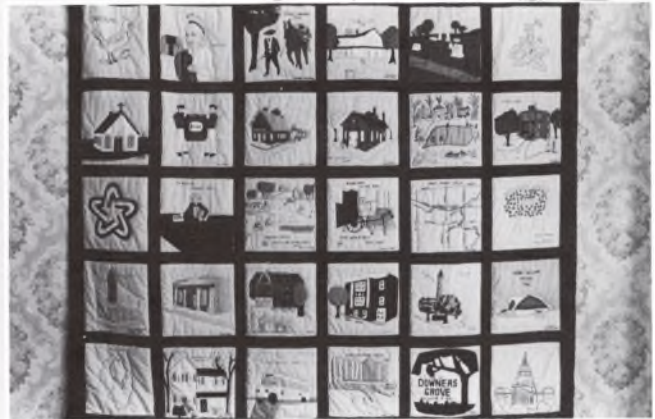
Volume I – No. 1

November 1975

★ LOGO PRIZE WINNERS ★



Mayor Frank Houck; Mrs. Gordon Goodman; Jessica Goodman



Bicentennial Quilt (property of Downers Grove Historical Society)



Bicentennial Mural, formerly on building at 5329 Main Street



Poster by Monique Aduddell, Rick Cristofaro, Kim Fuka



Bicentennial Freedom Train in Downers Grove. Priceless documents like the Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence, Emancipation Proclamation and Gettysburg Address were among the hundreds of documents aboard. (Photo by James Dunham)



Bicentennial Train (Photo by James Dunham)

Bicentennial projects of the Historical Society, the beautification program of the downtown area, and the purchase of the Belmont Prairie.

In addition to the five Bicentennial Commissioners, others who worked on the Bicentennial committees included:

Jim Bockelman  
 Bill Boyd  
 Bob Brader  
 Hazel and Gene Broadus  
 Rosemary Crump  
 James Dooley  
 Thomas & Lorraine Dyba  
 George Eckdahl  
 Linda & Michael Fisher  
 Friendship Club—South High School  
 James Hathaway  
 Tim Hudson  
 Ross Johnson  
 Bob & Mary Manning  
 Harold Mitchell  
 Dan Modzelewski  
 John Moler  
 Brian Mosey  
 Evelyn & Roger Naser  
 Ken Nelson  
 Alan Roselieb  
 Marge Wyman



Jack Bowers

And, of course, many other people worked on innumerable projects and programs through schools, churches, and various organizations.

Jack Bowers of Downers Grove was elected to the Illinois State Senate in 1976 and continues to represent the 41st Senatorial District. He has served on the Local Government Committee, Senate Judiciary I, and Senate Judiciary II and as the Republican spokesman on this last committee. He served in the Illinois House of Representatives from 1964-69.

Since 1952 Bowers has been engaged in the

general practice of law and is presently a partner in the firm of Bowers, Carney, Wiedel and Slansky. He served as an Assistant States Attorney and a State's Attorney of DuPage County and as Village Attorney for Downers Grove as well as several other municipalities.

Jack Bowers is our eighth citizen to serve in the Illinois General Assembly. The previous legislators were:

Jeduthan Hatch, 1842-44  
 William M. Whitney, 1870-72  
 Victor Fredenhagen, 1874-1876  
 Charles Curtiss, 1886-1888



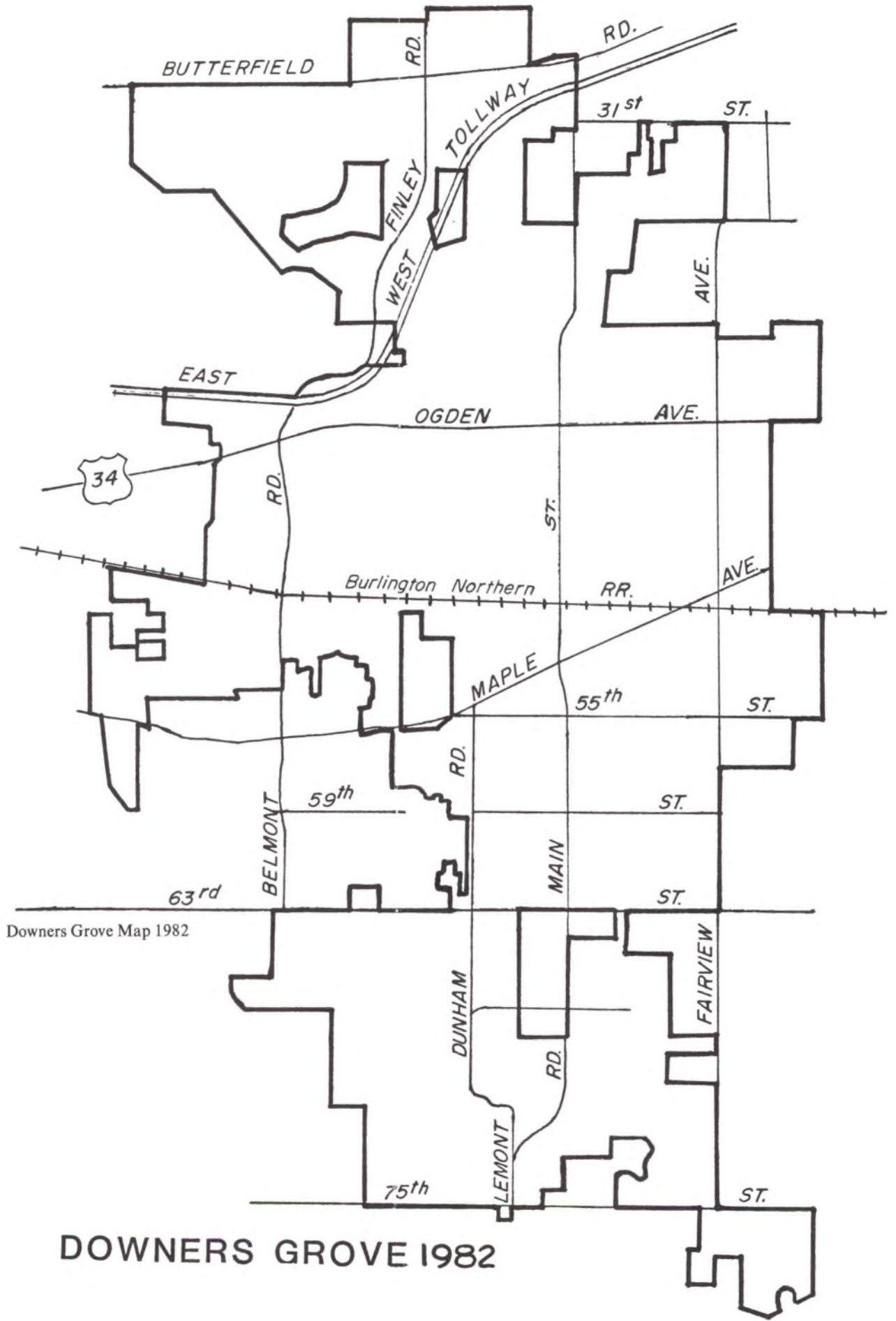
Oak Tree Towers — corner Forest and Warren D.G. National Bank drive-in on the corner, not part of the apartments, opened in 1977



Immanuel Residences (senior citizens apartments) Gilbert Ave. west of Forest Ave. opened 1981

Guy Bush, 1898-1910  
 Lottie Holman O'Neill, 1922-30; 1932-63  
 Fred Anderson, 1957-59

The 1970's saw the remodeling of the Burlington Northern train station and its environs into a modern, efficiently-designed Transportation Center. Parking areas were improved and designed to be aesthetically pleasing. The new Village Complex was completed, with the Village Hall being remodeled into a fine, commodi-



Downers Grove Map 1982

**DOWNERS GROVE 1982**

ous facility and a splendid new Police Department headquarters built nearby. The new entrance to the Village Hall, the parkways, lighting, walkways, and green parklike lawns provide the setting of a village green. During this same time the new modern public library was built on the site of the previous building.

The first senior citizen housing in the Village, the Oak Tree Towers on Warren between Forest and Saratoga, was completed in the summer of 1977. The former Grant Dicke Fire Station, after extensive remodeling, became a recreation facility for the residents of the Oak Tree Towers. The United Church Residences, apartments for senior citizens, one building at 1122 Gilbert and the other at 3737 Highland, were opened in the winter of 1981.

Merchants in five new shopping centers joined the business community in serving the Village and surrounding community: the Downers Grove Market on Ogden Avenue at Saratoga; Downers Grove Plaza, also on Ogden Avenue; Finley Square on Butterfield Road at Finley Road; Meadowbrook Shopping Center on 63rd Street, and Downers Grove Park Plaza at 75th and Lemont Road.

Downers Grove has a distinctive record of services which it had provided to its citizens. In the March 26, 1980, supplement to the *Suburban Trib*, dedicated to "Downers Grove—Traditional Yet Innovative", it was written, "In its direct services or actions affecting the people, Downers Grove has pioneered in the following areas:

The village provided and financed its own bus service in the mid-70's before the RTA began to subsidize suburban bus service. Downers Grove's bus service still operates independently of the RTA.

The Downers Grove Health and Human Resources Department was one of the first and still is one of few municipal social services in the state. Begun as a youth counseling service for the police department, it now has expanded into a service for counseling and assisting families and senior citizens as well.

The police department's selective Traffic Enforcement Program concentrates patrols by policemen and community service officers in areas of the village where statistics show that traffic accidents occur most frequently. The program is funded solely by the village.

Downers Grove adopted the first antivandalism ordinance in DuPage County that places the financial responsibility for an act of vandalism directly on the offender. Most other ordinances designate parents responsible for acts of vandalism committed by minors.

Downers Grove adopted the first comprehensive antismoking law in the country. Sponsored by former village council member Harry Spataro, the ordinance bans cigarette smoking at public meetings conducted by the village; in village buses; in elevators; in any building where the village determines smoking would be a fire hazard; in hospitals, except for specifically posted areas; and in specifically designated areas of restaurants.

In 1972 the village instigated one of the first programs in Illinois on flood control management and preservation of flood-plain areas.

Downers Grove citizens with complaints about their neighbors or unsightly property in their neighborhoods may air their grievances before a community maintenance board of village resi-



James Griesemer, Village Manager with Jon Council, Mayor 1982



Village Council 1982, Top: Betty Cheever, Jon Council, William Brennan, Everette Glas, James Kmetz.

dents. After hearing both sides of an issue, the board attempts to solve the problem without any involvement by the police department.”

In addition, the opportunity is provided for residents of the Village to visit informally with the Council at “Coffee with the Council”, held on the third Saturday of each month from 10:00 to noon. This is a joint program of the Village and the Chamber of Commerce.

In 1982 accomplishments of the Village are continuing and developing under the leadership of Mayor Jon Council and Commissioners William Brennan, Betty Cheever, Everette Glas, and James Kmetz, with the assistance of the boards and commissions of the Village and the Village administrative staff under the direction of Village Manager James Griesemer.

Community life in today’s Downers Grove is varied and active. The residents of the Village continue to be involved in many organizations and clubs, as shown by the following list. . .

The following is a list of many organizations and clubs which are active in Downers Grove. This is a representative list, not intended to include every organized group in the Village. For more complete information on these and other groups, you may contact the Downers Grove area Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Legion Post #80  
American Legion Post #80 Auxiliary  
Artists’ Guild  
Boy Scouts of America—West Suburban Council  
Business & Professional Women’s Club  
Camera Club of Downers Grove  
Camp Fire Girls  
Choral Aires Chapter Sweet Adelines, Inc.  
Civil Air Patrol D.G. Squadron  
Civil Air Patrol (Cherokee Composite Squadron)  
Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)  
Downers Grove Area Chamber of Commerce  
Downers Grove Concert Association  
Downers Grove Junior Women’s Club  
Downers Grove Music Club  
Downers Grove Nurses Club

The Downers Grove Oratorio Society  
Downers Grove Township Regular Democratic Organization  
Downers Grove Township Republican Men’s Organization  
Downers Grove Newcomers Club  
Downers Grove Theatre Guild  
Downers Grove Woman’s Club  
Downers Grove Women’s Republican Club  
Eastern Star  
Easter Seal Guild  
Elks Lodge #2242  
Friends of the Library  
Garden Club of Downers Grove  
Girl Scout Group—North  
Girl Scout Group—South  
Good Samaritan Hospital Auxiliary  
Grove Players (D.G. Civic Theatre)  
Historical Society—Downers Grove  
Indian Boundary Y’s Men’s Club  
Infant Welfare Society  
International Order of Job’s Daughters  
Jaycees  
Kiwanis Club  
Morning Kiwanis Club  
Knights of Columbus  
League of Women Voters  
Leo Club  
Noon Lions Club  
Masonic Order of Demolay  
Masonic Grove Lodge #824, A.F. & A.M.  
Masonic Grove Chapter #230 R.A.M.  
Mustang Boosters—Downers Grove South High School  
Loyal Order of the Moose, #1535  
Parents Without Partners—Ogden Trails Chapter #185  
Rotary Club of Downers Grove  
Royal Neighbors of America  
Seniors—Lincoln Center, I.D.’s—Lunches  
Senior Friendship Club  
Toastmasters Club (Downers Grove)  
Trojan Boosters of Downers Grove North High School  
United Way of Downers Grove /Darien/ Lisle/Westmont/Woodridge  
V.F.W. #503  
V.F.W. Auxiliary #503  
V.F.W. Junior Girls  
Women’s Christian Temperance Union  
YMCA  
Young Single Parents—Western Chapter

## Photo Collection



Guy Brown, principal of Washington School for 25 years, after whom the memorial gymnasium was named



Zella Morehouse former principal of Lincoln school for nearly 30 years



Avis Pitcher Moore educator, consultant, author, and long time resident



William G. Pohlmann, local choir director for North High School. He started the a cappella choir and composed music for his choirs



Clarence Shoemaker, band director of North High School for many years. He was also very active in community affairs



Helen Cleveland (Mrs. William) long time language teacher and counsellor at D.G. North High School and very active in community affairs



Charlotte Anderson, Dean of Girls at North High School for 42 years of dedicated service



Marching Mustangs Drill Team  
Downers Grove South High School 1980



Huck Finn cast of North High School on the steps of the D.G. Historical Museum.



Downer family with friends and neighbors on a nutting party at the Arboretum. Top Row From Left: Jim Downer, Nellie Downer, Eddie Archer, John Wolfersheim, John Wolfersheim Jr., Earl Downer, Mrs. Wolfersheim, Walter Staats, Harry Wolfersheim, Lillian (standing). Front Row: Alice Clements, Ruth Clements, Ethel Clements, Lillian Downer (Eickhorst), Lucy Lindley, Henrietta Staats (Winter), Clara Glenn, Hazel Staats Wolf, Mrs. Emma Staats and Mr. Chris Staats.

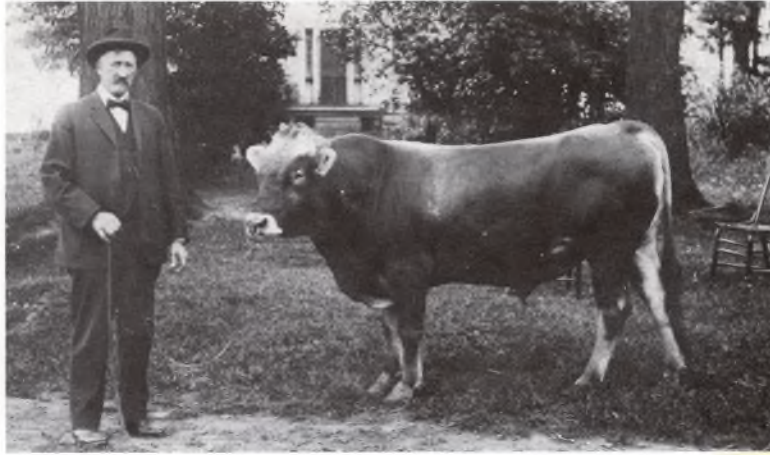


Downer Family Reunion circa 1902, Back Row: Helen Downer, Ruth Ellen Downer, Martha Downer Slusser, \_\_\_\_\_, Matte Downer, Lucy Lindley, Marie \_\_\_\_\_, Pierce, Jr. 3rd Row: Melville B. Downer, Adeline Summers Downer, Nellie Archer Downer, Ellen Knox Downer, John D. Downer, Rose L. Deuel Downer, 2 children unknown. 1st Row: Lillian E. Downer Eickhorst, \_\_\_\_\_, Earl Downer, Gertrude Downer Duner, Henry M. and George Orson (twins) Melville B. Downer.





Art and Lula Stanley Cole, daughter of John and Lucy Naramore Stanley



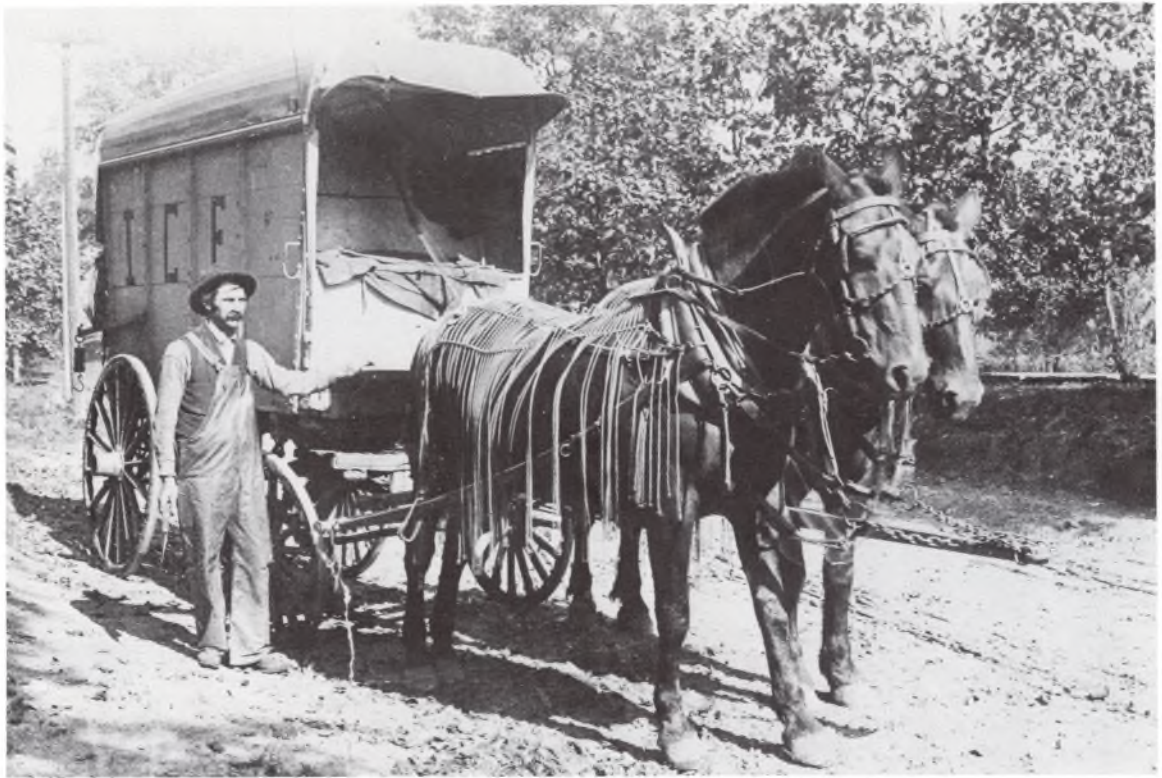
James Pierce Downer with prize bull



George B. Heartt father of Irving Heartt taken before Civil War



Selig sisters, owners and managers of Selig Sisters store, 1909-1969 in downtown Downers Grove



Mr. Zarn with ice wagon 1910. Company was owned by Irving Heartt



Mr. Piper, hired man, with milk can. Earl Downer on grandmother's lap. Ellen Downer, Earl's mother, standing. House was built in 1840s on site of the log cabin which was the original Downer home.  
Pierce Downer Family House on 4437 Seeley Avenue.



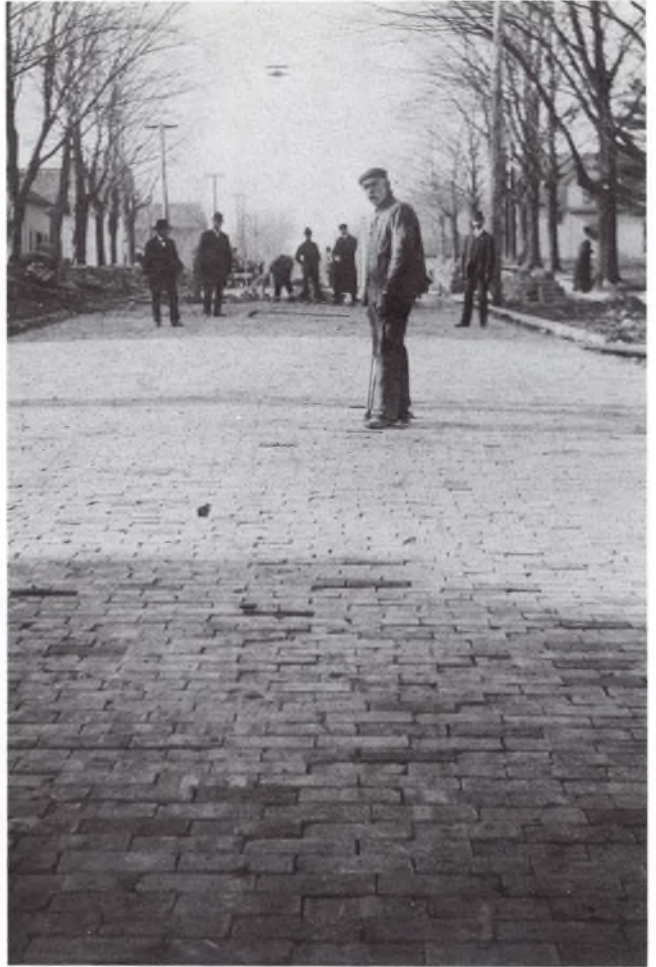
1932 Centennial Celebration in Downers Grove



1932 Centennial Celebration parade on Main Street looking north



Civil War veterans at the Centennial Celebration



Laying bricks on Maple Ave. in front of Lincoln School



Even an airplane arrived to add to the excitement of the Centennial Celebration



Frieda Dicke



Walnut gahtering aptry near Arboretum. Downer and Staats families

I AM A BOOSTER FOR MY TOWN AND BELIEVE THAT I AM ENTITLED TO HAVE A PART IN CELEBRATING THE 100th BIRTHDAY OF DOWNERS GROVE.

I will contribute \$.....Cents. which I agree to pay on or before May 28. Payment will entitle me to a window and auto sticker.

Signed.....

Address.....

Phone No.....

Downers Grove Centennial Booster Card

# CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS



Centennial parade on Main Street looking south



Centennial parade looking north and showing old freight depot and RR tracks



Centennial parade — 1932 — On Main Street across from the old Village Hall



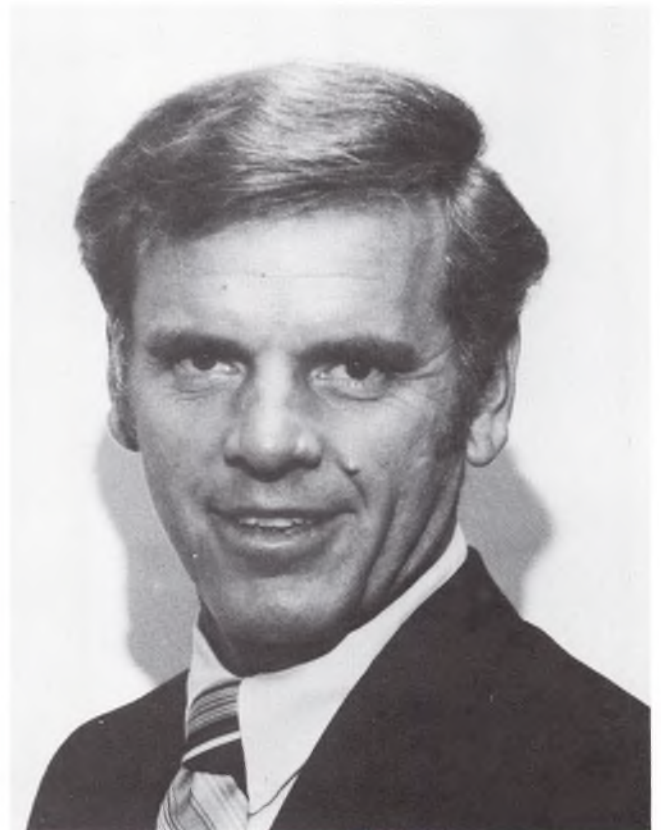
Centennial parade 1932, combined grade and high school band



Charles Johnson, current Superintendent of Schools



James Freese, current Principal of Downers Grove South High School



Larry E. Bowers, current Principal of Downers Grove North High School





Adelyn Lyness, Organist



Marion Lower, Organist



Marge Lukes, long-time resident and journalist.



Carrie Tandaric (Mrs. Edward) current artist 1980



John R. Powers, author of "Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?"





Clara Lacey, descendant of early settlers and civic contributor

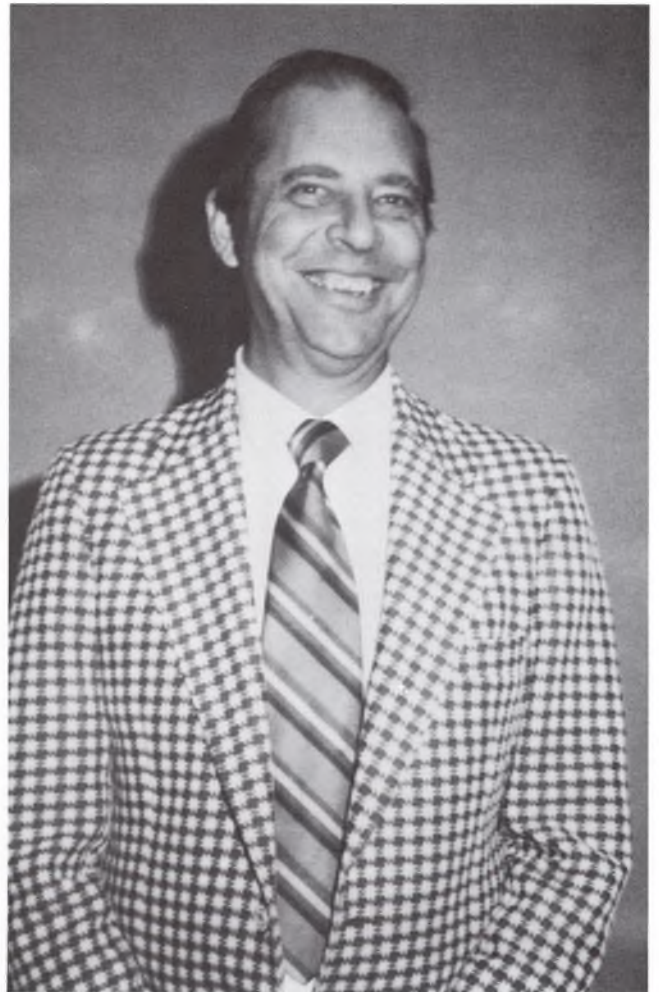
Marie Tea, a primary force behind the Well Baby Clinic



Robert Goold, School Board President, Chairman of School Board Caucus and present Chairman Board of Fire and Police Commissioners



Mary Kirkpatrick, Woman's Club past president, Good Samaritan Auxiliary past president and Heritage Festival General Chairman



Alan Soukup, Community Leader



John and Nancy Prickett Schwemm



Judge William Edward Hooper



Jean Maack, Teacher, Community Leader



Rev. W. Hamilton Sinclair,  
Baptist Minister, retired



Bill and Helen Cleveland, Teachers



Donn R. Armstrong



Bart and Dorothy Herrick Family



Richard and Joan Hamlin, President Geo.  
Williams College



Florence and Elmer Herrick Family



Rex Porter, former city treasurer and commissioner with wife Ella, author and teacher



Margaret and Clarence Godshalk



Myrtle and Clarence Johnson, retired principal of North High School



Lucile Bush, retired teacher and descendant of first families of Downers Grove, Community Leader.



Dave Humphreys



Mary Ann Humphreys



Herbert and Esther Adams, retired principal of North High School



Downers Grove Authors' Festival May 1981. Local authors Don Lawson and Ella Williams Porter pictured. They and local author Montrew Dunham were joined by area authors Jennifer Bartoli, Ann Bishop, Robert Crowe, Tom Dunnington, Seymour Fleishman, Dorothy Haas, Carol Lerner, Tom McGowen, Stella Pevsner, Rod Ruth, Mary Frances Shura, Muriel Stanek, Glennette Tilly Turner and Jerry Warshaw.



Dr. Richard Hamlin, President of George Williams College, and Jon Council, Mayor



Bon voyage party for Clarence Johnson with Herb Adams



Barbara Barnes, choral director for many years at both D.G. High Schools



Jack Bowles, teacher and Dean for many years at both D.G. High Schools



Helen Cleveland, counselor and teacher at North High School for many years with Wayne Guthrie, Director of Guidance



Larry Bowers, Gerry Thompson, Secretary, Herbert Adams, Principal of North High School



Dinner meeting at North High School — From Left: Charlotte Drees Anderson, Wayne Guthrie, Elaine Reiman, Clarence Johnson, Marjorie Wyman, Glen Reiman, Rosalind Guthrie, Charles Wyman.



Marilyn Wilgocki, Director of Quaternotes



Byron and Dorothy Goetz



Elmer Anderson, current commander of American Legion



Clifford H. Blatchley High Priest R.A.M. #230



Julianne Schwemer President, Good Samaritan Auxiliary



Helen Case (Mrs. Harry) long time civic leader



Margaret Johnson (Mrs. Ralph) currently involved in DuPage Senior Citizens



Gary R. Bayles, Worshipful Master, Masonic Lodge #824 (standing in picture)



Mrs. James Albright Regent DAR 1982



Rolle Burgeson, Worthy Matron, Vesta Chapter #242 Order of Eastern Star



Frank Schwantes, Governor Downers Grove Moose Lodge



Lois Perrine (Mrs. Martin) current president of Downers Grove Woman's Club



Bill Larson — President Downers Grove Jaycees



Kitty Griffin, current president League of Women Voters of Downers Grove and Woodridge



Marvin G. Ronaldson, President Downers Grove Evening Lions Club



Jane Montgomery (Mrs. John) President — The Garden Club of Downers Grove



Hayden Flaughter, Worthy Patron, Eastern Star



Richard Yates, owner of Giesche's Shoe Store, with Gil Testa, employee since store opened in 1936. Picture 1975



Marshall J. Lang Lions Club President 1962, Chamber of Commerce President 1969, Merchant



John Lehmann, grocer and active citizen



Phoebe Dutcher, County Recorder



John Lehmann and Al Jensen, shown in 1969 at which time they were two of the oldest members of the Chamber of Commerce



Kiwanis Club members collecting aluminum cans for recycling.



Mrs. Alice Payne (or Paine) 1932 chairman Centennial history





Old Crescy Auditorium, Grove and Main Streets



Baker Motor Service truck



Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Mochel and son Rudolph in front of their new barbershop on Main St. 1916



Cloverleaf Dairy, Lehmann's Grocery and Dicke Building — Forest Ave. north of the tracks 1969



New and old railroad stations, Main Street, before 1947



Larry Long (on right) current president of Downers Grove Chamber of Commerce. Rev. Ken Stewart of 1st Presbyterian Church on left



Gilbert and Marge Mochel, Community Leaders



Paul R. Backlund, Exalted Ruler of the Downers Grove Elks Club



Jim Rehnquist, current president of Evening Kiwanis Club



Jack Winter, owner-publisher of Downers Grove Reporter

## SCHOOLS

In 1836 Israel Blodgett built a lean-to against his log cabin to house a school which would provide an education for his own children and a few others who welcomed the opportunity to attend school. It is said that 12-year-old Mary Blodgett was the teacher in this schoolroom until Hiram Stillson (or Willson), who had attended Oberlin College, was hired to teach the Blodgett children and those of Blodgett's neighbors.

Another early school was built by Dexter Stanley on a part of his land, and it is written that Nancy Stanley Bush was the first teacher in the district\* when she taught in this school in 1837.

The first schools were supported by subscription. The pioneer parents paid whatever they could spare for the expenses of the school; and school was in session, weather permitting, when there was not urgent work to be done on the land.

One winter school was open a scant three weeks because of the low prices for produce. Oats were selling at ten cents per bushel and had to be delivered to market in Chicago. Pork brought three or four cents per pound, dressed and delivered to Chicago.

In about the year 1837-38 a school was opened in a house built by John Wallace, and George Carpenter taught here one winter. L.K. Hatch taught a school in what was then known as the "Norwegian House" or the old shoe shop, which stood some distance west of the Blanchard place.

In 1838 a schoolhouse was built on the west side, and Mr. Sherman taught the first year. The children came from far and near. The teachers who followed Mr. Sherman were: Mr. Slawson, E.W. Curtiss, L.K. Hatch, and Amos Adams.

\*This district is used in the sense of area rather than school district which was not formed until 1839.

Many young men started their careers by teaching for a year or two.

Walter Blanchard, in his account, said that "the first school in this town was started in 1839, and taught by Norman G. Hurd. It was kept in the back part of a log house, owned by Mr. Samuel Curtis. This was a private enterprise, and by shifting from one old building to another, the school was kept going from five to six months during the year for some four years."

"In December, 1839, since the Downers Grove area had no school district as yet, the county commissioners appointed Lauren Havens, Israel P. Blodgett and Robert Dixon as trustees."

In 1846 a redivision of school districts in the county took place, and Downers Grove became a recognized school district. A site was purchased at Maple and Dunham Roads, and a small frame one-room schoolhouse was built. O.P. Hathaway was hired to teach the first school in this new district and was followed by H.L. Litchfield, J.M. Valette, Mr. Dayton, and M.B. Gregory. Miss Mary Blodgett also taught here and Miss Annis Gilbert (later Mrs. Annis Gilbert Paige). Captain T.S. Rogers, later the President of the Downers Grove Village Board, served as teacher in this one-room school, and his brother J.W. Rogers taught here for a term or two.

County School Commissioner Hope Brown in his annual report of 1855 said:

"The schools have generally been taught from six to eight months during the year. The wages of teachers have been, for females from eight to sixteen dollars per month and board; for males, from sixteen to thirty per month and board. It is an omen of good, that there is a disposition to give to teachers better remuneration for their services than they have received in past years."



Lincoln School and addition



Washington School and addition

After the one-room school had served for twenty-one years, a new brick two-room school was erected in 1867 by Directors John Thatcher, John Stanley, and Gardner Paige, on the site which later became Lincoln School on Maple Avenue. The cost for completely equipping the new classrooms was a total of \$552.

The number of students increased rapidly, and by 1873 a room was rented on Main Street for additional classroom space. The school was graded in 1876 and a ten-year course of instruction adopted, including two years of high school work.

Due to rapid increase in the population of the Village and the growth of the number of students in school, in 1877 two additional rooms were added to Lincoln School, and the first class of five members was graduated in 1879.

The citizens voted in 1890 to organize a Board

of Education, at which time the enrollment was 166 boys and 176 girls at the elementary level and three boys and 42 girls in the high school.

As a result of a special election another site was purchased on Washington Street north of the Burlington tracks in 1891; and two-room Washington School was built. Just two years later two more rooms were added.

The north section of Lincoln School was built in 1900 in front of the original four-room building, and in 1913 this original building was razed, and a high school was built to the rear of Lincoln Grade School. This high school building was used until the Community High School was built in 1928.

The following schedule shows the construction dates for school buildings and additions for Districts 58 and 99.

### CONSTRUCTION DATES FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND ADDITIONS — DISTRICT 99

SCHOOL	ORIGINAL	ADD. #1	ADD. #2	ADD. #3	ADD. #4
NORTH H.S. 4436 Main St. D.G.	1928 (Original & Boiler Bldg.)	1935 (2 stories) (to west)	1938 (New Gym-) (1 floor-) (South of) (1935 Add.)	1953 (2nd & 3rd) (floor over) (1935 Add.)	1957 (Auditorium/foyer- New Boys' Gym)
SOUTH H.S. 1436 Norfolk	1964	1969 (Northeast-) (3 stories) (completed) (square around) (courtyard)			

THIRD HIGH SCHOOL SITE at Woodridge Dr. & Center Dr. in Woodridge still not built upon.

## CONSTRUCTION DATES FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND ADDITIONS — DISTRICT 58

SCHOOL	ORIGINAL	ADD. #1	ADD. #2	ADD. #3
BELLE AIRE	1969			
EL SIERRA	1969			
FAIRMOUNT	1959	1966	1973	
HIGHLAND	1952	1957		
HILLCREST	1952	1957	1962	
INDIAN TRAIL	1967			
KINGSLEY	1963			
LESTER	1956	1959		
**LONGFELLOW	1928	1951		
PIERCE DOWNER	1952	1959	1967	
**WASHINGTON	1891/93	1924	1927	1951
(back portion of old section demolished in 1924/27 — last of old section demolished in 1951)				
WHITTIER	1928	1951	1960	
HERRICK JR. HIGH	1953	1955	1962	1967
O'NEILL JR. HIGH	1957	1962	1967	
**RE: Washington School — one wall of old section in basement remains where gym joins 1924 addition.				
LINCOLN	1900	1913		

(SOLD TO DOWNERS GROVE PARK DISTRICT — 1974 — NOW LINCOLN CENTER)

\*\*Longfellow & Washington Schools are currently not used by District 58 for school purposes — but are rented to private/church schools and SASSED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) rents the upper floor of Washington School — Districts 58/99 are members of the SASSED Cooperative.



Alex R. Pawlowicz, Principal  
Kingsley Elementary School



Lawrence Bending, Principal  
Lester Elementary School



Stuart L. Johnson, Principal  
Pierce Downer Elementary School



Vernon T. Langley, Principal  
Indian Trail Elementary School



Norman Crandus, Principal  
Hillcrest Elementary School



Longfellow Elementary School



Washington Elementary School



F. Gregg Rybinski, Principal  
Belle Aire Elementary School



Everest A. Green, Principal  
Whittier Elementary School



Robert E. Gullborg, Principal  
El Sierra Elementary School



Donald J. Del Bene, Principal  
Highland Elementary School



Ronald F. Hale, Principal  
Fairmount Elementary School



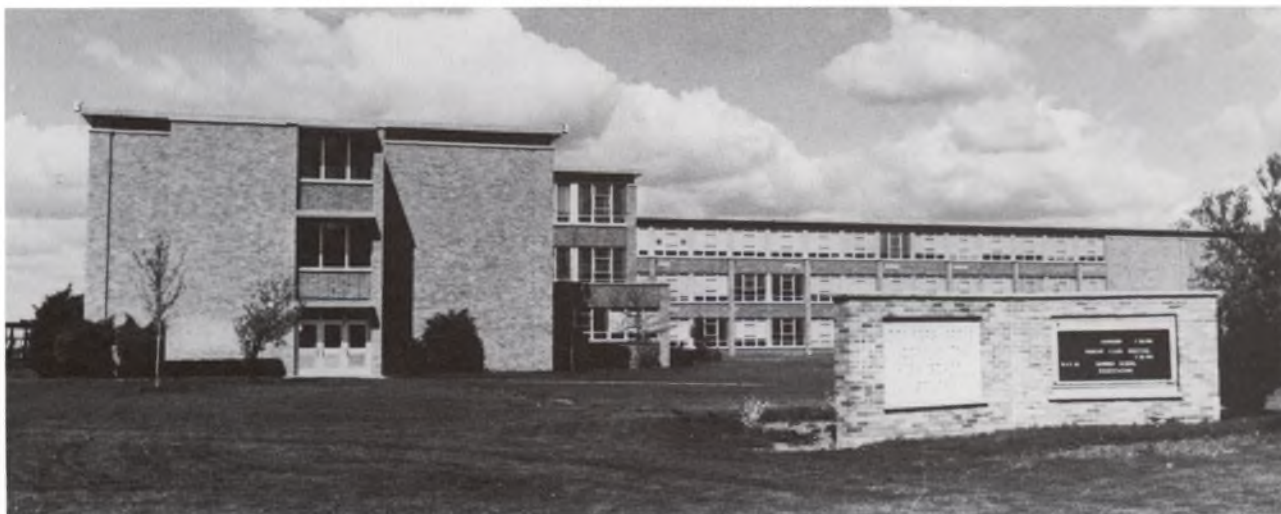
John A. Johnson, Principal  
Herrick Junior High School



Daniel L. Mahaffey, Principal  
O'Neill Junior High School



Larry E. Bowers, Principal  
Downers Grove Community High School — North 1982 Main Street View



James L. Freese, Principal  
Downers Grove Community High School — South 1982 Dunham Road View

## DOWNERS GROVE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

prior to 1923	George C. Butler Kenneth M. Snapp John F. Reed
1923-1931	Ernest Eiler
1931-1949	George DeWolf
1949-1953	Jack Elzay
1953-1957	Jack Harris
1957-1973	Glenn Pickrel
1973-1979	Arthur Wiscombe
1979-	Charles Johnson

### District #58—SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

prior to 1946	C.B. Campbell
prior to 1946	Allen B. Bernsten
prior to 1946	William P. Lehmann
prior to 1946	Irene Godchalk
1947-1949	R.P. Makela
1946-?	Charles F. Ely
1948-1949	R.E. Wachter
prior to 8/46-1953	J.B. Nichol
prior to 8/46-1951	James M. Lewis
prior to 3/49-1950	George D. Kelley
prior to 1946-1952	W.D. Herrick
1949-1955	Ben F. Powell
1949-1953	Edward P. Zimdars
1950-1952	Helen Alderman
1952-1953	Alice B. Dickson
1950-1957	William H. Ellsworth
1951-1954	Eugene A. Foster
1952-1955	Clarence E. Spicer
1953-1959	Russell Fernald
1953-1958	Raymond A. Lane
1953-1959	Charlotte Steinhauer
1954-1957	Jack C. Foster
1955-1961; 1962	Robert C. Goold
1955-1958	Andrew F. Stehney
1956-1960	Donald H. Wallingford
1957-1960	Joann M. Case
1958-1961	Frank G. Foote
1959-1965	C. Ronald Fairs
1959-1965	Marie E. Cooper
1959-1965	Karl Mattil
1960-1964	Emerson Pugh
1960-1966	Donald W. Jacobus
1961-1967	B.M. Whitlock
1961-1962	Donald R. Klusman
1963-1970	Henry R. Hoekstra
1964-1965	Wesley T. Johnson
1965-1972	Maynard Beil
1965-1972	John Schwemm
1965-1966	Ann Thacher
1965-1969	Kevin M. Myles
1966-1971	Todd Moore
1967-1971	Avis Moore (Mrs. Robert)
1967-1969	Carmen McDonald
1969-1971	Raymond C. Wingard
1970-1973	Maryanne Olson
1970-1973	Laurence Meyer

1974-1976	Laurence Meyer
1969-1970	Wayne K. Anderson
1971-1974	Randall S. Hintz
1971-1973	Theodore Puckorius
1971-1972	James W. Graves
1972-1975	Robert G. Tobey
1972-1974	Nancy Peraino (Mrs. Carl)
1973	Muriel B. Stone
1972-1979	Jacob Sedlet
1973-1978	Nancy Otterness
1974-1980	John M. Kikta
1974-1977	John A. Crane
1974-1977	Roberta M. Corbin
1975-1977	James E. Doty
1976-1979	Ronald B. Williams, Jr.
1977-(1983)	Joanne F. Cleveland
1977-1978	Bohdan T. Pruski
1977-1981	David W. Green
1978-(1984)	Diane Grund
1978-1980	John F. Torres
1979-(1982)	Sandra Reetz
1979-(1982)	Lucia Salman
1980-(1983)	Fredric W. Meek
1980-(1983)	Earlene Larson
1981-(1984)	Philip E. Mowbray

### District #99—SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

1923-1950	W.D. Herrick
1941-1947	Edna Doster (Mrs. Bruce)
prior to 1949-1951	H.A. Erffmeyer
1948-1952	Margaret Goodell (Mrs. Phillips Goodell)
prior to 1950-1952	James M. Lewis
prior to 1950-1954	E.L. Groat
1957-1958	
1950-1953	Frank W. Ahalt
1951-1957	Harlow W. Gregory
1951-1959	Donn R. Armstrong
1952-1955	Alice B. Dickson
1952-1955	Herbert A. Gaetjens
1952	Helen G. Alderman
1952-1958	John B. Sallemi
9/52-4/53	Clarence Spicer
1953-1959	Fred H. Eickemeyer
1954-1957	Iona A. Slepicka
1955-1958	Roberta M. Corbin
1955-5/57	Warren W. Lebeck
1957-1963	Albert H. Bowers
1957-1960	Howard H. Koltz
12/61-4/62	Howard H. Koltz
1958-12/61	C.E. Hacklander
1958-1961	Edward J. Doerhoefer
1958-1961	Charles W. Schoenberg
1959-1962	Charlotte Steinhauer
1959-2/60	Lyle F. Yerges
1961-1964	Lyle F. Yerges
1960-1966	Albert S. Rouffa
1960-1965	Winston M. Manning
1961-70	Mauritz E. Gahlon
1962-1965	Mary T. Soddy
1962-9/63	Jordan T. Weills



1963-1966	Roy L. Crone
1964-12/64	Warren T.A. Geary
9/63-1970	Allen R. Campbell
1965-1/66	Dennis L. Lane
1/65-1970	Norman C. Mindrum
1965-1968	Duane R. Borst
1/66-1971	Harvey I. Kling
1966-1969	Richard A. Swick
1966-1981	Harold W. Johanson
1968-1971	G. Howard Glassford
1969-1972	Thomas N. Taylor
1970-1976	John L. Lauder
1970-1973	Elizabeth Gilomen (Mrs. R.)
1971-1977	Wayne K. Anderson
1971-1974	Dean R. Spencer
1972-1975	William R. Conrad, Jr.
1970-(1982)	Leon Werch
1973-1979	Carol E. Bennett
1973-1979	John E. Connell
1974-(1983)	Barbara Wheeler
1975-1978	Donald E. Mullen
1977-(1983)	David S. Powers
1979-(1982)	Bruce E. Beckman
1979-(1982)	Daniel C. Morris
1981-(1984)	Kenneth A. Novak

In addition to the schools in the Village of Downers Grove the following associate elementary schools in our community are included in Community High School District #99:

- Puffer-Hefty School  
2220 Haddow  
Downers Grove
- Lakeview Junior  
High School  
701 Plainfield Road  
Downers Grove
- Eisenhower Junior  
High School  
1410—75th Street  
Downers Grove
- Jefferson Junior  
High School  
7200 Janes Avenue  
Woodridge
- Westview Hills  
Middle School  
630—165th Street  
Clarendon Hills

### ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

St. Mary's first school of two rooms was built in 1893 at the southwest corner of Prairie and Fairview and was staffed by dedicated lay people. In 1919 when the school's enrollment was fifty-three, the Felician Sisters were asked to share the responsibility for the education of the children. Three sisters comprised the faculty at that time.

St. Mary's school was moved in 1920 to 529 Franklin Street to a new two-story brick building which contained the school's classrooms, the convent, and a social hall.

Then in 1954 the parish built a school of thirteen classrooms at Prairie and Douglas. In



St. Mary's Catholic School

1978 a gymnasium and five classrooms were added to this building. The Felician Sisters have directed the school continuously through the years.

### ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

St. Joseph's parish opened its first grade school in 1910 in a large room at the rear of the church. Three Ursuline Sisters undertook the task of teaching the students. A classroom was opened in the convent in 1918 to supplement that in the church, and later a second room was used in the convent. In 1925 an eight-room school and community hall was erected on the corner of Highland and Franklin. The location of the school aroused a community furor over the enormous maple tree which had to come down to make room for the school building. It took six



St. Joseph's Catholic School

men with outstretched arms to encircle the trunk of the tree, and it was thought to be the largest maple tree in the Village.

The new school was opened in 1926 with six nuns teaching the students. In 1931 the Sisters of Providence took over as teachers.

## AVERY COONLEY SCHOOL

In 1912 the Kindergarten Extension Association opened its new school on Grove Street in Downers Grove. Mrs. Avery Coonley was President of the Kindergarten Association, and Miss Lucia Burton Morse the Director

“The association was composed of members interested in education and especially in that branch with which the kindergarten was concerned. Their desire was to establish, equip, and maintain kindergartens which demonstrated the Froebelian (kindergarten) philosophy of education under the most favorable conditions.”

The Association had established its first kindergarten two years previously in Brookfield where its work had met with outstanding success.

Downers Grove was selected for the second school as a favorable situation which had no public kindergarten.

Two free kindergarten sections of thirty children each were conducted for four years, when a primary class was begun under the direction of Miss Frances Ward. Four years later a second grade was added, and after another six years the third grade class. Shortly thereafter as a natural consequence the fourth and fifth grades were added. Gradually departments of music, art, shop and directed playground activities were developed, and it was decided to enlarge the school to include two years of kindergarten and



Avery Coonley School (private)

six grades. At this time fifteen acres were purchased by Mrs. Coonley from the Ducat estate on Maple Avenue in the heavily-wooded section west of Dunham Road. A large adequate building was erected in 1929, and the name was changed to The Avery Coonley School.

By 1933 there were over 150 students enrolled in two levels of kindergarten and all eight grades, and the reputation of the school grew across the country.

In 1960 Mr. John Malach became Headmaster of Avery Coonley, and a new direction was set for the school to develop and provide enriched learning programs for the gifted and superior child. Today the Avery Coonley School is well-known for these programs.

The Headmaster in 1981 is Richard Erickson; the enrollment is two hundred students.

## GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE

On June 5, 1966, George Williams College moved from 5315 Drexel in Chicago where it had been located since 1915, to a 200-acre campus in Downers Grove. The College, founded in 1890, is named for the founder of the YMCA. Located for fifty years in Chicago in one building on one



George Williams College  
Lowrey Center

acre, the College moved to fourteen buildings on the 200 acres. The entire campus and the Lowrey Center in particular were selected as “distinguished buildings” by the American Institute of Architects and the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry.

George Williams College, a liberal arts college accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and the Council on Social Work Education, came from a tradition of training people for YMCA work and is committed to the education of people in the area of social and group work. The College is also established as a center to train park and environmental education personnel in a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

Dr. Richard Hamlin, President of George Williams College wrote:

“Throughout its history George Williams College has been primarily concerned with educating persons for effective citizenship in a changing society and for careers of humanitarian responsibility.”

Downers Grove is distinguished by the location of this outstanding College in the Village and has reaped many benefits from the presence of this institution of higher learning.

## CHURCHES

From the earliest days of the settlement at the Grove, the pioneer families felt the need for the strength and solace of people joining in worship. From the beginning missionary priests travelled Indian trails and primitive roads stopping at any camp or cabin where people gathered for the purpose of receiving sacraments. Itinerant circuit preachers rode horseback over almost impassable muddy roads to preach in settlers' cabins to all who could come.

The Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, the Congregational Church, the Faith Evangelical Church, and St. Paul's Evangelical Church were the first organized churches in Downers Grove. The dates are difficult to follow, in that the dates of organization sometimes preceded

the building dates by long periods of time. There were also congregations organized in other locales by the people of Downers Grove and then moved to Downers Grove. In some cases, there was a gap of no church activities from the original organization to the final church group.

An account of the early history of each of the churches established prior to 1925 is included in this section. Pictures of the churches which have been organized since 1925 are included; but no attempt has been made to establish dates. Most of the churches in Downers Grove have compiled their own histories and should be consulted for accurate information on their building dates, names of the pastors who have served their congregations, and other pertinent developmental data.

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### FAITH EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN (now FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH)



Faith United Methodist Church



Faith Evangelical United Brethren

A small group of German Evangelical people which had been gathering and holding gospel meetings in the home of Martin Escher started meeting on Sunday afternoons in the church building on Belmont Road which had been built by the Congregational Church. After the East DuPage Congregational Society disbanded, the Evangelical Society purchased the building in 1861. The first services were held entirely in German. Early members were Martin Escher

and his family, Jacob Rehm, Solomon Mertz, Phillip Lehman, and Michael Hoffert.

The church building was moved to a location on Maple Avenue opposite the entrance to Oak Hill Cemetery. Later the church was; moved closer into town on Maple (now 1221-23 Maple) just west of Carpenter Street, where it was sold when the Society purchased the land on the corner of Main Street and Maple and built their church building in 1909.

## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DOWNERS GROVE

On August 5, 1851, a band of 17 Baptists met in a schoolhouse on the corner of Maple Avenue and Dunham Road. They organized as a congregation and called Rev. G.F. Holt as their pastor. Those first members were Henry Cruthers, Norman and Emily Gilbert, Caroline and Josephine Gleason, Edward and Laura Goodenough, and



Old Baptist Church

Harmon and Ann Goodenough, William Perry, Lewis and Mary Pound, G. & Sarah Smith, Philip and Emily Sucher, and Antoinette Trumbull. Services were held in the schoolhouse, and the baptisms took place in St. Joseph Creek just east of Washington Street. In midwinter, five or six inches of ice often had to be chopped away for the baptisms.

Samuel Curtiss donated land for a church building which was completed in the Fall of 1853 at a cost of \$1200. Among other early members were John Wallace, Kate Fox, Emerson and Cynthia Gleason and their daughter Estella, Eli Hunt, Charles Oldfield, Mrs. Nancy Capron Stanley, and Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Prentiss and their seven children. In the early days the church had no musical instrument, and the singing was



New Baptist Church

led by a leader using a tuning fork.

On May 22, 1871, the church was destroyed by fire! In addition to the sadness of the loss the building was not insured; however, with characteristic vigor the members set to work to raise a new building. On March 24, 1872, less than a year later, the new church was dedicated free of debt.



Old St. Mary's Catholic Church

## ST. MARY OF GOSTYN

The dedication ceremony of the Church of St. Mary of Gostyn took place on June 15, 1891. No church services were held, though, until October of that year when a permanent pastor, Rev. Frank Wojralewicz, was assigned to the parish.

The first parish roll of the church listed some twenty-five families as members. The impetus for the founding of this parish came from the



New St. Mary's Catholic Church

Polish immigrants who settled in the area in which St. Mary's is now located, a community which became known as Gostyn.

The church name was taken from the chapel in a convent of the Sisters of Phillip near the town of Gostyn, Poland, from whence many of these Polish people settling in Downers Grove had migrated.

The initial church services were held in a tent, but soon after, the first church building was erected on the location where the present rectory stands in 444 Wilson Avenue. The long narrow building was constructed of wood through labor and materials donated by the parishioners. There were thirty pews with room for 180 people. At that time it was the only Roman Catholic church between the towns of Naperville and LaGrange.

The first school was built in 1893 and had only two rooms. The church and school buildings were built and maintained by the parishioners. The priest lived in a private home, sometimes not even in the parish, until the rectory was built in 1895. The priest was paid with food contributed by the parishioners, and the furnishings for church and school were also contributed by the people. In the early days \$6.00 was the largest contribution for one year by any one family.

### FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Old First Methodist Church on Maple Avenue

The first Methodist preachers held meetings in the log cabins of the pioneer families. Stephen R. Beggs was one of the early preachers, if not the first. Mrs. Callie Belden Bush Rogers wrote that he was "the first minister that I remember. He used to come on horseback, and the roads were some roads then, mud up to the horse's knees a good portion of the time." In 1838, a schoolhouse was built on Maple Avenue, and this also served as a meeting place for the early pioneer preachers and their people.



New First Methodist Church on Maple Avenue

In 1853 the Methodist Congregation resolved to erect a church building. The land, which is the site of the present church, was donated by Henry Carpenter, and the men of the church worked together to build the church. Alex Foster, whose carpenter shop was next to the building site, did most of the construction with T.S. Rogers, John Coats, and several others cutting logs from their own wooded land and hauling it to the building site.

Among the early members were the Paiges, the Beldens, the Coats, the Oldfields and the Atwoods, Howards, and Roes. One of the first choir directors was Samuel Thatcher, and the first musical instrument was an old-fashioned melodeon.

This church remained on its original site until 1870 when it was rebuilt, and then in 1894 a still larger church was built.

Again and again the Methodist congregation opened their church building for the religious services of other new congregations who did not yet have buildings.

### FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DOWNERS GROVE



First Congregational Church — Built in 1874



First Congregational Church  
New Building

“The first effort toward organizing a religious society was made by settlers in this area as early as 1833.” The meeting was called at the request of Isaac Clark, Pomeroy Goodrich, Israel Blodgett, Robert Strong, Lester Peet, Henry Goodrich, and Samuel Goodrich and was organized by Rev. Jeremiah Porter and Rev. N. Catlin Clark.

Meetings were held in the south part of the Naperville settlement on three Sundays and in the schoolhouse at Naperville on the fourth.

The charter members were Avis Blodgett, Lucetta Barber, Robert Strong, Constance Abbot, Isaac Clark, Clarissa Clark, Lester Peet, and Henry, Thankful, Eliza, Lydia, Pomeroy and Lucy Goodrich with Sara and Eunice Peet and Mrs. Prudence Smith added the following day.

In 1837 the East DuPage Church was organized in a meeting at the house of Henry Puffer by George Parmalee, Mrs. Susan Parmalee, John A. Richards, Dexter and Nancy Stanley, and Henry, Mrs. Lucina, Elizabeth, and Hannah Puffer with Rev. Eliphalet Strong presiding as Moderator. The records in 1842 show the above members and in addition Rockwell Guild, Daniel Narramore, Charles Parmalee, Leonard Hatch, S.L. Jackson, Luther Hatch, Daniel Thatcher, Samuel Thatcher, Israel Blodgett, S.D. Lyman, John Chapman, Joseph Blodgett, T.E. Parsons, Henry Curtiss, James C. Hatch, John Richards, Henry Lyman, and Rev. Orange Lyman, who served as the first pastor of this congregation.

In 1845, after considerable difficulty in coming to agreement on a building site, the congregation built a meeting house “on land owned by Mrs. Nancy Bush opposite the house of Rockwell Guild.” This was on the west side of Belmont

south of Ogden, and in jest was referred to as “the church in Toad’s Hollow.”

The East DuPage Church held regular meetings for about twenty years when the membership split. Some organized the First Congregational Church in Lisle, and the others became the core membership for the First Congregational Church in Downers Grove, which was organized in 1866. The charter members were: Mr. & Mrs. John Richards, Mr. & Mrs. Uriah Balcom, Mr. & Mrs. H.M. Lyman, Lester Narramore, Mrs. Eunice Narramore, Mrs. Avis Blodgett, Mrs. Caroline Rogers, Mrs. Mary Curtiss, Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Handy, and Rev. & Mrs. R.F. Chafer.

For the first year meetings were held in the Methodist Church, and then for the next seven years worship services were held in Uriah Balcom’s Hall on Main Street. In 1874 the first church building was erected on the present site on Curtiss Street.

#### **ST. PAUL’S EVANGELICAL CHURCH (now ST. PAUL’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST)**

In or about 1893, Rev. August Fler, pastor of the church at Lace, started holding regular preaching services for the German-speaking inhabitants of Downers Grove. These services were held at the Congregational Church on Sunday afternoons.

The formal organization of St. Paul’s Church took place in January of 1897 with 39 charter members. In July of that year the organization bought a lot on Grove Street near Main from the Henry L. Bush estate for \$300. The church building was erected in 1908.



St. Paul’s Church on Grove Street



St. Paul's United Church of Christ

Until the year 1911 the German language was used exclusively in worship services, and for many years one worship service a month was retained in the German language for the benefit of the older members.

### ST. ANDREWS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The earliest services of the Episcopal Church were held in 1880 in homes in East Grove. In 1882 a lot was purchased, and a church building begun. The first service was held in the church on July 8, 1883. The mission was formally organized the following year under the name of Holy Trinity Mission. The Mission at one time comprised thirty families and 117 individuals but gradually declined until services were transferred to Downers Grove.



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
Erected in 1897 — Replaced in 1963



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
Franklin Street

In 1894 the Rev. Charles Baggs of St. John's Church in Naperville rode horseback from his morning service in Naperville to conduct evening prayer service each Sunday evening in Dicke's



Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
Main and Franklin

Hall in Downers Grove. The congregation was organized in May of 1895 as St. Andrew's Mission. A lot was purchased the following year at the corner of Forest and Franklin Streets, and on June 13, 1897, the cornerstone of the church was laid by Bishop McLaren of Chicago.

### ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

In 1906 the word went out inviting all Catholics who were interested in organizing a new



St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
Highland and Franklin

(1982 photos by Ed Bunting, Jr.)

church to attend a meeting in Clifford's Plumbing Shop on Main Street just south of Jake Miller's hotel at the corner of Main Street and Burlington. There were a dozen families represented: the Ernzens, Venards, Oldfields, Yackleys, Greniers, Roths, Burnetts, Borns, Doeslaeres, among others. The group requested the Archbishop of Chicago to start a mission parish in Downers Grove. Arrangements were made to rent the hall above Thompson's Grocery at the corner of Main and Curtiss, and Father Bollman from St. Francis Xavier Church in LaGrange rode the Burlington each Sunday to say Mass. The movement grew for a church. In 1906 Mrs. Kate Oldfield deeded property which she owned, at the northeast corner of Main and Franklin, to the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, and forty-eight families undertook the building and paying for the new church. The first Mass was celebrated in St. Joseph's Church in 1908, and the church was dedicated the following year.



First Church of Christ Scientist on Curtiss Street

### FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST

After meeting in the home of Mr. & Mrs. Max Schachner for several months, a small group of Christian Scientists organized the first Church of Christ Scientist on November, 1902. At first the group met at the Masonic Hall for services, and then Thompson Hall was leased in 1911 for the church and reading room. In June, 1918, the use of Library Hall, in the basement of the Library building, was obtained for services. A lot was selected on Curtiss Street at Forest Avenue for a church site in 1919, and the church building was completed in 1924.



Immanuel Lutheran Church on Carpenter Street

### IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Immanuel Lutheran Church of Downers Grove was organized on February 7, 1909, as the culmination of missionary efforts initiated two years previously by the Rev. H.C. Guebert, then pastor of Zion Lutheran Church of Hinsdale. The charter members included A.C. Pingl, Fred Thiesse, H.G. Krueger, C. Koers, William Schoen, Fred Wilke, and Richard C. Briggs.

A small group of Lutherans met through the years, served only at intervals by pastors of the nearby Lutheran churches. Rev. O.F. Arndt was called in 1921 as the first resident pastor of the church, and the congregation affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other states. The congregation built as their first house of worship a bungalow chapel which was located on Grove Street near Carpenter Street. The church was dedicated in October, 1924.

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF DOWNERS GROVE

The Downers Grove Presbyterian Church was organized on St. Patrick's Day, 1925, in the home of Peter F. Remsen on Grand Avenue.



First United Presbyterian Church  
4th and Fairview

(photos by Ed Bunting, Jr.)



Sunday school and church services were held in different homes, for the most part at the home of either W. DeWitt Nelson or Oscar Reinhold.

Soon after, the congregation purchased the property on the southeast corner of Fairview and Fourth Streets and for some time held Sunday school and church services in the old two-story house located on the lot. There were 23 charter



Covenant Reformed Church on Fairview Avenue



Seventh Day Adventist on Lee Avenue



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church on Grant Street



St. Luke United Presbyterian Church on Highland Avenue



Divine Savior Catholic Church at 67th and Main



Marquette Manor Baptist Church at 75th and Fairview



Church of Christ on 63rd Street



First Christian Church on 63rd Street



Jehovah's Witnesses Church on Herbert Street



Grace Baptist Church on Dunham Road



Full Gospel Church on Fairview Avenue



North Fairview Bible Church on Sterling Road

members, and some of the elected officers included Stanley Williams, J.J. Foss, Mrs. Emma Anderson, Frank Whitten, Oscar Reinhold, G.P. Warner, W. DeWitt Nelson, and Mrs. Axel Anderson.

In 1928 the house was moved back on the lot facing Fourth Street and remodelled for a manse, and the church building at Maple and Main formerly used by Faith United Brethren Church was purchased. This building was used for services until the church was built on Fairview and Fourth Streets in 1942.



Community Bible Church on Carpenter Street

(photos by Ed Bunting, Jr.)

## LIBRARY

In 1891 a small group of women met to discuss plans for a circulating library in the Village. Mrs. L.P. Narramore and Mrs. Brookins called the meeting. Mrs. Charles Caldwell and Mrs. Alice Heckman were hostesses.

Mr. L.P. Narramore donated the use of a room over the Farmer's and Merchant's Bank in the building at the corner of Main and Curtiss Streets for the library reading room, and Mable Blanchard Carnahan was the first librarian. As a result of much hard work in adding books for distribution, donations, and a quarterly individual use fee of 25¢, the reading room became a success.

When the book collection and its users outgrew their small space in 1895, John Stanley was persuaded to construct a small building on West Curtiss Street. Mrs. Emma J. Miller was chosen as President of the Women's Library Association in those days and served for seven consecutive years. Through her efforts Mr. Stanley gave the building rent-free for several years, and the women worked faithfully to keep the library open.

The women's organization took out a state charter in 1893, and for twenty-one years this determined band of women kept the work alive. Among those who worked were the following: Mesdames John Stanley, Curtiss, Blanchard, Miller, Marsh, Clifford, Cole, Thomas, Narramore, Burns, Daniels, Atwood, Cross, Bunge, Downer, S.C. Stanley, Hughes, Dietz, Northup, Sacksetter, Lancaster, Huling, Stanger, and Miss Gertrude Gibbs. Mrs. L.P. Narramore served as Secretary for a number of years.

The women of the Library Association worked with such diligent commitment that John Oldfield was persuaded to leave a bequest of \$2000 to the Library Association toward the purchase of a lot for a library building.

Through negotiations with the Trustees of the Carnegie Fund, it was ascertained that with the bequest from the late John Oldfield sufficient additional monies could be secured from the Andrew Carnegie Fund to erect a building, providing the Village of Downers Grove would approve a tax for the maintenance of the library and its building.

Mr. L.B. Wells, backed by Mrs. Mary Stewart Burns, for whose son the American Legion Post is named, worked for months to pass the tax which made the Carnegie assistance possible.

Three times the proposition for the right to levy a tax of 1.2 mills for the maintenance of a public library was voted upon before it was passed in June, 1911. Many citizens wrote letters asking the citizens to support the building of the public library. The Honorable Guy Bush sent a personal letter to the citizens before the special election urging the voters to vote favorably on the proposition.

After the lot where the present library stands was purchased and the tax approved, Mr. L.B. Wells, the President of the Library Board, worked day and night to complete the negotiations with the Carnegie Foundation to provide the funds for the building. The other members of that first Library Board were John Graves, Henry E. Tank, Arthur Bordwell, William B. Towsley, and Howard P. Jones.

In the fall of 1915, the building at the corner of Forest Avenue and Curtiss Street opened its doors to the public. So many dedicated people had worked so hard and so long to accomplish the reality of this splendid Public Library!

For the next forty years, through two wars, the Roaring Twenties, and the Great Depression the Library loyally served the Village. The children's room, decorated by the Downers Grove Artists' Guild, received state and national atten-

tion. By the early 1950's with the ever increasing population of the Village, it was painfully apparent that expanded quarters were necessary. It was also obvious that the pressure on the tax rate, by schools, Village government, the library, and other public bodies, would make the passage of a building referendum a very difficult proposition.

With a strong public relations effort, involving a coordination of activities by the Friends of the Library (founded in 1953), the staff, and the Village, a \$165,000 bond referendum was passed in December of 1954. The resulting addition, designed by local resident architect George Steckmesser was commonly referred to as the "wraparound", an ingenious expansion of the Carnegie building by surrounding the original structure with rooms and space integrated with the old. The rejuvenated Downers Grove Public Library was opened July 1, 1956.



Mrs. Frieda Humphris

Among the first librarians were Miss Madeline Hughes and Miss Ruth Lancaster. Miss

Hughes served for seven years and was succeeded by her assistant, Jessie Bryce, who was the Librarian until her retirement 1942. Following the same tradition Miss Bryce's assistant, Frieda Rawcliff Humphris, succeeded to the position, ably administering the library until 1971. Upon the retirement of Mrs. Humphris, Mr. Joseph Quaidy became the Librarian and held the position until his resignation on June 1, 1979. The present Librarian is Kathleen Mehaffey.



Kathleen Mehaffey Balcom

Such was the pace of growth and demand for services that the library had barely settled into its new environment in 1956 before it was confronted with many new issues and space problems. Over the following two decades the institution became part of the Suburban Library System and developed into one of the dominant libraries in the region. A recent highlight was the construction on the original site of an entirely new building designed by Loeb, Schlossman Dart & Hackl-John Wilson Associated Architects. The modern functional building was opened to the public in the fall of 1977. Previous Board members Philip Rinaldo, John Clark, Roger Tea, and John Mochel Jr., were involved in early stages of planning. Board members Carol Doty, chairman, John Mochel Jr., Jean Dale, Rebecca Mays, and James Wadsworth



Robert Konikow, President, Friends of Library, 1975

contributed long hours to seeing the institution through the trying times of planning, a referendum, and construction of the new building. The success of the referendum was due in large part to the devoted work of many members of the



Public Library, Erected in 1915 at Curtiss and Forest Avenue



"Wrap-around" Library Building. Designed by George Steckmesser, Architect (photo by Robert Dunham)



New Public Library in 1981. Opened to the public in 1979. (photo by Ed Bunting, Jr.)

Friends of the Library, whose President at that time was Robert Konikow.

Today the Downers Grove Public Library takes pride in being one of the oldest and most active forces on the local cultural and educational scene. Current Board members are Rebecca Mays, chairman, Jean Dale, Alan Burger, Karen Ecker, Thomas Arndt, and Fred Pearson.

## VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

On March 31, 1873, the settlement in Downer's Grove was incorporated as a Village as a result of an election which was held in the office of Warren Rogers on Saturday, March 19, 1873. Forty-nine men voted for organization of the Village and thirty-eight against. On the basis of the majority of eleven votes, Judge M.C. Dudley issued the certificate of incorporation. This incorporation provided for the election of a Board of Trustees with a President of the Board.

In September of 1915 the citizens of Downers Grove, by a vote of 317 to 193, decided to change

to the commission form of Village government, which changed the governing board to a Mayor and four Commissioners. The first election for these officials took place on May 1, 1917.

The form of government for the Village was again changed on June 2, 1962, to the council-manager form to meet the needs of the growing village.

The Village of Downers Grove still operates under the council-manager form of government. The Village Council, which consists of a Mayor and four Commissioners, is elected at large for



Village Council 1919-1923 L to R: C.M. Davis; W. Bender; I.G. Heartt; Charles Hitch, Village Clerk; Mayor W.C. Barber; Delbert Austin; King Bush; and Charles Haller.

over-lapping terms of four years and serves as the policy-making body for the Village government. The Council is responsible for enacting ordinances and resolutions which serve as the legislative policies of the Village and also for adopting the Village's annual operating budget. The Village Council appoints the Village Manager, Village Clerk, Village Attorney, and the members of the various boards and commissions.

The Village Manager is responsible for the over-all administration of Village departments. He is responsible for the preparation of the annual budget for the Village and keeps the Council informed on the financial condition of the Village. He makes recommendations to the Village Council and carries out policies which are adopted by the Council.



Photos of Village Presidents and Mayors in Village Hall

The Village Council meets every Monday evening to take action on ordinances, resolutions, and the recommendations from the Boards and Commissions. All citizens are encouraged to attend and participate in these meetings.

The Village government consists of the following departments: Fire, Police, Street, Water, Forestry, Building Services, Municipal Garage, Parking & Transportation, Health & Human Resources, Community Relations, Cable Television, Planning, Engineering, Code Enforcement, Accounting, Purchasing, Personnel, Data Processing, Risk Management, and Budget.

The boards and commissions are an integral part of the Village government in providing recommendations to the Village Council. The

following are the active boards and commissions:

- Architectural Commission
- Board of Fire and Police Commissioners
- Board of Local Improvements
- Building Board of Appeals
- Community Maintenance Board
- Electrical Commission
- Energy and Environmental Management Commission
- Flood Control Board of Appeals
- Health and Human Resources Commission
- Library Board
- Parking and Traffic Commission
- Plan Commission,
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Zoning Commission

The Village Presidents and Mayors are included in the following list:

### Village Presidents

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| T.S. Rogers, 1873-79      | Guy L. Bush, 1897-98      |
| Charles Curtiss, 1880     | P.C. Gallup, 1899-1900    |
| T.S. Rogers, 1881-82      | F.A. Root, 1900-01        |
| Charles Curtiss, 1883     | Charles Mochel, 1901-02   |
| T.S. Rogers, 1884-86      | L.B. Gesner, 1902-03      |
| C.B. Blodgett, 1887       | Charles Mochel, 1903-06   |
| T.S. Rogers, 1888-89      | J.W. Hughes, 1907-08      |
| Charles Curtiss, 1890-93  | F.D. Lindley, 1909-10     |
| W.J. Carpenter, 1894-96   | William S. Ellis, 1911-12 |
| C.V. Carpenter, 1896-1897 | Anson Backus, 1913-17     |

### Mayors

- |                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| J.F. Kidwell, 1917-19     | Newell H. Fishel, 1943-47; |
| W.C. Barber, 1919-23      | May-Oct., 1947;            |
| A.B. Snow, 1923-24        | (died 10-19-47)            |
| E.D. Otto, 1924-26        | Clyde B. Abscher, 1947-55  |
| G.W. Bailey, 1927-31      | Benjamin Groves, 1955-59   |
| W.C. Barber, 1931-35      | Phillip C. Behoff, 1959-67 |
| H.C. Dicke, 1935-39       | Wm. H. Friebert, 1967-71   |
| Carlyle B. Stair, 1939-43 | Frank Houck, 1971-79       |
|                           | Jon Council, 1979-present  |

### Trustees

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1873—John Stanley | 1876—Henry Carpenter |
| H. Carpenter      | E. Thatcher          |
| F.B. Faul         | C.B. Blodgett        |
| C.B. Blodgett     | F.M. Woods           |
| E. Thatcher       | Henry Faul           |
| 1874—John Stanley | 1877—C.B. Blodgett   |
| E. Thatcher       | H. Carpenter         |
| C.B. Blodgett     | F. Blanchard         |
| D. Kline          | J.W. Sucher          |
| Fred M. Woods     | Henry Faul           |
| 1875—E. Thatcher  | 1878—C.B. Blodgett   |
| C.B. Blodgett     | E. Thatcher          |
| Lewis Strouse     | Chas. Curtiss        |
| John Stanley      | H. Carpenter         |
| F.M. Woods        | Chas. Carpenter      |



- 1879—C.B. Blodgett  
E. Thatcher  
Chas. Curtiss  
John Stanley  
L.P. Narramore
- 1880—E. Thatcher  
C.B. Blodgett  
John Stanley  
D.H. Foote  
L.P. Narramore
- 1881—W.S. Brookins  
L.P. Narramore  
John Stanley  
E. Thatcher  
C.B. Blodgett
- 1882—Thos. Lyman  
E. Thatcher  
Chas. Curtiss  
W.S. Brookins  
L.P. Narramore
- 1883—W.S. Brookins  
T.S. Rogers  
Mitchell Heintz  
Thos. Lyman  
E. Thatcher
- 1884—J.A. Richards  
E. Thatcher  
C.B. Blodgett  
W.S. Brookins  
M. Heintz
- 1885—W.S. Brookins  
M. Heintz  
J.A. Richards  
E. Thatcher  
C.B. Blodgett
- 1886—W.S. Brookins  
M. Heintz  
C.B. Blodgett  
A.C. Ducat  
David Kline
- 1887—John Oldfield  
E.S. Wheeler  
D.O. Cole  
David Kline  
A.C. Ducat
- 1888—Chas. Carpenter  
D.O. Cole  
E.S. Wheeler  
Charles Curtiss  
C.B. Blodgett
- 1889—John Oldfield  
M. Heintz  
Levi Mertz  
C. Carpenter  
C.B. Blodgett
- 1890—W.A. Tope  
F.G. Brown  
M.E. Stanger  
L. Mertz  
John Oldfield
- 1891—J.M. Barr  
Chas. Mochel  
W.A. Tope  
F.G. Brown  
M.E. Stanger  
F. Blanchard
- 1892—P.C. Gallup  
D.W. Crescy  
W.S. Brookins  
F. Blanchard  
Chas. Mochel  
J.M. Barr
- 1893—J.B. Moss  
Guy L. Bush  
W.H. Edwards  
P.C. Gallup  
D.W. Crescy
- 1894—D.W. Crescy  
P.C. Gallup  
J.B. Moss  
L.B. Gesner  
Guy L. Bush  
W.H. Edwards
- 1895—A.H. Wetten  
Jas. Chilvers  
G.H. Bunge  
P.C. Gallup  
J.B. Moss  
D.W. Crescy
- 1896—Chas. Mochel  
E. Schultz  
J.W. Hughes  
G.H. Bunge  
A.H. Wetten  
Jas. Chilvers
- 1897—F.A. Root  
J.B. Barr  
F.E. Mayer  
E. Schultz  
J.W. Hughes  
Chas. Mochel
- 1898—Chas. Mochel  
J.W. Hughes  
J.M. Burns  
F.A. Root  
F.E. Mayer  
J.M. Barr
- 1899—H.H. Woelfersheim  
M.K. Bush  
G.H. Pearsall  
Chas. Mochel  
J.W. Hughes  
A.G. Prince
- 1900—W.S. Waples  
E.C. Kuenzel  
G.H. Pearsall  
H.H. Woelfersheim  
M.K. Bush  
G.H. Bunge
- 1901—E.E. Stevens  
W.W. Martin  
Louis Klein  
W.B. Towsley  
E.C. Kuenzel  
W.S. Waples
- 1902—E.C. Kuenzel  
John W. Graves  
C.K. Roe  
Louis Klein  
W.W. Martin  
E.E. Stevens
- 1903—Geo. B. Heartt  
C.F. Davis  
Chris H. Staats  
E.C. Kuenzel  
John W. Graves  
Chas. K. Roe
- 1904—J.W. Graves  
J.W. Hughes  
D.H. Uhlhorn  
C.F. Davis  
C.H. Staats  
G.B. Heartt
- 1905—G.B. Heartt  
C.F. Davis  
C.H. Staats  
J.W. Hughes  
D.H. Uhlhorn  
J.W. Graves
- 1906—J.W. Graves  
Ernest Schultz  
Myron Brunson  
J.W. Hughes  
C.F. Davis  
G.B. Heartt
- 1907—G.B. Heartt  
L.E. Singleterry  
J.W. Bradbury  
J.W. Graves  
Ernest Schultz  
Myron Brunson
- 1908—John W. Handy  
C.H. Dicke  
E.M. Gallup  
G.B. Heartt  
Julius Severus  
E.J. Matson
- 1909—J.M. Riel  
Julius Severus  
W.S. Ellis  
C.H. Dicke  
E.M. Gallup  
J.W. Handy
- 1910—J.W. Handy  
C.H. Dicke  
L.M. Cook  
Lester Barr  
J.M. Riel  
W.S. Ellis
- 1911—Lester Barr  
Paul M. Herring  
Chas. Haller  
L.M. Cook  
C.H. Dicke  
J.W. Handy
- 1912—Jason Littleford  
L.C. Mahoney  
J.W. Handy  
Lester Barr  
Chas. Haller  
P.M. Herring
- 1913—Chas. Haller  
Irving Heartt  
B.L. Kellogg  
J.W. Handy  
J. Littleford  
L.C. Mahoney
- 1914—J. Littleford  
J.F. Kidwell  
J.W. Handy  
B.L. Kellogg  
Irving Heartt  
Chas. Haller
- 1915—Chas. Haller  
I.G. Heartt  
B.L. Kellogg  
J.F. Kidwell  
J.W. Handy  
J. Littleford
- 1916—Delbert Austin  
J.F. Kidwell  
C.F. Knobluach  
I.G. Heartt  
Chas. Haller  
B.L. Kellogg

### Commissioners

- 1917—Delbert Austin  
W.C. Barber  
Chas. Haller  
Irving Heartt
- 1919—Delbert Austin—1 yr.  
Wm. Bender—1920-22  
Harry W. Bryce  
Chas. Haller  
Irving Heartt



1935 Village Council Meeting L to R: Judge Win Knock; James Childress; George Prickett; Mayor Henry Dicke; Orson Downer; Alex Modjeska; and Charles Hitch, Clerk

- 1923—H.W. Bryce  
H.C. Dicke  
G.W. Sweeny  
Stanley Brown—1924-26
- 1927—H.C. Dicke  
Robt. E. Dickson  
B.J. Diener  
H.D. Wyllie—1927-28  
A.O. Ross—1929-30
- 1931—F.N. Kidwell  
E.A. Volberding  
Carl Staiger  
Robert E. Dickson
- 1935—Jas. Childress  
G.O. Downer  
Geo. O. Prickett  
Alex Modjeska
- 1939—H.C. Dicke  
Gilbert C. Mochel  
Alex Modjeska  
Walter S. Otto—1939-42  
Dale Stingley—Sept., 1942
- 1943—B.V. Jones  
Gilbert C. Mochel  
Dale Stingley to 2-21-44  
(C.B. Absher 2-21-44 to 9-30-45  
Dale Stingley 10-8-45 on)  
Howard F. Pippinger
- 1947—Clyde B. Absher to 11-6-47  
(then became Mayor)  
(C. Chester 11-10-47 to 7-17-50  
N. Zollinger 7-17-50 on)  
Conrad Chester to 11-10-47  
(William Freibert 11-10-47)  
Thurber Bombaugh  
Dale Stingley
- 1951—William Freibert  
Erwin Lee to 12-1-52  
(J.S. Tennery 12-1-52 on)  
George Stone to 5-26-52

- (N. Zollinger 5-26-52 on)  
Norman Zollinger  
(Fred W. Stewartson 5-26-52 on)
- 1955—Rex V. Porter  
Robert M. Diebold  
Alfred A. Moore—resigned 9/6/55  
William H. Freibert  
Clarence E. Spicer—resigned 10-25-57  
Frank W. Houck—11-18-57
- 1959—William Freibert  
Rex Porter  
Frank W. Houck  
R.M. Diebold
- 1963—William Freibert  
Peter Hanes  
David Gooder  
J.V. Behnke

### Changed to Council-Manager form of government on June 2, 1962

- 1965—William Freibert  
David Gooder  
Peter Hanes  
Rex Wittekindt
- 1967—Robert L. Hain  
Peter Hanes  
Gilbey Mehagen  
Roy Wittekindt
- 1969—Robert L. Hain  
Gilbey Mehagen  
James H. Anders  
Wallace H. Brown
- 1971—James H. Anders (resigned 5/8/72)  
Wallace H. Brown  
Harry L. Scoggin  
Harry D. Spataro  
Jon D. Council (apptd. 5/15/72)
- 1973—Harry L. Scoggin  
Harry D. Spataro  
Wallace H. Brown  
Jon D. Council



Village Council at work

1975—Wallace H. Brown  
 Harry D. Spataro  
 Jon D. Council  
 Betty M. Cheever  
 1977—Harry D. Spataro  
 Jon D. Council  
 Betty M. Cheever  
 Everette Glas  
 1979—Betty M. Cheever  
 Everette Glas  
 James Kmetz  
 William Brennan (apptd. to replace  
 Jon Council 5/79)  
 1981—Betty M. Cheever  
 Everette Glas  
 James Kmetz  
 William Brennan

## Census

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>
1850	957*
1860	1,806*
1870	2,518*
1880	586
1890	960
1900	2,103
1910	2,601
1920	3,543
1930	8,977
1940	9,526
1950	11,865
1960	21,154
1970	32,715
1975	38,776
1980	42,560

\*Census figures included unincorporated areas.



1954 ground breaking ceremony. Village officials: James Tennery; William Freibert; William Haeger; Gilbert Mochel; Mayor Clyde Absher; and Larry Baylor



1981 Village Hall 801 Burlington Ave.

## DOWNERS GROVE POLICE DEPARTMENT

In 1885 Gardner Paige was the Police Magistrate, and Valentine Wetten was the policeman. In a village of some 500 people, the task of keeping law and order was not complex.

The frame Village Hall on Main Street near St. Joseph Creek (later 5154 Main Street) had one large room for the Village Hall and two jail cells. A desk, in one corner of the large room, was the "police station". Usually the only occupants of the jail cells were the occasional "drunks" who needed a place to spend the night. Double bunks made it difficult for the prisoners to sit up

straight so that the prisoner had to either lie down on the bunk or sit up all doubled over.

Village Board meetings became a three-ring circus with the Board members trying to make budget and other decisions to the background of prisoners shouting at each other or quarreling with the Board decisions.

By 1893 it was necessary to hire a night policeman who was paid \$25 a month and "such private subscriptions as were approved by the board." He was responsible for keeping the Village Hall and calaboose\* clean, to build the

\*slang term for jail



Officers Russo; Mike Venard; William Conway; and Paul Tussy. 1925

fires in the Village Hall when required, and to have charge of all the persons confined in the calaboose during his hours of duty. He also had charge of the street lamps and was expected to patrol the streets and to meet the late incoming trains.

Policeman Hoffert decided in 1895 that he needed a raise in pay since several of the merchants had stopped paying their subscriptions. He presented his request to the Village Board and was shocked when Mr. Chilvers made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Moss that Officer Hoffert be discharged if his salary was insufficient and another policeman be employed in his place. After a little thought Policeman Hoffert withdrew his application for a salary increase!

In 1917 the day policeman was Martin White, and the night policeman was John Stockenbery. The Police Department moved in 1925 to the second floor of the Memorial Hall, the new Village Hall.



Ed Tanner



Lou Fulgaro

An eight-box call system was installed in 1931, and the officer patrolling his beat on foot called in to the station from the telephone boxes at regular intervals. This system was considered very efficient. The beat cop also had to keep his eye on the water tower. If a yellow light flashed atop the tower, it meant his superior officer needed to talk to him. The policeman would get to the nearest phone as quickly as he could to call in to the station for his message.

Mike Venard was Police Chief for many years and continued on the force when he was replaced as Chief by Walter Otto on December 31, 1931. Chief Otto served for four years, and on his resignation James Dwyer, a member of the force, became Chief and served until July 1, 1939.

In 1939 the Police Department acquired two-way radio equipment, which was a marvelous advantage. The equipment was described in some detail in the *Reporter*:



New Police building — official opening in 1981.

“Calls from the local station (police headquarters) are received with ease all over the village, but messages from the Sheriff’s office are not always clear if the car is in a hollow or faced in a certain direction, hence the advantage of the booster.”

Del Leverenz was the Police Chief after Dwyer and was followed by Leslie Dexter who served as the Acting Chief until 1948 when Otto Springborn was selected as Chief. Springborn continued in this capacity until 1965.

Ed Tanner joined the Department in 1952 when the Department had two squad cars, one for the north side of town and one for the south. That same year the reserve police were organized.

In 1956 Lou Fulgaro joined the force and was to serve the Department for twenty-five years in countless capacities, including Acting Police Chief, until his retirement in 1981.

The Police Department moved in 1958 to the new building at 945 Burlington which they shared with other Village departments.

In 1965 Daniel D’Aquila was named Police

Chief and served until September of 1973. At that time Lt. Robert Muir served as Acting Chief until Arthur Hess was appointed Chief in February of 1974. In 1978 when Hess left for another position, Lou Fulgaro was named Acting Police Chief. The present Chief, Stanley Troyer, was appointed on May 14, 1979.

The Police Department made their fourth move on July 28, 1979, to the splendid new Police Building at 825 Burlington in the Civic Center.



Officers John Davis and Mitchel VandenBos (photo by Carol Konkoly)



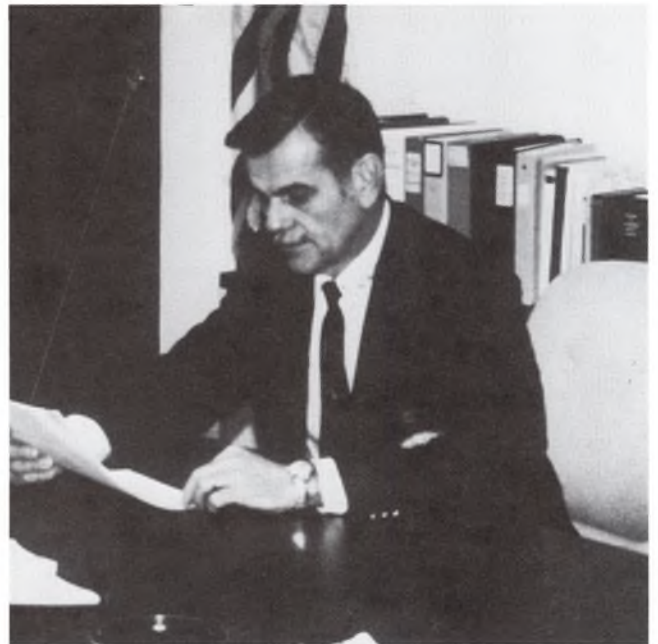
Officers Mitchel VandenBos and Kirk Schwabe in police booking room.



Officer Hank Niewold



Police Records Clerks Mary Ann Keysboe and Arlette Wachowiak



Police Chief Stanley Troyer



Village Operations Center



Downers Grove Police Dept. from Curtiss Ave.



## FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Downers Grove Fire Department was founded nearly 80 years ago as a volunteer department. An ongoing group of dedicated volunteers have continued to provide fire-fighting services to the residents of Downers Grove, working side by side with full-time firefighters.

In the early days of the village a fire burning out of control struck panic in the heart of every householder. Though friends and neighbors ral-

lied to fight any fire, there was a group of about twenty men who could always be counted upon to help. These able volunteers would form a fire brigade, plunging buckets into creeks, cisterns, or troughs while others pumped feverishly, passing the dripping buckets one to another to empty on the flames and then encircling the buckets back to be refilled.

In 1885 the Village purchased 500 feet of hose and a hand pumper which pumped water from wells and cisterns. This vastly improved pumping system replaced the bucket brigade. However, a team of horses was necessary to draw the cart to the fire. Therefore, the Village would pay \$5.00 to \$10.00 to the first man to bring a team to the barn where the hose cart was housed when the fire alarm was sounded.

In 1893 a fire of enormous proportion raged in the area bounded by Main, Maple, and Grove

### *Anniversary Dinner*

JULY 29, 1961

#### GUESTS

MAYOR AND MRS. PHILIP BEHOFF  
 COUNCILMAN AND MRS. REX PORTER  
 COUNCILMAN AND MRS. WILLIAM FREIBERT  
 COUNCILMAN AND MRS. FRANK HOUCK  
 COUNCILMAN AND MRS. ROBERT DIEBOLD

CHIEF OF POLICE AND MRS. OTTO SPRINGBORN

REVEREND AND MRS. GEORGE B. WILLIAMS  
 St. Andrews Episcopal Church

Mr. and Mrs. H. Robert Lucas	YMCA
Mr. and Mrs. James Yates	Kiwanis
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bartlett	Lions Club
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas D. Peterson	Chamber of Commerce
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Blaida	American Legion
Mr. and Mrs. Fred M. Rith	Moose Lodge
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Winter	D. G. Reporter
Mr. and Mrs. G. Wendell Zemina	Suburban Life

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Miskelly	Mr. and Mrs. Roy Peterson
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Waples	Mr. and Mrs. Ben Groves
Mr. and Mrs. Felix Bridges	Mr. and Mrs. Dale Stingley
Miss Diane Dicke	Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Absher
Mr. and Mrs. George Repp, Jr.	Mr. and Mrs. Fritz W. Wandschneide
Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Uhlhorn	Mr. and Mrs. John Ehninger

Program of Anniversary Dinner honoring Grant E. Dicke



Young Grant E. Dicke, later Fire Chief.

Streets. Eight buildings were destroyed including a harness shop, a laundry, the Querin Schmitt Livery, and Sam Hoffert's blacksmith shop and residence. The Crescy Auditorium was saved by skillful and tenacious firefighting. Every well and cistern in the neighborhood were pumped dry!

With the building of the waterworks in 1894 the capacity for fighting fires was greatly improved in the Village.

The following year thirty-some men met in the Village Hall to organize two fire companies, one for the north side of the Village and the other for the south side. North side members were:

Fred Ayer	Harry Courtright
A. Beidelman	W. Deveraux
Charles Blodgett	George Downer
John Brown	W.E. Farrar
J. Chilvers	P.C. Gallup
D. Colville	T.A. Holland
Will Colville	Chat Kellogg
A.J. Cooper	G.C. McDougall
E.O. Craft	William Mertz
A. Courtright	J.B. Moss

Al Nash  
M. Pridham  
L.D. Prince  
E. Schultz  
L. Scofield  
F. Shears

E.C. Stanley  
L. Sucher  
A. Wells  
Harry Wheeler  
W.P. Whitney

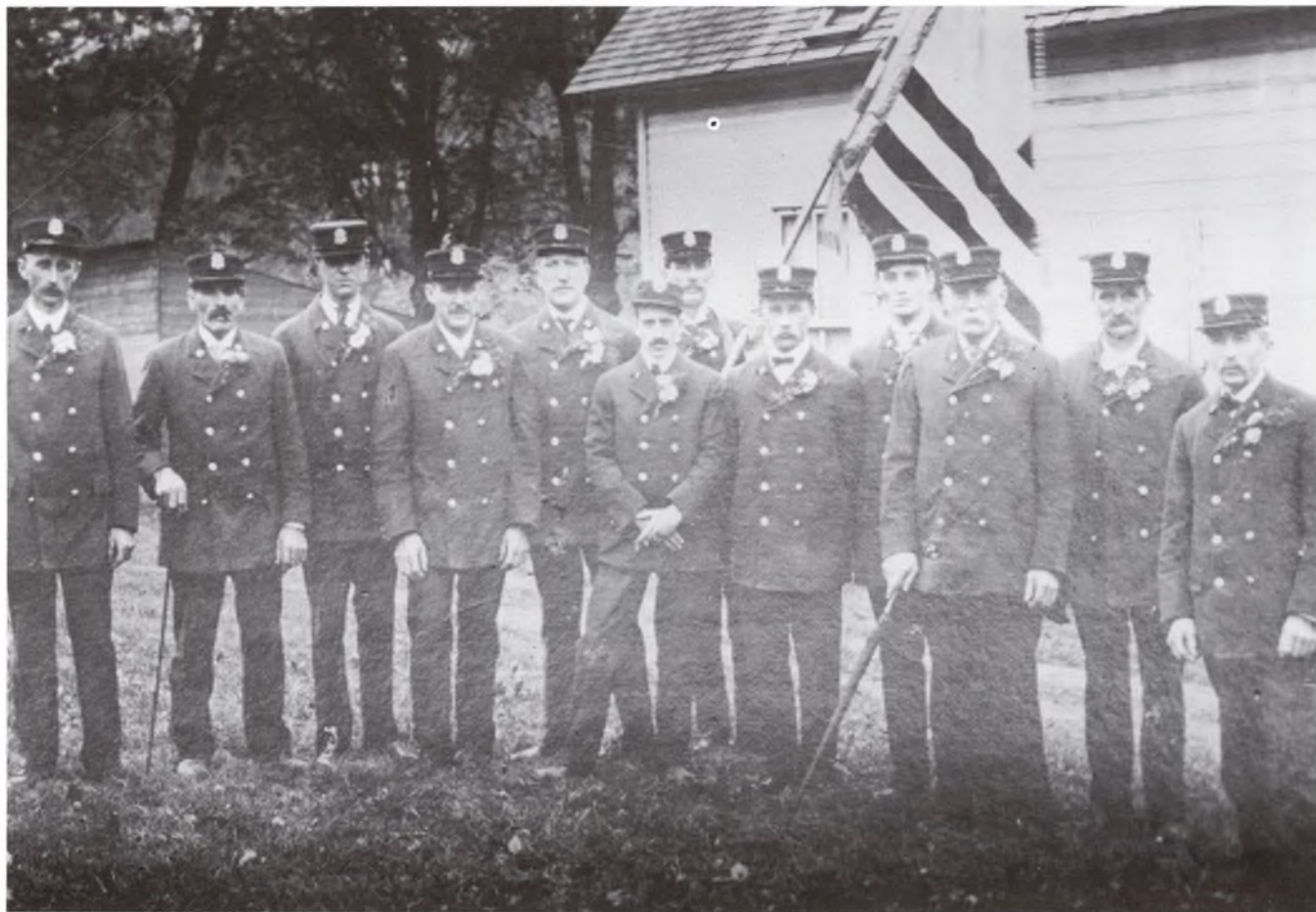
J. Woelfersheim with A. Courtright elected Captain.

South side members included:

A.H. Barnhart  
George Barr  
L. Barr  
Harry Blodgett  
W.F. Canada  
George Diener  
J.H. Graham  
Howard Jones  
L. Klein

S.A. Lyman  
Emil Marchel  
Dan Miley  
C. Mochel  
H. Smith  
E.O. Stanley  
Frank Steere  
E. Sucher  
J. Sucher

B. Wetherbee with Charles Mochel being elected Captain of this company.



First Volunteer Fire Department



First fire equipment — hose care and fire horse — 1912. Building was at 1041 Burlington. L. Klein, Chief

The first Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1898 with:

Allen H. Barnhart	Louis Klein
L. Barr	Dan Latimer
Fred Binder	F. Miller
Phil Binder	Roy Millet
C.F. Davis	W. Timke
Sam Hoffert	J. Wimmer
Chat M. Kellogg	John Woelfersheim

These members decided to apply for incorporation in 1904 and by that time had added:

George Baker	D. Nehorn
C. Barr	L. Scofield
George Binder	C.H. Staats
W.C. Deveraux	C. Strawley
T. Holland	Ben C. Weatherbee
Peter Johnson	M. White
F. Liebundguth	

The year 1906 was a most memorable year for the Downers Grove Fire Department. The Department acquired a 1100 lb. bell for sound-

ing alarms, and a badge was selected to be worn by all the members of the Department. The most far-reaching event of the year 1906 had to be the fire at the Dickè Tool Company in which Casper Dicke had the misfortune to lose his buildings.

Out of this misfortune of the Dicke family came the dedication of Casper Dicke's seven sons, Clarence, Henry, Elmer, Arthur, George, Leonard, and Grant to firefighting in the Village. The name of Dicke is almost synonymous with the Downers Grove Fire Department. Grant Dicke served fifty years in the Department, and as Fire Chief from 1925 to 1967. Henry Dicke was Fire Chief from 1914 to 1924, and Elmer Dicke served as Assistant Fire Chief for many years.

The volunteer fire departments of nearby villages rallied to help each other in the event of large fires. At 10:00 PM on a sub-zero January night in 1909 Chief Louis Klein "rang the whistle and blew the bells," that Hinsdale was burning down. Since the roads were covered with

snowdrifts, the Downers Grove Fire Department boarded the 11:22 PM train for Hinsdale with 500 feet of hose and a nozzle. The LaGrange Fire Department got stuck in a snowdrift and never did get to the fire! The Downers Grove Volunteers worked all night to extinguish the blaze in the Dietzel Store. At the next meeting of the Downers Grove Department, a vote of thanks was read from Hinsdale along with \$38.00 for the group.

The Fire Department picnics were occasions of delight and pleasure for old and young alike. The picnics were generally held in Fireman's Park on the north side of Gilbert just south of the tracks. In 1898, the year of the first picnic, it is recorded that there was a basket lunch, races, dancing, a refreshment stand, coon rack, doll rack, knife rack, cane rack, and a lunch counter.

The first annual Fireman's Dance was held on Thanksgiving Eve of that same year and has continued to be an annual tradition. The 1912 Downers Grove *Reporter* reported a very pleasant affair with about 80 couples enjoying dancing until about 1:00 o'clock but emphasized the

obligation of property owners to buy tickets for the dance even if they did not attend, saying:

"Have you ever stopped to think that the fire boys do not cost the taxpayers anything? They have spent about \$1,500 in the last ten years building an addition to the Village Hall for their meeting room, in buying uniforms and attending firemen's tournaments and conventions. The boys deserve your support and we hope you will not forget them when they have their next dance and will cheerfully donate."

In 1920 the Department purchased its first motorized pumper, a 359 GPM 1920 White, and bought the first complete set of uniforms in 1925. An election was held on July 23, 1927, for the purpose of voting on a \$40,000 bond issue to provide \$20,000 for the first fire station and another \$20,000 for motorized equipment. The bond issue was passed with 426 votes cast, 338 in favor and 88 against. On October 24, 1927, groundbreaking ceremonies were held for Station #1 at 1110 Warren Avenue, which was built at a cost of \$21,000. In 1928 the Department purchased its first ladder truck, a Seagrave Suburbanite Ladder Truck, and a Seagrave 750 GPM Pumper Truck. On September 20, 1953,



Fire Department on Warren Ave., Station #1.



Volunteer Fire Department — 1950. From the Left Are: Chief Dicke; Reed Loy; Arthur Grenier; Phillip Vix; Roland Nelson; Arthur Bammann; Thomas Manning; Elmer Dicke; R.B. Wight, Jr.; Thomas Smith; Frank Wander; Kenneth Jacobs; Edward Leibundguth; Anthony Dolatowski; and Albert Smith.

Station #2, to serve the Village on the south side of the tracks, was completed at Main and Summit at a cost of \$52,000.

On July 29, 1961, Station #1 was renamed the Grant E. Dicke Fire Station by action of the Village Council, in recognition of Grant Dicke's fifty years of dedicated service to the Village of Downers Grove Fire Department.

Frank Wander, who had joined the Department in 1944 and became Assistant Fire Chief to Grant Dicke in 1960, was named the first full-time Fire Chief on January 1, 1967; and on November 1, the first three full-time paid firemen were hired. That same year a modern communications room was constructed at the Grant E. Dicke Station.

In September, 1970, construction was started on Station #3 at 39th and Highland at a projected cost of \$328,909. The new communications center of the Fire Department was moved to Station #3, which also serves as the Administration Center of the Department.

In June, 1977, Frank Wander retired, and his son John succeeded him as Chief. Also in that year Station #1 was built at Wisconsin and Katrine, to better serve the Ellsworth Park Industrial District. Old Station #1 is now part of Oak Tree Towers, Senior Citizens housing, and is used as a recreation building.

On May 1, 1980, the Downers Grove Fire Department instituted the Village's paramedic program.

In 1981 the Downers Grove Fire Department had 7 pumpers, 2 aerial ladder trucks, 1 squad truck and 3 ambulances and a paramedic squad. The Department includes 25 paid firemen, 6 para-medics and 35 volunteer firemen, who man the three stations 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Both the structure and spirit of the Downers Grove Fire Department are unique. *Every* full-time firefighter is by *choice* a paid-on-call volunteer. This means all full-time people work with the volunteers, getting to know them well. Fur-



(photo by Ed Bunting, Jr.)

thermore, *all* of the firefighters are members of the Downers Grove Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., a social and professional service club which provides supplementary training and raise money for additional equipment.\* As a result, Downers Grove volunteer and full-time firefighters form a strong, cohesive group. They have camaraderie and mutual respect as well as strong positive feelings about what they do. Being a firefighter in our Village is a way of life! Many individuals have been volunteer firefighters for 25-35 years!

\*One way the firefighters raised money from February, 1946 to September, 1962, was through paper drives. In 1962 they voted to turn this activity over to the Lions Club.



Mayor Houck and Fire Chief Frank Wander



Former Fire Chief Grant Dicke

### CHIEFS OF FIRE DEPARTMENT

	<i>Chiefs</i>	<i>Assistants</i>
1898-1901	C. Ford Davis	Louis Klein
1901-1903	Sam Hoffert	Fred Binder
1904	John Woelfersheim	Fred Binder
1905	Sam Hoffert	Warren Devereaux
1906	D.H. Uhlhorn	Will Timke
1907-1909	Louis Klein	Harry Darnley
1910-1911	Louis Klein	
1912	Louis Klein & C.H. Staats	Phillip Binder
1913	C.H. Staats	Fred Heinke
1914-1917	Henry Dicke	George Binder
1918-1920	Henry Dicke	Grant Dicke
1925-1961	Grant Dicke	Wm. Eichhorst-1925
		Elmer Vix-1926
		Elmer Dicke-1927
		Frank Wander-1958
1961-1967	Grant Dicke	Arthur Grenier-1965
1967-1977	Frank Wander	Frank Meister-1967
1977-_____	John Wander	Edward Leibundguth-1970
		James Mrkvicka-1972
		John Wander-1972
		Robert Lang-1978



Fire Station #2 — located at 55th and Main Street (photo by Ed Bunting, Jr.)



Paramedics Kent Adams and Tom Leitherer (photo by Carol Konkoly)



Firefighter Dave Haack (photo by Carol Konkoly)



Fire Station #1 — located at Wisconsin and Katrine (photo by Ed Bunting, Jr.)



Fire Station #3 — located at 39th and Highland (photo by Ed Bunting, Jr.)



Fire Chief John Wander



Firefighters Mike Quish and Bill Friedrich and Inspector Joe Pasakarnis (center) (photo by Carol Konkoly)



Inspector Joe Pasakarnis and "Ashes" Fire Prevention Program — (photo by Carol Konkoly)



1920 Fire Engine — L to R: Grant Dicke; Larry Bertolin, Frank Meister; Larry Nelson and Ted McCollum 1956



L to R: Firefighter Mike Shaver, Inspector Joe Pasakarnis, Volunteer Huey Mitchell and Captain Terry Reiter as "Torch the Clown."



Volunteer Bob Giebraski and Asst. Chief Jim Mrkvicka — 1963



## POST OFFICE

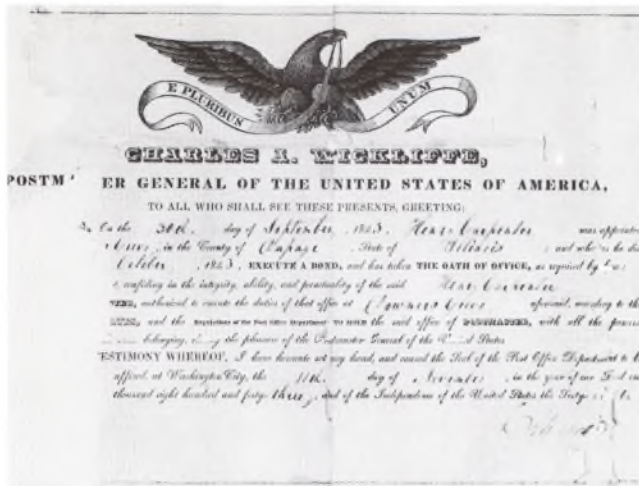
On September 11, 1839, Eli Curtiss was named the first Postmaster in Downer's Grove. As Postmaster it was necessary for him to ride horseback to Plainfield Road to meet the stage-coach carrying the mail. Curtiss picked up the mail from the driver and placed it in his saddle bags for his return trip to Downer's Grove. It was said that he wore a high silk hat, and if he had more mail than would fit in his saddle bags, he

would place it in his tall hat. The settlers, anxious for letters from their friends and relatives back home, watched hopefully for the tall-hatted rider galloping up the road.

A few years later, in September of 1843, Henry Carpenter was appointed Postmaster, and he established the Post Office in his home and general store on Maple and Lane Place. This building still stands and is occupied as a resi-



Interior of old Post Office in rear of Farmers' & Merchants' Bank (currently Muriel Mundy Store)

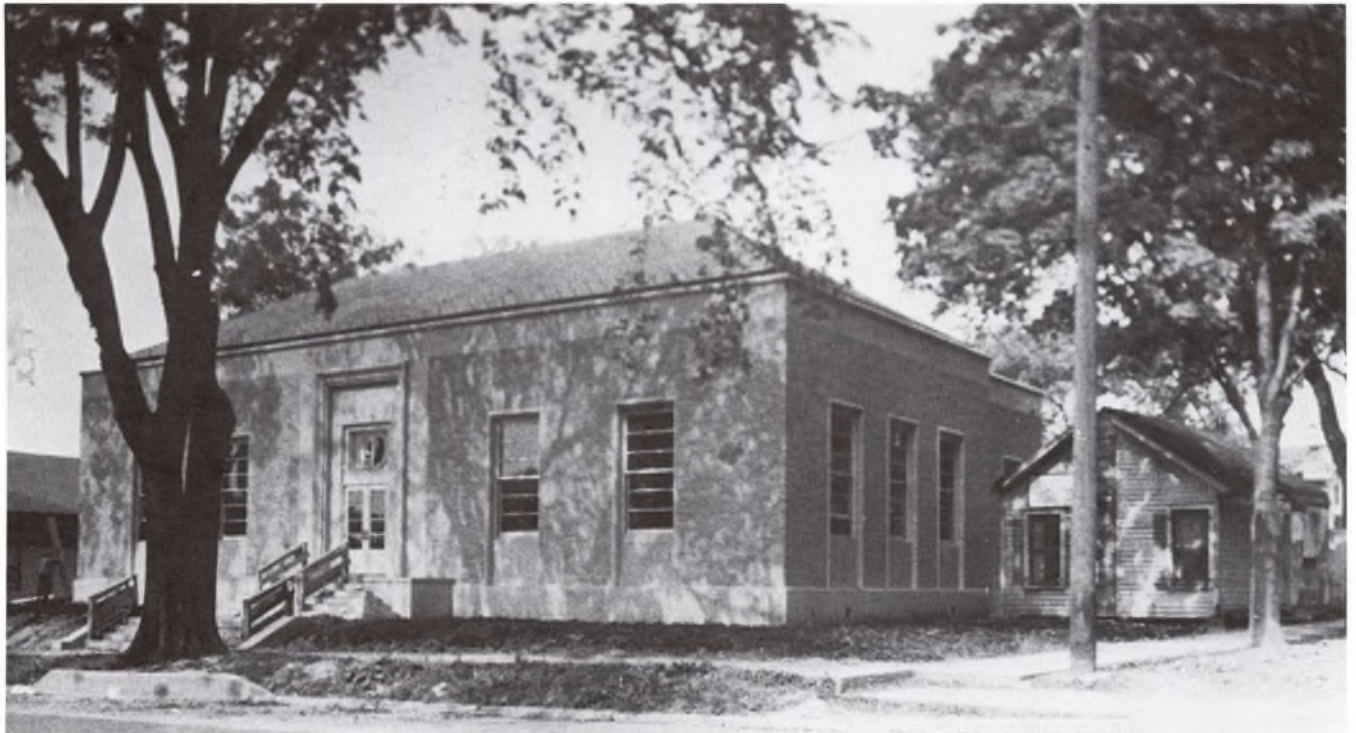


Document appointing Henry Carpenter as Postmaster (original in Downers Grove Historical Museum) (photo by Ed Bunting, Jr.)

dence. During the Bicentennial celebration Carpenter's Post Office was "conducted" in the original building as a commemorative celebration.

The Post Office had several moves in those early years. L.K. Hatch and Eldred Thatcher bought Carpenter's store, and when they moved the store to the corner of Maple and Main, the Post Office moved with the store. The Post Office was moved later to a small building on the Stanley property just opposite Grove Street, and still later it was moved just north of St. Joseph Creek on the west side of Main Street.

In the early 1890's when the Farmer's and Merchant's Bank Building was built on the northeast corner of Curtiss and Main Street, the Post Office was housed in an office at the east end of the building with the entrance on Curtiss Street. Later, a small building was erected expressly for the Post Office immediately across Curtiss Street from the bank building. This building at 1015 Curtiss Street served as Post Office until 1937 when the large Government-owned building was constructed at the corner of Washington and Curtiss Street, the present location of the Post Office.



Post Office — 1938

## DOWNERS GROVE POSTMASTERS

(Downers Grove Post Office, Dupage County,  
Illinois—Established on September 11, 1839)

<i>Postmasters</i>	<i>Dates of Appointment</i>
Eli W. Curtis	9-11-1839
Henry Carpenter	9-30-1843
Levi C. Aldrich	12-21-1844
Samuel Curtiss	6-28-1849
James Depue	8-24-1853
Eldred Thatcher	8-17-1859
James M. Barr	6-2-1881
E.M. Crittenden	9-15-1885
Martin E. Stanger	6-6-1889
Charles Carpenter	6-6-1901
Elbert C. Stanley	5-24-1905
Bert C. White	3-10-1914
Arthur D. Hathaway (Acting)	8-19-1916
J.D. Downer	1-8-1917
Chris H. Staats	12-19-1921
Harry B. Rigsbee	1-22-1927
Joseph T. Cline	9-18-1935
Mrs. Dora C. Whidden	3-15-1937
Budd L. Kellog	7-22-1938
George O. Downer	11-30-1949
John D. Stough	6-30-1953
Roland W. Schultz	8-31-1954
Lester W. Black	6-30-1958
Milan S. Gjundjek	11-30-1961
John J. Danajka	11-25-72
Lehland R. Deilke	1977



Post Office on Curtiss Street — 1981 (photo by Ed Bunting, Jr.)



First Post Office and General Store — Henry Carpenter Home 1047 Maple Built 1845

## PARK DISTRICT

The Downers Grove Park District was created by the majority vote in a local referendum on June 15, 1946, although the people of Downers Grove had maintained parks since the earliest days. In the beginning village playing fields, the banks of St. Joseph Creek, and a few small ponds supplemented the large yards, fields, and forests as recreation areas. Then through the years the Village of Downers Grove had acquired Grove Street Park (now Fishel Park), Randall Park, Gilbert Park, Littleford Park, and Prince Pond. In 1948 the Village of Downers Grove deeded all these properties, with the exception of the Grove Street park which was leased, to the newly-created Park District. The Downers Grove Park District then began its work with donated land.

The election of 1946 named five men to the non-salaried post of Park Commissioner. Each would have equal authority, and none could act on behalf of the Board without majority consent. Thus began a tradition of public service by the Park Commissioners through the years. Some served for a short time; others for more than one six-year term, each striving to do their best for the community. The dedication and perseverance of the Park Commissioners has resulted in a first-class park and recreation system for all the citizens of Downers Grove.

On June 27, 1946, Otto Hummer was elected Chairman of the Board by his fellow commissioners, E. Russell Bradley, Phillips Goodell, and Philip S. Rinaldo, Jr. The fifth Commissioner Frank Ahalt was appointed for a two-year term to fill the vacancy created by W. Bradford Wines, who had declined to serve. At that first meeting the Board voted to borrow \$500 at 2% interest "to carry on the business of the District."

Hummer resigned from the Board in 1962 to become the first Superintendent of the Park District. Upon Hummer's retirement in 1964,

former Downers Grove Police Chief Otto Springborn served as Superintendent for the year 1965. The following year Charles Tattersall replaced Springborn and served as District Superintendent until 1971.

In the 1960's the Park Commissioners voted to hire some permanent part-time employees in order to carry on the business of the District. For ten years 1960-69, Frances E. Wander kept the minutes, issued permits, typed reports, and handled other park business. After her death her



Otto Hummer

daughter-in-law Linda Wander succeeded her in the office, serving until 1972. Robert O'Brien was appointed to the position of Treasurer in 1966 in response to the increasing financial complexity of the District. O'Brien served as Treasurer until 1972 and has been the only non-Commissioner to serve in that capacity.

On April 30, 1952, the Park Board created a Department of Recreation headed by President Otto Hummer. Other members of the Recreation Department were Park Commissioner E. Russell Bradley and three citizens, Mrs. E.J. Frawley, Robert Rubado, and H.P. Current. Prior to that time short-term activities and individual activities had been the only recreation provided by the Park Board.

In 1964 Muriel Martinek was appointed summer Recreation Director. Her successful program that year was followed in 1965 by another with Patricia Smith as Director. Between 1966 and 1971 Gordon Teichman directed the summer program.

The decade of the 1970's saw a tremendous growth in the services of the Park District to the community. Among the facilities and opportunities available to the community in 1981, which did not exist in 1970, are: year-round recreation programs for people of all ages and interests, summer band concerts, an historical museum, the Lincoln Center complex, the multi-faceted Senior Citizens' services, the Belmont Prairie Nature Preserve, year-round swimming, and specialized recreational opportunities for adults and children with special needs. During this period the Park District actively supported legislation and court decisions which require residential subdividers to make either a cash or land donation to the Park District to help offset the additional recreational requirements generated by the new residents. During this decade the Park District received 25.7 acres and \$171,000 in lieu of land from subdividers. These donations have made it possible for the District to concentrate its efforts on park improvements instead of trying to outguess and outbid the subdividers.

The Park District has consistently sought to acquire and preserve open lands for recreational purposes. Often the Park Board purchased land at a time it could ill afford the expenditures, in order to acquire the land when it was available. From simple transactions in the early years involving a thousand dollars, it has been only a

short time to complicated purchases such as the \$275,000 purchase of the 86-acre Downers Grove Golf Course.

In 1971 the Park Board hired its first recreation professional when John Woodson was hired as Park Administrator on a shared-time basis with the Woodridge Park District. Woodson served as a full-time administrator for the next year and was succeeded by Ned Bell in May of 1973. Bell has led the Park District through the challenging expansion of the seventies and into the eighties. In 1972 Gregory Butler was hired as Recreation Director, and under his leadership the recreation program was developed and has flourished. Butler was succeeded in 1978 by Barbara Anderson Powell, who has continued to improve and update the Recreation Department. The first Directors of Parks, Robert Shoger, was hired by the Park District in 1973.

In 1974 the Park District entered into an agreement with the Downers Grove Historical Society to furnish a building to house the Society's collection. The first Museum was four rooms on the second floor of 801 Burlington, the new Village Hall, and later a small six-room house at 841 Curtiss Street was purchased. The collection of historical artifacts soon outgrew this site, and in 1976 it was decided to purchase the historic Blodgett House at 831 Maple Avenue as a permanent home for the Museum. The Museum had its formal opening in this new home on January 30, 1977.

In 1974 the Park District purchased the moth-balled Lincoln School from Grade School District #58. The building was remodelled in three phases into a community recreation center, which was named Lincoln Center. The first phase involved the rehabilitation of the exterior of the building and major structural improvements, including an elevator. The second phase which ended in 1978, included the renovation of the gym, auditorium, and half of the classrooms into meeting and instructional rooms. The final phase involved the renovation of the remaining rooms.

In 1973 the Park District started the operation of a Senior Center at the Masonic Temple. At the completion of Phase II of the renovation, the Senior Center moved to the "new" Lincoln Center. The Senior Center provides a wide variety of activities and services for the mature members of the community, including travel,

assistance with legal concerns, income tax, and social security/medicare questions. A drop-in center area and a diner's club are also part of the Senior Center's service.

The Park District held an initial Open House for the community at Lincoln Center with a turnout of over 600 citizens! A large number of those attending were either alumni or parents of former students of the old Lincoln School. Many had both attended Lincoln School as students and were parents of former students. Those in attendance were very pleased with the recycling of the building into a community center. The dedication of Lincoln Center after the completion of Phase III was held on May 3, 1981.

Presently, the following parks and recreational areas are included in the Downers Grove Park District:

**DOERHOFER PARK**—This 12-acre maximum-activity park is located at 41st Street between Saratoga Avenue and Venard Road. The facility has 3 lighted baseball diamonds, a lighted football/soccer field, 5 lighted tennis courts, and a tennis practice area, a playground



Playtime at Lincoln Center

and a multi-purpose fieldhouse. Doerhoefer Park is named after former Park Commissioner and Park Board President, Edward J. Doerhoefer, to honor his leadership in acquiring and developing this site. The facility was formally dedicated in June of 1971 as part of the District's twenty-fifth anniversary celebration. At the same time the pavillion was named the Frances E. Wander Pavillion in memory of the first Park District clerk.



Lincoln Center



Old Belmont Golf Course — original building — 1893 to 1976



Golfers Top (L to R): George Whitney; Gordon Swanson; Ray Adams; A.E. Bricker. Bottom (L to R): Elon Staats; and Carl Wander.

**DOWNERS GROVE GOLF COURSE**—The Downers Gove Golf Course is the oldest 9-hole golf course west of the Appalachian Mountains and one of the ten oldest golf clubs in the United States. The course is an interesting 9-hole, 2950-yard golf course set on eighty-six rolling acres near the west edge of the Village. The clubhouse entrance and parking lot are located at 2420 Haddow Avenue, a half-mile west of Belmont Road. The land was purchased by the Park Board in 1968 from the Robert and James Slepicka families, who had owned and operated the golf course for many years. As part of the Downers Grove Park District the golf course is operated as a daily-fee public course. Both resident and non-resident membership and youth-rate season privileges are offered, and the course is available for league play. The original clubhouse burned down in 1976. The new clubhouse opened in 1977, where golfers may purchase light refreshments and golf accessories.

**PATRIOTS PARK**—This combination recreation area and water retention basin is one of the prettiest of the parks. In the winter the six-acre Barth Pond becomes a giant skating rink; during the rest of the year it is used for fishing and canoeing. The Village and Park District cooper-



ated in 1970-80 in the contouring of Barth Pond to increase the amount of water it can contain to prevent downstream flooding in the event of a severe storm. In 1976 the park was named Patriots Park as a part of the Bicentennial Celebration and at the same time Barth Pond was named in honor of the memory of Police Officer Richard J. Barth, who was slain on March 18, 1974, while in the performance of his duties. His death occurred at another park, Hoopers Hollow. Officer Barth was the first Village police officer to be killed in the line of duty.

**FISHEL PARK**—The bandshell in this downtown park is regularly used for summer concerts and other recreational activities. Its small playground and open play space are popular with both children from the neighborhood and children whose parents are shopping in the nearby stores. This 2-acre site was originally owned by the Village and subsequently turned over to the Park District. It is named in memory of the late Mayor Newell Fischel, who died in office in 1947. The property was previously the first site of



Skating at Barth Pond located on 55th Street

the Avery Coonley School. It was bought from Mrs. Avery Coonley during the early 1940's by a group of public-spirited citizens and given to the Village as a site for public recreation.

**GILBERT PARK**—Considerable capital improvement and re-routing of Gilbert Avenue made this 7-acre park a useful facility. Located at 1500 Gilbert Avenue, this park has a lighted baseball diamond, a playground, and a picnic pavillion which is popular for group and family outings. This park borders Maple Grove Forest Preserve, believed to be the only stand of virgin timber in the county forest preserve system. A



Family picnic in the Southwest section of Gilbert Park

pathway through the Preserve connects Gilbert Park with Memorial Park, a tract owned by the DuPage County Forest Preserve District and leased to the Park Board.

**HUMMER PARK**—These ten acres of grass and trees provide one of the most popular picnic sites in town. A feeder stream which leads to St. Joseph Creek cuts diagonally through the Park from northeast to southwest. In late fall the stream is dammed to flood a pond area for ice skating. The old community building known as Hummer House was closed in 1978 in conjunction with the opening of the Lincoln Center. The building was razed in 1981 and replaced with a picnic pavillion. This park is named in honor of Otto H. Hummer, the Park District's first President.

**MEMORIAL PARK**—This park is an open portion of Forest Preserve property which is leased to the Park District on a long-term basis. The Park Board has built two baseball diamonds



Ice skating at Hummer Park located on Fairview Avenue

on the property, one of which is lighted, and purchased a refreshment stand and utilities building. Memorial Park fronts Maple Avenue in the 1500 block.

**PRINCE POND**—This three-acre site, also called Prince Park, is one of the oldest recreation



Grove Lake, or Prince Pond, in 1894. Season ticket for winter activities.

areas in Downer Grove. Another early name for this park was Grove Park. Bordered by Linscott, Franklin, and Parkway streets, Prince Pond was



Prince Pond

a gift of the Prince family. It comprises a large water-retention basin and a small ice-skating shelter. In 1980-81 the Pond area receive extensive remodelling, which added new walks, banks, and seating areas.

**RANDALL PARK**—Located at the corner of



Girl Scouts in canoes on Prince Pond (Northwest section)



Tennis at Randall Park (Southeast section)

Randall and Park streets, a portion of this property was one of the original Village parks deeded to the Park District in 1948. The Park Board purchased additional land to increase the park area to its present 4.5 acres. Randall Park has two lighted tennis courts, a small sandlot ball diamond, and a playgroud.

**STERLING NORTH PARKSITE**—Development of this 7.5 acre site is awaiting the widening of St. Joseph Creek, which flows through the property. This was the former site of the Sanitary District's treatment plant. The Park District bought the property as a future site for picnicking and skating on the old "polishing pond."

The late Senator Lottie Holman O'Neill first persuaded the Legislature to fund the widening of the creek for flood prevention in 1959. Governor Stratton and his successors have either vetoed or avoided repeated legislation for the

improvement of this section of the creek. In February, 1965, the park site was named in honor of the late Sterling North, the noted children's author and editor, who lived a part of his life in Downers Grove.

**McCOLLUM PARK**—Development of this park site began in 1891. During the 1970's the Park District acquired four contiguous parcels of land near 67th and Main Street, totalling almost 150 acres. This park, named to honor Theodore McCollum's long years of service on the Board and his vigorous efforts in the acquisition of this

large active-recreation site, will be the site of a variety of activities, including tennis, football, baseball, soccer, miniature golf, playgrounds, and a picnic area. The administrative offices of both the Downers Grove Park District and of SEASPAR, the South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation, a cooperative program which provides recreation services to people with special needs, are located in McCollum Park.

**WANDSCHNEIDER PARK**—This park includes the Downers Grove Historical Museum situated on a knoll with a commanding presence on historic Maple Avenue. The present house was built by Charles Blodgett in 1892, the third house was built by the Blodgetts on their land. The park, named to honor the long years of services given by Pauline Wandschneider as founder of the Downers Grove Historical Society and as Curator of the Historical Museum, includes approximately four acres of grounds.

**HOOPER'S HOLLOW**—Semi-developed, this site was named in honor of the late Judge William Hooper, a long-time resident of the community and one-time resident of the community and one-time attorney for the Park District.



Dedication of Wandschneider Park, March, 1978. L to R: Bud Sherman; Pauline Wandschneider; Ned Bell; and Linda Wander.



Historical Museum at 831 Maple Avenue. Former Israel Blodgett homesite and farm. 1976.



Jan Kopsis, Park District President



Fran Wander, First Park District Clerk During Formative Years.



Hooper Hollow slide

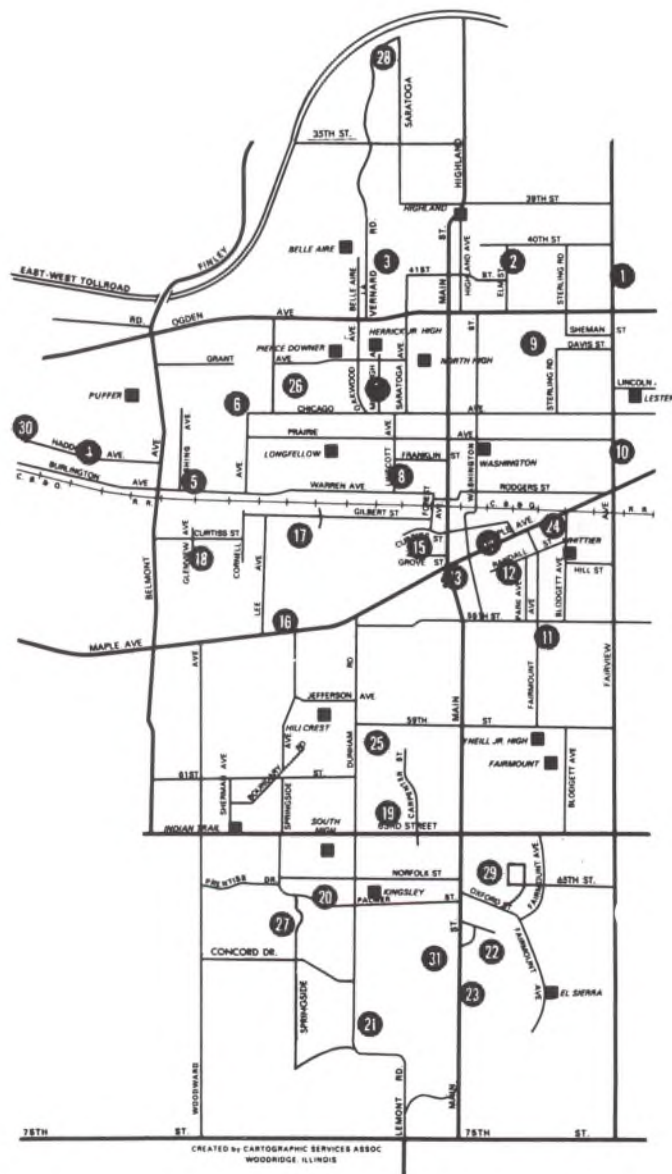
It includes playground equipment and a toboggan slide donated by the Lions Club. An outdoor swimming pool had been proposed for this site, but that proposal was overwhelmingly defeated in an August, 1970, referendum. It was in this park that Police Officer Richard J. Barth was slain in 1974.

**NORTHEAST PARK**—Twenty acres of open fields and a small wooded area provide room to run and play. It also has a ball diamond and playground equipment plus the Park District's first formal jogging path.

**O'BRIEN PARK**—This park, named in honor of former Commissioner and subsequent Treasurer, Robert W. O'Brien, offers sixteen acres for winter fun and includes a small skating pond and a sledding hill.

**LOY PARK**—This small neighborhood park was named in memory of Reed Loy, Jr., a long-time park employee and also volunteer fireman who died at work. This site is leased from the Village.

**BELMONT PRAIRIE**—In 1978 the Park District was approached by The Nature Conservancy, a national conservation organization. The group was concerned about the Belmont Prairie,





one of the few fragment of native prairie left in northeast Illinois. Grants from The Nature Conservancy enabled the Park District to acquire this land. The prairie has since been designated as an Illinois Nature Preserve, which gives it the highest ecological protection of the State. Belmont Prairie, almost 10 acres in size, supports over 100 species of prairie plants and grasses. It was first discovered as a native prairie remnant by local residents, Al and Margo DuPree, who spearheaded a long, and many times lonely, battle to preserve the area. The Belmont Prairie was officially dedicated in August of 1980.



Early spring in the Prairie (photo by Robert Dunham)

**DOWNERS BURIAL PLACE**—The Park District was given the Old Downer Family Burial Grounds in 1974 in the will of Earl Downer, the last family member to be buried there. This small cemetery was started in 1863 when Mrs. Lucy Downer died. The St. Joseph Creek was in full flood, preventing the burial of Mrs. Downer in the Main Street Cemetery. Pierce Downer died on the day following the death of his wife, and he was buried here on the hill where he had camped his first night in the grove in 1832. Several other members of the Downer family were buried in this small cemetery on the family farm. The cemetery is unique in that it is completely surrounded by the backyards of the adjacent homes, but there is public access over a driveway of the home at 4524 Linscott Avenue.

**MAPLE GROVE FOREST PRESERVE**—Although not a part of the Downers Grove Park District, the Maple Grove Forest Preserve is very much a part of the tradition of Downers Grove. This site lies between Gilbert Park on the northeast and Memorial Park on the southwest. This property of about eighty acres was purchased

from the Marshall Field estate in 1920 for the Dupage County Forest Preserve District, and in 1923 an additional three acres were purchased. For many years there was a Girl Scout cabin located on the southern end of the preserve. A number of trails wind through it connecting the parks. Maple Grove is distinctive in that it contains one of the best stands of virgin maple forest in this area.

## SEASPAR

**SEASPAR**, the South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation, is a cooperative program among the Claredon Hills, Darien, Downers Grove, Lisle, Westmont, and Woodridge Park Districts, and the Village of Indian Head Park that provides recreation services to individuals with special needs. A variety of weekly activities ranging from bowling leagues and swimming lessons to ceramics and Friday night teen and adult clubs are offered throughout the year. Many outings such as trips to theaters, museums, and sporting events highlight each season's program.

In cooperation with MERCI, a not-for-profit medical group, SEASPAR is sponsoring Cor-Care. Cor-Care is a program for individuals who have high-risk cardiac factors or who have had cardiac problems. It is a medically-supervised program designed to increase muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility. The controlled physical conditioning improves the body's work capacity without increasing the oxygen needed by the heart. The program may also decrease one's heart rate and blood pressure. The program is held at two facilities within the SEASPAR district. A morning program is held on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7:00-8:00 AM, at the Westmont Community Center, and an evening program is held at the Rice Center, Illinois Benedictine College in Lisle, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7:00-8:00 PM. A physician's approval is necessary for admission to the program. An individual may contact his physician or one of MERCI's staff physicians. A medical evaluation and stress test are also required. Based on these tests, an individual's exercise prescription is developed by the physician.

## CHICAGO, BURLINGTON, AND QUINCY RAILROAD

The coming of the railroad to the Village was probably the most significant single influence on the development of Downers Grove. This transportation link made the difference between a village which was an island on the prairie and a village which was dynamic and progressive, linked in its growth with the commerce, industry, and finance of the developing city of Chicago.

In 1858, a committee of men from Brush Hill, Downers Grove, and Naperville filed a petition with the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad (the CB&Q) to request a branch of the railroad from Aurora to Chicago to serve the southern part of DuPage County. Nearly six years later the first passenger train from the west pulled into Downers Grove.

Some of the leading citizens in Downers Grove put up \$500 to purchase grounds for the depot on the southwest corner of present-day Main Street and the railroad tracks.

"The cars of that day, viewed from the outside, were square looking at the ends, and were painted a bright color. Inside, the seats were arranged much the same as they are today . . . But space was provided for a stove at each end, though sometimes a single stove served, in the middle of the car, with a box of wood for fuel. Kerosene lamps gave light. The car trucks were a combination of wood and iron members, bolted together. At this date air brakes had not arrived, nor had the automatic coupler. Hand-operated brakes and the old link-and-pin coupler were to serve until well along in the eighties.

"Train dispatching by telegraph had become standard practice . . . The old 'highball' signal, consisting of a sphere about 18 inches in diameter which could be raised or lowered on a high pole, had been replaced by the hand-operated semaphore. The engineer was handed his 'train orders', a written message before starting his run. The orders were subject to change, and the engineer could be handed new orders at stations along the way, with changes made by telegraph. Operators of telegraph instruments were important people in those days, for the safety of trains depended upon the accuracy of their messages"

Full-scale conversion from wood- to coal-burning locomotives came during the late 1860's. Firemen and engineers who had become extremely proficient in getting the most out of the new coal burners were presented with medals.

Downers Grove became a train change point and terminal for suburban service with an engine roundhouse built in 1893 approximately at the foot of Oakwood Avenue. In 1901 the interlocking plant was established, and this was remodeled in 1930. The water tank was erected in 1912.

On August 23, 1893, the switching tower was opened for operation. Mr. John Griffiths was the tower operator. It was his responsibility to man the switching lights and to transmit the orders he received by telegraph to the engineers. By 1910-11 the 600-class fast Ten-wheelers had taken over the suburban runs from the older locomotives.

All-steel coaches appeared about the time of World War I, and in the 1930's Pacific-type steam locomotives were put on the suburban runs to provide even faster schedules for the express suburban trains. The diesel revolution began on May 26, 1934, when the Burlington Zephyr streaked through Downers Grove on its record-breaking non-stop trip from Denver to the Century of Progress Exposition on Chicago's lakefront.

During World War II the Burlington played a remarkable role. At the end of the war the decision was made to convert the suburban trains into the first all-dieselized, all air-conditioned service. Shortly thereafter in 1950, Budd's new "gallery cars", which provided seating on two levels, were delivered.

"With all diesel operation a fact, in September 1952, the Downers Grove terminal operation was moved to Aurora where all suburban trains, instead of half as previously, would originate and terminate.



Engine #500 in 1901



Steam train in yards at Downers Grove — 1880



John Griffiths, watchman-telegraphman



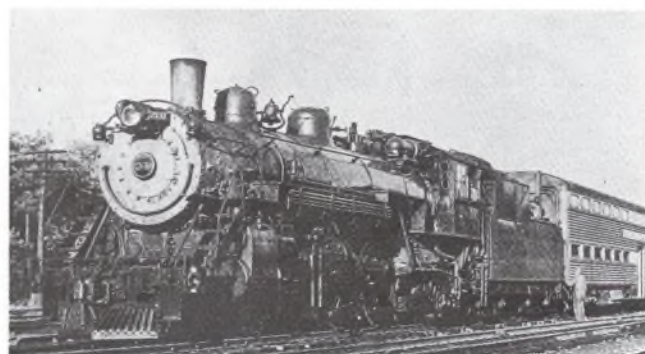
CB&Q turntable near roundhouse (photo by Ed Bunting, Jr.)



Switching Tower — opened for work on August 23, 1893



CB&Q train in 1929



Last run of CB&Q with steam train 1952





Depot — 1870



From Left: Diamond stack #35, typical of American-type wood and coal burners in use from 1850 to well into the 20th Century; Coal-burning 4960, Mikado-type build in 1923 for freight service; a Burlington Zephyr, first diesel-powered, stainless steel streamlined train in the world introduced in 1934; E-9 passenger built by Electro-Motive Division of General Motors; and Turbocharged, GP-35 locomotive built in December, 1963 by Electro Motive. (Burlington RR photo)



Burlington's famed Denver Flyer speeds through Downers Grove in 1899.



2900-series Pacific type locomotives used in 1946



Last steam train 1965. Note double deck cars.

## HISTORIC HOUSES

In 1980 the Downers Grove Historical Society made available a "Maple Avenue Historical Walk" pamphlet, prepared by members Virginia Stehney and Marcia Jolitz. This pamphlet contains information on many of the historic houses along Maple Avenue, with architectural notes by W. Lockwood Martling, Jr.

Information on the houses includes:

### 831 Maple—BLODGETT HOUSE

Now the D.G. HISTORICAL MUSEUM, this gracious Queen Anne home was built in 1892 by Charles B. Blodgett, son of Israel and Avis. It was the third home on this lot. The first was a log cabin. The second, built in 1849, was a house moved south on Blodgett land before the Civil War and is at 812 Randall. This house has brass hardware, sliding parlor doors, and a golden oak stairway with turned balusters and hand-carved newel posts. It originally had vergeboard on gables on east and west sides and a cupola.

Note: originally had balusters on front porch rail like those on rear porch and ornamental brackets on gables

### 819 Maple—STANLEY HOUSE

This retirement home of Emerson O. and Mary Allen Stanley is similar to the Blodgett house and was also built in 1892. It too has a lovely open stairway and has a carved mantel and tiles imported from England set into the mantel.

Note: half circle window, stained glass window beside front door, leaded glass transom, paneled oak door with beveled plate glass

### 811 Maple—MOCHEL HOUSE

Built around 1910 for Charles and Caroline Mochel. Has a few leaded windows and golden oak woodwork and floors and built-in buffet across end of dining room and built-in vacuum system

### 805 Maple

Built in 1888.

Note: balusters in porch railing; 2-story bay window; iron railing and posts not original

### 743 Maple

Note: simple 2-story frame house virtually unaltered; had moveable shutters

### 735 Maple—DAILY HOUSE

Present owner believes Willard Daily, a carpenter, had a "shell" built and completed it himself in 1886.

Note: accents in contrasting color; neat little attic window; vergeboard treatment in the gable; small front porch; tiffany windows.

### 731 Maple

Note: 3-story circular turret; shingle gable; wood brackets under eaves of main roof and sub-cornice; old stone chimney same material as foundation

### 717 Maple—WOELFERSHEIM HOUSE

Built in 1898 by H.H. Woelfersheim, a stonemason who laid the first drainage pipes for St. Joseph Creek under the center of town. House has had only three owners: Woelfersheims, the Woelfersheim daughter, Mrs. Henrietta Schultz; and the present owners.

Note: carriage step at street with family name (thought to be the only one in town); ornamental finial atop turret; well-done color styling with contrasting corner boards

### 701 Maple

Note: Queen Anne style; railing and newel posts on corner balconies; latticework; leaded glass window beside front door and over large living room window; eaves were probably cut off

### 702 Maple—AUSTIN RICHARD HOUSE

Thought to be built by Austin Richards in 1855, this typical early American farmhouse with attached barn originally faced west. In the barn, windows were located over the two stalls (for the horses to look out?). For many years, until 1957, the Strong sisters lived here.

Note: outstanding color treatment; arched window heads and barn door; panels below bay window; limestone walk; new foundation

### **710 Maple—CAPT. COLE HOUSE**

In 1864 Capt. J.J. Cole, a Civil War soldier, built this house from trees that were on the property. It has hand-hewn studding and wooden pegs. Four families lived here from 1864-1968: Cole, Austin, Anthony, Rutherford.

Note: incompatible iron railings (probably *none* originally)

### **726 Maple**

Note: 1½ story; beautiful gabled treatment; corner boards

### **730 Maple—JUDGE MACKIE HOUSE**

Erected in the 1850's for Judge James B. Mackie, Circuit Court judge in Wheaton.

Note: wood shingles in gable; typical Victorian window treatment with large panes in center and surrounding small panes in upper sash; incompatible picture window

### **806 Maple—LYMAN HOUSE**

THE OLDEST HOME IN DOWNERS GROVE, this was built in 1839 in the Greek Revival style by Rev. Orange Lyman, Presbyterian minister. The iron fence surrounded the property which extended east to Mackie Place and north to Curtiss Street. For many years this was the home of the Reil family, some of whom still live in the area.

Note: pillars, stucco probably added in the 1930's, probably had ornate wood shingling in the eaves

### **820 Maple**

This house, erected in the late 1800's, originally sat on the corner lot to the west. Past owners include Belden, Curtiss, Lyman, and Methodist Church, which used it as a parsonage. It has 10 foot ceilings and the original windows downstairs.

Note: beautiful posts and other details on porch; spindled fretwork and bandsawn brackets on porch eaves; latticework

### **832 Maple—GOODENOUGH HOUSE**

This home was built in the 1840's for the Harmon Goodenoughs. Believed to have been a station on the underground railroad during the Civil War.

Note: low ceilings; stucco over original wood siding, probably added in the 1930's one bracket still remaining on east gable

### **840 Maple**

Note: shingles in gambrel-roofed gables; oval and circular windows; Doric columns; and original wood porch railing

### **844 Maple—(2nd) CLIFFORD HOUSE**

Built by the Cliffords after they decided the 13-room house at 850 was too large. The Clifford daughters lived here for many years.

Note: still has original siding and hinged wooden shutters with movable shutters with movable louvers that *fit* windows; original cornice treatment over windows; bay on the west with unevenness (wiggles) in the glass, showing age; board and batten barn in rear

### **850 Maple—(Original) CLIFFORD HOUSE**

Built in 1893 for the Cliffords, who had two daughters. When they decided it was too large, they built and moved into 844 Maple, just to the east.

Note: ornamental wood on the vergeboards; wood shingling in gables; and small attic windows

### **902 Maple—HEARTT HOUSE**

Irving Heartt built this home in 1912 as a frame Victorian house and later had it changed to a brick Regency style. A porch and dormers were removed and double French doors with leaded glass were added to all interior doorways.

### **928 Maple—LEIBUNDGUTH HOUSE**

Note: fine color treatment; long windows on 1st floor with upper sash 2 panes high, lower 4 panes high; half circle window; wide fascia board under eaves on the west (Greek Revival treatment)

### **942 Maple—EDWARDS HOUSE**

W.H. Edwards built this stately Victorian home in the 1880's or 1890's. Realty ad from the 1930's mentions 5 twin-size bedrooms.

Note: 2 turrets with conical roofs; porch on 2nd as well as 1st floor; original siding; bracketed eaves all around

### **SW Corner of Maple & Main—FORMER BLACKSMITH SHOP**

Erected in 1875 by Jim Sucher, blacksmith and iron worker, on the site of his business since the early 1840's, this is THE OLDEST BRICK BUILDING IN THE VILLAGE and has walls one foot thick. The bricks were made in a brickyard located about where Pepperidge Farm, Inc. stands today, east of Fairview, south of the railroad. Over the years it has had various uses and in 1975 was modernized for offices.

### **1047 Maple—CARPENTER HOUSE**

Built by Henry Carpenter in the early 1840's this Midwestern farmhouse style home was the first post office and general store as well as Carpenter's home. Carpenter donated the land across Maple Avenue on

which the Methodist Church stands and was the first individual in the community to subdivide his property.

During the Bicentennial year the owner leased the house for a "general store and post office", where special cancellations were made each month for collectors.

### **943 Maple—LEIBUNDGUTH HOUSE**

Dating from the 1860's, this home originally had 3 rooms down and 3 above. Home has massive interior doors, original wainscoting, old glass door knobs, and a beautiful open stairway. Incompatible iron railings and roof over steps were added rather recently.

Note: the long windows; ornate details over 1st floor windows; simpler details over 2nd floor and attic windows; ornate bracketed gables; original front door

Note: massive Queen Anne with 3-story octagonal turret; new siding

### **909 Maple**

Note: Massive Queen Anne with 3-story octagonal turret; new siding

### **905 Maple**

Note: 2-story octagonal turret; transoms over window; bay window on the side; porch added probably 30-40 years ago

### **853 Maple—CHARLES V. CARPENTER HOUSE**

Note: lovely stained-glass transom; 1st floor windows; brackets under 2nd floor overhand to the east; wood muntins in upper window sash and in front door; details in gable have been covered over

### **847 Maple—L.E. STANLEY HOUSE**

Note: stately, square, hip-roofed home with dormer; 2-story bay; massive beveled posts on large porch; original small balusters in porch railing

### **843 Maple—TROWBRIDGE HOUSE**

In 1893 an architect built this Queen Anne house for his parents, Harriet and W.E.S. Trowbridge.

Note: leaded glass windows on 1st and 2nd floors; west windows that go up the stairway; double bays (extending 2 stories); curved bay on the east; 3-story octagonal turret; original porch and railing; lattice treatment under the porch floor.



Charles Blodgett house 831 Maple (PRESENT HISTORICAL MUSEUM)



Eagle Scouts laying out bicycle tour — 1980



Pierce Downer House at 4437 Seeley Avenue — 1968 Arthur A. Frigo's home.



**806 Maple — built in 1839 for Rev. Orange Lyman. Jack Bowers, current owner.**



**843 Maple — built for the Trowbridges in 1893. Gordon and Jane Behrel current owners.**



943 Maple — built by a Leibundguth in the early 1860's. Now the home of Mrs. William Stillwell



942 Maple — built in the 1890's by W.H. Edwards  
D.R. Tuttle, current owners





Built by Capt. T.S. Rogers in 1844 (now a parking lot at 1024 Warren)



Built by General Arthur Ducat in 1872 on his 800 acre estate. Now the home of Dr. and Mrs. Howard Glassford on Lindenwald Lane.



702 Maple — built in 1870 by Austin Richards. C.H. Orange Current Owner.

(Photo by Thomas Dyba)



730 Maple — built in 1857 for Judge James B. Mackie



**1741 Prairie — built in 1858 by David Kline (later part of the Marshall Field estate) Currently home of the Bollinger family**



**4836 Linscott. Built in 1890 by Levi Mertz. Current owner, John Hanson**

THESE THREE HOUSES WERE BUILT BY WILLIAM STRAUBE, BUILDER AND SUBDIVIDER



5228 Fairmount — built in 1890's (residence of Sterling North in late 1930's)



5216 Fairmount — built in 1890's



5256 Fairmount — built in 1893



4714 Oakwood — built in 1890's by E.H. Prince. Current owner Dr. John V. Wander



4816 Prince — built in 1893 by Fred Alford. Current owner, Mrs. Grant Dicke



936 Prairie — called the "Barn Castle." Built about 1869 by Oscar Gibbs

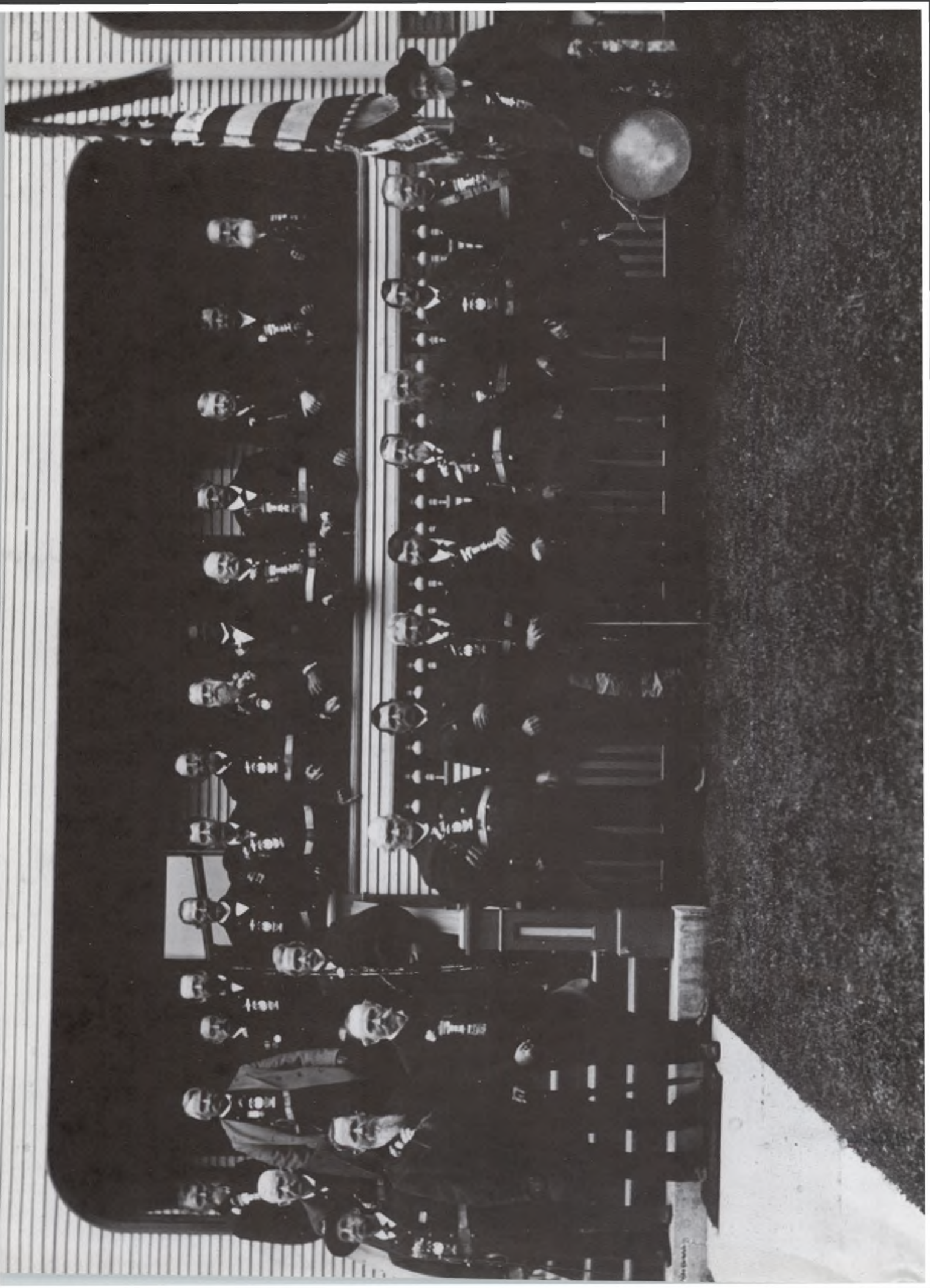


Built in late 1840's or 1850's. Home of Benjamin and Regina Cable Prentiss. Located where South High School now stands.



5430 Washington — built in the 1880's (moved from the 900 block of Curtiss before 1930)

(Photo by Thomas Dyba)





## Glossary Place Names

### *Old Name*

Athens  
Babcock's Grove  
Barber's Corners  
Barry's Point  
Belmont Swimming Pool

### *Present Name*

Lemont  
Lombard  
Route 53 and Boughton Road  
Riverside  
Maple Avenue and Belmont Rd.



Israel Blackburn, Civil War soldier, former slave, buried in Main Street cemetery — old stone



American Legion & Historical Society Members replacing old worn Blackburn marker with new one



Bronze plaque in the Pierce Downer cemetery donated by the Junior Women's Club. Mrs. Richard Olsen and Mrs. Pauline Wandschneider



"Pierce Downer pitched his tent here," in 1832. This plaque presented by local DAR chapter in 1930.

<i>(Old Name)</i>	<i>(Present Name)</i>
Brush Hill “... there is quite a smart little ‘huddle’ generally known as Brush Hill; but at present we believe it is dignified by the title of Fullersburg.”	Hinsdale
Cass A small community consisting of several good farms, a post office, a church, a school; “there is another settlement at ... Cass, in the south part of the town, on the Chicago and Joliet road.”	now part of Darien; south and east of Downers Grove; east of Main Street and as far south as “Old 66” (or near present I-55)
Cottage Hill	Elmhurst
Depot Park a small park with a fountain between Warren Avenue and the railroad tracks	
East Grove Eastern portion of Downers Grove that was served by St. Mary’s Catholic Church; also called Gostyn. After World War I the area was named Fairview, after the street, as is the stop on the railroad. This area had a large number of Polish people as early settlers.	eastern part of Downers Grove, north of the railroad
Fullersburg (first known as Brush Hill) Most of the settlers settled north of the Plank Road (now Ogden Avenue); Orente Grant was the first settler in 1836.	Hinsdale
Gostyn — see East Grove	
Greggs Station Named after a Mr. Gregg who was a very early settler in that area.	Westmont
Northwestern College Name was changed in 1926; originally located in Plainfield in Will County in 1861; Evangelical Association; moved to Naperville in 1870;	North Central College

Oak Knoll (Swimming) Pool  
 Located on Belmont Road south of  
 Ogden Avenue  
 Railroad Park — another name for  
 Depot Park  
 Turner's Junction  
 Walker's Grove

West Chicago (in Winfield  
 Township)  
 Plainfield

### *Street Names*

Belmont Avenue  
 Church  
 Depot Street  
 Foote Avenue (named after a  
 subdivider of the area)  
 Geowey  
 Liberty Street  
 Main Street  
 Railroad Alley and Railroad  
 Avenue  
 Rogers  
 Union Street

Warren Street, west of  
 Forest Avenue  
 55th Street  
 Main Street  
 Forest Avenue  
 Douglas Road  
 Washington Street  
 Highland Avenue  
 Burlington Avenue  
 Main Street (north of tracks)  
 Main Street

### **COUNTIES AND TOWNSHIPS**

*Cook County* was formed in 1831 and is directly east of DuPage County.

*Downers Grove Township* is one of nine townships in DuPage County and is located in the southeast corner. It is the level of local government providing such services as general assistance welfare, road maintenance in unincorporated areas, property assessment, youth commission activities, and voter registration. The Township office is located at 4340 Prince Street, Downers Grove.

*DuPage County* was part of Cook County until 1839 when it was formed as another county because of the increase in population. It comprises about 340 square miles. Part of Will County was part of DuPage until an election when it was voted out by one vote. The first courthouse was erected in 1839 in Naperville, which served as the county seat for 20 years. Several attempts were made to move the courthouse, and the move was finally made in 1869.

*Lisle Township* is the township directly west of Downers Grove Township. Its boundary line is Belmont Road. Many early settlers settled first in Lisle Township and later moved to Downers Grove.

*Milton Township* is located in the center of the county. Wheaton, the county seat, is located here.

## CEMETERIES

*Downer Family Cemetery* — This small cemetery is located in the area between Linscott, Middaugh, Grant, and Lincoln Streets. The driveway entrance at 4524 Linscott, which leads to the cemetery, is for public use. A large sign, which can be seen from the street, marks the cemetery.

*Main Street Cemetery* — This cemetery is located on the west side of Main Street between Curtiss and Grove Streets, south of Giesche's Shoe Store and the parking lot of the Downers Grove National Bank.

The Main Street Cemetery was opened in 1856 when Samuel Curtiss donated a part of his sheep pasture. He was eventually paid \$15, which was collected from the people who formed the cemetery association.

Prior to 1856 there were two small graves near a log cabin at the southwest corner of Maple and Main Streets. A young Pye boy had been buried there in 1850 and the Richards' daughter Sarah in 1853. Henry Carpenter, sitting around the old stove at the Methodist Church with his friends, told how saddened he was by the sight of those two lonely little graves as he looked out the door of his house and said he thought Downers Grove should have a more permanent burial ground.

The entrance to the cemetery was on the west, and therefore most of the old grave markers are engraved on the west side of the stone.

A cemetery association was formed in 1864. Legal papers were drawn up in 1880 with a deed in trust for the association. In 1881 Mrs. Mable Paine and Mrs. Emma Foster Miller of the Downers Grove Woman's Club collected \$800 from people in the community in order to make the cemetery more presentable. They had a pipe and cedar post fence erected.

The present brick wall and cement steps were installed in the 1920's; and shrubs and hanging vines were planted, which gave a more park-like appearance. A fifty-eight foot strip of land on the north side of the property was sold to the Village for \$550 so that the Memorial Hall could be built as a Village Hall in 1925.

For the past few years, the Village of Downers Grove and the Park District have taken the responsibility for the care and upkeep of this cemetery. Particular attention has been given to this task so the cemetery will be in good condition for the celebration of Downers Grove's 150th birthday.

*Oak Hill and Oak Crest Cemeteries* — These cemeteries are located on Glenview about one block north of Maple with the entrance at approximately Howard Street. Glenview is a north-south street about two blocks east of Belmont Road.

Oak Hill Cemetery is on the east side of Glenview. It was formerly called "Blodgett Cemetery" and "West Side Cemetery" by the local people, though it was originally the Stanley family cemetery. Luther Farrar, the husband of Emaline Stanley Farrar, was the first person to be buried in the family cemetery, which was later donated to the community as the Oak Hill Cemetery.

The part of the cemetery north of the fence was the Oak Crest Cemetery, once privately-owned, which later came under the management of the officers of the Oak Hill Cemetery.

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Park District information from William Sherman, Jo Anne L. Baker, and Robert W. O'Brien and news article. Historical Society collection.

## Chapter XIV

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## Chapter XV

Information from Maple Avenue Historic Walk pamphlet by Marcia Jolitz and Virginia A. Stehney. Historical Society collection.



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## EPILOGUE

The most difficult problem in the compilation of material to be included in this history of the Village of Downers Grove was to decide where to stop. The temptation was great to include *all* the information of these recent decades about *all* the events about *all* the people in our Village. Of course, this was not possible.

We would wish for the wisdom to be able to catalog the events of the present into those of greater and lesser significance. It will be the task of the following generations to make those judgments, for the events of today are the history of tomorrow.

Downers Grove in 1982 is a vital, growing community, the size of a city with the spirit and intimacy of a village. The people who live and have lived in our town are the town. The physical characteristics of the place provided the opportunities, but it is the people who make the community which is Downers Grove.

We recognize and honor all those who have lived in Downers Grove during the past century and a half, whose lives have contributed to the quality of life in Downers Grove.

## AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

**MONTREW GOETZ DUNHAM**, a resident of Downers Grove for twenty-five years, a counselor at Downers Grove High School-South, and author of a number of biographies of famous people, received an A.B. degree from Butler University and a M.A. degree from Northwestern University. Her previous books include: Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., George Westinghouse, Abner Doubleday, Anne Bradstreet, Mahalia Jackson, Langston Hughes, John Muir and Margaret Bourke-White.



Montrew and her husband Robert Dunham, a Labor Arbitrator, have four children, Charles Reynolds Dunham, Diane Dunham Massey, Denise Jay Dunham and James Mitchell Dunham and one grandchild, Mackenzie Ann Dunham.

**PAULINE WENDELL WANDSCHNEIDER**, a Downers Grove resident for the last forty-six years, was born in Aberdeen, South Dakota, in 1904. After receiving a B.A. degree with a Home Economics major from the University of South Dakota, she came to Chicago and worked in the food service field for General Electric, Hotpoint, Commonwealth Edison, R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., and J. Sterling Morton High School.



Mrs. Wandschneider has been active in many community organizations, including PTA, AAUW, DAR, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Eastern Star. Long ago she became interested in genealogy and Downers Grove history and was one of the founders and the first President of the Downers Grove Historical Society. Since 1975 she has been Curator of the Downers Grove Historical Museum. For years she has given historical talks and tours to students, teachers, and community groups. Recently she has made a series on local history to be presented on the local TV station as part of the town's Sesquicentennial celebration.

Mrs. Wandschneider and her late husband Fritz have two daughters, Mrs. J.D. Buchanan (Polly) and Carol Wandschneider, who were born in Downers Grove and attended the local schools, and two grandchildren, James Junior and Carlye.

