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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY





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**The**

**Centennial**

**Book**

**Gifford, Illinois**

**1875 - 1975**





# Introduction

Oh, the wonderful, terrible, heroic, cowardly, honest, thieving, kindly, selfish, eager, lazy, cantankerous, cooperative people whose efforts created the Village of Gifford and kept it going for a hundred years—

And all those men and women—equally mixed in their good and bad qualities—who will see it through the next century and prepare for the Bi-Centennial Celebration in 2075.

Lord, have mercy on all of us.

This volume has been hastily prepared, and by amateurs. It does not claim to present the whole story of Gifford, and your favorite incident or character may have been omitted. It will surely contain errors—some of our own and some found in our source materials—and these are regretted. The preparation of this book has shown the need for establishing some kind of Historical Society, or a Village Historian perhaps, to gather and preserve all possible accounts of our past and to record the events of our second century as they occur. Such action is urged upon the present Village Board.



# Dedication



GERTRUDE WOOLDRIDGE BARNES

There was much excitement in the first house south of the Gifford School on February 27, 1893, when a 12-pound daughter, Gertrude Irene, was born to William Alonzo and Hattie Maria (Morse) Wooldridge. Members of the Wooldridge and Morse families have lived in the Gifford area since around 1866—coming to Illinois from New York State. Their ancestors were among the Puritans, who came from England and settled in the New England states, and later pioneered in the State of New York. Gertrude's father had been a monument cutter by trade in New York. After coming to the Gifford area, he was an employee of the J. M. Morse Drug Store, where he became a watch repairman. Will Wooldridge was postmaster of Gifford for 18 years—part of which time the jewelry, drug store and Post Office were combined.

Gertrude came by her musical abilities naturally as her family were all interested in music and art.

At a very early age, Gertrude played the big bass “fiddle” in the family string orchestra. When she was about ten years old, she recalls playing the pump organ at school while the children marched to classes. A cousin of her mother, Samuel F. B. Morse, was a well-known portrait painter and the inventor of many electric devices. The Morse Code was named in his honor. Gertrude's cousin, Frank Wooldridge of Gifford, played with the John Phillip Sousa Band before his death at Great Lakes, during the 'flu epidemic of World War I.

Since she had two older brothers (Gene and Fay) and her parents ran the Post Office and drug store, Gertrude and her dog “Rufus” were very familiar sights on the streets of Gifford. She admits she was a “tom boy” and probably a “spoiled little brat.” As she lived next door to the school, Gertrude used to run home at recess and “raid the cookie jar” for her friends. The year she graduated

from Gifford High School, she was the only member of the graduating class. During the "Womens' Suffrage Movement," she joined the bunting-covered caravan that toured Champaign County, urging "the vote" for women. In those days, after the "turn of the century," Gifford was one of the larger towns in Champaign County, and had an opera house, chautauqua shows, a community orchestra and even a visit from the famed evangelist Billy Sunday.

The Morse and Wooldridge families were among the founders of the Mount Zion Baptist Church in 1868 (later known as the Gifford Baptist Church). Gertrude has always been an active member of the church. At the age of 19, she was appointed as Sunday School superintendent—a position which she held for many years. She also taught Sunday School and Bible School, played the piano for Sunday School, directed and sang in the choir, and for many decades has furnished or arranged the flowers each Sunday. Hattie Wooldridge was organist of the Baptist Church from the time they bought their first organ in the late 1800's. Since her mother's death in 1924, Gertrude has been the regular church organist. She has never accepted any remuneration for her 51 years as organist. Since she was a small girl, her beautiful voice has been very familiar to the people of the area, as she has sung and played for weddings, funerals, church and school events for generations.

On June 1, 1921, she was united in marriage to Roy Stanley Barnes (the son of James Simmons and Dora Belle Lenox Barnes) in Gifford. The Lenox and Barnes families had also been early pioneers in this area—coming to Illinois from Ohio in the 1860's, when this area was mostly prairie.

Roy was postmaster and then RFD mail carrier out of Gifford from 1908 until his retirement in 1960. During World War II when his sub-carrier was in the Army, Gertrude drove the 40-mile mail route as the substitute carrier. Roy and Gertrude Barnes were the parents of two children, Ruth Ann (Zook) and William James Barnes. They farmed 80 acres of land just west of Gifford on Route 136 for over 20

years, where they had a large herd of Guernsey dairy cattle. Gertrude sold eggs, cream, home-made butter and cottage cheese. In 1947, they sold the farm and moved back into Gifford. One of the many moments of pride in her life was the election of Roy as Mayor of Gifford in the 1960's. During his administration, Gifford got its present water system.

Gertrude is a charter member of Woman's Club, WSCS and World Wide Guild, and has served as President of each organization several times. Since Roy was a veteran of World War I, they were both active members of Rantoul American Legion Post 287 for over 50 years. She is a past president of Auxiliary and for many years was 19th District rehabilitation chairman. In the last 25 years, she has compiled over 5,000 hours as a "volunteer" at the Danville Veterans' Administration Hospital. For several years, she was on the Board of Directors of the Gifford State Bank, which was founded as the Exchange Bank in 1885 by her grandfather, James Madison Morse.

One of her life's unfulfilled desires was to be a registered nurse. Maybe that is why she has devoted so much of her life to the sick, elderly and bereaved. She has been on the Champaign County Board of Directors of Red Cross, Heart Association and Cancer Society, and goes weekly, with a group of ladies of the Lutheran Church, to sing at several Champaign County nursing homes. Nearly every week day, Gertrude can be found at Country Health, helping in the craft shop or at the piano.

After 53 years of married life, Mr. Barnes passed away on September 14, 1974. Gertrude continues her very active life as a volunteer at Country Health and the Danville VA, participates in community and family activities and as Methodist Church organist.

With this dedication, the Gifford community, at this time of its 100th birthday, pays tribute to one of its well-loved senior citizens, Gertrude Irene (Wooldridge) Barnes, for her 82 years of unselfish giving to her home town.

# Mr. & Mrs. Pioneer

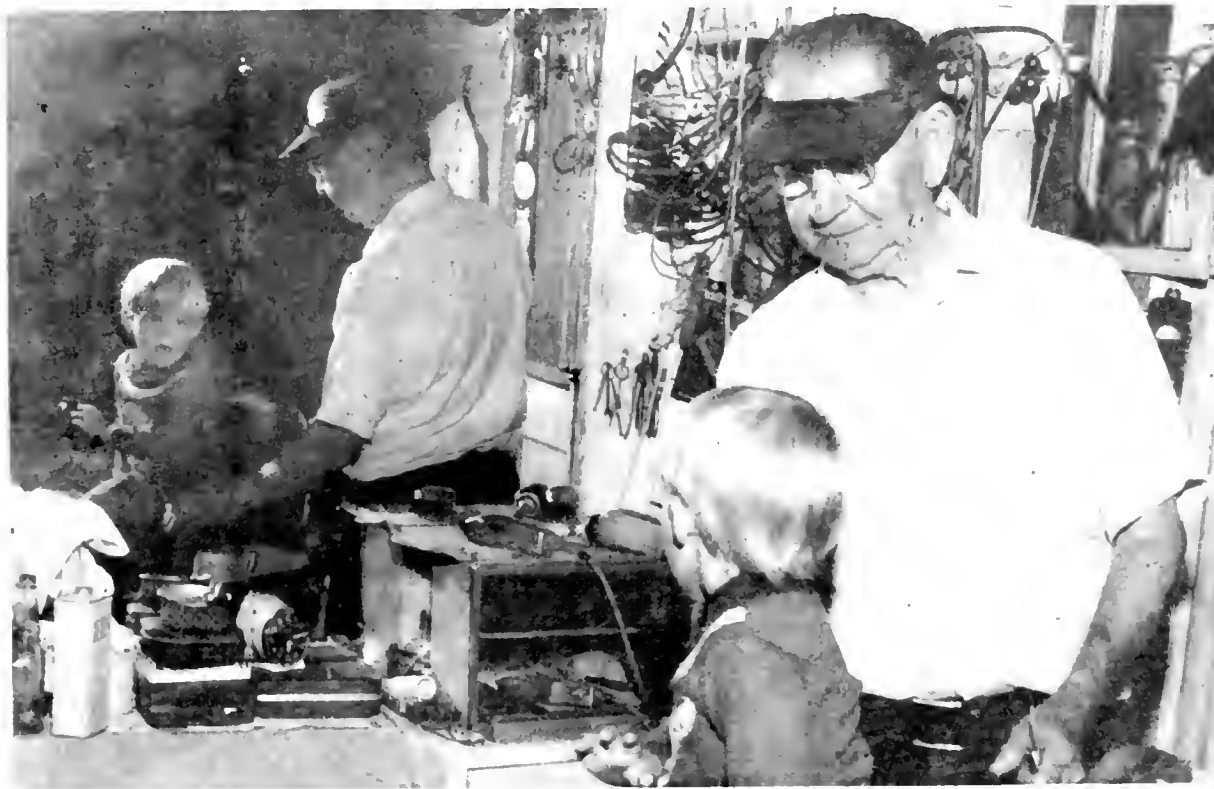
*The Gifford Centennial's Mr. and Mrs. Pioneer are representative of the wonderful people who make Gifford their home. Neither of them lived here as a child, but each chose the Gifford community in which to start married life and to raise a family. As much as were the early settlers, Mr. and Mrs. Pioneer are great assets to the community they chose to call "home."*

## Mr. Pioneer – Howard Varner

Howard Varner has owned and operated a barber shop in Gifford for 47 years—nearly half of the century of progress we are commemorating. He was born in Wayne County, Illinois, on December 25, 1899. His first trip to the central Illinois area was in 1915. Later travels took him to Pueblo, Colorado, where he began barbering in August of 1920. In 1928 he and his wife, Maude, settled in Gifford and Howard opened his own barber shop. At that time haircuts were 35¢ and a shave was 15¢. In the

accompanying picture, Howard is preparing to cut the hair of Danny Reynolds—the fifth generation of the Reynolds family whom he has served.

During the depression years Howard served the community as Justice of the Peace. He is a member of the United Methodist Church, of the Gifford Lions Club, and of the Masonic Lodge. He has enjoyed bowling for years and still bowls once a week on the Gifford State Bank team. Howard and Maude have been married for 52 years. They have one son, James, and four grandchildren.



Howard Varner, Mr. Pioneer, and Danny Reynolds



Sophia Grimm Roessler, Mrs. Pioneer

**Mrs. Pioneer – Sophia Roessler**

Sophia Grimm was born on October 17, 1890, in Bischtroff, Germany, and came to central Illinois in 1903. She was married to Carl Roessler in October of 1912 and they lived west of Rantoul for several years. In March of 1924 she and Carl moved to a farm just east of Gifford, and there they completed the rearing of their seven children. They retired from farming and moved into Gifford in 1924. Carl passed away in 1961.

Mrs. Roessler is a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and she is a charter member of the Women's Missionary Society (now called American Lutheran Church Women). She taught Sunday School for 38 years and she taught in Vacation Bible School for 25 years. She was a member of the Gifford Home Bureau and she is still a member of the Penfield-Gifford American Legion Auxiliary.

Mrs. Roessler has 21 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.



Werner William Roessler – 1913 - 1973

Werner was the first of seven children born to Carl Roessler and his wife, the former Sophia Grimm. He was born on August 5, 1913, near Dewey, Illinois. While he was still an infant his family moved to a farm where the Bethany Park Christian Church now stands at Rantoul. As a boy he attended what is now known as the Myna Thompson School, but it was then called the Frederick Street School. At age 17 he moved with his family to a farm outside Gifford.

Werner was married on May 18, 1935, to Miss Marie Aden and the new couple lived on the farm now occupied by the Don Osterburs. Eight children were born in their family—Leona, Kenneth, Beverly, Lawrence, Bernice, Karen, Dean, and Don—and there are at the present time eleven grandchildren.

The Werner Roesslers moved into Gifford in 1948 when Werner established the Roessler Slaughter Plant at the south edge of town. In the same year he assumed management of the Gifford Locker Plant. He later came to own the Locker Plant and ran it until his death in 1973.

Werner was an almost life-long member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Gifford and he served the church in many capacities. He was a member of the Senior Choir for 42 years. He was a member of the Lutheran Brotherhood and of the Church Council, and at the time of his death he was a member of the Evangelism Committee, of the Board of Lutheran Homes at Muscatine, Iowa, and of the Champaign-Urbana Camp of Gideon International.

Werner was an enthusiastic and active member of the Gifford community. He was a charter member of the Gifford Lions Club, and of Gifford's volunteer Fire Department (the Gifford Fire Protection District). He served as Fire Chief for years. For fifteen years he was Scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts, first for Troop 45 and then for Troop 27, and for an additional ten years he served Scouting as institutional representative and in other capacities. Werner was one of the organizers of the Gifford German Fall Festival and was serving as its treasurer at the time of his death, March 16, 1973.





# In The Beginning

Well, "in the beginning" our little area shared with the rest of the Earth in its creation, however that creation was accomplished. Perhaps it was all done in six hectic days with God shoving the hills, valleys, plains and rivers into place and populating them with birds, beasts, fish—and men. When He stepped back to admire His work on that first Saturday evening, He looked out upon things all in place, essentially as they are now.

Geologists and other scientists tell us that the creation was a long, slow process involving hundreds of thousands of years. They say that our area was once submerged for centuries under the ocean and they point to the 20-foot layer of limestone under the ground (at least as near as Danville) as proof. They tell us that in other centuries our area was tropical—covered with lush, dense vegetation and they say that deposits of coal and oil in Illinois prove that. They say that our area was at the edge of a vast glacier in some distant ice age and they explain that the very high ground on which we stand is the eroded remnant of a great ridge of soil and rock which the glacier had pushed ahead of it from the North. Oh yes, and when that glacier melted—the scientists say—the old Middlefork River ran a hundred times wider and deeper than it does now, receding at last to leave the high banks which more or less parallel the present river at a distance of several rods. If all these things really happened it must have been quite a show. Wish I could have been there to see it.

Whatever the creation process, centuries of time passed with no men in this area. It fascinates me to consider how the Winter winds howled across the land, the Spring flowers bloomed and the Autumn leaves fell with no one here to know it. Seedlings grew into giant trees—the trees fell, rotted and nurtured other seedlings—with no one to witness it but the prairie chickens and the chipmunks.



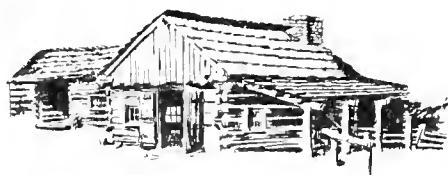
So much for the "beginning." Men did finally appear in this location—Indians. As with the creation, the origin and history of the Indians is largely a matter for speculation. But the Indians were here and our farmers still find an occasional arrowhead in the fields. And to rub the dirt off an arrowhead with your thumb almost impels you to wonder about the man who chipped it out of flint and shot it, probably at some small animal. What did he look like? How tall was he? What kind of a life did he live, and how long ago? In this area they probably lived along the Middlefork River. They were never much as farmers and they probably roamed across our fields only in search of game.

The very first white men in Illinois were the French explorers—LaSalle, Joliet, and Marquette in the late 1600's. They came up the Mississippi and



Illinois Rivers and across to Lake Michigan but it is doubtful they ever entered our locale. Their efforts did mean, though, that for a time our homesite was part of the French colony of Louisiana. When the British took over the area by the Treaty of Paris, "our town" became part of the colony of Virginia. Having lain for centuries under no flag, our fields have since belonged under four flags—the flag (or whatever) of the Indians and the flags of France, England, and the United States. So you see, we've been around.

By the late 1700's, migrants, mostly from Virginia, reached Illinois and the inexorable pressure upon the Indians began. Illinois became a state in 1818 and as the numbers of white settlers increased the Indians were more and more either killed or driven off their native grounds. The matter came to



a cruel climax and the Indians were effectively eliminated from the new state with the defeat of the great Sauk Indian Chief, Black Hawk.

So far as is recorded, the first settler in Compromise Township was Isaac Moore, who settled in "Buck Grove," just northeast of Penfield, in 1830.<sup>1</sup> He appears to have been followed by other settlers

as follows: Robert Wyatt in 1834, a man named Bruffett in 1835,<sup>2</sup> Caleb Evertson in 1842, William Prentice and John McFarland in 1853, Joseph McCormick in 1856, Hamilton Fairchild and Frank White in 1858, John Lester in 1859, and Jeremiah Butz in 1860. The pace rapidly increased, however, and the "History of Champaign County" lists nearly a hundred men—presumably with their families—in Compromise Township by 1870.<sup>3</sup> The men listed on Sections 1 and 2 where Gifford now stands were: C. H. Willard, Alexander Craigmile, George A. Jackson, J. L. Buxton, F. J. L. Newburn, T. P. Barnes, H. M. Spencer, J. J. Brickey, "and two Swedes by the name of Lindeleaf."<sup>1</sup>



**Editor's Note:** The system by which sections of land are numbered and laid out in "townships" has no relationship to the political Townships which levy taxes and elect officials. The political Compromise Township includes numbered sections from Ranges 10 and 11 East and 14 West, all in Township 21 North. Thus the identification of sections gets a little tedious. If you can't find Grandpa's farm in this, well . . .



<sup>1</sup> From "The History of Champaign County" published in 1878.

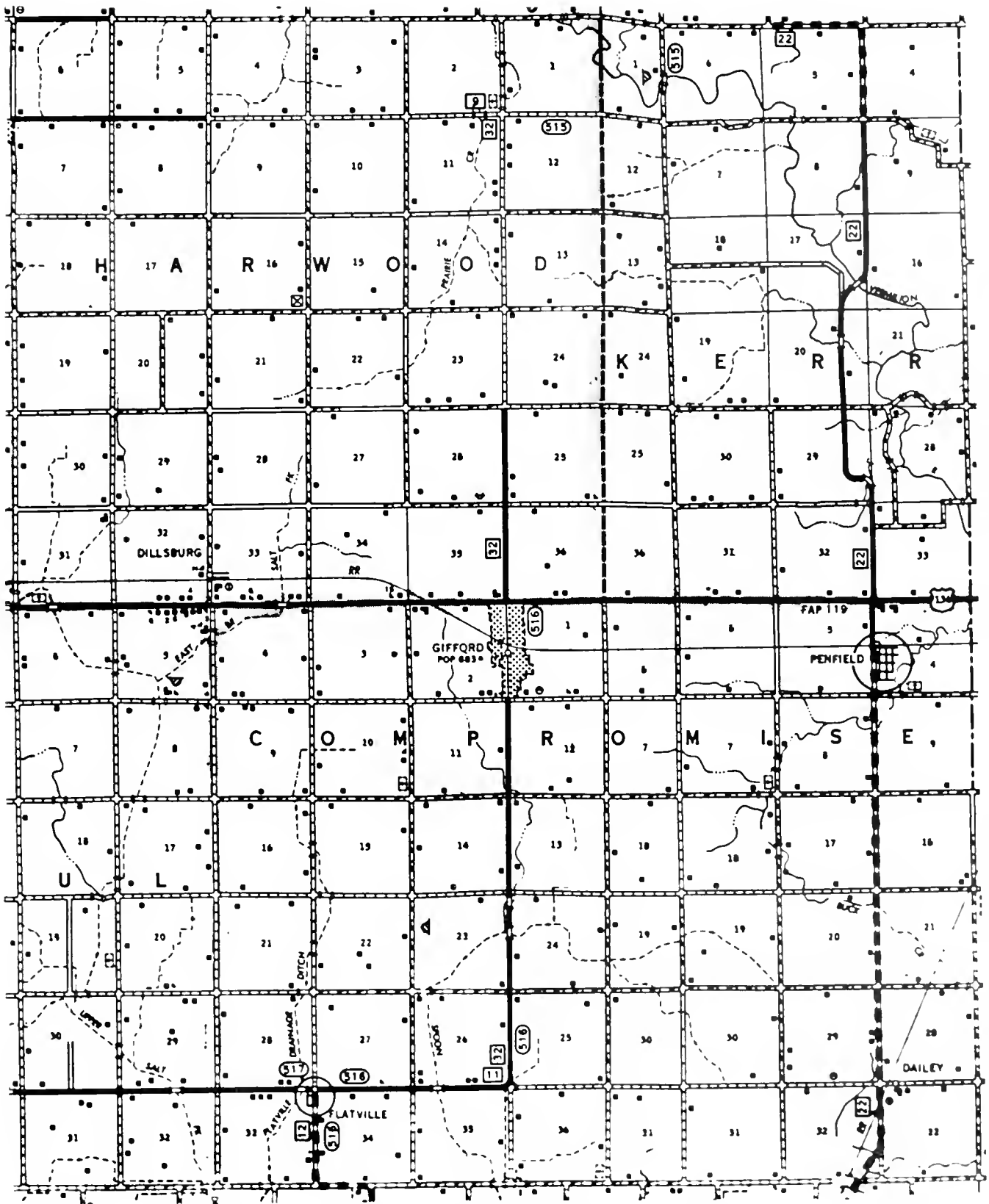
<sup>2</sup> The story is that Mr. Bruffett came from Ohio and bought part of the property held by Isaac Moore. He set out to find a good place to build a house and could not find one to his liking. The more he looked, the less he liked what he saw, so he turned his horses Eastward and went back to Ohio without ever unloading his wagons.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to those already named, the following men are indicated as present in Compromise Township in 1870, on the sections indicated:

TWP 21N Range 14W Section 8—Edward and Edwin Foreman, Section 9—R. Crawford, Section 16—Christian Wolf, Section 17—Henry C. Bear, Section 18—N. B. Odell, Section 19—E. Dickerson, Section 10—E. S. Obenchain, B. J. Gifford, Section 28—A. S. Houghtaylen, M. Jenkins, E. R. Michener, Section 29—L. Nabecker, A. J. Clifton, Job Clifton, M. Schwartz, Section 30—Joseph Ambler, T. Y. Thompson, John Hanessey, Section 31—J. H. Ellis, J. Horton, Section

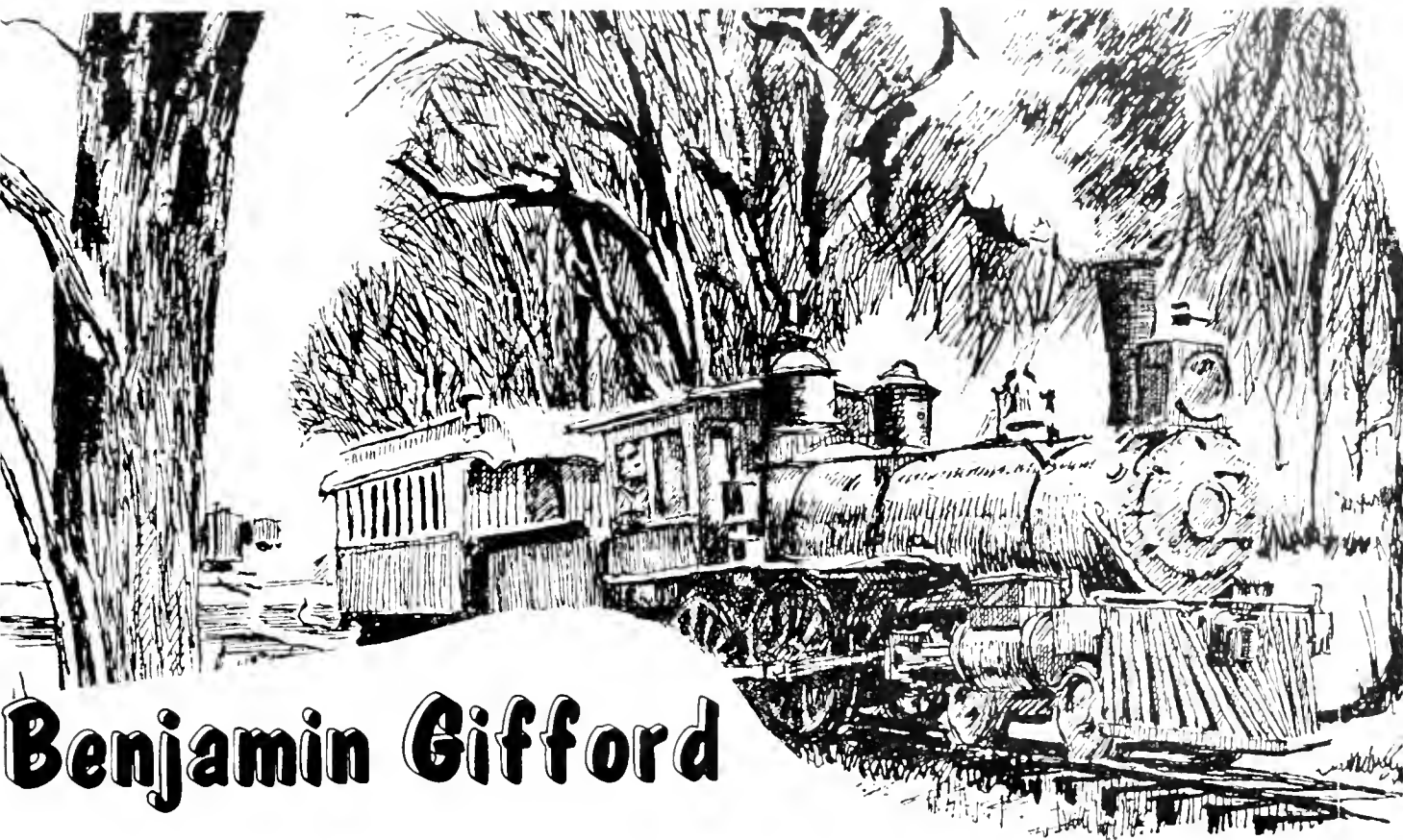
32—Charles Haines, Section 33—W. J. Booker, R. M. Eye-stone, M. Jenkins, T. D. Cundiff.

TWP 21N Range 10E Section 3—John L. Lester, James Cambers, Section 4—Brown Matthewson, B. Suffield, Section 9—Frank Boon, Section 10—T. P. Barnes, J. H. Tilghman, T. S. McMasters, E. Buck, Section 12—J. M. Morse, Hiram Lennox, J. W. Dillsworth, Wm. H. Smith, William Stewart, James Pierce, J. Peoplow, Section 13—J. C. Shalton, A. Stanley, Section 14—Charles F. Guyer, A. Rutherford, M. Wisegarver, J. M. Morse, Section 15—Charles F. Guyer, Section 16—M. Dooling, D. Barry, L. Martin, A. Miller, Section 21—? Skillman, John B. Perry, Section 22—J. Gruising, Phillip Mutter, Section 24—G. E. Cook, C. Wright, T. T. Wright, J. M. Wright, J. Despain, Section 26—Alexander Wilson, R. Knudson, Section 27—J. Shaw, N. Johnson, H. Gerbers, Section 28—T. Y. Thompson, William Niskch, H. Loschen, G. Dennerlein, Section 33—S. Willcox, Section 34—J. Buhr, Wm. Flesner, E. Henrys, Section 35—Mrs. A. Price, Section 36—Wm. Raber, Demas Judd, O. P. Ice, F. Owenson.



THE VILLAGE OF GIFFORD WITH PORTIONS OF HARWOOD, KERR AND COMPROMISE TOWNSHIPS SURROUNDING





# Benjamin Gifford

Benjamin Gifford was a promoter, a developer, a planner and an organizer. He was a man of intense drive and ambition, a man quick to see opportunities where other men failed to see them. While our town bears his name, the founding of Gifford, Illinois, was no big thing in his life.

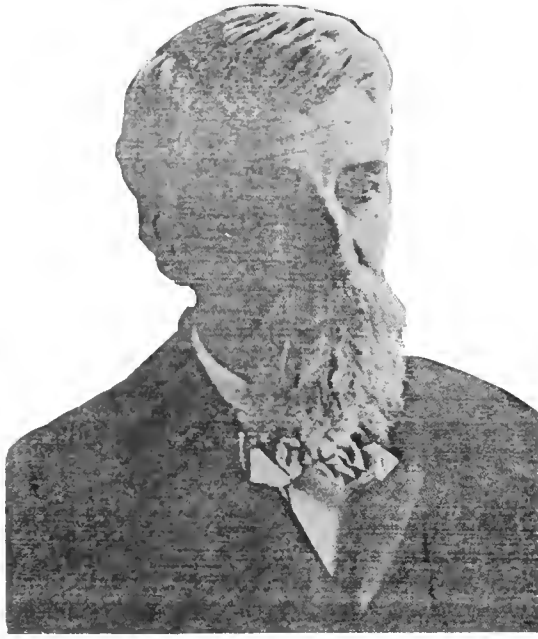
Mr. Gifford was born near Plano, Illinois, in 1840. He attended "seminaries" in Mt. Morris and Aurora, Illinois, briefly and began his professional career by teaching school at Yorkville, Illinois. He served under General Grant in the Civil War. He was wounded twice at Vicksburg and was promoted to Lieutenant for bravery. At the end of his three-year enlistment he returned home, raised a company of men and returned to the war. In November of 1865 he was married to Miss Etta Martindale and in 1868 he moved to Rantoul and established himself as a lawyer. His only child, a son, died in infancy.

According to the obituary prepared by his sister at the time of his death, Mr. Gifford negotiated the purchase of 80 acres of land when he was only 11 years old and his father stopped the deal,

not because the boy was too young or unwise but "because the tract was a mile and a half from timber." The young Ben Gifford noticed the different heights of corn planted at the same time and figured out that they resulted from differences in the quality of the soil when he was 12 years old.

Still quoting his sister, by 1884 Mr. Gifford had successfully drained 7,500 acres of land in Campaign County with a system of 30 miles of ditches. He turned next to the "Vermillion swamps" in Ford County with equal success. In 1891 he began buying swamp land in Lake and Jasper Counties in Indiana and at one time owned 36,000 acres which he had made productive "with a system of 75 miles of broad dredge ditches."

In his spare time, so to speak, he built railroads. In 1873 he and others secured a charter from the State to build a line from Havana, Illinois, to a point north of Danville on the present C. and E. I. They also arranged in Indiana to extend the line to Lebanon. By January of 1876 his railroad was operating from Alvin to Fisher and by 1879 it was



BENJAMIN F. GIFFORD

running scheduled freight and passenger trains daily from Leroy, Illinois, to West Lebanon, Indiana. Its shops and offices were in Rantoul.

The Havana, Rantoul and Eastern Railroad—as it was called—did a bustling business in its early days and was of great importance in the development of farmland and villages along its right of way. But it never had anything but trouble financially. It was a narrow gauge train with tracks only three feet wide, and every item of freight had to be unloaded and transferred to other cars before it could be received from or shipped on a standard gauge road like the Illinois Central—its primary connection. The H. R. & E. defaulted on its bonds and was sold at auction to the Harriman-Hill interests of New York in the early 1880's. The Illinois Central took control of the H. R. & E. in 1887 and rebuilt the tracks to standard gauge. The wide tracks were laid outside the narrow tracks. For a time both big trains and little trains operated on the line, but the little

engines and box cars were soon disposed of. A lot of them were used by local farmers as storage bins and a few of them were used as living quarters. The "History of Rantoul" (1951) says that at one time there was over a mile of these little box cars parked on a siding east of Rantoul.

Both freight and passenger trains ran daily until 1933. By that time the automobiles and trucks had so far undercut the railroads that the Illinois Central got permission from the State Commerce Commission to drop the passenger service. It was required, however, to provide intermittent freight service and still does so.

When freight came to town by train it provided a job for a "drayman." He would meet the trains with his horses and wagon, load up the freight and deliver it to the merchants and others for whom it was intended. But the trucks did away with the "drayman's" job, too. It is hard to imagine now that there was a time when the way to go to Urbana was to catch the H. R. & E. to Rantoul, change over to the Illinois Central and ride to Urbana. But how else? Even with a good horse and buggy, the trip to Urbana took three or four hours—one way.

But to get back to Mr. Gifford. His plans for the railroad and his and Mr. Bullock's plan for the original Town of Gifford were developed simultaneously, apparently, for the plat for the Original Town provides right of way for the railroad. He knew by April of 1873 that he was going to build a railroad, and the plat for the town was recorded on November 12, 1875. Along with Mr. Gifford's success in Indiana, he was for a time part owner of the Cleveland and Marietta Railroad in Ohio. After about 1900 he organized and built a line called the Chicago and Wabash Valley Railroad in Indiana, largely to serve the thriving farm area which he had reclaimed from the swamps of Jasper County.

Mr. Gifford died in March of 1913 following a stroke. Funeral services were held in Rensselaer, Indiana, where he had been living and in Kankakee, Illinois, where he is buried.

# Some of Our Pioneer Families

No attempt is made in these pages to present backgrounds on all of our ancestral families. These are simply stories which have been brought to our attention concerning families which have been in the community for a hundred years or so—or who were real pioneers in the area. Some of the accounts are re-writes of sketches found in various histories of Champaign County—published in 1878, 1887, 1905 and 1918. Others have been prepared from information submitted by the families themselves.

## THEOPHILUS P. BARNES

Mr. Barnes was born on August 7, 1816, near Phillipsburg, New Jersey, and began work at an early age as a carpenter. He was married to Miss Nancy Cyphers before he was twenty years old, and in 1837, with his wife and a young son, he moved to Marion County, Ohio, by team and wagon. The trip took over three weeks, during which time they cooked beside the road and slept in their wagon. He busied himself with carpenter work and farming in Ohio for sixteen years, then he loaded his wagon, hitched up his horses and “hit the road” again—this time to Warren County, Illinois.

He farmed in that area until 1865, when he bought 240 acres in Section 10 just southwest of Gifford. To quote the account in the “History of Champaign County” published in 1878, “He has proved himself entirely worthy of a prominent place among the intelligent and enterprising farmers of this section. His land is in a good state of cultivation, and prolific of the choicest crops of the Prairie State. The farm buildings are convenient and well constructed, and the whole presents a picture which is pleasing and delightful to the eye of the passerby. She who began with him in his first effort for the establishment of a home, passed from the scenes of earth on the 16th of March, 1863, after having been his faithful and sympathizing companion for over a quarter of a century.” (How’s that for real writing?) Eleven children were born to

the Barneses, the youngest of whom was the James S. Barnes who was a real estate and insurance man in the fledgling town of Gifford. James S. was the father of Roy Barnes who is known to many of you, and who was President of the Village Board for nearly ten years.

## THEES H. BUSBOOM

The place and date of Mr. Busboom’s birth are not available, except that he was born in Germany. In 1866 his twenty-year-old son, Heije T., came to the United States and went to Adams County. Encouraged by Heije’s reports of the new country, presumably, Mr. Busboom gathered together his wife and his three other sons and they all came to America. After some six years in Adams County, the whole family settled near Gifford in 1874. The four sons then were Heije, Rankin, George and John.

To account for all their descendants in the 101 years since their arrival in Gifford will have to be the subject of another book—and that book ought to be written.

A few of Mr. Busboom’s grandsons are shown in the accompanying picture with their “hot rods” in 1916.



Car to left: Heye Busboom and Fred Bluhm  
Other car; back seat: John Busboom, Fred Busboom  
Front seat: Ed Busboom, driving, Ed Bluhm

## JOHN CLARK

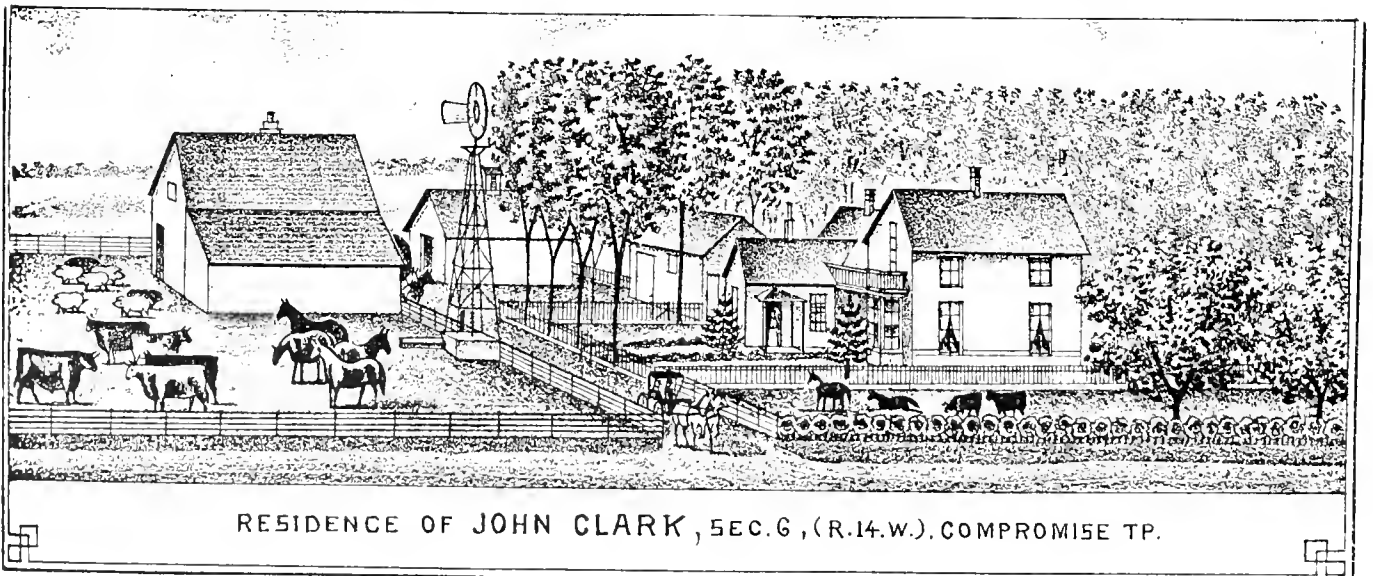
Mr. Clark "first opened his eyes to light in Forfarshire, Scotland, on April 2, 1830"—the son of William and Mary (Donaldson) Clark. Mr. Clark was married to Miss Jane Butters in 1853, and on the day after the wedding they sailed from Glasgow for the United States. It took them 52 days . . . on that sailing ship to reach New York where they remained for two years. In 1855 they moved to Chicago, arriving with just \$6.00 in their possession. They had to pay \$5.00 rent in advance, so they began their housekeeping in Chicago with a cash reserve of one lonesome dollar. Their joys continued to be mixed with misfortunes, and just after the birth of their third child, John A., their house burned and they were left with nothing.

Friends came to their rescue, and by hard work and good management they soon recovered. The Clarks came to Compromise Township in 1868 and settled on the family homestead just east of Gifford on Section 6 which they purchased from the railroad for \$8.00 an acre. Through the four children who grew to maturity, the Clarks have a number of descendants in the area, including granddaughters Bonnie Bryan and Jeannie Clark who live on the original homestead.



JOHN AND JANE CLARK

From the "History of Champaign County" — 1887



RESIDENCE OF JOHN CLARK, SEC. 6, (R. 14. W.) COMPROMISE TP.

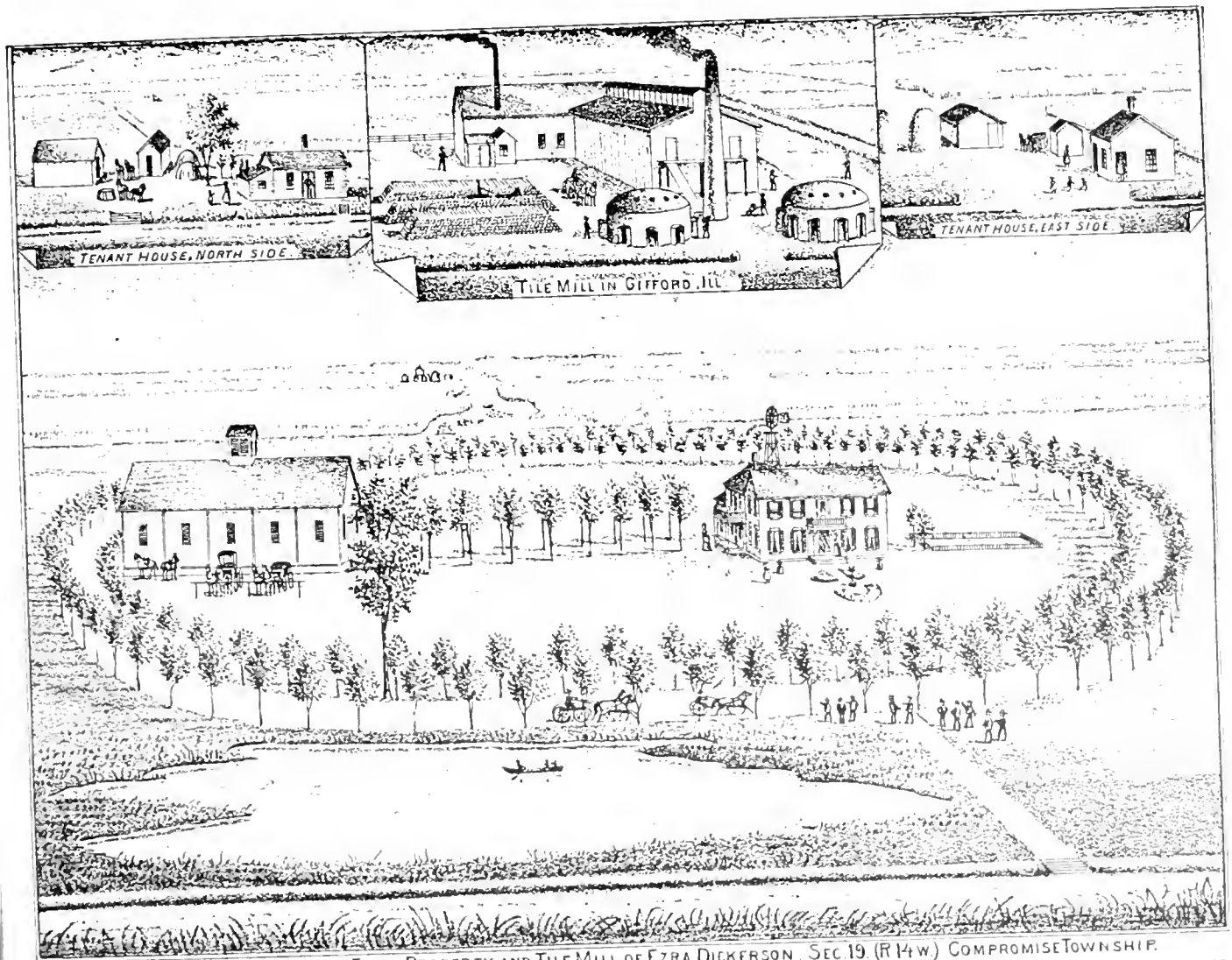


## EZRA DICKERSON

Mr. Dickerson was born in 1834 in Franklin County, Indiana. His father was a cooper by trade—a maker of wooden barrels. Mr. Dickerson first worked as a carpenter at \$10 a month until he had saved \$300. With this he bought a sawmill and went into the lumber business. Success in that venture brought him wealth enough to buy a full section (640 acres) of unbroken prairie in Compromise Township, Section 19, southeast of Gifford. Mr. Dickerson was superintendent on the construction of 35 miles of track and necessary bridges for the new Havana, Rantoul and Eastern Railroad. When

the railroad began operation, Mr. Dickerson served as conductor for four years.

The Dickerson home was built in 1883-4 and is described in our source as “a commodious structure, two stories in height, being finely furnished, and altogether is one of the best farm dwellings in that part of the county.” In 1884, for the purpose of draining his own land, he established a tile factory at the south edge of Gifford. That business was also successful and he made extensive shipments to points in this and other counties. Mrs. Dickerson was the former Miss Elizabeth Wiley of Hendricks County, Indiana. The Dickersons lost a son, Charles, at the age of two and raised two daughters, Florence and Effie, to adulthood.



RESIDENCE, FARM PROPERTY AND TILE MILL OF EZRA DICKERSON, SEC 19, (R 14 W) COMPROMISE TOWNSHIP.

From the "History of Champaign County" - 1887

## HERMAN E. DUDEN

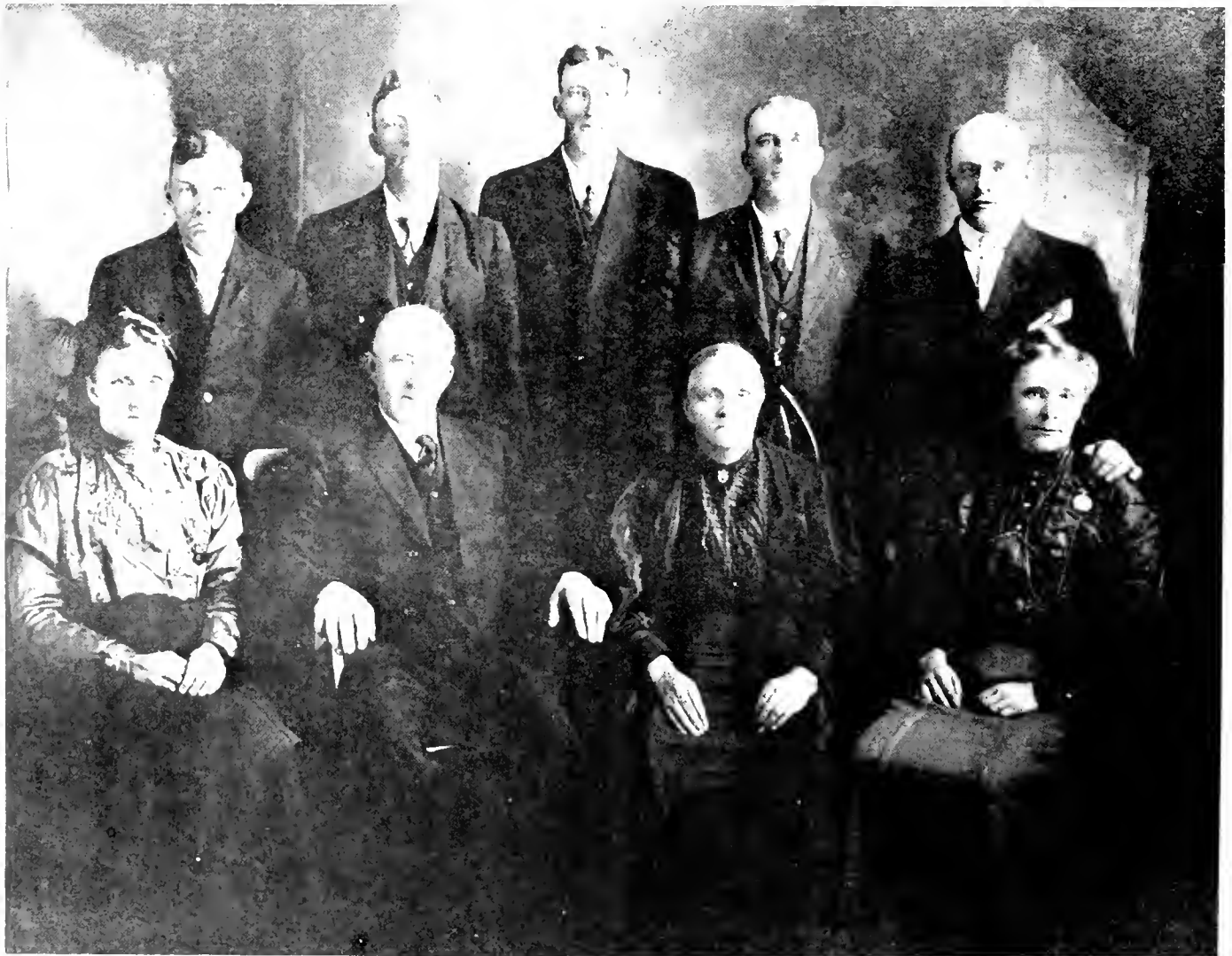
Mr. Duden was born August 6, 1847, and Maria Janssen was born February 17, 1850, in Ostfriesland, Germany. They came to the United States on the same ship in the late 1860's, and while they may have met before, the family tradition is that their romantic relationship blossomed on the ship. From New York City they came by way of Chicago to Golden, Illinois, where friends and relatives had settled earlier. It is believed that they were married in 1871. Two children were born there, Ed on July 12, 1872, and Engel on December 31, 1874.

In 1875 Herman Duden and Gerd Ideus came to Champaign County by wagon to establish themselves in farming. They built a two-room house where Fred Ideus now lives and in the winter of 1875 their wives and their little children came by

train to Tolono. The husbands were notified. They met their families and brought them from Tolono to the Flatville area in a blinding snow storm. Both families moved into the little house, and they shared it for some time.

Later the Herman Duden family moved to a farm three miles north of Flatville. Seven more children were born here—Geske and Mareka who died in infancy, and John, Harm, Geske, Meint, and Gerd. Engel married William Huls and Geske (Grace) married Ehme Aden.

About 1895 the family moved to the farmstead one mile south of Gifford. The farm has been in the family for 80 years and is now owned by the only surviving child—Meint—who observed his 88th birthday on March 9, 1975. There are now about a hundred direct descendents of this pioneer couple. Herman died in 1923 and Maria in 1927.



THE HERMAN DUDEN FAMILY — Standing, left to right: Ed, Harm, Meint, John and Gerd  
Seated, left to right — Engel, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Duden, and Grace

## WILKE EMKES

Mr. Emkes was born in Ostfriesland, Germany, on March 3, 1840. At the age of 29 he was married to Altje Janssen, and the young married couple spent their honeymoon on ship to the United States. They were accompanied by her parents to Chicago. There they separated, the Janssens going to Golden, Illinois, and the Emkes going to Freeport, where Mr. Emkes had a cousin, Alec Eiskamp. Two of their children, Mareka and Engel, were born during the five years they spent in that area, and they witnessed from their home the great Chicago fire of 1871. When they moved to the Flatville area in 1874, the family came down from Freeport on the train while he drove down with a wagon and team—but they were misdirected somewhere and he arrived in Rantoul before they did. They lived first just east of Flatville, but in 1875 took up 80 acres south of Dillsburg. With two horses, a borrowed mule, and a one-bottom walking plow he broke the marshy prairie. "When furrows were made the snakes and water would follow them."

In 1891 the Emkes moved to what was to be their permanent home located a mile west of Gifford.

Mr. Emkes died in 1903 and his wife in 1906, but through the two sons and five daughters who survived them they are surely remembered in many a family album. The sons were John and Anton Emkes. Their daughters were Mareka (Mrs. Gerd Ihnen), Engel (Mrs. Ontke Ehnen), Katherine (Mrs. Martin Harms), Marie (Mrs. Claus Gronewald)

In addition to his farming, Mr. Emkes was also a carpenter—a moonlighter, even in those days—and he is said to have built the first house in Gifford. But that honor is also claimed in other accounts by Henry Flesner. *Perhaps* it is that Mr. Flesner built the first house in that he owned it while Mr. Emkes built it in the sense that he was the carpenter on the job. In any case, the "first house" was apparently the one on Summitt Street now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Howard Varner.



MR. and MRS WILKE EMKES AND THEIR CHILDREN

Seated, left to right: John, Katherine, Maria, and Mareka. Standing: Engel and Anton

## HENRY G. FLESNER

Mr. Flesner was born in Ostfriesland, Germany, on October 12, 1832, and came to the United States along with his parental family, a brother-in-law named Hinrich H. Franzen, and a little nephew, Harm Franzen, who was only about a year and a half old at the time. There were ten in the party. They sailed for the United States in October and arrived in New Orleans on January 11, 1850. The Flesner Family Register reports that one of Mr. Flesner's sisters, Trientje, fell in love with a sailor during that long 75-day voyage. She left him and started up the Mississippi with her family, but when the boat was laid up for repairs a few days later she left her family and returned to New Orleans to find and marry her sailor. She never saw her family again.

The whole Flesner family and the son-in-law settled first near Golden, Illinois; but Mr. Flesner apparently came to the Gifford community within a few years, for he is designated as the first Postmaster for the village when the Post Office was established in 1877. He is also reported to have built the first house in Gifford in 1876, though it may be that he owned it and had it built for him by someone else.

## JAMES K. ICE

Mr. Ice was born in West Virginia in 1844, and both sides of his family date back to pre-Revolutionary times in this country. His great grandfather came from Prussia, bringing with him a family, every member of which was killed by the Indians. He remarried late in life, fathered a son at the age of 100, and then lived on to be 124 years old. His

His mother's family also listed persons active before and during the Revolutionary War, and in the War of 1812. Mr. Ice received his schooling in West Virginia and accompanied his father and his step-mother to Champaign County in 1860.

He was married in 1846 to Miss Nancy J. Butcher and they became parents of 13 children, six of whom died before reaching maturity. But the remaining seven children were remarkable for their educational achievements in a time when education was difficult to acquire and not common for most people. Three of his daughters were college graduates—one an architect and two of them teachers—and a fourth daughter completed three years of college training and became a teacher. Mr. Ice was a druggist in Gifford, beginning in 1887.

## JAMES MARTIN

Mr. Martin and his brothers, Josephus and Perry, came to this vicinity in the 1850's and took up land holdings some five miles northeast of Gifford. Many details are lost in history, but there was a time when the three men controlled thousands of acres of land, much of which passed to married daughters and so now appears under other family names. One farm in particular—now cultivated by Lyle K. Williams—was purchased by Mr. James Martin in 1863 and was farmed by him or his heirs until about 1960. James Martin's son, Henry Allen (Allie) was born on that farm in 1869 and in due time married Miss Ona Hancock whose grandfather, Micajah Hancock lived to be 106 years old and whose great great grandfather, John Hancock, signed the Declaration of Independence. Allie Martin was a leading business man in Paxton, an automobile dealer, in addition to his farming and community interests.



HENRY A. (Allie) MARTIN on the farm where he was born.  
Early 1900's

2782

No. 19216  
19217

Consolidated

**CONSTRUCTION DEED.**

Trustees Illinois Central Railroad Co.,

TO

*James Martin*

County of *Champaign*

Filed for Record on the *fifteenth*  
day of *August* 1864

Recorded, Book No. 1

Pages *46 & 47*

*A. H. Somers* Recorder

No. ....

**WARRANTY DEED.**

*David C Lizer*  
TO

*James Martin*

STATE OF ILLINOIS, }  
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY. } ss.

This Instrument was filed for Record on  
the *10<sup>th</sup>* day of *July*  
A.D. 1865, and duly Recorded in Book *3*  
of Deeds, Page *437*.

*D. O. Alexander*

RECORDER.

By .....

DEPUTY.

Culver, Page & Hoyne, Stationers, Chicago.

*\$1.00 pd*



TWO SHOTS OF THE MARTIN FAMILY in those "good old days"



**FRANK MILLER**

Mr. Miller was born in Ostfriesland, Germany, on October 13, 1854, the son of Simon and Greti Astendorf Miller. He came to the United States at the age of 17 and settled at Flanagan, Illinois. Mrs. Miller was also born in Ostfriesland, she in 1861, and came to America at the age of 14. She was confirmed in the Immanuel Lutheran Church of Flatville by Pastor Fischer. In March of 1881 the young people rode on horseback seven miles to Flatville to be married. They farmed in the Gifford, Flatville and Royal communities until 1929 when they moved to Gifford, and they lived to celebrate sixty-two years of married life.

**JAMES M. MORSE**

Mr. Morse was born in the state of New York on June 19, 1836. He received what was then a very good education, attending a "Seminary" in Oneida County of New York for six years. "At the age of twenty he determined to try what fortune had in store for him in the Great West." He first came to Wisconsin, He was engaged for 11 years in Kendall County, Illinois, as both farmer and teacher, then came to our area and bought 220 acres "of the raw prairie" from the Illinois Central Railroad just one mile south of Gifford on Section 14 (where Heye Busboom now lives). Mr. Morse was married in 1861 to Elizabeth J. Hart and they reared three children—Hattie (Mrs. Gertrude Barnes' mother), Rollin, and Jedediah.

In addition to his farming, in 1877, Mr. Morse entered into partnership with W. A. Wooldridge (Mrs. Barnes' father) and in 1885 he established the Morse State Bank. Following his death in 1887 the bank was run in turn by his two sons, Rollin and "Jed." They were followed in management of the bank by Dale E. Goodwine, Arthur F. Busboom, and now Eugene Schmidt. Somewhere along the line the name was changed to Gifford State Bank.

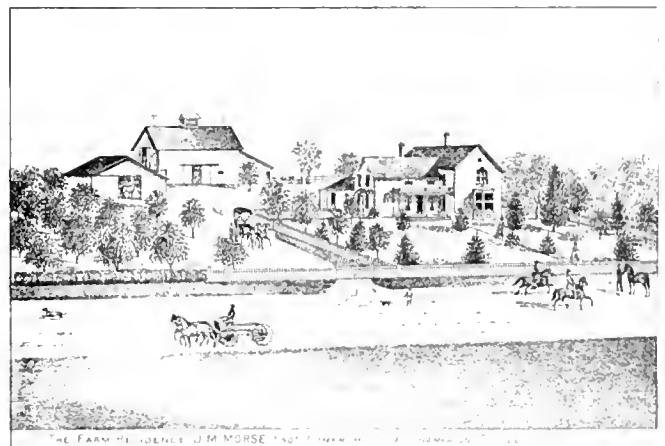
**Editor's Note:**

I recall several things about the bank, and about the Morses. I recall that banks used to pay 2% on savings. They seemed to me to be cold, unfriendly places where you had to beg for money. Now banks are friendly as pups and seem to want you to please borrow from them—comparatively. Mr. "Jed" Morse had a stiff leg and so walked with a limp. He was superintendent in our Sunday School for years and used to play the violin for the singing. One morning he was playing away on his violin for Sunday School when someone came and whispered something into his ear. He laid down his violin and left hastily. His house was on fire.

His mother lacked only a couple of months of living to be a hundred years old. I remember her as a frail little thing in a long dress, walking with tiny steps about two inches long.

Sometime in the late 1930's Mr. Morse organized a "Book Club." For a time the meetings were all in his home and he would read and review all the books for us. Later we took turns with the reviews. On the night of the fire in 1938, the fire burned right up to the bank building. It happened that I was with Mr. Morse when he entered the bank with the fire right next door, and he was the calmest man in town. When I asked what we should carry out first, he said "Nothing. Oh, you might take out that typewriter." (pointing to one) "it belongs to Finley (his son) and not to the bank."

Mr. Morse was a gentleman of the old tradition. He never failed to tip his hat to any lady he met on the street. When the banks closed in 1933, it took the Morse State Bank nearly two months to struggle back into business, and the Penfield Bank never did reopen. The heavy vault door of glass and steel which now closes the vault in Gifford was once a feature of the Penfield Bank, and it lay unused from 1933 until the construction of the new Gifford State Bank in 1963.



## HANFORD REYNOLDS

Mr. Reynolds was born in Westchester County, State of New York in 1833. He was married to Susan Roberts in 1862 and settled in Knox County, Illinois, where the young couple lived for five years. Mr. Reynolds was a surveyor by trade in his younger life and the "History of Champaign County" credits him with laying out the city of Genesee, Illinois. The same volume reports that when Mr. Reynolds moved onto his land north of Gifford in 1868 he had to haul lumber out from Ludlow to build a house—and that the land so abounded with ducks,



HANFORD REYNOLDS

geese and brant (?) that he had to hire men to shoot them to keep them from eating his crops.

In 1874 Mr. Reynolds bought a whole section of land from the Illinois Central Railroad for one dollar an acre, and in time built the two-story brick house where Mr. and Mrs. Fred Olson now live. It is recorded that "this land did not have a tree or bush, and it was his (Mr. Reynolds') planting, continued over a course of many years, that gave the land its present pleasant aspect." Our forefathers did not seem to think highly of the open, treeless prairie. In 1889 and again in 1892, Mr. Reynolds patented a tank heater, a coal or wood-burning device

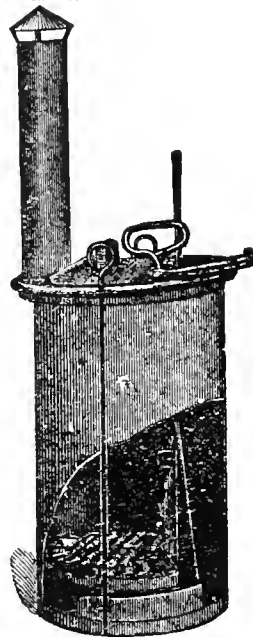
for warming the drinking water for livestock in the winter, and presently had a factory going in Gifford for their production. It was apparently a well-received product and he supplied them to dealers far and near.

In 1892 Mr. Reynolds donated land adjacent to his tank heater plant—corner of Main and Plumb Streets—for the construction of a Christian Church.

The Reynolds raised five children: William H. (Witt), Charles, Chester, John J. (Jack), and Ora (Mrs. John Remley). A major portion of Mr. Reynolds' land north of Gifford remains in the family, more than a full century after he purchased it.

# CHAMPAIGN

## - - - TANK HEATER



AND . . . .

# FEED COOKER.

PATENTED:

JUNE 11, 1889.

JAN. 26, 1892.

MANUFACTURED BY

Hanford Reynolds,

GIFFORD,

- - -

ILLINOIS.

RANTOUL PRESS STEAM PRINT



## WILLIAM SCHLUTER

Johann Wilhelm Schluter (later known as William Schluter) was born August 26, 1847, at Holtrop, Ostfriesland, Germany, where he was baptized and confirmed. In the fall of 1865, when he was eighteen years of age, he came to Golden, Illinois. On March 30, 1865, he was married to Gesche Fecht who had also immigrated from Germany. In 1875 they moved to a farm southwest of Gifford. To this

union eight children were born. Mrs. Schluter died June 24, 1905 and Mr. Schluter died June 7, 1925, on a farm east of Gifford.

The children, all now deceased, were: John, Harm, Trientje, Martin, Katharina, Annebken, Louis, and Antje. There are numerous younger descendants of William Schluter living in and around the Gifford community.



THE WILLIAM SCHLUTER FAMILY



JOHN AND ALESIA SCHRODER

### JOHN SCHRODER

John and Alesia Schroder came from Germany, settled on a farm east of Penfield and farmed it for several years. In 1878 they moved with their five children into a two-room house on a McFarland farm just two miles south of Gifford. There three of their children survived and two died, one at the age of nine and one at the age of twenty-one. The children helped to break the prairie, helping to fight copperheads, rattlers, bull snakes and turtles, tilling the swamps and fighting the prairie fires. They cut slough grass to make roofs for the barn and other buildings. They grew sugar cane, corn and oats, and garden produce. After 11 years in the two-room house, a new house was built along with barn and sheds. The Schrodgers lived in the new house for 11 years, too, and then moved into Gifford. When their health began to fail they moved into the home of their daughter, Amelia, and lived with her and her husband, Peter Strom, until their deaths in 1913 and 1915. The Stroms lived on the "McFarland farm" for thirty years, and raised three children—Victor (deceased), Forrest and Freda.



TWO-ROOM COTTAGE



MR. and MRS. PETER STROM



**JAMES A. TALBOTT**

Mr. Talbott was the fourth of eight children born to J. V. and Sarah (Parsons) Talbott, born in Virginia at an unknown date. He was still young when his parents moved their family to Illinois, arriving in Danville on the day news of Lincoln's assassination reached that city. Mr. J. V. Talbott bought ninety acres in Vermilion County but did not live to develop it, for he died in the next year.

In February of 1875, James A. Talbott bought eighty acres of land just north of Gifford from Mr. J. C. Shelton and chose himself a wife—Ruthie LeFever. The young couple had their work cut out for them in building a farm home and turning the raw prairie into productive acreage, but they did it, meanwhile raising four children—Charles V., Lucy A., Frank W., and Earl P. The four children attended the one-room school just a mile north of Gifford which was then known as the Corless School from the name of the man who leased land for its construction. The school later became the Talbott School.

When school was discontinued there in 1918, the building was moved to its present site and was remodelled to provide a home for the Talbotts' long-time friend and employee—Clarence (Shorty) Alcorn. The original homestead remains in the family and is now the home of a granddaughter, Mrs. Viola (Talbott) Hylbert. She reports that a portion of an old wagon trail can still be seen across a pasture field which has never been farmed. She also points out a few little entries in her father's diaries:

"Dad (James A.) owned the Gifford Hotel."

"Dad built the house where Elizabeth Saathoff now lives."

"Put hard road (pavement) North of Gifford, 1930."

"Went on the high line (REA electric power line), November 11, 1930."

The base for the pavement in 1930 was prepared by men with horses and scrapers. Some of the construction horses were stabled in Mr. Talbott's barns.

**ABSOLOM B.  
VALLANDINGHAM**



Major Vallandingham was born on September 1, 1817, near Lexington, Kentucky, where his father owned nearly a thousand acres and some twenty slaves. He received a good education for that time and was married in 1839 to Miss Mary Vallandingham who was a distant relative. As happened all too often in those times, the young wife bore five children and died in 1849. A second wife lived only a year and the Major married for a third time in 1856, choosing this time a Miss Jennie Elizabeth Coons. He operated a hotel in Warsaw, Kentucky, until the start of the Civil War. He was designated as Provost Marshal of the town. He helped to recruit the 18th Kentucky Infantry and was detailed to the Army Secret Service. In 1864 he recruited the 37th Kentucky Infantry and was commissioned Major in the Union Army.

In 1867 he moved to Illinois. As a counselor-at-law he helped to secure right-of-way for the Havana, Rantoul and Eastern Railroad. With the completion of that task he settled in Gifford, then built and operated the "Commercial Hotel" on the east side of Main Street, just north of the railroad.

For several years the Vallandingham cared for the children of John Armstrong and for his widow until she remarried. He had fatally hurt himself in trying to lift a threshing machine off a stump in 1874.

One of the children was John Leslie Armstrong who in his youth fell in love with the Vallandingham's granddaughter, Anna Jean Richards, after she came at the age of 18 to work as a seamstress in the Commercial Hotel. The Vallandingham fully approved of this romance, and the young couple planned to be married in the Spring of 1895. But Mrs. Vallandingham was very ill, and she wanted to see the young couple married. So the wedding was performed at her bedside on the evening of January 14th and she died before morning. The newly married couple lived out their lives in the Gifford community, farming for years northeast of town and raising their children, one of whom was Lorain (Pete) Armstrong who still lives here.

## JOSEPH H. WELLES

Mr. Welles, one of fourteen children, was born in Connecticut on October 19, 1818, the son of Joseph and Lucy Welles. His father was a cousin of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy under President Lincoln. The family moved to Ohio in 1835 and there the young Mr. Welles married Sarah A. Jones in 1848. Mr. Welles and his wife came to Compromise Township in 1865 and settled on the family homestead southeast of Gifford—320 acres on Section 7, “not a foot of which had been broken.”

Nine children were born to this marriage, several of whom were related to the history of Gifford in one way or another. One daughter, May, was the wife of Charles W. Ellis who founded the lumber yard in Gifford. Two of the daughters, Maria and Lidie, were in turn the wives of Joseph W. McHenry, who was a furniture dealer and undertaker in Gifford. A son, Thomas B., remained on the family farm and his family of six children included four teachers who were long active in the Gifford-Penfield vicinity, Ralph, Marion, Louise and Margaret (Hamilton). Another son, Maxwell, died in his twenties leaving three daughters. Another daughter, Katie, now lives in Indianapolis, Indiana.



*Joseph H. Welles*

## CHARLES H. WILLARD

Mr. Willard was born in Mississippi in 1820. He was left an orphan and was “apprenticed” to a man in Arkansas who “treated him like a slave” so he ran away. For fifteen years he was employed on river boats plying the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. He went up to Minneapolis, Minnesota, at a time when there were only Indian tents on the site of the present city.

Orphaned, mistreated, and without a day’s schooling, Mr. Willard fought his way to notable success. He was married in 1850 to Miss Malinda Smith while in Indiana and shortly thereafter made the trip to Illinois by ox cart. He had achieved considerable success and had increased his holdings to 360 acres before he bought a tract which included parts of the present village of Gifford. He platted and added a three block subdivision to the town the next year after Mr. Gifford laid out the original portion, and soon built a grain elevator at a cost of \$10,000.

Mr. Willard was married twice and raised two families, the first including six children and the second one eight, so there are many descendants. He also owned 600 acres of land in Lawrence County, Illinois.



### A “HAS BEEN”

When I was young and my slippers were red,  
I could kick my feet clear over my head;  
Then I grew older and my slippers were blue  
But still I could dance the whole night through.

Now I am old and my slippers are black.  
I walk to the corner and puff my way back.  
The reason I know that my youth has been spent—  
My “get up and go” has “got up and went”!

But I really don’t mind when I think with a grin  
Of all the good places my “get up” has been.  
Since I have retired from life’s competition  
I find every day an exact repetition—

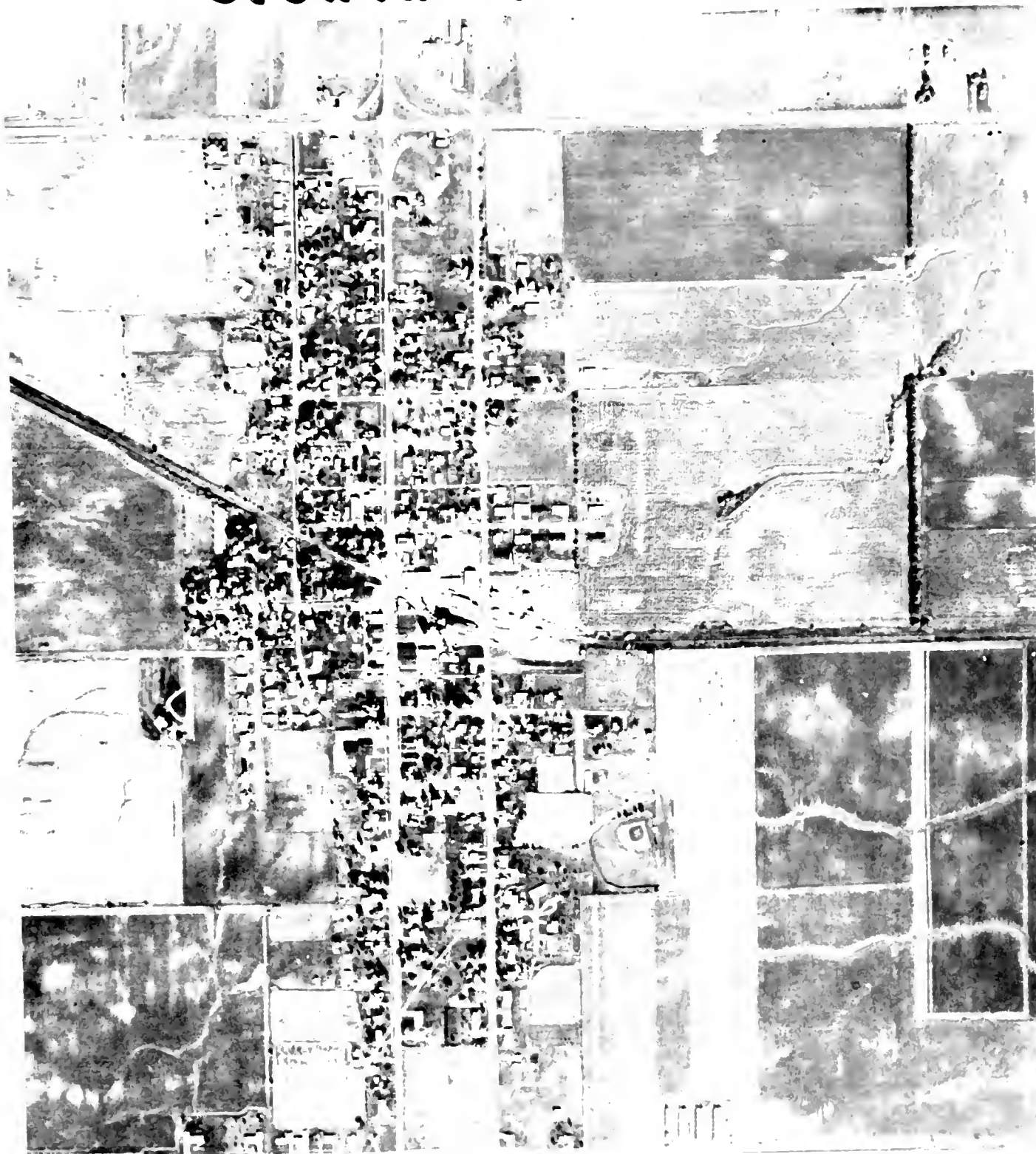
I get up each morning and dust off my wits,  
Pick up the paper and read the “obits.”  
If my name is missing I know I’m not dead,  
So I eat a big breakfast and go back to bed.

—Author and Source Unknown





# Growth Of Gifford

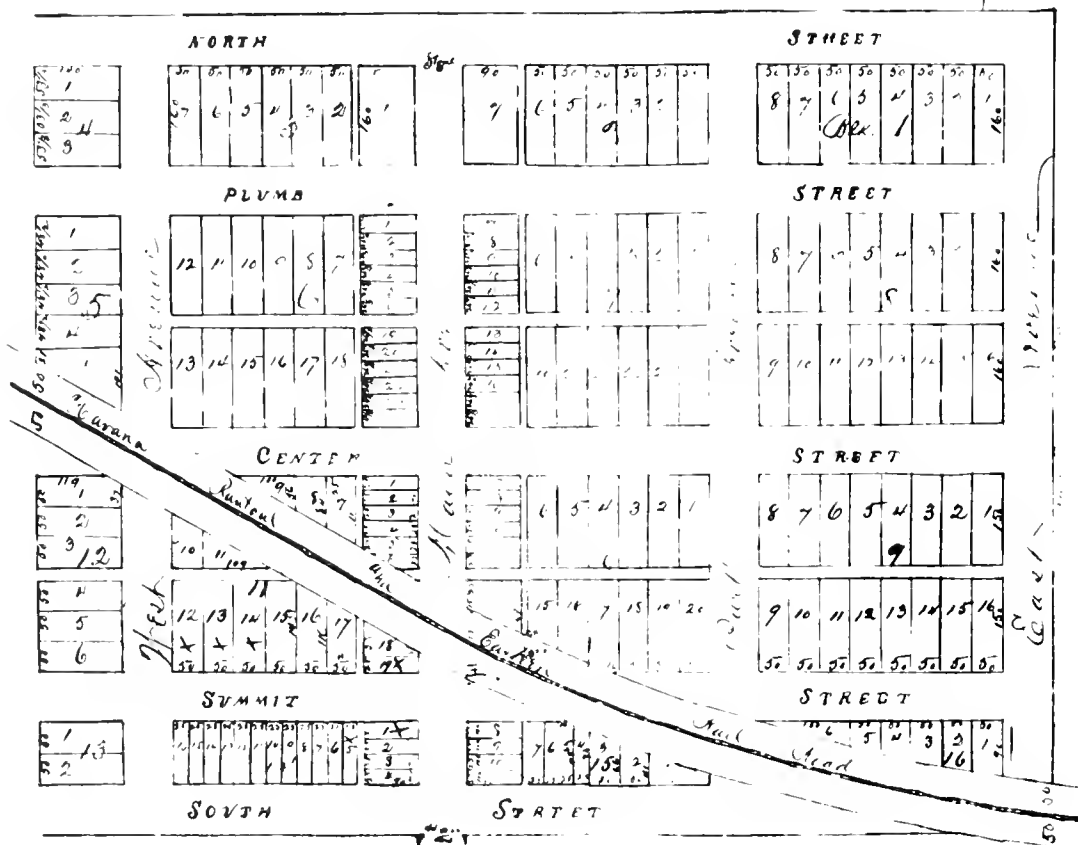


So far as its land area is concerned, Gifford grew somewhat like your Grandmother's patchwork quilt. Benjamin Gifford and Harvey Bullock put down the first square. Then other men and women "sewed on" a patch from time to time to make up our present day map—or quilt.

The original portion platted by Mr. Gifford included only the area from the present Post Office corner (South Street) to Alberta Carley's corner (North Street) in its North/South dimension. It included a full tier of lots on the west side of West

Street and extended a full block beyond Park Avenue to a street called (you guessed it!) East Street. But East Street was never opened or used until very recently when Mr. and Mrs. George Buenting developed a short section of it in their subdivision. The plat for the original town of Gifford is dated November 12, 1875, but the very next year Mr. Gifford scissored off the south end of it and replaced it with a different pattern. The new pattern eliminated the west end of South Street and the east end of Summit Street, among other changes.

## Original Town of Gifford



ORIGINAL TOWN OF GIFFORD — November 12, 1875



In 1876, also, Mr. C. H. Willard stitched on his patch—the two blocks directly south of the present Post Office corner and one block directly south of the railroad and east of Park Avenue. In 1883, three men named Sawdey, West and Olds sewed their patch onto our quilt—New Street and the 1/8th mile lying west of it, extending from Summitt Street to North Street. In 1885 someone knitted together the strangest patch of all, so strange that I'm not sure if it amounts to an addition to our town or not. They had surveyed, platted and recorded a map of the ground between Church Street and South Road extending a quarter mile east of Main Street. But it was not divided into lots and streets. It was simply divided into small fields and areas, varying from one half to twelve and a half acres.

We must have hit a slump then, for no more patches were added to the quilt until 1901 when W. H. Allison laid out a tier of eight lots between West and Main Streets and four lots west of West Street—all north of North Street—and appliqued them into our quilt. In the same month, April, "at the request of E. N. Carley the Assessor" another patch was platted and sewed on. It included the land between Main and Park Streets lying north of North Street to include Lloyd Filkin's present home, along with four lots just north of North Street on the east side of Park Avenue. Later in the same year "E. N. Carley the Assessor" also platted and attached to the town all those lots on the west side of Main Street from the Post Office corner south to include the present school and school yard.

In 1908 Mr. C. E. Crane re-drew the map in his area and added to the town a series of 7 lots directly south of the present Lutheran Church parking area. Then we really hit a slump and nothing was added on for 47 years. . . .

In 1955, Anna and Minnie Franzen had three lots added to the town along the east side of Park Avenue, just south of Florida Avenue. In 1959 Anna Franzen returned to the scene through her

lawyer and sewed on seven lots lying north and east of Florida Avenue which is shown on the plat as Franzen Court.

It was in 1956 that Hollie G. Wise hired a surveyor and platted the 11 lots along the west side of West Street, from Route 136 southward. That portion of West Street had been used by the public for years but had never been released from private ownership. For that reason Mr. Wise's plat included the street which he then dedicated to public use. The cluster of houses lying south of Summitt Street and east of New Street are on lots platted and added to the village by Orville Leischner in 1959. Most of the houses on the west side of New Street to the south of Summitt are on lots stitched onto our "quilt" by Mr. Leischner in 1962.

Werner and Marie Roessler added nine lots near the corner of Main Street and South Road in 1961, four of them along the west side of Main Street and five of them along the north side of South Road. Still another 20 lots and a new street (Eilers Drive) were basted onto our quilt block by John and Bertha Eilers in 1962.

In 1967 the Rademacher Brothers knitted together three lots and added them to the town on the east side of Park Avenue, just south of the first Franzen addition. In 1970 Mr. and Mrs. George Buenting opened a short extension of the never developed East Avenue and laid out five lots along the two sides of it. They have drawings made for four more lots running eastward from that.

If you have followed this development with any interest, you may have noted that some areas have not been mentioned. The row of houses lying south of the school house on the west side of Main Street would be one notable example. There is no record of their having been added to the town by any particular action. The houses were built there, and they seemed to lie inside any reasonable corporate limit when the town was incorporated, so they were included.

Editor's Note:

The study of these documents brings up a lot of funny little things. Sometimes the measurements don't add up, as in the description of the Willard Subdivision which reads in part, "Beginning at—corner, then East 920 feet, then South 380 feet, then West 480 feet, then South 380 feet, then West 520 feet, then North to place of beginning—." But he has come 1000 feet west and he went only 920 feet east. How can he then go "North to place of beginning"?

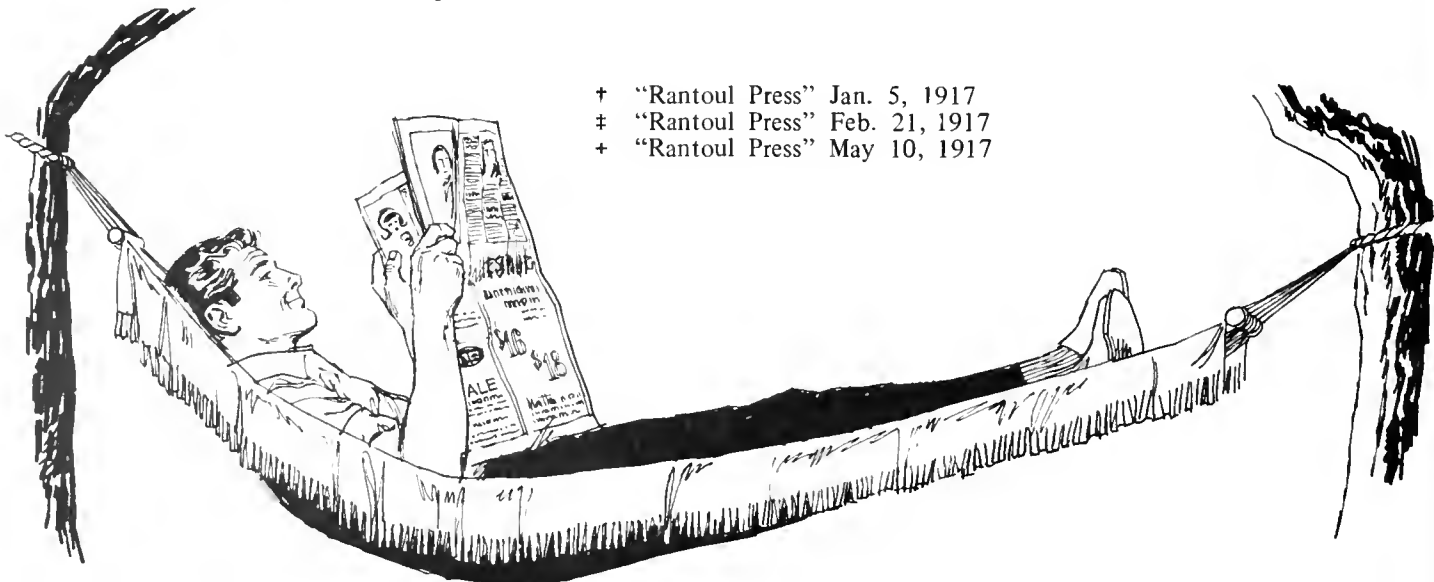
Another gem worth studying—especially for you women—is the Notary Public's statement on

the description of the Original Town of Gifford. It reads in part, ". . . appeared before me Benj and Etta Gifford and Harvey and Margaret Bullock . . . the said Etta Gifford and Margaret Bullock having been by me examined separate and out of the hearing of their husbands and the contents and meaning of this said instrument having been fully explained to them and they also being by me fully informed of their rights . . . acknowledged that they had freely and voluntarily executed the same . . . without compulsion of their said husbands . . ." As it says in a current series of cigarette ads, "You've come a long way, baby."

“NEWS” FROM OUR GIFFORD CORRESPONDENT

- † Uvah and Bill Kelso were Ludlow callers last Thursday.
- ‡ Jake Johnson has purchased a new Ford runabout.
- † Grandma Heffington from Rantoul spent Thursday with her son Clyde Heffington.
- † Miss Ruby and Anna Hylbert entertained a number of young people at a watch party Sunday evening.
- ‡ Bill Jeakins left Tuesday for Montana.
- ‡ Roy Siddens and Bud Alcorn were Potomac callers Sunday.
- ‡ Everette Siddens and Hollie Wise were Rantoul callers Saturday evening.
- + “His Honor, the Mayor” will be presented by eight High School students at the Opera House, May 18th.
- † Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hoch ate New Years dinner with Dr. and Mrs. Axtell.
- † Misses Louise and Irene Condit spent New Years Day with J. S. Barnes and family.
- + Frank and Fay Wooldridge attended the Orpheum at Champaign Wednesday night.
- + Mrs. Sarah Hodam has purchased the residence of Frank Miller at Rantoul.

- † “Rantoul Press” Jan. 5, 1917
- ‡ “Rantoul Press” Feb. 21, 1917
- + “Rantoul Press” May 10, 1917



I Thomas B. Kyle Surveyor in and for the County of Champagne do hereby certify that I surveyed the above Plat of ground situated in the S<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of the N<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of Sec. 17 of Twp. 10<sup>n</sup> of R. 10<sup>w</sup> of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dist. of Ill. as follows: Beginning two feet north of a stone which is planted at the S<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> corner of the N<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of Section No. One in Township No. 10 North of Range No. 10 East of the 3<sup>d</sup> P. M. and running thence West 660 feet thence North 1320 feet thence East 660 feet thence South 1320 feet thence West 1000 feet to the place of Beginning containing 51<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Acres & divided it into 16 Lots and Alleys suitable for a town or city to be known by the name of Efford. The Streets are all 80 feet in width. The alleys which run East and West are 20 feet wide and those running North and South are 10 feet. The size of the Lots are marked in figures indicating feet. There are 16 Blocks in number the Lots of which are numbered consecutively accompanying the foregoing plat is a diagram of the Homestead Railroad and Eastern Railroad showing the manner in which it cuts into Lots and reduces them. The quantity of ground occupied by said RR with the right of way is 100 feet wide 50 feet from the center of the track on each side.

Given under my hand this 11<sup>th</sup> day of November A.D. 1875.

Thomas B. Kyle Sr. Surveyor. Chas. Smith.

Now all Men by these presents that we Benjamin J. Efford Esq. Etta J. Efford Mary C. Bullock and Margaret M. Bullock the wife of the County of Champagne in the State of Illinois, do hereby convey and release the streets and alleys in the above plat of ground described in the foregoing surveyors Certificate to the parties hereinafter mentioned and said this 14<sup>th</sup> day of November in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred & Seventy

Benj. J. Efford  
Etta J. Efford  
Mary C. Bullock  
Margaret M. Bullock

State of Illinois }  
} Champagne County }

On this 1<sup>st</sup> day of December A.D. 1875 personally appeared before me Benj. J. Efford & Etta J. Efford Mary C. Bullock and Margaret M. Bullock his wife Personally known to me as the same persons mentioned in the instrument appeared before me this day and acknowledged that they had signed sealed and delivered instrument as their free and voluntary act for the use and purpose included. And the Etta J. Efford wife Benj. J. Efford & Margaret M. Bullock wife of the said Mary C. Bullock having been by me examined separately out of the hearing of their said husbands and the contents and meaning of the said instrument having fully explained to them and they also being by me fully informed of their rights under the Homestead law of this State acknowledged that they had freely and voluntarily executed the same and relinquished their lands embraced in said streets and alleys and also all their rights and advantages under and by the Homestead laws of this State, without compulsion of their said husbands and that they do not wish the same.

## GIFFORD AS A CORPORATE VILLAGE

For nearly 80 years Gifford was, politically, just a portion of Compromise Township, but in 1954 all the legal steps were taken to incorporate. Klaus Saathoff was the first "Mayor" and John Harper, Henry Kopman, Loren Walston, Harry Hoch, Lorain (Pete) Armstrong and William R. Johnson made up the first Village Board of Trustees. Mildred Roseman was the Clerk and Hollie G. Wise was the treasurer. Wesley Alcorn was named as the first Village Marshal in 1956.

Substantial progress has been made by the Village since its incorporation. It has been commented that "twenty-one years ago the Village of Gifford didn't own so much as a pencil. Now it has an excellent Water System, a modest municipal building, a maintenance and machine shed, a patrol car, and a truck and tractor for use in street maintenance and water department business." The Water System draws from two wells and all essential equipment is in duplicate in order to provide continuing service in case of equipment failure. It also has an emergency generator to carry the water system in case of power failure and an alarm system to warn of trouble *before* we run out of water.

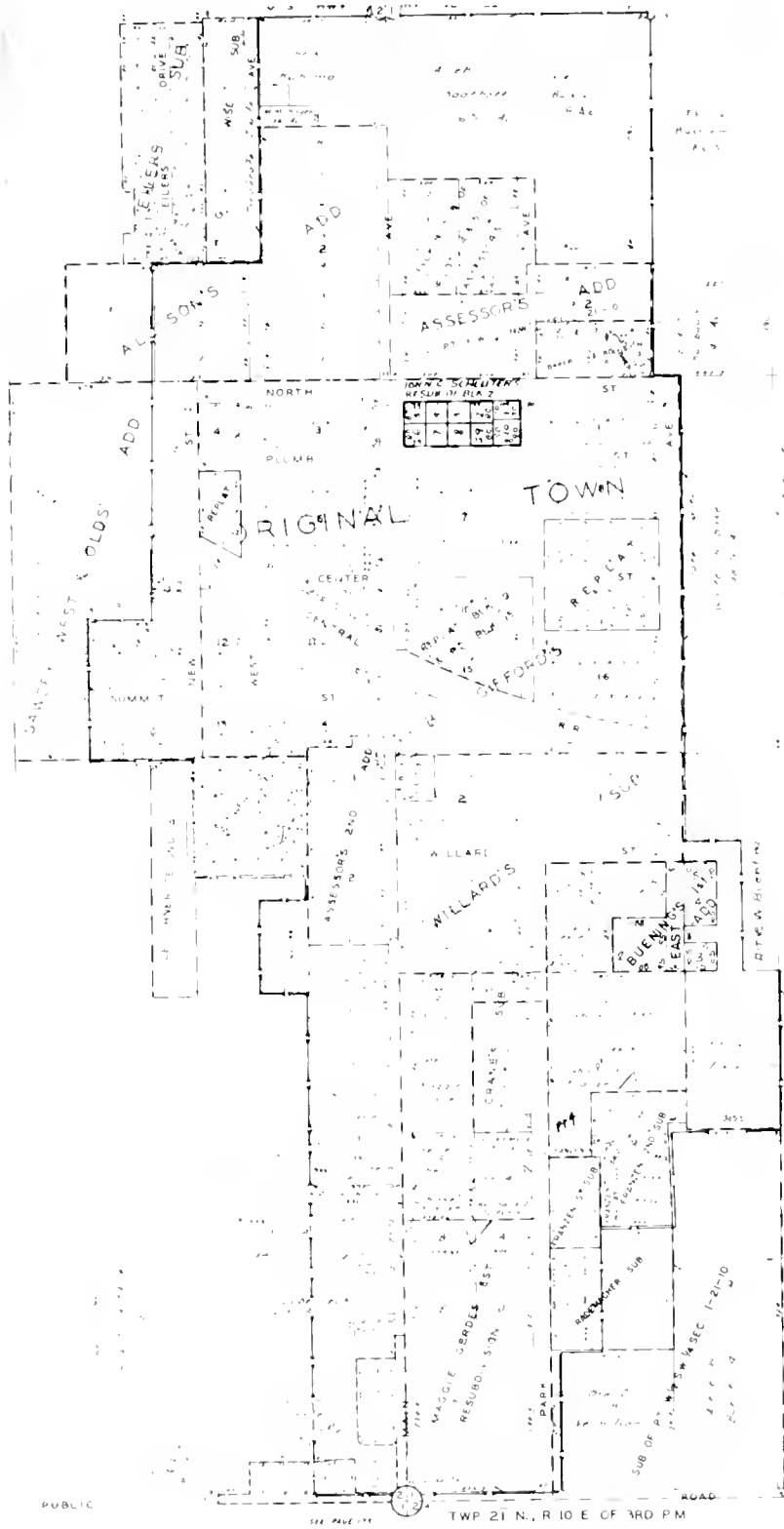
The water system and the municipal building were completed in 1961, the maintenance shed in 1972. The Village has had engineering studies made, has submitted applications for the construction of a sewage system, and has this year purchased land south of town for a sewage treatment plant.

Since the original set of village officials, the following persons have served: "Mayors"—Carlton Meyers, Paul Schenck, Roy S. Barnes, Harry Spear and Loren Walston. "Clerks"—William R. Johnson, Freda Behr, James Martin and Jack Bouse. "Treasurers"—Theodore Siddens and Maynard Duitsman. "Village Marshals"—Werner Roessler, Henry Peters, and Joe Curtis.



THE GIFFORD MUNICIPAL BUILDING – 1975

# VILLAGE OF GIFFORD





# Churches

Gifford has had four denominational groups in the past, with two of them still active in God's work. Scratch that line, and start over. Considering that "God moves in many mysterious ways," and without stretching the truth too far, one could say that the Baptist and Christian Churches are still active in Gifford along with the Methodist and Lutheran congregations. How so? Well, the Young Ladies' Organization of the Baptist Church was formed in 1914. It later came to be known as the World Wide Guild and is still active in our community even though its parent congregation has been out of business for 47 years. . . .

And the old Christian Church? It has a tenuous thread connecting it to the beautiful and inspiring chapel at the Country Health Nursing Care Center. Two of the members of the old Christian Church were Emma Steward (long time teacher in Gifford) and her sister Sarah. When the Christian Church closed, the "Steward girls" transferred their memberships to, and when they died, left their estate to the present day Bethany Park Christian Church. Several years after the death of both of the Steward sisters, the Bethany Park Church was moved to offer the Nursing Care Center \$10,000 with only one string attached, namely that a chapel be prepared in memory of Emma and Sarah Steward. It was done, and there you have the connection—the continuing function of the old Christian Church in our community.

With that for introduction, the stories of our churches follow as presented by representatives of the congregations themselves. They are presented in the order of their founding dates: Methodist—1866; Baptist—1868; St. Paul's Lutheran—1892.

## GIFFORD METHODIST CHURCH

A country school house near Gifford was the site of the first Methodist "Church." It was a 24' by 36' wooden structure, with a foundation of large stones. (It was built by Denton and Craig of Champaign, Illinois, at a cost of \$987.46 and completed in August, 1866.) During the week it served as a school house and on the Sabbath was used for Sunday School and Church.

In 1869, the Gifford Methodist and Baptist Churches held a union Sunday School and had preaching on alternate Sundays. (Each congregation had its own minister.) Prior to this time, early Methodist ministers, who resided somewhere in "The Flats" preached in private homes whenever opportunity permitted.

The two congregations continued to worship at the school until Gifford sprang into being, and a Methodist Church was built in Gifford in 1876. Both congregations moved into the new church where they continued to hold union Sunday School and had preaching, alternating Methodist and Baptist ministers. Rev. W. J. Tull was the first Methodist minister and Rev. Lewis McCreary was the first Baptist minister in the new church. These arrangements continued pleasantly until the Baptist people built their own church in 1888.

On March 11, 1880, property, formerly owned by the Willard Estate, was deeded to the Village of Gifford, in trust that "said premises shall be used, kept, maintained and disposed of as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church. . ."

Several years later this church building was sold to the Gifford Opera House Corporation for

the sum of \$700, said building to be used for worship services until the new church was completed. In 1905 a new church was erected on the same plot of ground.

In July 1906, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was organized.



THE NEW METHODIST CHURCH—1905—at the corner of Willard and Park Streets where the Martin Osborn's now live. The original Methodist church on this same site was moved downtown to become at first the Opera House and most recently the Longbranch.

**CHAMPAIGN DISTRICT**  
*Woman's Foreign Missionary*  
*Society,*  
**Methodist Episcopal Church.**

\*\*\*

FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING,  
**Rantoul, October 21-22, 1897.**

CONVENTION PROGRAM — WFMS, Oct. 1897





In 1926, the church and parsonage were destroyed by fire on a Sunday morning. Many church records and deeds were destroyed at this time, and compilation of a complete history of the church is impossible.

The Baptists invited the Methodist congregation to worship with them until plans could be made for rebuilding the Methodist Church. In 1926, Reverend Leonard R. Sutton was sent to us, and for six years he served as pastor of the united congregations. In 1928, the Baptist Church building (the present site) was purchased by the Methodist Episcopal congregation for \$3,250.

From the year 1932 until 1935, Rev. A. H. Dagley served as minister and during this time remodeling was done in the parsonage.

The Woman's Society of Christian Service was organized in 1940. The name was changed to United Methodist Women in 1973.

In September of 1940 (under the ministry of Rev. A. A. Heinlein) a Resolution was passed that the name of the church be changed from Methodist Episcopal Church to Gifford Methodist Church.

Mrs. William A. (Hattie Morse) Wooldridge was church organist for many years, and was succeeded by her daughter, Mrs. Gertrude Barnes, who has been the church organist for more than 50 years. The present Baldwin Orgasonic electric organ was purchased in 1954.

In 1959, Rev. Ture Dahlqvist of Bandhagen, Sweden, (while attending Garrett Institute) accepted the charge as minister of the Gifford Church. In April of 1960, Reverend and Mrs. Dahlqvist entertained the Bishop of Stockholm, Rev. Odd Hagen, while he was in the United States attending the World Conference of Churches in Denver, Colorado.

Written by Ruth Ann (Barnes) Zook from information compiled by Mrs. Roy Barnes and Mrs. Ira Lewis several years ago and from other sources.

### Roster of Ministers of the Gifford Methodist Church

Rev. W. J. Tull	1877	Rev. C. S. McCullom	1925
Rev. Isaac Groves	1878	Rev. Homer Massey	1926 served less than one year
Rev. Roger L. Schoate	1880	Rev. L. R. Sutton	1926-1931
Rev. Benjamin Bartholow	1882	Rev. A. H. Dagley	1932-1935
Rev. W. H. Schwartz	1883	Rev. W. Thornton	1936-1937
Rev. H. A. McKinney	1883	Rev. H. G. Nylén	1937-1938
Rev. Alex M. Campbell	1884	Rev. A. A. Heinlein	1938-1941
Rev. C. M. Crays	1885	Rev. Omer Creech	1941-1943
Rev. F. C. Reed	1887	Rev. Max Sykes	1944-1946, March
Rev. Phillip Shaffer	1888	Supply pastors served several months until Rev. Hamilton came.	
Rev. T. M. Middleton	1891	Rev. Ed Hamilton	1946-1949
Rev. E. M. Jeffers	1892	Rev. Wm. A. Groshans	1949-1953
Rev. D. Wiley	1894	Rev. Hubert P. Lytle	1953-1956
Rev. S. H. Huber	1895.	Rev. Raymond Laury	1956-1957
Rev. W. A. Boyd	1898	Rev. Charles Gibson	1957-1959
Rev. T. S. Mitchell	1900	Rev. Ture Dahlquist	Oct. 1959-May 1960
Rev. S. M. VanCleve	1902	Rev. Prentice Douglas	1960-1961
Rev. J. B. Martin	1905	Rev. Oscar T. Jones	1961-1964
Rev. F. L. Cook	1908	Rev. David Graham	1964-1967
Rev. H. F. Powell	1911	Rev. James Elder	1967-1969
Rev. H. L. Thrall	1913-1915	Rev. Robert Hackl	1969-1971
Rev. E. J. Williams	1915	Rev. Michael Eischen	1971-1972
Rev. Ira Haverfield	1917	Rev. Dennis Paulson	1972-1973
Rev. S. C. Pierce	1919-1922	Rev. Danny Cox	1973-
Rev. Laken Spears	1922-1923		
Rev. W. H. Downing	1924-1925		

2, selections. Mrs Strine read the scripture lesson and Mrs. Artell & Mrs. Hennessey led in prayers. Minutes of the previous meeting read and approved. Reading by Mrs. Wooldridge, Mrs Zigler, Mrs Turner & Mrs Artell. Mrs. Hylbert a Missionary worker in China gave a very interesting talk. Mystery Box questions were answered by both sides. Mrs. Neare's name was given in as a new member for our society and a new subscriber for

January 3, 1919.

The first meeting of the W. F. M. S. since September on account of the dredge epidemic of Influenza that swept the land.

The W. F. M. S. met with Mrs Edinburn, Dec. 26th. with a number of the husbands present meeting opened with a selection on the victrola. Also led by Mrs Pierce

## BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORY

The Mt. Zion Church was organized on January 1, 1868, and was composed of six Baptist Church members living in this area. On August 21, 1868, they were admitted into the Baptist Bloomfield (Conference) with Elder C. Garrison, Brothers James B. Cambers, J. M. Morse and John Lester as delegates. Services were held at 3 p.m. on every 4th Saturday of the month in the "Lester School House." Due to the very severe Illinois winters, there were no services during the winter months.

On September 26, 1868, Brothers Morse and Cambers were appointed to pick a minister. Rev. (Elder) John Nicholson of Big Rock, Illinois, moved to the vicinity and preached every other Sunday for \$200 per year. They continued to meet in the school house for approximately 10 years.

In 1869 and 1870, union services were held with the Methodist Episcopal Church congregation.



**THE NEW BAPTIST CHURCH - 1906**  
The original Baptist Church, across the street and a little to the east had been purchased by the up-and-coming Lutheran congregation and is shown in the account of their formation.



On April 8, 1878, they voted to rent the new Methodist Episcopal Church in Gifford for services. They met every other Sunday and at other times when it did not conflict with the Methodist Church services.

The name was officially changed to First Baptist Church of Gifford on August 7, 1886.

The Ladies Helping Hand Society was organized on November 6, 1886.

In December of 1886, the congregation voted to build its own church on land donated by Mr. Charles Wesley Ellis. On August 14, 1889, the Gifford Baptist Church was dedicated. It was 32' x 40' plus baptistry, and had cost \$2,000. The church was debt free.

A few interesting notes from their minutes: May 4, 1889, the ladies' organization of the church loaned the men enough to finish paying off the bill for the lightning rods for the church. (The total cost of the rods was \$44.79.) The men gave a strawberry and ice cream festival to pay off their debt. A bell was ordered on November 30, 1889. On November 12, 1899, seven anonymous persons donated the church organ.

One of the "red letter days" for the church was the visit of the famed evangelist, Rev. Billy Sunday, who preached in Gifford on October 2, 1905. As a result of his evangelistic meetings in Rantoul and Gifford, many new members were brought into the church. In late 1905, the congregation voted to erect a new church.

The Ladies Aid Society was first mentioned in minutes of July 29, 1908.

The parsonage was built in 1909. Mr. and Mrs. John Clark donated \$500, Sister Gleason \$250 and Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Wooldridge donated the paint

for the church and parsonage. The Young Ladies Organization (later known as the World Wide Guild) was formed in 1914.

As the small congregation of Baptists was about to fail, providentially C. A. Garst, Principal of the Gifford Public School, and an ordained minister of the Church of Christ, offered to fill the pulpit every other Sunday, and moved into the parsonage in 1924.

The loss of the parsonage, by fire, on January 23, 1925, was another very discouraging blow to the small congregation. The townspeople insistently offered their assistance and said they would rebuild the parsonage IF it could be done before spring work began. A committee, composed of Perry Stewart, C. A. Garst, Mrs. Frank D. Hamilton, Mrs. Ed Carley and Homer Hamilton were appointed as a building committee. The present parsonage of the United Methodist Church on Main Street is the result of the generosity of the congregation and many kind citizens of Gifford.

On July 31, 1928, the small congregation of the First Baptist Church of Gifford officially sold their church building to the Methodist Episcopal Church of Gifford as their church had been destroyed by fire. The members of the Baptist congregation continued to worship in the church jointly with the Methodist congregation. In 1950, the Baptist Church was officially disbanded. Most members then joined the United Methodist Church of Gifford and continue to worship there.

(Compiled by Ruth Ann [Barnes] Zook from the hand-written minutes of the church dating back to 1868, and from other sources.)

## HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Lutheran worship services in the Gifford community go back to 1892 when Pastor H. Bergstaedt of St. John's Lutheran Church, Royal, served the East Fresian German Lutheran families who had settled north of Gifford. The Reverend L. Seelase of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Flatville, (founded in 1874) served these families in 1894 and then the Reverend E. Moehl accepted the call to be the pastor of the Flatville congregation and continued the pastoral ministry in the Gifford area until 1906.

Services were held on Sunday afternoons in various homes, in the public school and later, in the Christian Church which was located on the north side of Plum Street between Main Street and Park Avenue. According to oral tradition, the janitor would place an extra piece of wood in the stove in the winter time so that the building would be warm for the Lutheran service in the afternoon.

In 1906 the group bought the old Baptist church building just east of the present church structure for \$800. After remodeling, it was dedicated in October, 1906.



THE FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GIFFORD  
purchased from the Baptist congregation in 1906

The Reverend H. Haferman of St. John's Lutheran Church, Royal, took over the preaching place in 1906. The small group of 16 families met on May 21, 1906, to organize the Evangelical Lutheran St. Paul's congregation. The constitution, formulated by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Iowa and Other States, to which the pastors who served this group belonged, was adopted. It was signed by the following twelve members: J. F. Oehmke, Henry Ackerman, Hajo Onken, Christian Schoon,

Wilhelm Schluter, Meenke Saathoff, Lubbo Pannbacker, Andreas Eilers, B. M. Behrends, Habbe Sage, Gerhard P. Park, and Michael Rassler.

On July 2, 1907, the congregation called the Reverend Friedrich Mutschmann of St. John's Lutheran Church, Boscobel, Wisconsin, as its first pastor. He was offered a salary of \$500 a year, free housing and free fuel for the heating stoves, \$50 a year for feed for his horse and \$1 per month from each child for teaching summer school. On July 31, 1907, when he accepted the call, the house west of the church was purchased for a parsonage. (It is now part of the home of Robert Buenting at 513 S. Park Avenue.)

Land was purchased on the east side of the church property in 1908 from Christian Schoon to build a parochial school house. It was completed April 15, 1909. The 18' x 18' x 10' building was enlarged to almost twice its original size in 1915. The schoolhouse was in the middle of the present parking lot.



AN EARLY MISSION FESTIVAL – ABOUT 1912

By 1928 the congregation of 80 families was too large for a building of that size. The congregation decided to build a new church. It was to be debt free. The pastor, who was past eighty years old, together with two members were directed to obtain pledges for the building from the members of the congregation only. A list was made out. It was the middle of July when the pastor called in the two assistants and said, "Brothers, we have a difficult assignment: we are to collect money for building our church. Hence, let us kneel here at the altar and entrust the matter to God who has power over the hearts and purses of men, to open both." In one week's time \$37,000 was subscribed. The subscriptions ranged from \$1,200 per family downward. When the pastor reported this to the congregation, everyone was filled with joy.

At the end of August, 1928, the Building Committee (Oltman Busboom, Gerd Flesner, Meenke Saathoff, and Harm Schluter) came to the pastor and asked the pastor to conduct a ground-breaking ceremony the next morning. They planned to be on the building site with horses and all necessary equipment early the next morning. The congregation too, was invited to be present. Pastor Mutschmann writes, "And truly everything was at hand! The horses carried their heads high, and the people had their hymnals open. We sang 'Jesu, geh voran' (Jesus, Lead Thou On). Then I read a Psalm, gave a short prayer, and the congregation joined in the 'Our Father.' Then with a 'Forward' I gave the signal for work to begin."

Within a week the basement was excavated. The construction of the church progressed without obstacles through fall, winter, and spring—until May, 1929, and it was completed. The complete building and furnishings were valued at \$45,000. The value of the material and building of the basement raised the valuation to \$50,000. All of this was pledged for by dedication day, June 16, 1929, with the exception of \$3,000.

What Pastor Mutschmann said on dedication day (in part) still holds true today: "The Evangelical Lutheran St. Paul's Church has its doors wide open and room for everyone. All are cordially invited for communion of Saints, for prayer, for Word and Sacraments, who in the true Christian faith yearn for holiness and a blessed end. May peace abide in this House of God and with all who prayerfully go in and out."

The first week in September, 1929, Pastor Mutschmann resigned and retired as pastor after having served St. Paul's for 22 years as the first resident pastor. Pastor Weet A. Harms, Waterville, Minnesota, was called to be the second pastor. He arrived in January, 1930. He introduced the first English worship service in July, 1930. He also began the Sunday school and organized the Luther League and Brotherhood.

Pastor Harms was stricken with bronchial pneumonia and died on January 27, 1939.

The Reverend Edward Keller of Jonesboro, Illinois, was called and installed as the third resident pastor on June 7, 1939. In 1940 the present parsonage was built for \$9,000. Mr. Heiko Kuhlmann was



THE NEW ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH — 1929



OUR BELOVED FIRST RESIDENT PASTOR, FRIEDRICH MUTSCHMANN, and his family—1924

the contractor and Johnson Hardware was the plumbing and heating contractor. Parsonage building committee members were Harm Schluter, John Emkes, Reiner Heien, Louis W. Schluter, and Heiko Kuhlmann. The congregation at this time numbered 216 confirmed souls. Pastor Keller began the Junior Mission Band and initiated a vigorous teacher-training program.

When Pastor Keller resigned in April, 1947, Pastor W. J. Ferne of Blue Island, Illinois, was called and installed in June, 1947. In 1947 the congregation numbered 431 baptized and 317 confirmed souls.

The church was re-decorated in 1949 and again in 1967. The Schulmerich Bell System was installed in 1951 at a cost of \$5,780. The congregation hosted the American Lutheran Church, Illinois District Convention in 1951. Modern fold doors were installed in the church basement in the early 1950's.

On June 27, 1954, the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the church was celebrated. On May 27, 1956, the 50th anniversary of the organization of the congregation was celebrated. The guest speaker was the Reverend E. E. Mutschmann of Cleveland, Ohio.

The Sunday school building was started in 1959 and dedicated on May 29, 1960. The cost was \$91,000. It has 13 individual classrooms, an office, choir room, and rest rooms. The building committee consisted of E. H. Bergman, A. F. Busboom, C. W. Saathoff, E. H. Ackerman, and A. J. Freese.

The Reverend W. J. Ferne closed his ministry of 20 years on December 1, 1967.

Pastor Melvin C. Blobaum has served the congregation since that time.

In 1970 the parsonage was remodeled and enlarged at a material cost of \$7,000. All labor was donated by members of the congregation.

The congregation today numbers 668 baptized and 505 confirmed members.

The congregation has two sons ordained in the gospel ministry. They are Paul Hesterberg (ordained June 24, 1961) and Ervin Hesterberg (ordained February 8, 1970). Both are sons of the late Arthur and Mareka Hesterberg.

In 1934, under the leadership of Pastor W. A. Harms, 25 women of St. Paul's Lutheran Church formed the "Aid and Missionary Society." Of the 25 charter members, eight now remain: Mrs. George Buenting, Mrs. Heye Busboom, Mrs. Gerd Duden, Miss Marie Duden, Mrs. William Duitsman, Mrs. Carl Roessler, Mrs. William Schluter and Mrs. Richard Sjoken. The Society has been of great help to Lutheran Home in Muscatine, Iowa, with food, clothing and equipment, and it has served as hostess to Luther League Rallies, Pastoral conferences and other meetings held in our local church. The name was changed to American Lutheran Church Women in 1960 and the group was divided into smaller "circles."



### GIFFORD CHRISTIAN CHURCH

There is very little information available with regard to the Christian Church. It was built in 1892 on Plumb Street between Main and park on land donated by Hanford Reynolds. A Reverend Stipp conducted the dedication service and a Reverend B. Anderson later served the congregation, but the group disbanded in 1914 and the building was eventually torn down.



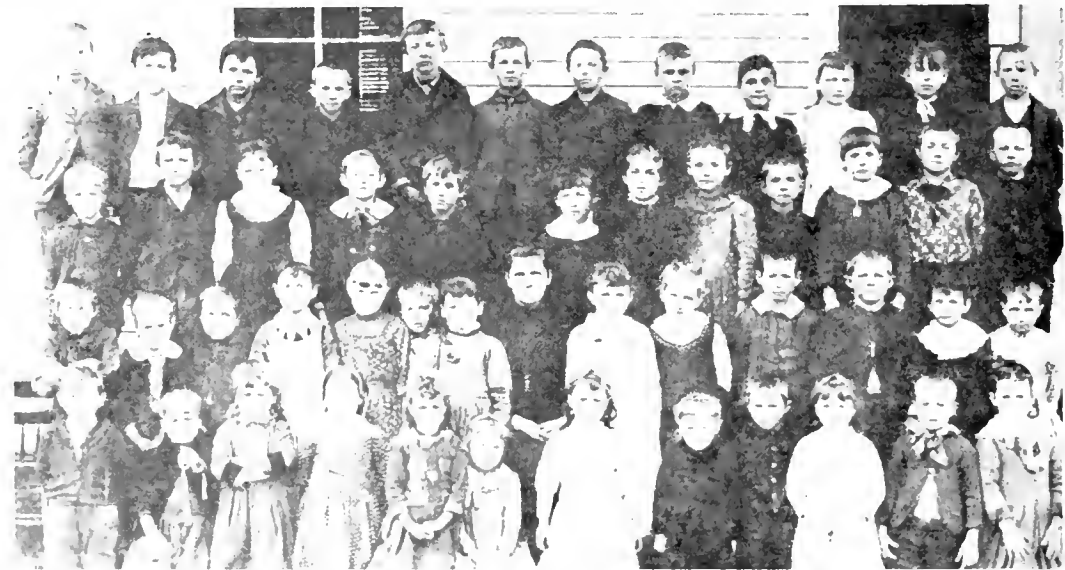




# Schools

Our school is surely the institution which most nearly unites all of our residents, past and present. Not everyone belongs to the Lions Club, or to the Methodist Church, but as the decades roll by, almost every family has, or has had some connection with the school. The school also boasts a longer unbroken history of service to the community than any other institution in town, though that long history is not all well documented.

The first school house in Gifford was a two-room, frame structure built in 1879 at the same location as our present school. It became inadequate for the growing town in 1896 and was moved to 532 South Main Street where, with much remodeling and repair it is now occupied by the Ronald Ryan family. We have one picture of that old school, presented here in spite of the fact that we are not able to identify many of the persons shown.



THE OLD, TWO-ROOM SCHOOL – EARLY 1890's

- Left to right  
 Front Row: ----, a Perring Girl, ----, Margaret Wood, ----, ----, Maude Davis, ----, ----, Addie Davis, G. Wood, Addie Walker  
 Second Row: ----, Gene Wooldridge, Frank Bohlen, Lola West, ----, ----, ----, Mrs. Billings, Lottie Cook, Nellie Ice, ----, Fred Carlson, ----, ----,  
 Third Row: ----, ----, Laura Ice, Irvin McMaster, ----, ----, ----, ----, Frank Wooldridge, ----, ----, ----,  
 Back Row: ----, Frank Hennessey, ----, Walter Wood, Bert Bohlen, ----, ----, Roy Perring, Lola Perring, Bertha Billings, ----, John Miller

Courtesy of  
 The Ranch House – Dave Roll  
 Urbana, Illinois

Gifford had quite a time about schools then, for a few years. The new, four-room school built in 1896 burned in 1898. So they built another school house in 1898 and it burned before it was ever occupied. For a couple of years teachers lectured their pupils in second floor rooms downtown, above the present Schenck's Hardware Store and above the old George Parks General Store. Both buildings had outside stairways to the second floor

so that "school" and "business" did not necessarily interfere. Another school was completed for use in 1900—two rooms on first floor, two rooms on second floor with coat closets, stairway, entry hall and partial basement. Two more rooms were added to it later, north of the entryway and connected to it at both floor levels. This building served until 1940 and appears in several of the accompanying pictures.



SOME OF THE LOWER GRADES, ABOUT 1912

Note: Compare this with the other pictures on this and the next page to see where the addition was built.

Front Row, L to R: Bruce Morse, Harley Jeakins, ———, John Hoch, ———, Harlan Hamilton

Second Row: LaRue Lytle, ———, ———, Essie Hoch, ———, ———, Keith McHenry

Back Row: ———, Miss Thornton, ———, Chuck Polin, Charlie Wooldridge, janitor, ———, ———, ———,

Front Row, L to R: Warren Lytle, Harley Jeakins, ———, Harold Hylbert

Second Row: Essie Hoch, Bruce Morse, May Heffington, Merle Morrison, Daisy Kelso, George Herbert

Back Row: Laura McIlwain, Ted Siddens, Harlan Hamilton, Chuck Polin, Miss Newlin, Forest McCartney, Keith McHenry



THE UPPER GRADES, ABOUT 1916

Courtesy of  
Riteway Automotive, Inc.  
Route 136 East, Rantoul, Illinois



**PART OF THE GIFFORD GRADE SCHOOL IN 1917, OR THEREABOUTS**

The few identifications we can make are Left to Right:

Front row: Viola Morrison, ----, Zora Belle Adams, Lorene McGinley, ----, ----,

Second row: Chris Rocker, John Sheuring, ----, Lee Sheuring, Harold McDonald,  
Garneth Waespe, ----, ----

Back row: ----, Lela Carley, ----, ----, Sarah Fox, Emma Steward-teacher, Margaret  
Fox

And the little guy peeking out the window: ----,



**THE FIRST AND SECOND GRADES — ABOUT 1922**

Front Row, L to R: Stanley Means, Mary Margaret McGinley, Dorothy Cole, Draper  
Williams, Beatrice Wright, Lila Sheuring, Paul Wright, Opal Means, Laura Morrison

Second Row: Nellie McCoy, ----, Reba Waespe, Robert Wooldridge, Jarret Hylbert,  
Jewel Price, Hope Carley, John McDonald

Back Row: Johanna Sage, Annie Franzen, John Reitmeier, Wilke Emkes, George Sjoken,  
Everett Adams, Inez Cloud, Maudie Alcorn. The teacher-Mrs. Pierce

Courtesy of

The Rogers Chevrolet Co.

Congress and Tanager, Pantou, Illinois

There follows a full presentation of the Gifford School as it was in 1935. Forty years represents a huge step back into our hundred year history. The pictures show our present day fifty-year-olds—grandparents in many cases—as they looked at the age of 10. Our thanks to Mae Spalding who taught English at that time, and to the young people whom she assisted in putting together the 1935 yearbook. Gifford had a three-year high school at that time with just five pupils in the graduating Junior Class. Two of them were the twin sons of the principal, R. J. Walston.



FACULTY – 1935 Left to Right: R. J. Walston, Principal; Mae L. Spaulding, Finley Morse, Dorothy Salden



Lindel Walston



Joseph Wright



Clara Harms



Linden Walston



Clinton Funkhouser

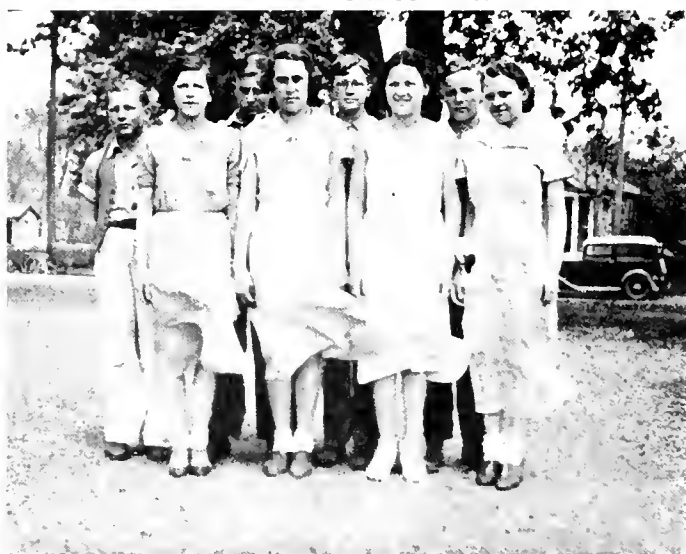
JUNIORS – 1935

SOPHOMORE CLASS – 1935



First row, left to right: Eleanor Grimm, Gladys Ewbank, Frances Carlson, Rita Herbert, Willis Siddens  
Second row: Eugene Hoch, Roy Hall, Paul Longenbaugh

FRESHMAN CLASS – 1935



First row, left to right: Pauline Swan, Freda Roessler, Marjorie Funkhouser, Sadie Frerichs  
Second row: Arthur Busboom, Raymond Burdette, Clarence Crozier, Charles Wright

Courtesy of  
Ayers Shoe Store  
Downtown – Rantoul, Illinois  
"Your Friendly Shoe Store"



MR. VANBLARICUM'S ROOM – 1935

First row, left to right: – Wells, Elsie Harms, Ruth Ann Barnes, Bernard Emkes, Glenn Jeakins, Junior Siddens.

Second row: Vivian Wells, Helen Waespe, Dorothy Longenbaugh, Doris Ewbank, Harriet Siddens, Barbara Crozier, Raymond Saathoff, Stoffer Frerichs

Third row: Arnold Ackerman, Gordon Watson, Paul Alcorn, Louise Kuhlman, Marie Frerichs, Effie Fox, Esther Mae Carlson, Mr. J.O. Vanblaricum



MISS STEWARD'S ROOM – 1935

First row, left to right: Doris Alcorn, Dorothy Emkes, Helen Crozier, Edna Harper, Junior Hoch

Second row: Dennis Vanblaricum, Billy Barnes, Loren Walston, Johnny Hoch, Donald Wise, Theodore Grimm

Third row: Helen Dahl, Ana Curtis, Helen Fox, Helen Knospe, Arnold Schluter, Lloyd Longenbaugh, Elmer Kuhlman, Wayne Funkhouser.

Fourth row: Madeline Crocetti, Helen Harms, Helen Vandervort, Ivan Beasley, Robert Alcorn

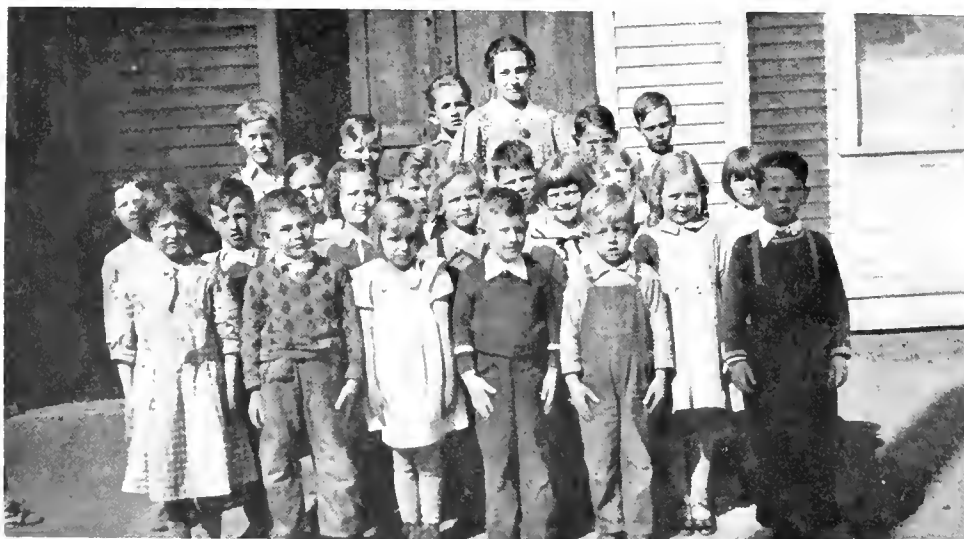
Fifth row: Miss Steward

Courtesy of  
The Hunter-Webb Lumber Co.  
Ogden, Illinois – 582-2430



**MISS EMKES' ROOM – 1935**

First row, left to right: Marie Alcorn, Mildred Siddens, John Harper, Geneva Otis, Irene Harms, Mildred Aldrich, Lois Kelso  
 Second row: Henry Crocetti, Ernest Busboom, Edward Bruns, Nancy Longenbaugh, Beverly Bartel, Dick Ackerman, Helen Siddens, Walter Roessler  
 Third row: Robert Busboom, Irene Kuhlman, Donald Ewbank, Margaret Hancock, Miss Emkes.



**MISS JOHNSONS' ROOM – 1935**

First row, left to right: Nina Fox, Junior Roessler, Barbara Wells, Charles Aldrich, Robert Bunting, Robert Swan.  
 Second row: Ruby Alcorn, Charles Hoch, Margaret Doan, Arlene Wright, Ruth Harms, Edna Grimm  
 Third row: Esther Eilers, Paul Carlson, Eugene Longenbaugh, Ellouise Bunting, Mildred Ewbank  
 Fourth row: Harry Fox, Carl Saathoff, Harold Ewbank, Miss Johnson, Jimmie Varner, Henry Schluter

Courtesy of  
 The Busboom Grain Co.  
 Collison and Royal, Illinois





"OLD FAITHFUL"



MR. CARLEY

Gifford's fifth and present school building was first used in 1940, starting with four class rooms upstairs and music room, assembly room and other facilities in the basement. The gymnasium was added in 1949, the unit of classrooms to the south-

west was added in 1959, and the cafeteria and the rooms above it were added in 1963—to keep pace with the growing population and the influx of pupils brought in by the consolidation of school districts.

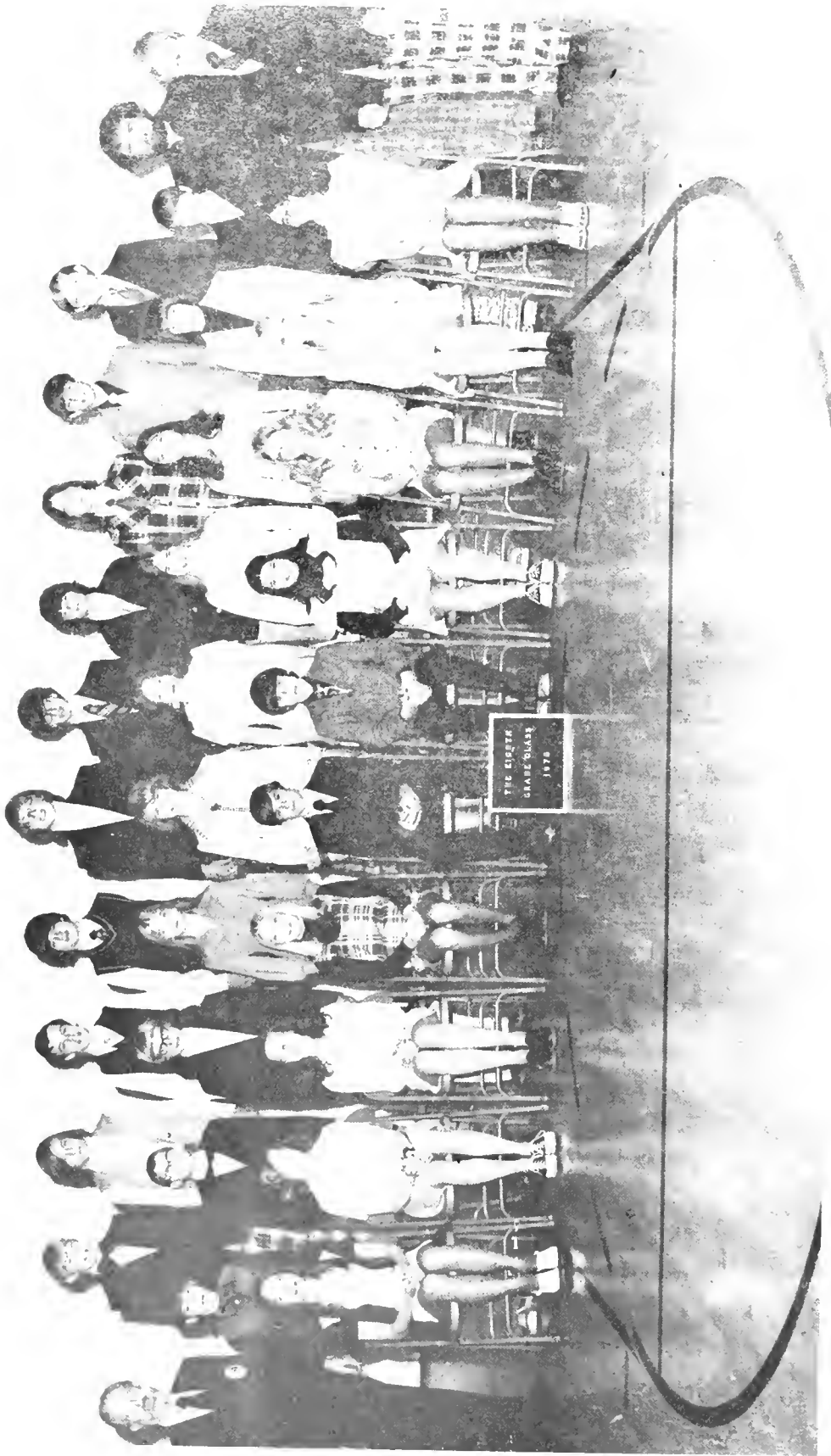
MISS EMMA STEWARD  
AT THE TIME OF HER RETIREMENT

No teacher ever served longer in the Gifford School, or was better known or more widely loved by her pupils and their families than Miss Emma Steward. She began teaching in the country schools when one could begin teaching on the basis of an eighth grade education—in the days when teachers walked to their schools, or rode a horse, and when teachers built their own fires and swept their own school room floors.

Miss Steward taught for nearly fifty years in all, and was encountering the third generation of pupils in a few Gifford families when she retired.

Shown with her, presenting gifts and expressing their high regard for her, are Hollie G. Wise (center) and Jack Bouse.





THE EIGHTH GRADE GRADUATING CLASS IN THIS CENTENNIAL YEAR

Front row, left to right: Barbara Gehrt, Brenda Jones, Laura Fuller, Sandra Hesterberg, Larry Roberts, Pat Herbert, Lorraine Porter, Pam Chalk, Ann McDaniel and Penny Hiles  
 Second row: Robert Hinderer, Scott Denius, Kevin Emkes, Denise Schmidt, Rhonda German, Michelle Irvn, Kristi Buck, Cheryl Cacy, Brian Brownfield

Back row: Mike Hedge, Mark Schnepfer, Jeff Buentings, Robert Elliott, Mark Balcer, Dave Vermillion, Sean Ryan, Jonathon Emord, Marty Shelefontiuk, and David Osterbur. Not shown—Jack Morris  
 Instructors: Albert Dale Shepherd, at left; Thomas Veihman, and Randall Wolker, at the right

## BASEBALL TEAM – 1973

The Gifford Grade School baseball team advanced from their regular season play of 9 wins and 1 loss to district play. At that level, Gifford defeated Homer, 24 to 1 and Flatville, 4 to 0.

With these wins, they moved on to sectional play. Their first game was against Bismarck-Henning which Gifford won, 9 to 0. Then they scored a victory over Rantoul J. W. Eater Junior High, 4 to 0. This gave Gifford a berth in the final eight. They won over Greenup-Cumberland, 12 to 3, in the quarter-finals played at Oakland.

The members of the team, managers and coaches traveled to Jacksonville for the State Championship. They stayed at the Holiday Inn and played

the next morning at 9:00 a.m. The enthusiasm of the loyal fans was tremendous. In a most exciting contest, our team bowed to Rochester 7 to 6 in 10 innings in semi-final play. They then lost that afternoon to Normal Chiddix Junior High, 6 to 1 to finish fourth in the State.

The team was met at Rantoul by the County Police and escorted to Gifford where they were met by the fire trucks and about 500 fans. After a parade through the town an assembly was held in the gymnasium and cake and ice cream was served in the cafeteria. The 1973 Gifford Baseball Team was the first team ever to make it to State Tournament, and they were number one in the hearts of the community.



BASEBALL TEAM – 1973

Front row, left to right: Mike Hedge, Robert Rauch, Rodney Buhr, Neil Bruns, Deon Mennenga, Derald Mennenga, Pat Herbert, Greg Johnson

Back row: Mark Balcer, Manager; Mark Busboom, Randy Wolken, Coach; David Henry, Scott Richey, Todd Franzen, John Busboom, David Vermillion, Tom Viehman, Coach; Jeff Buenting, Marty Shelefontiuk, Manager

Courtesy of  
The Lutheran Mutual Life Insurance Co.  
Errol E. Bergman, Agent  
Rantoul, Illinois

## BASKETBALL TEAM – 1974

The 1974 Class "B" basketball team was the first ever to make it to the State Tournament. They went undefeated for the regular season before entering tournament play.

Gifford hosted the district and in the first game defeated Danville Diamond, 72 to 14. They then won over Bismarck in the district finals, 51 to 47.

The sectional was held at Rantoul J. W. Eater and Rantoul Myna Thompson was Gifford's next victim by a score of 61 to 38. The next night Gifford scored a win over J. W. Eater in the sectional finals, 42 to 34 to earn the right to advance to the I.E.S.A. Class B Little Sweet Sixteen.

On Saturday, February 23, Gifford defeated Chatham-Glenwood in the first round, 40 to 30, before a large group of enthusiastic fans at Olympia High School. On the following Monday, they won over Carmi, 40 to 36, then lost a heartbreaker to Pontiac the following night on two last second free throws. The next night, they lost to Bradley, 60 to 56, in overtime to finish fourth in the State.

A celebration followed at a steakhouse in Bloomington for all the players, coaches, cheerleaders, parents, and fans. Gifford ended a very successful season with a record of 19 and 2.



Front row: Bobby Rauch, Jeff Hedge, Derald Mennenga  
Second row: Pat Herbert, Rodney Buhr, Alex Richey

Third row: Mr. Veihman, coach; Mike Hedge, Deon Mennenga, Larry Roberts, Neil Bruns, Tom Johnson, Mr. Wolken, coach

## BASKETBALL TEAM - 1975

After the 1974 basketball season, the 1975 basketball team knew they had a rough act to follow. But they were determined to achieve a successful season. As the season went by they continued to win game after game and found themselves with a 16 and 1 record at district time.

The district was held at Flatville where Gifford beat Sidell in the first game, 56 to 38, and Penfield in the championship game, 42 to 34.

Gifford then hosted the sectional and played Catlin. They defeated them 54 to 47 and earned the right to advance to the Little Sweet Sixteen for the second year in a row.

The state tournament was held at Normal Community High School and Gifford's first opponent was the defending State champion Morton. After a hard-fought battle, they lost to Morton 37 to 35.

Finishing with a sparkling record of 19 and 2 the Gifford Eagles had once again made the community very proud of them.



### BASKETBALL - 1975

Front row: John Miles, Mike Flanigan, Alex Richey, Rodney Olson, Charles Head, John Dietz

Second row: Mr. Veihman, coach; Jeff Hedge, Mark Porter, Ronnie Hovel, Tom Johnson, Jim Babb, Pat Herbert, Mr. Wolken, coach

Courtesy of  
Birkey's Farm Store, Inc.  
Authorized Sales and Service  
Rantoul and Paxton, Illinois



# Businesses

It may not ever be possible to recapture the whole story of the businesses in Gifford. Mention is found here and there of five businesses which seem to have been more than retail stores or direct service shops—a tile factory, a tank heater factory, a planing mill, an incubator factory, and a wagon shop. What we have found on the first two appears in the accounts of the men most concerned with them—Ezra Dickerson and Hanford Reynolds—under “A few of our Pioneer Families.” Nothing has been found regarding the planing mill or the incubator factory, and the only mention of a wagon shop appears in the next paragraph.

In 1878 the *History of Champaign County, Illinois*, listed the businesses in Gifford as follows:

General Stores	Flesner and Bohlen West Brothers Selena Smith
Shoe Shop	George Rupp
Hardware Store	William McLain
Wagon Shop	C. Nelson
Grain Dealers	Tomlinson and Hicks John Penfield
Drug Store	J. M. Morse
Blacksmith Shops	Cummings and Hall J. W. Heffington
Elevator	Charles H. Willard
Hotel	J. M. Gray

Henry G. Flesner was postmaster; D. R. McKinney and William Van Camp were doctors; and Absalom Bainbridge Vallandingham “when occasion requires, acts as attorney.”

The account of the fire in 1894 mentions the following businesses, though there may have been others:

Drug Store	J. K. Ice
Blacksmith Shop	Hoch and Cummings
Groceries	George Harrison
General Stores (probably including groceries)	H. W. Beacham Perring Brothers
Barber Shop and Billiard Hall	H. E. Elmore
Barber Shop	Hiram Steward
Lumber Yard	C. W. Ellis
Grain Dealers	Perring and Wood Harrington, Hannah and Co. Watson and Reynolds
Furniture Stores	J. W. McHenry G. L. Galvond
Shoe Shop	Joseph Sheuring, Sr. George Rupp
Corn Shelling	Heije Busboom
Bank	E. J. Morse and Son
Coal	W. T. Pierce (this may have been only in connection with the elevator which he ran
Dry Goods	Ezra Harrison
Meat Market	Erdwin Brothers
Hotels—two	Proprietors not named
Hardware	J. H. Hennessey Gallagher Brothers
Restaurants	William Fordon W. A. Wooldridge
Harness Shop	J. W. McHenry
Millinery	Miss Kittie Early

McKinney and Johnson are mentioned as a partnership, but there is no indication of what business.

The account mentions that after the fire someone “moved into the old Reynolds Tank Shop.”

**Steiner & Harweger**  
For What You  
Eat and Wear



A MESSAGE  
FROM

**...Gifford, Illinois...**



Presented To You By Its  
**Leading Business Men**  
1916



THE  
**MORSE STATE BANK**  
OF GIFFORD  
ESTABLISHED 1885  
INCORPORATED 1912

—3% Interest Paid In Savings Department—

**J. W. McHENRY**  
DEALER IN  
**...Furniture and Undertaking...**

LICENSED EMBALMER  
LICENSE NUMBER 2288

**CHURCHES**

**METHODIST**— Rev. E. J. Williams, Pastor  
**BAPTIST**— Rev. R. M. Wood, Pastor  
**GERMAN LUTHERAN**— Rev. S. Muschmann, Pastor  
**CHRISTIAN**— Pastor

**LODGES**

**I. O. O. F** M. W. A.  
Court of Honor

**Railroad Time Table**

EAST		WEST	
Passenger, 9:04 a. m.	Passenger 2:25 p. m.	Local, 9:40 a. m.	Local 4:55 p. m.

**W. A. WOOLDRIDGE**

Drugs, Medicines, Perfumes Toilet Articles,  
Soaps, Brushes, Combs and a Full Line  
of Druggists' Sundries  
Paints, Oils, Varnishes, Brushes, Etc.  
School Supplies

**JACOB JOHNSON**  
DEALER IN  
**HARDWARE AND COAL**

Boots and Shoes Cigars and Tobacco

**FRED BUSBOOM**  
GENERAL MERCHANDISE  
STAPLE GROCERIES FANCY

**Railroad Distance From Gifford**

TO	MILES
Rantoul	7
Champaign	20
Danville	53
Paxton	14
Gilman	39
Le Roy	42
Bloomington	59
Decatur	67
Springfield	106
St. Louis	201
Kankakee	65
Chicago	119
Peoria	116
Streator	116
Ottawa	129
Joliet	98
Milwaukee, Wis.	201
Madison, Wis.	242
St. Paul, Minn.	510

**Auto Distance From Gifford**

TO	MILES
Potomac	13 1/4
Rantoul	7 1/2
Champaign	25
Iranville	35
Rankin	18
Paxton	15
Rossville	28
Hoopeston	35
Fisher	20
Bloomington	65
Gibson City	30
Farmer City	35
Homer	22
Cassna Park	25
Mahomet	28
Urbana	24
Lotus	25
Alvin	28

**ALVERSON & SON**  
Restaurant and Lunch Room  
Ice Cream, Candies, Soft Drinks  
Cigars and Tobacco

**Gifford Elevator Co.**  
Grain and Coal



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## Danville Creamery Co.

JEAN A. MCCOY, LOCAL MANAGER

CASH FOR YOUR CREAM

Honest Test By Weights and Quick Service  
Orders—Large or Small—Solicited

---

### A Good Story—

A good story bears repeating—Whether it's the story that relates the coming of Christmas—the story of our childhood days—or the story of whatever may be of interest to us—we like to hear it again and again.

### We Therefore—

Present to you a truthful story of a good town, in order that it may aid you more conclusively in memorizing and appreciating the true values of its commercial and social existence.

### Gifford Illinois—

Is the town—A good business center of about 500 people, in Champaign County, on the Illinois Central Railway, 111 miles south of Chicago and 7 miles east of Rantoul.

And when in need of anything in the line of  
Men's and Boys' Furnishings and  
Tailored To Your Order Clothes

SEE 

**BERT J. BOHLEN**

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### Gifford—

Has a splendid system of schools, fine churches and several good lodges. The town is located in the heart of the richest farming country in the state; its farmers are prosperous and up to the times in their farming methods and they rank high in prominent citizenship.

### The Business Houses—

Are in majority, up-to-date in their line of wares and in their form of operating their business and are therefore fully prepared to meet the demands of the most particular, and they deserve the patronage of all who are conveniently located.

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## Food For Thought

### What Buying At Home Means To The Buyer—

In a publication of the middle-northwest recently appeared an article which made reference to a town of 11,000 people where more than seven-eighths of all the buying public within a radius of six miles of its center purchased from its local business people more than seven-eighths of all their necessities and luxuries of life; and the article went on to state that in no part of the whole middle-northwest could be found more prosperity and better dressed people than within that six-mile radius.

### Then It Is True—

Of every dollar we spend with our local business people, a part of that dollar is reflected to us.

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### What Gifford Has—

Gifford has one strong bank established since 1885—a drug store established in 1875—3 general stores—1 hardware store—2 implement houses—2 grain elevators of great capacity—1 lumber company—1 hotel—2 restaurants—1 meat market—1 millinery shop—1 harness shop—1 shoe repair shop—1 furniture store—1 cream station—1 garage—1 livery and feed barn—2 barber shops—2 blacksmith shops—2 doctors—1 real estate office—1 exclusive clothing store—2 contractors and builders—a motion picture show on Tuesday and Saturday nights, good productions.

THE GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCH—located 5 1/2 miles southwest of Gifford, is worthy of mention as it is undoubtedly the finest structure seen anywhere in the country, erected at a cost of \$70,000.00.

GIFFORD—prides itself as being one big family. They always harmonize in any project that will improve their town. Nothing is undertaken until it is unanimous in sentiment. It is indeed a town worthy of praise and deserves the attention of those looking for a good home town.

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## WRIGHT GARAGE

GENERAL REPAIR WORK

—I Make Your Car Work Like New—

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### What Would Thrive In Gifford—

A Weekly Newspaper—A Creamery—A Canning Factory

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## G. B. PARK

....THE CASH STORE....  
DEALER IN  
GENERAL MERCHANDISE

Let those come who never come before  
And those that have come let them all the more

---

## Faith and Confidence

### We Believe In Gifford—

We have faith and confidence in its people—that live and trade within its commercial boundary. We have faith and confidence in Gifford as a business center—both from the business men's stand point and from its patrons'. It is through these sources that progress is possible. We further believe in all that Gifford has—its commercial center—its educational freedom—its religious and social activities.

### Have Faith and Confidence—

In what you do and say and you are sure of success and happiness.

---

## J. S. BARNES

REAL ESTATE AND INSURANCE  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
SURETY BONDS SECURED

Own farms a specialty—I have for sale Minnesota's Great Red River Valley Farms

---

Notice the 31 business listed of which 13 have taken ads.

Courtesy of  
THE BUSBOOM GRAIN CO.  
Collison and Royal, Illinois



### GIFFORD BUSINESS MEN MEET

The Gifford Business Men's Association held a dinner meeting Tuesday night at the Redwood Inn in Rantoul. Among those present, sitting, left to right, are: Theodore Siddens (Sundries), James Herbert (Elevator Manager), Arthur F. Busboom (Busboom's Store), Rev. W. J. Ferne (Lutheran Pastor), Rev. Hubert Lytle (Methodist Pastor), Dr. Walter Rhode, Dale Goodwine (Bank President), Barney Bartell (Tavern), Werner Roessler (Locker

Plant). Standing: Joe Johnson (Restaurant), Altje Saathoff (Farm Machine Repair), Ernest Busboom (Ford Garage), D. W. Pratt (Veterinary), Walter Baker (F/S Oil Truck), Raymond Busboom (Dairy), Martin Hagen (Standard Oil Truck), John Huls (Tavern), Wayne Stone-street, J. A. McKeown (Grocery Store), Bill Johnson (Hardware), Harry Hoch (Garage). ———, Lloyd Filkin, and C. H. Myers (Veterinary). "News Gazette" Nov. 16, 1955

In more modern times—1955— we see the Gifford Business Men's Association enjoying itself at a luncheon in Rantoul.

It is in those intervening years—1878 to 1894 and 1894 to 1916—that we have nothing to go on but memory, and even our collective memories fade fast beyond about 1930. So we'll tackle the problem from this end, naming our businesses and business locations as they exist today and tracing them back as best we can. Starting at the north end, east side of Main Street:



The BUSBOOM WAREHOUSE & Oil Tanks — 1975

The Busboom Oil Tanks and Warehouse—Heye Busboom and his son Robert have run this business since 1921. This was the site of our first hotel, built and run by the Vallandingham. There was a livery



GIFFORD'S FIRST HOTEL, with Mr. and Mrs. Vallandingham and eight-year-old John Leslie Armstrong.

stable in the same area, perhaps right next to the hotel. The livery stable was the "parking lot" and the "Hertz Car Rental" of that era, and you'd expect a hotel to have a parking lot, wouldn't you? The building now used by the Busbooms as a warehouse was the McCoy and Falkner Ford Garage in the early 1900's.



THE LIVERY STABLE

The Rademacher Brothers Lumber Company — Charles Wesley Ellis built our first lumber yard on this site in the 1870's. It burned in 1894 and was rebuilt. It was managed from 1901 to 1939 by Frank D. Hamilton. Hollie G. Wise worked for the lumber yard from the early 1920's on and took over management of it when Mr. Hamilton retired. (Editor's Note: I happen to recall that at one time Mr. Wise was paid \$30 a month in winter when the lumber yard was idle and \$60 a month in summer when it was busy. On that kind of magnificent

salary, he got married, built a house, and started his family.) The lumber yard was rebuilt under Mr. Wise's management and was again up-to-date for its time. The Rademacher Brothers bought out the



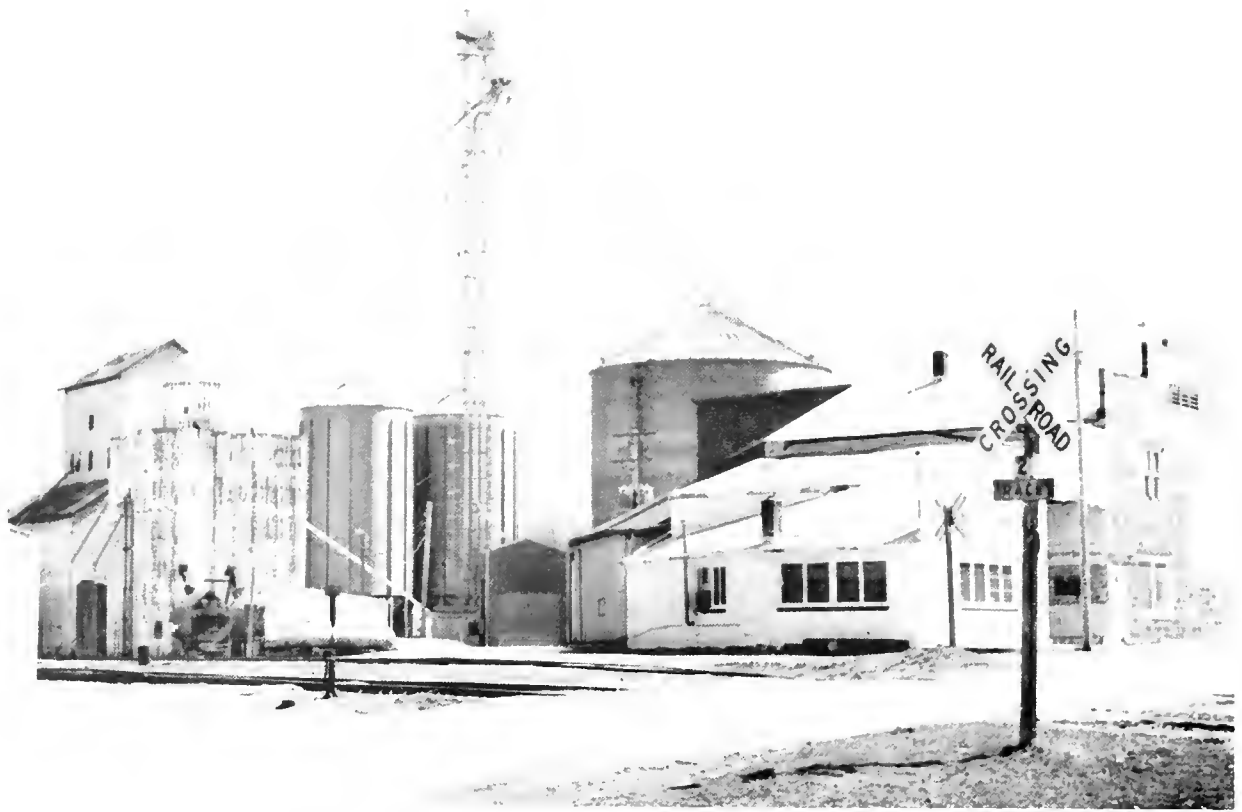
INTERIOR OF RADEMACHERS'

Ellises in 1961 and Mr. Wise died in 1963. The Rademachers rebuilt just a few years ago, adding a hardware, appliance, building supply and gift store to create an unbelievably fine set-up for a town the size of Gifford.



RADEMACHER BROTHERS LUMBER COMPANY

Courtesy of  
Rademacher True-Value Lumber and Hardware  
Main Street, Gifford, Illinois



THE GIFFORD ELEVATOR COMPANY – 1975

The Gifford Elevator Company—The first elevator was built by Charles H. Willard in 1876 just as the railroad became available to haul the grain. A second elevator was built in those same early days by John and Ed Wood. Their elevator stood where the Sohigro Fertilizer plant is now, and their scale house and office was located where our post office is today. Both elevators burned in 1894 and both were rebuilt, this one by the Chicago grain firm of Harrington, Hannah & Company. It was managed for a time by, and then sold to H. W. Hamilton and W. T. (Billie) Pierce. Further along the way it was purchased by an association of local farmers and has

since been run as a cooperative. The Wood Brothers elevator came to be managed by—and I believe owned by—Jacob Johnson. But hard times came. Mr. Johnson had his full share of troubles and finally that elevator was taken over by this one and later torn down. The office building for the present elevator was a two-story building on the present site. It burned in 1949 and was rebuilt in its present form.

(Editor's Note: That old upstairs was headquarters for the Boy Scout Troop under R. J. Walston in my day. Then for a time it was home—living quarters—for old Mr. Pat Rowlen.)

The next six buildings south of the elevator are believed to be the "block of buildings" constructed by Harvey Bullock north of the railroad and later moved to the south side of the tracks. New fronts have been built on them, so the six buildings now appear to be only three. In recent years they have often been vacant and have fallen into disrepair, but in their day they housed thriving businesses—barber shops, clothing store, the post office, doctor's office, butcher shop, general store, furniture and undertaking parlor, garage, and hardware store at least, as the decades passed. The first two units south of the elevator were a two-story structure and that upstairs housed, at various times, the Odd Fellows Lodge, the Modern Woodmen lodge, the Court of Honor lodge, a pool hall, and dance hall, and half the Gifford Grade School while a new school house was being built. The first floor rooms were occupied by A. S. Chambers Furniture and Undertaking Parlor and by George Parks' General Store. George Johnson and his sons Ralph and Bill ran a hardware store in the two center units from 1917 to about 1965, and in 1929 when they built that new brick front with eight huge plate glass windows, it was surely the sharpest thing in town at the time. The

two south units housed, among others, Doctor McKinney, the E. M. Hoch Garage in the 1920's, a meat market, T. O. Waespe's Trucking Company in the 1930's, and the F. C. Auto and Leon Purdy Body Shops in the late 1960's and early 70's. These units have lately been used for the storage of school buses and other equipment. (Editor's Note: Between these buildings and the Johnson Elevator office which was then on the corner, there was a vacant lot with a big cottonwood tree under which men of the village used to pitch horseshoes by the hour.)



A view of the east side of Main Street about 1910. "A. S. Chambers" was a furniture dealer and undertaker. The present Post Office site is occupied by the Wood Brothers Elevator office.



THE "BULLOCK BLOCK" south of the Elevator - 1975. From left to right they will be referred to as the George Parks Building, the Johnson Hardware Building, and the E. M. Hoch Garage Building

Courtesy of  
The Art Busboom Insurance Agency  
Gifford, Illinois

The east side of Main Street a few years later. The first awning reads "J. Bohlen—Men's Furnishings." The second one reads "G. B. Parks Store" and "A. S. Chambers" has been replaced by "J. W. McHenry"—another furniture dealer and undertaker. The present Schenck's Hardware building has a new sign reading—"Perring and Ackerman Cash Store—a complete line of dry goods, groceries, shoes . . . ."

And LOOK at that car!

BELOW: An unflattering view of the Johnson Hardware Store of about 1918 and a gasoline pump used to refuel those early cars. The young man is Ted Siddens.



THE E. M HOCH GARAGE in the late 1920's

Above center: Interior of Johnson's Hardware. Ehme Ackerman at left, Mr. Johnson on right





The Wood Brothers (Jake Johnson) Elevator office which stood on the site of the present Post Office. Howard Varner, shown here has used it as his barber shop since about 1940.

**Howard Varner's Barber Shop**—This building was the scale house and office for the Wood Brothers (Jake Johnson) Elevator and used to stand on the corner where the Post Office is. Mr. Varner occupied it for several years in that location, and then moved it to make way for the new Post Office.

**The Post Office**—This building was constructed in 1959 for use as a Post Office. The Gifford Post Office was established in 1876 with Henry G. Flesner as the first postmaster. The job has since been held by Mrs. Hattie Wooldridge, James S. Barnes, Roy S. Barnes, Ed Breithaupt, George Buenting, Paul Schenck, Bud McKeown, and since 1952 by Mrs. Grace Stover. The post office function has been

housed in several places through the years—the building just south of the elevator on the east side, the site of the John Deere building, the present Cabin, the old Wooldridge Drug Store where the bank is now, a little building on the now vacant lot across from Hoch's garage, and, of course, at the present spot. Rural Free Delivery was established in 1903 with two routes out of Gifford. At first Frank Wooldridge carried on the north route and Bill Hennessey on the south. Later Roy S. Barnes carried the mail north and Loren Wilson carried it south. As the roads and transportation improved the routes were combined and Mr. Barnes carried the mail alone until his retirement when Jack Kaler took over.



THE GIFFORD POST OFFICE — an inside view with Roy Barnes sorting mail, about 1919 when the Post Office was in the George Parks building on the east side of the street.

Courtesy of  
Leland F. Albers, Builder  
Gifford, Illinois



SCHENCK'S HARDWARE and PECK'S STAR MARKET

**Schenck's Hardware**—This site, and this building, have been the scene of retail businesses perhaps for as long as any spot in town. A Mr. Mallot, a Mr. Bert Bohlen and a partnership of Perring & Ackerman had stores here before 1913. Fred Busboom ran a general store there from 1913 to 1962. Paul and Irene Schenck had a grocery store there, too, until they completely remodelled the old Busboom Ford Garage next door and made it into an up-to-date food store. The second floor housed the telephone switchboard at one time, with Lottie Siddens, Lillie Alcorn and Ora Stewart serving as operators. At another point Dr. McKinney had his office up there, and classes met up there for half the Gifford Grade School after the schoolhouse burned. Paul

and Irene Schenck have been in one business or another in Gifford since 1937 when Paul came into town to run the Standard Oil agency. Since then they have run grocery stores, a wholesale meat business, a refrigeration and store equipment business, the Post Office, and a hardware store—at various times. They have also raised five fine daughters—Mary, Paulette, Brenda, Drusilla and Eveleen.

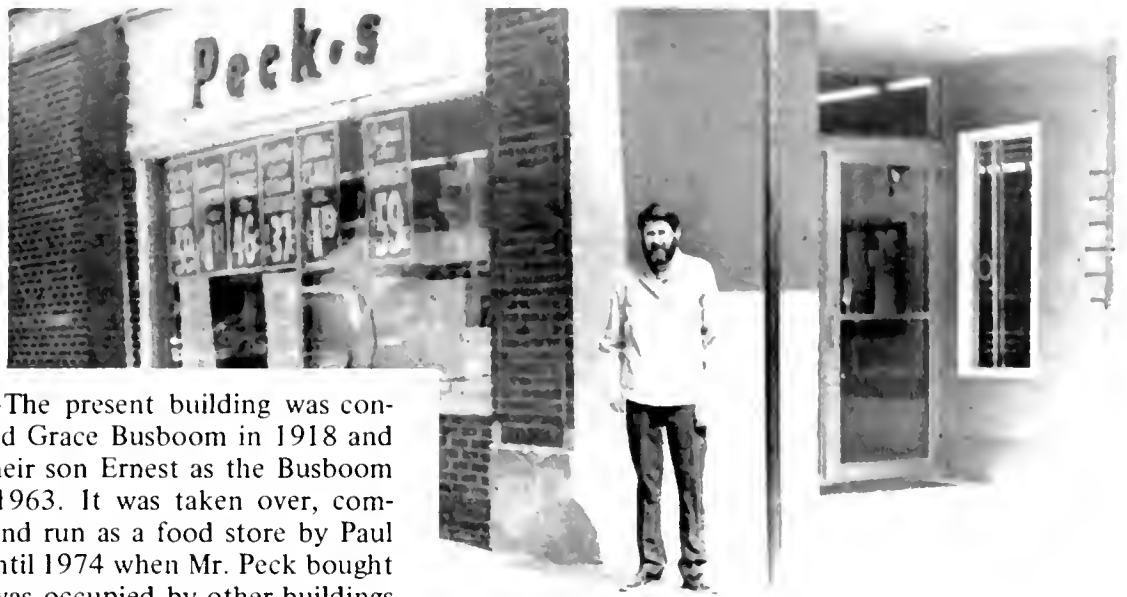


OUTSIDE OF THE BUSBOOM STORE  
in the early 1930's



INTERIOR OF THE FRED BUSBOOM STORE in the late teens. Mr. Busboom on the left and Clyde Heffington right. Later, Glen Walston spent most of his working life as a clerk in this store and Mabel (Lytle) Stewart worked there for a long time.





**Peck's Star Market**—The present building was constructed by John and Grace Busboom in 1918 and run by them and their son Ernest as the Busboom Ford Garage until 1963. It was taken over, completely remodelled and run as a food store by Paul and Irene Schenck until 1974 when Mr. Peck bought them out. The site was occupied by other buildings and other businesses before the Busbooms. Hi Steward had his barber shop in a previous building there for a time, and Cad Crane had a carpentry/woodworking shop there.

PECK'S STAR MARKET – 1975



Mr. Peck and Mrs. Lawrence O'Rourke talk to their customer, Robert Glazik – 1975

Courtesy of  
**PECK'S STAR MARKET**  
Gifford, Illinois



JOHN W. HOCH (with hammer) and his son Harry. About 1905

#### Space between Peck's Market and Hoch's Garage—

This spot was occupied in the early 1920's as a "Cream Station"—that is to say, by a man who bought cream, eggs, butter and poultry from the farmers and shipped them off to plants where they were prepared for sale in the cities. Some of the produce was brought into town and delivered by the farmers, but it was a feature of the times that the Creamery Man would run a spring wagon or Model-T pickup out through the countryside, buying chickens right out of the hen house and bargaining for the cream in the milk house—on the spot. Perry Stewart ran the Cream Station in the 1920's and was followed by John Yakel up into the 1930's.



HOCH GARAGE — 1975

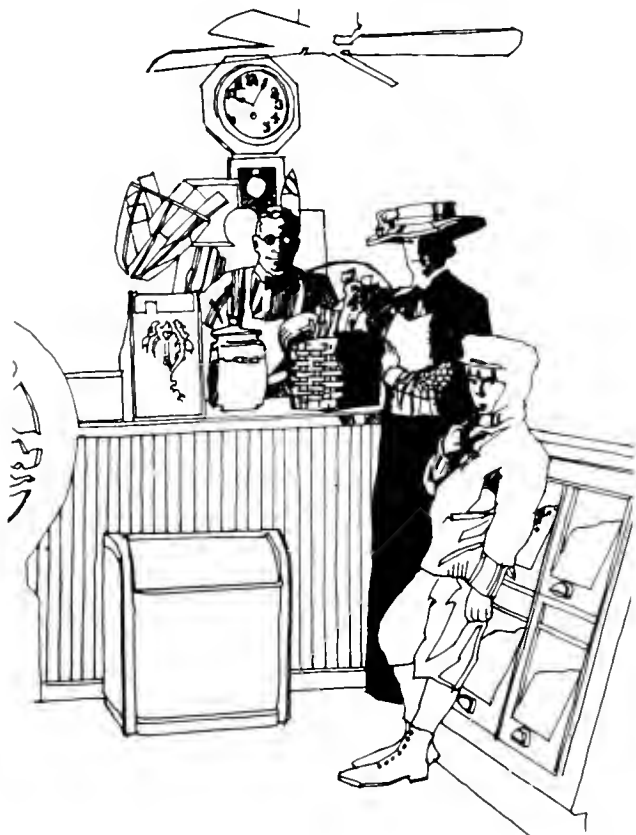
Hoch's Garage—Dan Cummings established a blacksmith shop here in 1890, and here he hammered out rings, pins, bands, hooks, and horseshoes from a malleable iron which he heated red hot in his forge and then beat into shape on his anvil. The business is listed as "Hoch and Cummings" in the story of the fire in 1894 because John Hoch had joined him by then. John Hoch was followed by his son, Harry. Harry Hoch was followed by his son, Eugene. Eugene Hoch is being followed by his son, Danny—for the only four-generation business in town. But the shop has changed. The "hay-burner" gave way to the "gas-burner." The forge and anvil were replaced by the gasoline pump and the torque wrench, and the blacksmith shop became an auto garage. Gene says the forge was finally dismantled and thrown out in 1960.



Inside of the Hoch Garage — 1975. Gene Hoch is in center; son, Danny, is at the left.

**The Laundromat and Beauty Shop**—This building, just back of Peck's and Hoch's, was built by Grace and Raymond Busboom in 1962

**Nojd's Die Shop**—The metal building just east of Schenck's doesn't look all that impressive, but it, too, has long been the scene of business activity. Hickman and Boggs had a blacksmith shop there in the 'teens. It was a storage building for Fred Busboom's Store while he was in business, and it housed a radio and TV repair shop for Jack Rouse and Ballard Spears in the 1960's. Since 1967 Gordon Nojd has had a Steel Rule Die Shop there. (Editor's Note: A steel rule die is a cutting instrument, especially made to cut paper products into a desired shape, ya dummy! Example: If you want to cut out a hundred heart shapes for valentines, Mr. Nojd can make you a steel rule die, shaped just right, which you press down on the paper, like a cookie cutter, to cut them out.)



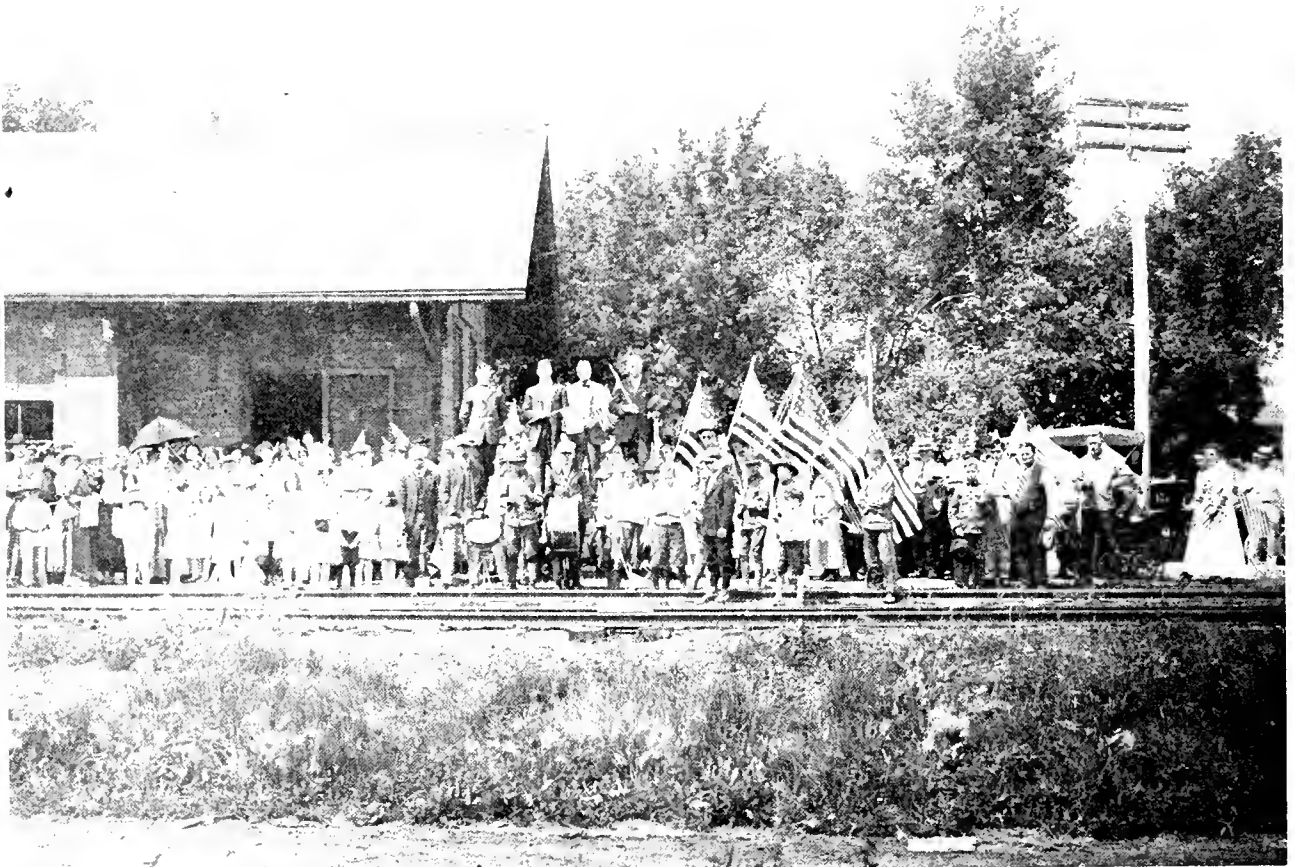
Whew! This story is getting to be a kind of endurance contest. But if you are still with us, let's go back up north of the railroad and work our way down the west side of the street.

**The "Old Hotel"**—The fine house now occupied by the Ernest Emord family just across from the Busboom Oil Tanks, replaces Gifford's second hotel. The house was built by T. O. Waespe in the 1930's. The "old hotel" was a big, frame structure with perhaps a dozen rooms upstairs, and a big parlor, dining room and kitchen downstairs. It was no "Holiday Inn" even in its day, but it served the needs of a lot of people when it was not practical to come out from Champaign, put in a day's activity, and go back the same day. Traveling salesmen ("drummers," they were called then) would come in on the train one day, work the town and go out on the train the next day. When the hotel trade dried up, families occupied the building as a private home for several years—and there was a dentist's office in there once, until Mr. Waespe tore it down to make way for, and to provide a lot of materials for the present house.

**The Depot**—The railroad and the depot deserve special emphasis. Though they were not "Gifford businesses" they did do business in Gifford. If it had not been for the Havana, Rantoul and Eastern Railroad, Gifford might never have existed at all. Or it would have occupied some other location. In its day, the depot was to Gifford what a modern airport is to a city. People arrived in town at the depot—people left town at the depot. There were tearful farewells and joyful reunions at the depot. Many of our ancestors arrived in the area at the depot, some of them carrying everything they owned in a bundle. Merchants looked to the depot for their new merchandise. If you'd ordered a corset or a cream separator from Sears Roebuck, you

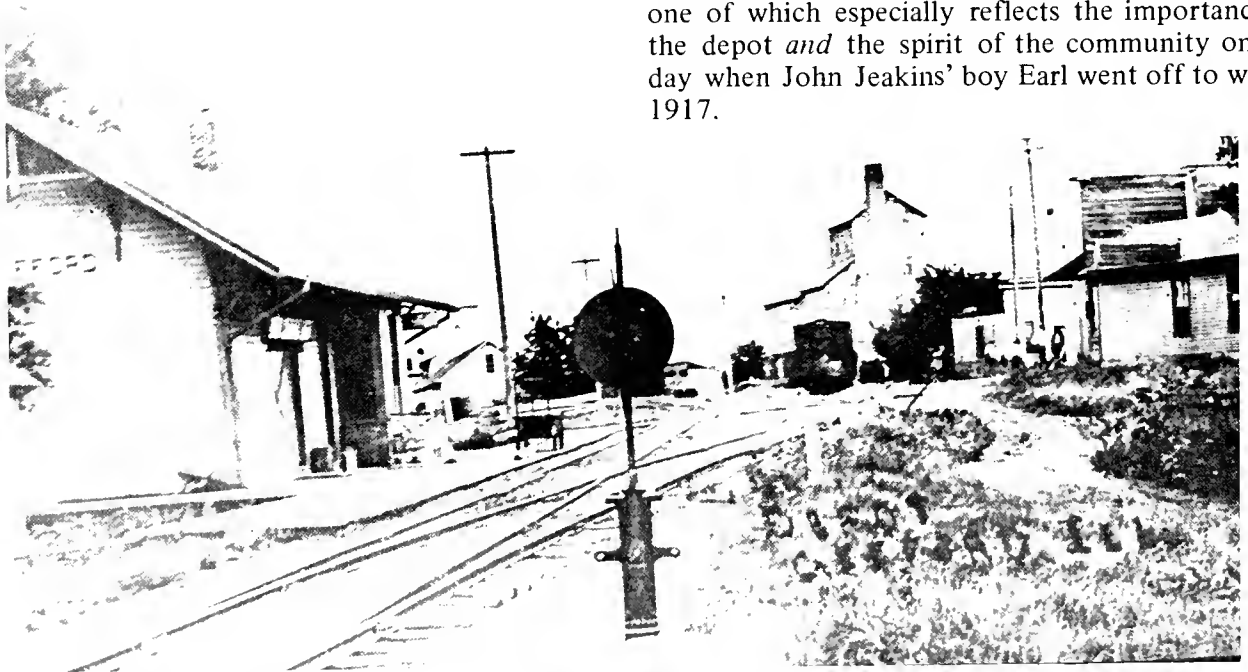


**THE DEPOT, LOOKING WEST FROM MAIN STREET**  
The small white building at the left is believed to be the first depot for the narrow-gauge railroad.



The DEPOT when one of John Jeakins' sons went to war in 1917

looked to the depot for its arrival. The mail arrived daily at the depot, and telegrams were received there. So here are three pictures of "the depot"—one of which especially reflects the importance of the depot *and* the spirit of the community on the day when John Jeakins' boy Earl went off to war in 1917.



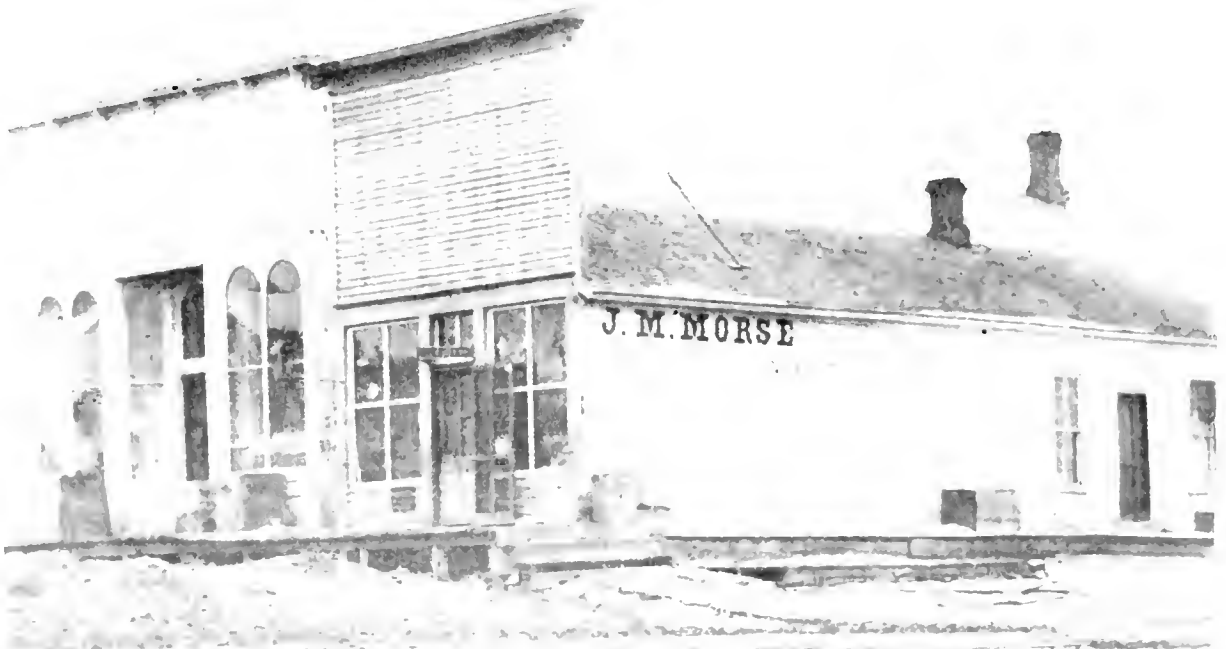
The DEPOT, looking east toward the elevator and lumber yard — about 1915

THE JOHN DEERE BUILDING – 1975



The “John Deere Building”—The present building just south of the railroad was built for use by a dealer in John Deere farm equipment, and it was so used in the late 1940’s and early 50’s. Since that time it has had intermittent use as a warehouse and truck repair garage—and as the site of an occasional Lions Club Supper, Rummage Sale, and the like. The site was formerly occupied by two buildings

which extended out to the sidewalk like other downtown buildings. The north unit was once used by “J. M. Morse” as a bank—or as a drugstore—we are not sure. The south unit was used as a restaurant by at least four men—Alverson, Hickman, Lytle and Barnes. At other times it was used as a barber shop, general store, and hardware.



The first bank? We are not sure. J. M. Morse established the first bank, but he also had to do with the first drugstore, and there is no way to be sure which

this was. These two buildings stood where the present “John Deere” building is, but extended out to the sidewalk and street.

Courtesy of  
THE GIFFORD COIN WASH  
Gifford, Illinois



**Hesterberg Electric**—This very nice looking building was constructed in 1973 to house Robert Hesterberg's electrical contracting business. It replaced an old frame building which originally extended to the sidewalk but was cut back in the early 1920's to make room for a Standard Oil service station. Robert Behr, Leon Reynolds and David Gilkison—among others—operated the garage portion of it. Perry Stewart, Charles Stewart and Hap Parker ran the service station at various times.

**The Pool Hall**—The original part of this building was constructed about 1922 by Dr. E. S. Axtell for use as his office, and it was so used until he moved to Rantoul about 1938. It has been operated in essentially its present form for a long time, by Alberta Carley, Harry Minniear, Leroy Carpenter and others. The former uses of this site are unknown.



Mr. and Mrs. Perry Stewart in their new restaurant — 1929. Mrs. Stewart's description written on the back of the picture and addressed to members of her family reads, "This is a very good picture of our place of business. Our dining room is under the sky light. My table seats ten comfortably and we also serve short orders and lunches at counter. At front is a soda fountain but there was not much of it got in the picture. There is candy in show case on south side and cigars and tobacco in front of that. The lady that is with us used to live here. She lives in Chicago now and was down here and just dropped in to talk a few minutes. 9/23/29. Write to us, all of you. This is to go to Mother and Dad after you have all saw it so keep mailing it along."

Ora



Perry Stewart's Service Station and the old garage building in back of it.

L to R: Junior Hoch, Loren Walston, Donald Wise, Perry Stewart and Ora Stewart



North portion of THE WEST SIDE OF MAIN STREET — 1975

Left to right: Dr. Bruns' office; Atty. Hirschfeld's office; The Cabin; J & S Chapparel; The Pool Hall, and the Hesterberg Building.

**J & S Chapparel**—This building has almost always been a restaurant, so far as is known. Bob Chumbley had a restaurant there back in the teens. The Rufus Means had a restaurant there in the early twenties. Mrs. Ora Stewart ran the restaurant business there from 1929 until 1951 and restaurants were later run there by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Johnson and by Marie Minniear. Mrs. Jan Severins started a ceramics shop in 1973 and she and Sandy Hildebrand added a stock of clothing in 1974.



MRS. JAN SEVERINS with her stock of casual wear in the J & S Chapparel – 1975

**The Cabin**—Totally remodelled and equipped by Mr. and Mrs. Ted Turza, this old building in its modern guise as a tavern and restaurant draws customers from miles away. The building was used to house John Steiner's grocery store in the 1920's. Cyrus Hickman and his wife, the former Mrs. Sally Burdette, had a restaurant there for a time. The Charles Rays, the T. P. Jennings, W. J. Hylbert, Allie Wells, the Paul Schencks and Bud McKeown operated grocery stores there. There were a few rooms behind the store and from time to time the families lived in the building.

**Lawyer Hirschfeld's Office**—For as long as this writer can remember, this building housed a tavern run by Lubbo Pannbacker, Lloyd Carley, Allie Wells and perhaps others. Beyond that, it is reported that Florence Strine had a hat shop there and that a man named Yarrington ran a meat market there—away back when.

**Dr. Brun's Office**—Joseph W. McHenry had his furniture store and undertaking business in this building from the late 1890's well up into the 1930's. After the fire in 1938, Fay M. Wooldridge used half of it for his drugstore and Howard Varner took the other half for his barber shop. When Mr. Varner moved across the street, Mr. Wooldridge and later Mr. and Mrs. Ted Siddens occupied the whole building for their drugstore until about 1965.

(Editor's Note: Mr. McHenry used a big, black horse-drawn hearse in those days, and he and the driver sat on a high seat at the front, exposed to whatever the weather was. For a time Leonard Hylbert furnished the required four horses and drove the hearse. Mr. McHenry also did "fumigating." When contagious diseases were more common it was the custom to fumigate the house after a sickness. The method was to burn sulphur in small containers throughout the house. It made a lot of smoke and a terrible odor, but supposedly it killed off the germs of typhoid, diphtheria, scarlet fever, influenza and the rest. Mr. McHenry came to fumigate our house one time. He and Mom were never what you'd call real pals, and in an attempt to be friendly he said "Before this is done, you'll think even less of me than you do now." Mom, whose tongue was pretty sharp sometimes, replied "Impossible!")

## THE GIFFORD STATE BANK

The Gifford State Bank—As an institution, the bank was founded in 1885 by James M. Morse as the “Exchange Bank.” It was run after his death two years later by his widow and two of his sons under at least two titles—“E. J. Morse and Son” and “Morse Brothers and Co.” until 1912 when it was incorporated as The Morse State Bank. The bank was headed by Rollin Morse from 1887 to 1896, and by Jedediah (“Jed”) Morse from 1896 until he was disabled by a stroke in the early 1940’s. In its earlier

days the bank occupied other locations. The present building was constructed by the bank itself in 1961 just a half step, so to speak, south of the location it had occupied since the early 1900’s.

The present building and the space for its driveway occupy space formerly occupied by the old bank building, the Jerome Hylbert building where Howard Varner first had his barber shop and the old Wooldridge Drugstore building. In 1950 the bank was renamed The Gifford State Bank and since the Morses left the scene it has been headed by Dale E. Goodwine, Arthur F. Busboom, and presently by Eugene Schmidt.



THE BANK – 1913, Mr. “Jed” Morse left of the door



THE BANK – 1960



THE BANK – in the John Deere Building while the present building was under construction

Courtesy of  
THE GIFFORD STATE BANK  
Gifford, Illinois





The South portion of the WEST SIDE OF MAIN STREET — 1975  
 Right to left this time, please: The Bank, the Homestead Tavern, Stan Kopman's Shop,  
 the Longbranch (Opera House), and Glen Walston's House.

The Wooldridge Drugstore Building and the Varner Barber Shop building were small buildings, surely not more than 20 feet wide, each. The barber shop was a two-story affair and had several rooms in the rear portion where the Varners lived at the time of the fire in 1938.

**The Wooldridge Drugstore**—The first drugstore in town was opened in March of 1876 by H. D. Corlies and was taken over in the next year by J. M. Morse and his son-in-law, W. A. Wooldridge. In view of his growing interest in banking, it is understandable that Mr. Morse shortly left the operation of the drugstore to Mr. Wooldridge. Mrs. Wooldridge followed her husband as operator of the store, and their son, Fay, followed her in 1924. It was not a drugstore in the modern sense of a pharmacy. Mr. Wooldridge kept and sold patent medicines—and glass and paint and jewelry and small gifts—and school supplies. He ordered and sold the text books used by the school, along with pencils, tablets, crayons, rulers, etc.

Referring to a number of unpaid accounts, Mr. Wooldridge (a bachelor) used to point out that he had educated a lot of kids. Upon the death of Fay Wooldridge in 1953, the business was sold to Mr. Ted Siddens who had worked for him for years anyway. Ted and his wife, Meta, carried on the business until about 1963, when he liquidated it and went into accounting and tax preparation on a full-time basis.

**The Homestead**—It is reported that this site was once occupied by Condit's Hardware Store, by a barber shop, and at different times by two men running meat markets—a Mr. Simmons, and a Jasper Huls. Beyond that there is no background on this site except that it was run as Barney Bartell's Tavern from the 1920's on. The old building burned in 1938 but was immediately replaced. When Mr. Bartell's health failed and he gave up active operation of the business, it was leased to Mrs. Ersie Cooper who operates it as "The Homestead."

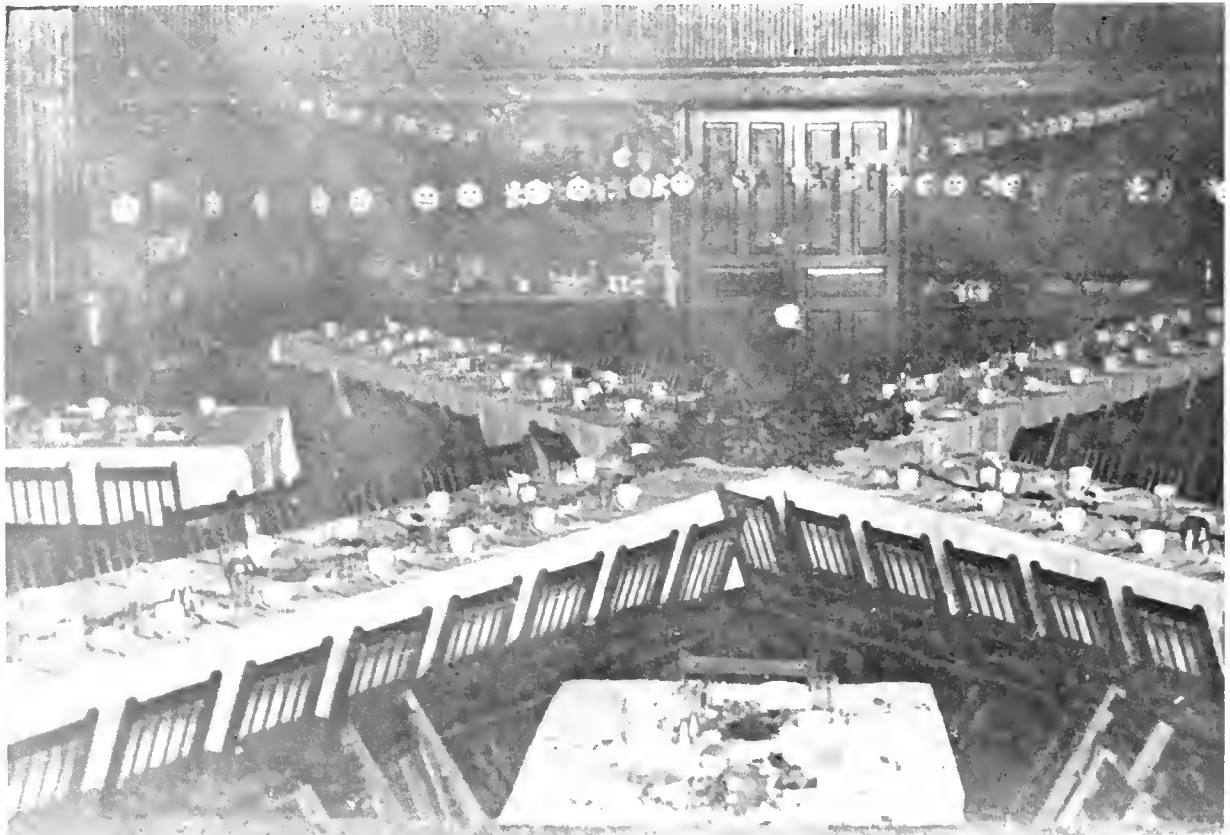


Mrs. Ersie Cooper and "The Homestead" — 1975

**Stan Kopman's Barber Shop**—This is a new building, constructed by Kopman in 1970 and used by him as a barber shop for two years. The site was formerly occupied by Joseph Sheuring's harness and shoe repair shop from about 1900 until the building burned in 1938. Mr. Sheuring then moved his business to the north half of the George Parks building just south of the present elevator office, then later to the present Pool Hall building, and finally to a small block building in the corner of his own yard at home. There was at one time a little, one-room shop between Sheuring's and the present Longbranch and it was Lloyd Brown's barber shop.

**The Longbranch**—This building was the original Methodist Church in Gifford. When the Methodists decided to build a new church in 1905, they sold their old building to the "Opera House Company"—W. A. Wooldridge, Rollin Morse and John Wood.

The building was moved to this site, remodelled and equipped with stage, curtains, dressing rooms, etc., and used as a center for community entertainment until the late teens. Shows were presented by traveling professional musical and theatrical groups and by local, home-talent groups. There were years when movies were shown regularly. Cyrus Hickman bought the building and continued with it as a movie theater. There were years when it was regularly used for roller skating, but it continued to be available for almost any kind of public function. Banquets and public functions were held there, including this writer's own Eighth Grade graduation exercises in 1928. When the Gifford School had no gymnasium, the basketball teams practiced in "the old Opera House." Along about the early 1930's Dr. F. L. Edenburn took over the building and used it as his veterinary office and occasional small animal hospital. He rented a small office to James S. Barnes who was still active in the real estate and insurance busi-



A BANQUET SET-UP IN THE OPERA HOUSE — about 1915

"The History of Champaign County, Illinois," published by the Lewis Publishing Company in 1918, contains the following item—

"On May 23, 1903, Mr. and Mrs. John Clark cele-

brated their golden wedding anniversary. Ten years later, in 1913, their sixtieth anniversary was celebrated. This was a notable occasion and 187 guests sat at the banquet which was served in the Opera House."

Courtesy of  
**THE LONGBRANCH**  
 Gifford, Illinois

ness. In the worst of the depression days, when Finley Morse was publishing a little, mimeographed advertising newspaper called "The Observer," he published it in the balcony of the Opera House. A whole second floor was built in at some point, with apartments for rent. Then Mr. and Mrs. Richard Marikos acquired the place and have used it as a supper-club tavern since 1968.

Glen Walston's Building—This has been used as the private residence of the Glen Walston family since 1929, but further back it had been one of the business buildings. It once housed Florence Strine's Hat Shop, and the telephone switchboard was on the second floor, not necessarily at the same time. Dr. Walker also once used the second floor as his office.

*If You Can't*  
**LAUGH**  
*Don't Read This!*

**"HIS UNCLE'S NIECE"**

A Rollicking Farce in Three Acts  
 Written by Raymond W. Sargent

Presented by the Young People of the  
**GIFFORD COMMUNITY SUNDAY SCHOOL**

at the

**GIFFORD OPERA HOUSE**  
 Saturday evening  
**APRIL 10th, 1926**

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

Richard Late Esq. (A rising young lawyer).....  
 .....Ralph W. Johnson

Francis Felton (the cause of all the trouble) ..E. A. Harris  
 Dora Hale (very much attached to the "cause") ..  
 ..... Zora B. Adams

Alice Malcolm (a close chum of Dora's).....Lela Carley

Mrs. Sarah Ann Mullen (a woman of few words,  
 from Happy Valley) .....Avelyn Waeste

Simon F. Felton (Frank's uncle, who never makes  
 a mistake).....Theodore Siddens

Philander Filmore ("humble but wise") ..William J. Aldrich

Timothy Hays (gardener at Happy Valley Junc-  
 tion).....Lorraine Armstrong

Silas Sickelmore (the constable at Happy Valley)  
 .....Garneth Waespe

The Ralph Busboom Lot—This lot, now vacant, was the site of the Post Office for a long time in the days of Ed Breithaupt. The Post Office was in a small wood building in the northeast corner of the lot. Mr. Breithaupt kept a stock of candies and notions and he did business as a photographer, besides being postmaster. The lot flooded periodically, then, as it



The Gifford Post Office — late 20's and early 30's  
 Left to right: Loren Wilson, Roy S. Barnes (both rural mail carriers), Ed Breithaupt (Postmaster) and Merle Morrison. One wall of the "town tank" can be seen in the foreground.

does now, and so did the Post Office. Directly in front of the Post Office was the "Town Well," a regular deep well with a windmill to operate it. And there was a big concrete water tank beside the well for the watering of horses and in later years for the washing of cars! I remember that Edyth Sheuring fell into that old tank one time, and then ran home—dribbling water all the way.



THE SOHIGRO PLANT – 1975

There. !! We made it. That is all for the “down town” business section of Gifford, but there are a few businesses in the “suburbs” which should be mentioned. The Sohigro Fertilizer plant has been over on Park Street since 1967, and it was preceded by the Remole Soil Service. That spot is where the Wood Brothers/Jacob Johnson Grain Elevator stood. Heiko Kuhlman had a little service station out at the north corner away back in the days of the hand operated, glass topped gas pumps. It was enlarged and modernized as the years went by, and has since been operated by Leroy (Cotton) Carpenter, Harold Frazier, Ernest Crozier, Charlie Miles and probably others. It is now run by Terry Green. The FS Station is also at the north corner and it dates back into the thirties. Wesley Alcorn ran the FS station in the early days and it was while he was there that the present concrete block building was erected.



THE MOBIL STATION on the Kuhlman Station Site – 1975



THE HEIKO KUHLMAN STATION – 1926



THE FS STATION – 1975

From the bulk tanks at the FS Station—and from his home—Bob Baker is busy as distributor for FS petroleum products, as was his father, Walter Baker, before him.

Terry Ellis, in partnership with his father, John, and brother Tony from Penfield, keeps busy with a gravel, excavating and construction business. Leland F. Albers is a contractor mainly in the field of home construction. Arthur F. Busboom maintains an insurance agency in addition to his banking responsibilities in both Rantoul and Gifford. Bill Bull runs an upholstery shop. Jim Head has a repair service for household appliances. Elmer Ehmen now runs the welding and farm machine repair service which Altje Saathoff operated from 1945 until 1967. Harry Ellis has a lawn mower sales and service business. Robert Chapman has a greenhouse, does tree

work and produces honey. Emma and Rhonda Weinke, Norma Emkes, and Carmen Bull have beauty shops in their homes.

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The Gifford Locker Plant was established as a cooperative in 1948 to process and store frozen goods. It was for a time managed and later owned by Werner Roessler, and for a time he also did butchering in a plant at the south edge of town. Since Mr. Roessler's death, both the Locker Plant and the butchering have been taken over by Robert Glazik and his family.



THE GIFFORD LOCKER PLANT - 1975



Left to right: Jeannie Gardner, Joe Glazik, Lena Duitsman, Regina Glazik, Robert Glazik and Audry Chapman



THE COUNTRY HEALTH, INC., NURSING CARE CENTER – 1975

The Country Health Nursing Care Center may or may not belong in this section of our book, but in one sense it is a business. The Center was conceived in 1967 and received its first two patients in January, 1970. It has a capacity of 97 residents and is licensed by the State as a “skilled care” facility—the highest rating awarded by the State. It is operated as a not-for-profit humanitarian agency, and it is a unique institution for a town the size of Gifford.

The Hicksgas Fertilizer Plant has been on the north corner since 1963 and they were preceded by Paul Cler’s gas and fertilizer business. It was Paul Cler who ran a system of pipes through the town and provided LP gas for the heating of homes and

businesses. This distribution system was taken over by the Northern Illinois Gas Company in 1966 and converted to natural gas which comes by pipe line from the oil fields of Texas.

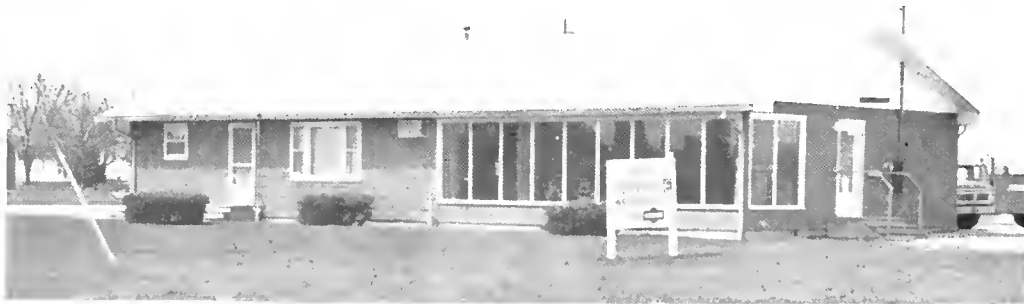
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To venture only a mile or so from town, Carl and Frieda Mennenga are both in business, in addition to their farming. He is a distributor for DeKalb Seed Corn and she is the representative for Stanley Home Products. Mr. and Mrs. Chris Rocker operate a modern egg farm with thousands of hens producing eggs by the case.

Now, whom did I leave out . . . ?

*Who?*

Well, sorry about that! ! !



THE HICKSGAS BUILDING – 1975

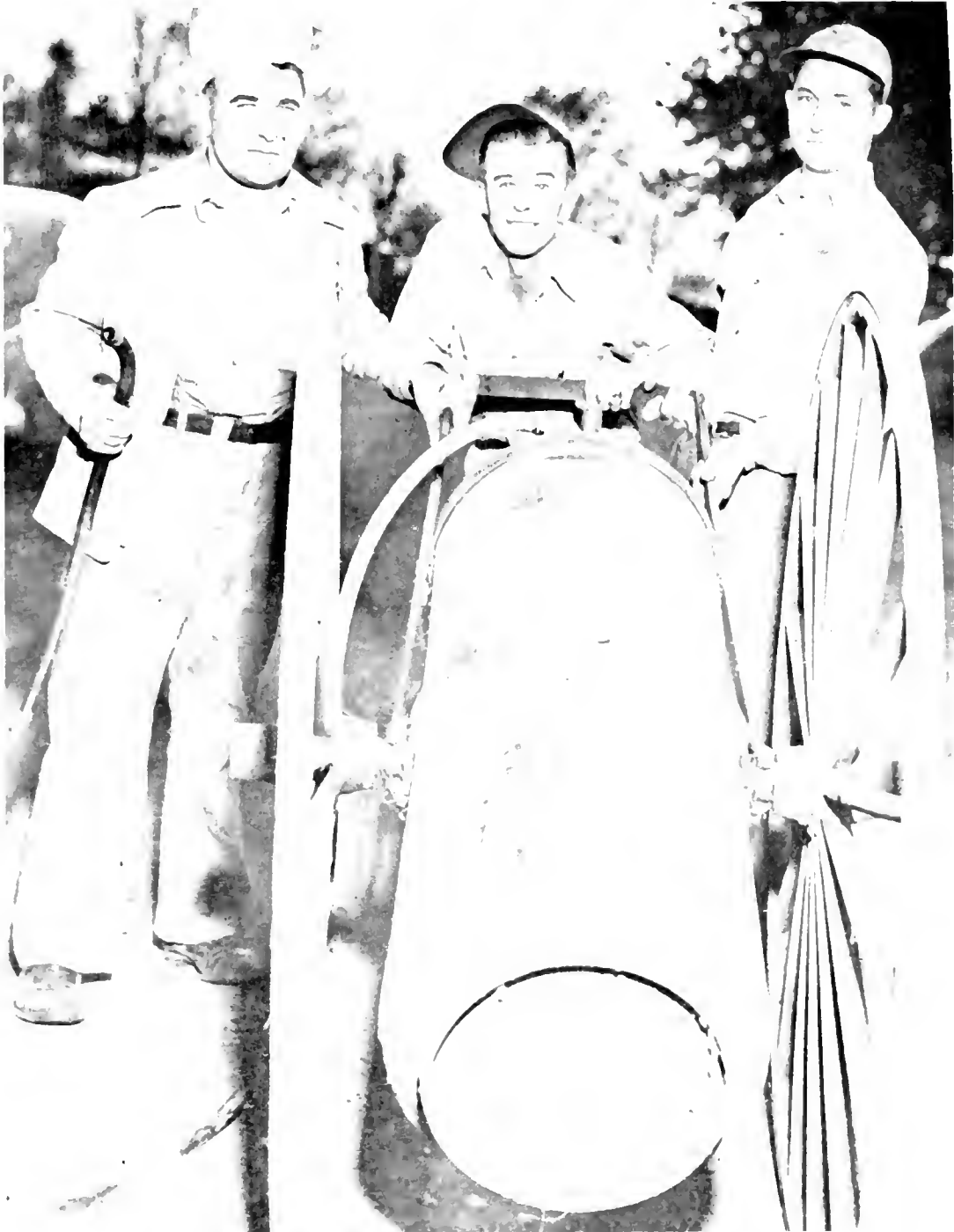
Courtesy of  
HICKSGAS GIFFORD, Inc.  
Gifford, Illinois







# Service Agencies



THE OLD "FIRE TRUCK"

This is the kind of fire protection we had in the "good old days"—a chemical tank which held perhaps 50 gallons of water mounted on a two-wheeled hand cart.  
Left to right: Werner Roessler, Doyle Curtis and "Tex" Lewis

Courtesy of  
**THE BANK OF RANTOUL**  
Rantoul, Illinois

## HISTORY OF GIFFORD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

The Gifford Fire Protection District was created by a special election held in late 1947. Wayne Stonestreet, Fred Mennenga and John H. Franzen were appointed by the County Judge to head that District.

The Department did not become operational until April 9, 1948, after the purchase and delivery of a high pressure pumper from the John Bean Corporation. Six men—Frank Fox, Doyle Curtis, Fred Mennenga, Jack Bouse, Wayne Stonestreet and Werner Roessler—received factory training at Lansing, Michigan, with the new truck and became the nucleus of the new fire department. In addition to the above mentioned, twelve more men formed the eighteen-man fire department. They were Russell Burdette, Melvin Roessler, Ernest Hein, Eugene Hoch, William Johnson, Herman Ackerman, Lloyd

Filkin, Dr. M. W. Tempero, John Harper, Ira (Tex) Lewis, Arthur Busboom and Loren Walston.

Jack Bouse was selected by those firemen to serve as the first Fire Chief with Fred Mennenga as his Assistant Chief. Space was rented in the newly constructed Locker Plant to house the truck and to serve as a meeting room.

Over the years more trucks and equipment were acquired, making it necessary to find larger quarters, so the present building was constructed in 1957 and 1958 and dedicated formally with an open house on July 27, 1958. Jack Bouse was succeeded by Werner Roessler as Chief and later on by the present Chief, Joe Curtis. The department now has four trucks—two pumpers and two water tankers manned by twenty-nine firemen.

Of the original eighteen firemen only Loren Walston, Jack Bouse and John Harper are still members of the department, Loren and John as assistant chiefs and Jack as a trustee.



### THE FIRST FIRE TRUCK AND VOLUNTEERS

Front row, left to right: Lloyd Filkin, Herman Ackerman, Loren Walston, Ernest Hein, Bill Johnson, Frank Fox

Back row: Arthur Busboom, Werner Roessler, Melvin Roessler, Eugene Hoch, John Harper, "Tex" Lewis, Doyle Curtis, Fred Mennenga, and Wayne Stonestreet



## Present Fire Department Roster

Trustees: Ernest J. Huls, Glen Reynolds, Jack Bouse

Fire Chief: Joe Curtis

Assistant Chiefs: Loren Walston, John Harper

### Firemen

Lee Albers	Marshall Huls
Robert Baker	Charles Huls
Robert Buenting	Al Hoveln
Ron Duden	John Emkes
Stan Kopmann	John Wienke
Eldon Hesterberg	Melvin Wilken
Karl Hesterberg	Lowell (Pete) Watson
Robert Hesterberg	Dan Hoch
Norman Rademacher	Jon Bouse
Glen Yeazel	Charles Gehrt
Eugene Vermillion	Paul Severins
James Martin	Glen Roberson
Ray Busboom	James Peck

## ELECTRIC SERVICE

The Central Illinois Public Service Company brought its lines into Gifford in 1928 and 1929. Before that kerosene lamps were the standard source of light. Some buildings (I recall the Methodist Church in particular) had carbide lights, and some families had gasoline mantle lamps.

A few families “up on the hill”—the Morses, the Hamiltons, the Axtells and perhaps others—had a private system of electric lights. It consisted of a gasoline-powered generator with a whole room full of batteries. They’d charge up the batteries every day and enjoy the luxury of electric lights every night. They were really livin’.

## TELEPHONE SERVICE

So far as is known, telephone service has always been provided by companies outside of Gifford, generally headquartered in Rantoul. At present it is provided by the Eastern Illinois Telephone Company with an automatic, essentially impersonal dialing system. Memory reverts to the “good old days” of party lines and real, live, human operators.

“Central” would answer when you turned the crank on your wall phone. Like as not she’d comment on the weather, or visit for a moment, then she’d “plug you in” and ring your party—two longs and a short, or whatever.

Party lines had their disadvantages, of course; but they were personal, friendly, kind of intimate things, and good in many ways. If I heard your

“ring” on my phone and if I knew you were not at home, I could pick up my receiver and tell the caller where to reach you, perhaps.

So far as can be recalled, the following women have been operators at Gifford: Fern Davis, Lottie Siddens, Ora Stewart, Maudie Alcorn, Mina McDonald, Opal Funkhouser Schrader, Maggie Swan, and Nellie Harper.



## WATER PLANT AT GIFFORD IS APPROVED

“Courier” – July 29, 1961

Voters gave the go-ahead for constructing a water works and water distribution system for Gifford. They overwhelmingly approved a \$60,000 general obligation bond issue to help finance the project.

Of the 247 persons who went to the polls, 220 voted for issuing the bonds and 19 voted against. There were eight spoiled ballots.

Total cost of the project has been estimated at \$154,340. It is planned to issue \$94,340 in revenue bonds to make up the difference, with revenue from the system going to pay off these bonds.

The proposition that was approved provided that the general obligation bonds may not be sold at a greater maximum interest rate than four and seven-eighths per cent per annum.

Source of water has been found that will produce 100 gallons per minute. Project will include a 50,000-gallon elevated water storage tank and a pump house.



# Clubs and Organizations



THE "GIFFORD HYMN SINGERS"

These fine women have for years devoted one day a week to singing in nearby nursing homes. They appear regularly in the Champaign County Home, Greenbriar Manor, The Fontana Nursing Care Center, the Americana Health Care Centers (2), The Heritage House, the Country Health Nursing Care Center, and in the Garwood Nursing Home.

Seated, left to right: Tinnie Kopmann, Sophie Roessler, Margaret Schluter, Gertrude Barnes, Dora Stonestreet and Theda Smith

Standing, left to right: Hilda Bergman, Dora Sjoken, Margie Huls, Reka Goldenstein, Uvah Alcorn, Betty Fuller, Bernice Buenting, Tena Olson, Anna Hesterberg and Carlene Schluter.

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The Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Co.  
Life and Health – Kent Stonestreet, Agent  
Rantoul, Illinois – 892-2467



### GIFFORD LIONS CLUB

The Gifford Lions Club was chartered in 1957 with 30 members:

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Elme Ackerman         | Ernie H. Huls      |
| Roy S. Barnes         | William R. Johnson |
| Dr. Robert Basler     | William Kilhoffer  |
| Arthur F. Busboom     | Orville Leischner  |
| Ernest Busboom        | Elbert Murrell     |
| Raymond Busboom       | Dr. Donald Pratt   |
| Lloyd Carley          | James Rocker       |
| Wesley Calhoun        | Louis B. Schluter  |
| Pastor W. J. Ferne    | Mike Schlueter     |
| Pastor Charles Gibson | Theodore Siddens   |
| Dale E. Goodwine      | Ballard H. Spears  |
| James Hannagan        | Wayne Stonestreet  |
| John Harper           | Marshall Strom     |
| James R. Herbert      | Joseph E. Whalen   |
| Eugene Hoch           | Byron Wise         |

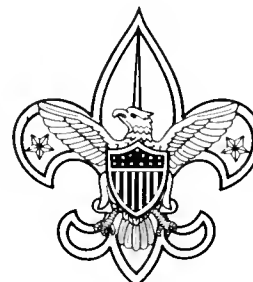
and chose Arthur F. Busboom as its first president.

As an international organization, the Lions have always devoted much of their time and money to services for blind persons, and to the prevention of blindness. Locally, the Lions Club has sponsored many community improvement projects, beginning with the installation of street signs and house numbers in Gifford and Penfield. The idea of a German Fall Festival was born in a Lions Club meeting, and the idea of the Country Health Nursing Care Center was nurtured and fostered by the club. The Gifford Lions, under Lion "Pete" Watson, painted the entire Nursing Care Center before it opened. We sponsored a new Lions Club in Thomasboro and we now number 63 members—ready to help with community projects in the years to come.

### SCOUTING IN GIFFORD

Gifford has had Boy Scout troops for a long time. R. J. Walston was Scoutmaster along about the early thirties. But there had been a period of inactivity and Scouting was renewed in the late forties with first the Methodist Church as sponsor and later the Gifford Lions Club. We first had Troop 45 and then Troop 27. Scoutmasters since the late forties have been: Werner Roessler, Robert Carley, Dick Murrell, Dewey Carley, David Powell, Robert Chapman, Norman Zech, Richard Mercer, Clyde German, John Hiles and Bill Henry. The institutional representatives through the years have been Pastor Edward Hamilton, Doyle Curtis, Lorain Armstrong, Ballard Spears, Werner Roessler and Bill Henry.

The Neighborhood Commissioner has been Pastor Melvin C. Blobaum. The Committee Chairmen have been Lorain Armstrong, Carlton Myers, Werner Roessler, Pastor James Elder and Robert Hesterberg. Members of the Scout Committee have included



B. S. A.

Bill Johnson, Dale Goodwine, Wayne Stonestreet, George Stonestreet, Lloyd Filkin, Eldon Scott, William Early, Ronald Ryan and Eric Strzesak. For a short time in the fifties, Gifford had an Explorer Post. Advisors have been Robert Buenting and Gene Rudisill.

Scout projects have included selling flags, selling candles, cleaning up the roadsides, and planting trees to beautify the community.

Scout leaders in this the Centennial Year are: Scoutmaster, Carl Bales; Assistant Scoutmasters, Fred Davidson and Clyde German; and Junior Assistant Scoutmasters, Mike Busboom and Gary German.

The Gifford Cub Scouts were organized in 1953 with 20 boys enrolled. The Cub Master was John Wrench, Jr., and there were three dens. The

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"All Parts and Labor Guaranteed"

Den Mothers were Mildred Schneider, Freda Huls and Frieda Mennenga. In 1957 the Gifford Lions Club assumed sponsorship of the Cub Scout Pack and in 1962 the Pack number was changed from 45 to 27.



Our girls have been active in Scouting at least since 1932 when they were sponsored by the Gifford Women's Club. Women and girls who have been Scouts will recall their past Troop Leaders, including Mrs. Melvin Blobaum, Mrs. Eli Macom, Mrs. Bill Early, Mrs. Chris White, Mrs. Donald Halverson and Mrs. Evelyn Smith. They will recall, too, one of their activities—the laying of wreaths in the local cemeteries on Memorial Days.



NU IOTA

Nu Iota is a Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi, an international organization created for young women in search of culture and social activity, friendship and helping others.

Nu Iota was formed in May, 1965, by several women who were members of the Theta Chi Chapter in Rantoul.

The Charter Members were: Elaine Busboom, Barbara Johnson, Phyllis Wright, Wilma Busboom, Betty Greenhow, Jean Hannagan, Addie Fruitt, Pauline Craig and Ruth McQuaid.

Some of the projects of Nu Iota have been helping the Gifford Kindergarten-Country Health Nursing Home, and they helped furnish the doctor's waiting room in Gifford. They are going to furnish a drinking fountain for the new park and are setting up a Scholarship Fund.

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## THE "GIFFORD HOBO'S"

### CITIZEN BAND CLUB

The Gifford Hobo's Citizen Band Club is a non-profit organization chartered by the State of Illinois in February of 1975—surely our newest organization. The club is for better relationships among licensees in Citizen Band Services and to serve the community by providing a reliable communication facility when called upon by civic or disaster-relief organization, by law enforcement agencies or by sports groups when two-way radio communications may help in the protection of life or property or give guidance to the travelling public.

Our pioneer officers are: Dean Spurlock, president; H. D. Heimburger, vice-president; Gini Schluter, secretary; Ralph Mayeron, treasurer; Eva Schluter, public relations; John Christians, membership; Larry Schluter, recreation and social activities; and Joe Glazik, sergeant at arms.



GIFFORD HOBO'S

## THE PENFIELD-GIFFORD AMERICAN LEGION POST

After World War II the veterans of the two World Wars decided to form a Legion Post in the community of Gifford and Penfield. Seventeen names appeared on the temporary charter which was issued in October of 1947. They were: Edward Whitt, James Early, John McNamara, Frederick Ackerman, Ora K. Miles, Joe Powell, Thomas Gordon, Robert Hedrick, Elof Olson, Ernest Busboom, Charles Willard, Jesse Stover, William Webber, Harold Early, Charles Buck and Cloyd Hayes. Of these, Whitt, Busboom, Willard, Buck and Hayes are now deceased. Elof Olson has 53 years of continuous membership in the American Legion.

The post first bought the former United Brethren Church for a Legion home, but had used it only a few months when fire damaged it badly and it was torn down. In the Spring of 1948 it was decided to buy lots from Mrs. Annie Huls and build a Legion hall there. Plans for a building with basement were decided upon in September of 1948.

The application for permanent charter, issued in January of 1949, listed the names of 64 members, of whom 14 are now deceased. The latest to die was Arthur Buck who passed away in December of 1973, having been a Legionaire for more than fifty years.

The present Legion Hall was dedicated on Sunday, November 13, 1949, and with a lot of hard work and money from the people of the Gifford and Penfield community, a dream had come true.

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### THE GIFFORD WOMEN'S CLUB

When the Women's Club was started in 1914, it was called the Domestic Science Club and it began with 22 members. The minutes show that in that first year the lesson materials and activities included studies of Chinaware and of the Life of Theodore Roosevelt, a masquerade party, a guest day in May, a picnic in June and an annual banquet. The club bought a set of scales for the Gifford Grade School in that first year. In 1921 the name was changed to "The Women's Club of Gifford" and there were 30 members.

The club colors are yellow and white. The club flower is the yellow chrysanthemum. The club objective is to "promote intellectual and civic im-

provement and social enjoyment and to provide a united effort for the welfare of the community." The Women's Club is one of the oldest organizations in the town and now has 30 members.

Other entries in the old minutes mention study of the life and works of James Whitcomb Riley and of the history of St. Patrick's Day. The club has given financial support to The Red Cross, the Cancer Fund, the Community Chest, the Tuberculosis Association, the March of Dimes, the Polio Fund, the United Fund, the Boy Scouts and others. Locally, the club has helped to provide street lights and shrubbery near the School, and has sponsored the Parent Teachers Association and the local kindergarten classes.

The minutes for 1943 show that Rev. Clarence Hall of Ludlow showed pictures of his trip to the Holy Land at one meeting, and that Mrs. Darlene Cherry and Mrs. Betty Chumbley showed and demonstrated "Hair Styling, Wigs and Hair Pieces" at another meeting.

The club contributed to the founding of the Country Health Nursing Care Center and provided beautiful candlesticks and a cross for its chapel. We serve cakes for regular birthday parties at the Nursing Care Center, send cards and flowers to members who are ill and collect used clothing for the needy.

The roster of our past presidents will interest "old-timers" in Gifford:

1914-14	Mrs. J. D. Morse
1916-17	Mrs. Rena Axtell
1918	Mrs. Laura Wood
1919	Miss Gertrude Wooldridge
1920-21	Mrs. Bertha Hamilton
1922	Mrs. Margaret Smith
1922	Mrs. Margaret Jenkinson
1923	Mrs. Pearl Hennessey
1924	Mrs. Frances Morse
1925	Mrs. Ora Stewart
1926	Mrs. Rena Axtell
1927-28	Mrs. Frances Herbert
1929-30	Mrs. Rena Axtell
1931	Miss Jeannie Clark
1932-33	Mrs. Gertrude Barnes
1934	Mrs. Rena Axtell
1935	Mrs. Geraldine Jennings
1936	Mrs. E. J. Rueck
1937	Mrs. Maude Varner
1938	Mrs. Bertha Hamilton
1939	Mrs. Frances Morse
1940-41	Mrs. Julia Truman

Courtesy

CISSNA PARK LIVESTOCK SALES  
Jack, Donald and Jerry Wyss  
Cissna Park, Illinois



1942 Mrs. Alta Watson  
 1945 Mrs. Alsye Wooldridge  
 1946-47 Mrs. Marie Biddle  
 1948-49 Mrs. Belle Hamilton  
 1950-51 Mrs. Esther Mae Hein  
 1952 Mrs. Effie Lee Smith  
 1953-54 Mrs. Nellie Leischner  
 1955 Mrs. Opal Gehrt  
 1956-57 Mrs. Oral Bartell  
 1958-59 Mrs. Margaret Franzen  
 1960-61 Mrs. Mabel Steward  
 1962-63 Mrs. Elsie Armstrong  
 1964 Mrs. Gertrude Barnes  
 1965-66 Mrs. Mabel Steward  
 1967-68 Mrs. Elsie Armstrong  
 1969-70 Mrs. Uvah Alcorn  
 1971-72 Mrs. Emma Busboom  
 1973 Mrs. Gertrude Barnes  
 1974-75 Mrs. Theda Smith

Yet for the hands that gather it,  
 With toil and sweat of brow,  
 There was more money in the world  
 A hundred years ago.

No monster combinations then  
 Their industries destroyed;  
 No cry for mine or factory  
 Of labor unemployed;  
 No corn was burning in the West,  
 Because its price was low,  
 While men were starving at the East,  
 A hundred years ago.

They thought it no disgrace to work,  
 And idlers then were few;  
 And of the wealth that from the farm,  
 From mine and mill they drew,  
 They found that when the year came round  
 They'd something more to show  
 Than empty purse and tax receipts,  
 A hundred years ago.



## A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

by Mrs. S. M. Smith

*(Read before the State Farmers Association,  
 Bloomington, Illinois, January 20, 1876)*

I fain would spend an hour to-day  
 In retrospective thought,  
 Upon the changes that for us  
 The century hath wrought;  
 Compare our losses, and our gains,  
 Our happiness and woe,  
 With something of their lot who lived  
 A hundred years ago.

Gone are those savage warriors now,  
 Vanished the dusky race,  
 A Christian people, Christian arts,  
 Usurp their dwelling place;  
 Yet do we hear of scalpers now,  
 Who still go to and fro,  
 Plying a trade that flourished here  
 A hundred years ago.

Farms, mines and manufactories  
 Have poured their riches forth;  
 With gold and silver we have filled  
 The treasuries of earth,

And though with unaccustomed pomp  
 Of circumstance, and state,  
 The natal day of Liberty  
 We this year celebrate;  
 Lay countless offerings on her shrine,  
 Yet bitterly, we know,  
 That soul is fled that dwelt in her  
 A hundred years ago.

She stands, an empty image, bound,  
 With chains of glittering gold,  
 And in her presence, in her name,  
 Men's souls are bought and sold—  
 Bartered for gold, the sacred rights  
 Once dear to high and low,  
 And with the blood of heroes bought.  
 A hundred years ago.

May the old memories that the year  
 Will bring to every heart,  
 Bring the old spirit also, ere  
 Its later days depart;  
 Set Liberty's forgotten fires  
 In hut and hall aglow  
 That men may love her as they loved  
 A hundred years ago.

## EPSILON SIGMA ALPHA

The local chapter of ESA, Epsilon Rho No. 4318, was chartered in 1973 when nine women of the community joined to form its membership. Epsilon Sigma Alpha International was founded in 1929 and now has some 30,000 women working in service to the handicapped through the international philanthropic project of St. Jude Hospital for children.

The aims of the local chapter are to develop the finest qualities of womanhood in each member, to encourage the joys of association within a membership devoted to common ideals, to develop in every member an ability for self-expression, and to foster a truly educated membership, endowing it with the leadership abilities needed to meet the challenges of the world.

The charter members were: Mrs. Larry Barringer, Mrs. Ronald Duden, Mrs. Donald Franzen, Mrs. Ronald Franzen, Mrs. Vernon Franzen, Mrs. Gary Hedge, Mrs. Barbara Howell, Mrs. Delan Johnson, and Mrs. Paul Severins.

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## COUNTRY HEALTH AUXILIARY

The Country Health Auxiliary was organized in October of 1969 at the request of the Country Health Board of Directors. The purpose of our organization is to perform voluntarily many functions which will make the health center stay of patients more pleasant and homelike. We accomplish this through many projects and services—sewing, decoration, arts and crafts, parties, transportation, floor work, assistance with church services, planting and tending flower and vegetable gardens, and other activities. Material donations are made possible by fund-raising projects in harmony with the nursing home and with the planning of the community.

The membership has centered at about 100 volunteers. The Auxiliary has also sponsored the Red Cross Volunteers. These young girls and boys provide many services to the residents after school and on holidays and weekends. Our Volunteer Chairman schedules their time and they are a joy to the residents.

The Auxiliary undertakes many ways and means projects each year, the largest recently being the Fall Festival Food Tent. Other projects include dances, dinners, bake sales, white elephant sales,

rummage sales, magazine subscriptions, fruit and fruit cake sales, theatre ticket sales, bazaars, the redemption of Betty Crocker coupons and others.

Our donations to the Nursing Care Center have included the installation and maintenance of a public address system, training aids, donation to sprinkler system, draperies and curtains, donation to purchase of floor coverings, card tables, record player, blankets, pads, sewing room and beauty shop equipment, refrigerators, orthopedic chairs, movie projector, stainless steel carts, laundry supplies and equipment, stack chairs, shower curtains, wastebaskets, pillow covers, bulletin boards, charts and chart holders, vacuum cleaners, examination tables, and others "too numerous to mention."

No record is kept of the hours of our volunteer work. We have not been concerned with the time element but have been satisfied instead with the satisfaction which comes from providing services to the home and to the community. Our organization is very proud of its accomplishments, and our members have gained much from their work at Country Health.

## KEEP YOUR RAIN BARREL UNDER

### THE DRIP

*Many the blessings that fall from the sky,  
But often we let them slip;  
There is rain enough for the world's supply,  
But our barrel isn't under the drip.*

*Opportunity knocks but we've gone for a walk,  
And it calls for the man next door;  
He takes the job while we stand and talk,  
Till the best of our chances are o'er.*

*'Tis better to catch a horse by the nose  
Than to risk a grab at his tail;  
You often can head him off as he goes  
When to wait till he passes, you fail.*

*Watch for the chances that pass you each day,  
Take hold with a stronger grip;  
Look for the clouds that are coming your way;  
Keep your rain barrel under the drip.*

—Wm. J. Harper

Courtesy of

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and Interior Decorating  
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Rantoul, Illinois 61866

## THE GIFFORD HOME MAKERS EXTENSION UNIT

The first organizational meeting to form a Home Bureau Unit was held in the Penfield Grade School in 1949, with twenty to thirty members joining this wonderful club as charter members. Our lessons were then presented by specialists from the University of Illinois. Our club was first called the Penfield-Gifford Home Bureau, since enthusiastic women from both communities belonged. Meetings were held once a month in the homes of members. By 1952 our membership had grown to 32 active members, along with several associate members.

Our lessons cover a wide area such as clothing, family life, family economics, foods and nutrition, home furnishings, interior design and housing, environmental design and protection, home management and health education. We are much concerned with our most important crop—our 4-H Club members and other youth. County-wide, we have special lessons, activities, bus trips to points of interest and annual meetings.

On April 28, 1959, Mrs. Carrie Linthicum, a member of long standing, suggested we change our name to just Gifford Home Bureau, since it had somehow developed that all of our members were from the Gifford vicinity. Her motion was seconded and carried. Our adviser, Carol Ribbe, had advised that this move would be legal and we carried our new name until 1962 when "Home Bureau" was changed to "Home Extension." We now have sixteen active members and a number of associates.

The years of membership in the Home Extension Unit have brought many friends, county-wide, because of our annual meetings, bus trips and 4-H activities. Several of our members have served on the county board of Home Extension and have worked as chaperones for the 4-H girls and boys at the State Fair. All Home Extension functions are open to the public and anyone wanting to become a member can do so.

Our Homemaker's Aim is to have the home—  
Economically Sound  
Mechanically Convenient  
Physically Healthful  
Morally Wholesome  
Mentally Stimulating  
Artistically Satisfying  
Spiritually Inspiring  
and Founded Upon Mutual Affection and  
Respect.

## THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

The Penfield-Gifford American Legion Auxiliary was formed in 1949 at the neighboring town of Penfield as a service organization to the Penfield-Gifford American Legion Post 1153. Seven Gifford women were charter members: Elaine Busboom, Esther Mae Hein, Mary Burdette, Marie Filkin, Maurine Sturgeon, Marge Snyder and Bernice Huls. Elaine Busboom was our first president, and over the years several Gifford women have held the presidency and other offices.

Rehabilitation work at the Veterans' Hospital in Danville is a very important part of our concern, and Sophie Roessler, Mabel Steward, Uvah Alcorn and Theda Smith became volunteer workers at the hospital. Many hours of time have been donated by these women. Mabel Steward received a bronze plaque from the hospital in 1970 for 1750 hours of volunteer work, and when she was honored by the community in 1974, representatives of the Veterans' Administration noted that she had donated a total of 2400 hours of time to their work. Miss Steward died this Spring, but the other three are still faithful workers. Mary Burdette has been helpful to the Veterans' Hospital in another unique way. She has made hundreds of Joke Books and Cross Word Puzzle Books for the men at the hospital. She moved to Florida recently, and she is greatly missed.

Since 1951, the Auxiliary has made annual visits to the USO which serves the Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul to provide the Airmen with homemade cake and cookies. American flags were given to the Gifford Cub Scouts in 1952. School signs were provided for the Gifford Grade School, and in 1957 the unit donated \$25 to the Gifford Fire Protection District. One of our members, Sophie Roessler, was chosen by the unit to compete in the "Mother of the Year" contest.

Many other community service projects draw our support. Some of them are: baby sitting, religious training, visiting the ill, and doing volunteer work at the Nursing Center. The unit gave \$125 to the Country Health Nursing Care Center at Gifford, and we plan this year to donate and plant an oak tree in the Werner Roessler Memorial Park. Each year we sponsor the Americanism Essay Contest and the Gifford School has always participated in it.



# Events and Personalities

(*Champaign County Gazette* – August 10, 1894)

## GIFFORD MISHAP – AN ACCOUNT OF THE FIRE THURSDAY MORNING

**The Business Section of the Town is Practically Wiped Out of Existence**

**List of the Sufferers, with Estimates of the Losses and the Insurance**

Special Correspondent of the Gazette

Gifford, Illinois – August 10 – What is left of this little village is a sorry looking sight, but the town is composed of energetic, enterprising business men, and in less than a year from this time Gifford will not know that it was once destroyed. The fire which swept over the business district at day-break Thursday morning left nothing in its path but great heaps of smoldering ashes, piles of burned and twisted stoves, agricultural implements and hardware, and great heaps of parched grain.

At 3:30 o'clock in the morning, C. C. White, a citizen, had business downtown, and as he was passing along the main street he discovered that H. E. Elmore's Barber Shop and Billiard Hall, located in the Bullock Block, was on fire. When the discovery was made the flames were bursting through the roof. He at once raised the alarm, and in a very few minutes the whole population was out, clad in all sorts of apparel. The only means at hand to fight the fire was water carried in buckets and this had apparently no effect in stopping the progress of the flames.

The fire made short work of the building where it originated and soon spread to adjoining buildings, so that in considerably less than a half hour the entire business portion of the town from

Fordon's Restaurant north to C. W. Ellis' Lumber Yard, and from Wooldridge's Restaurant to Wood and Perring's Grain Office was a sea of leaping fire. The people were almost powerless to fight the fire. Men and women carried water for their lives, but to no avail, and when the sun looked down on Gifford Thursday morning it saw nothing remaining of the business portion of the town but J. K. Ice's Drug-store, Hoch and Cummings Blacksmith Shop and H. W. Beacham's General Store.

They would not have been left to mark the place where the business portion once stood had it not been that they stood alone, some distance from the burning district. As it was, men standing on the roofs of these three buildings had all they could attend to in efforts to save them. The two hotels of the village, which are on the north side of the railroad, are still standing. Soon after the fire got under headway a stiff breeze came up from the northwest and this assisted in spreading the fire. It also carried fire sparks into the country and fear was entertained that the fields of grain surrounding the buildings would be fired, but this did not occur. A few houses some distance away caught from the flying sparks, but their owners were watching over them and no damage resulted from this source.

In less than three hours after the fire was first discovered in the billiard room, twenty places of business and other property had been destroyed. When it was seen that every business house in town was doomed and could not possibly be saved, the villagers set to work removing what they could of the stocks of goods from the stores in the path of the fire. Perring and Brothers saved probably \$6,000

worth of goods which were carried and piled at the school house. J. W. McHenry and the Erdwin Brothers also saved a part of their stocks. Morse and Company, the bankers, saved their desks and a few of the books which were left outside of the vault. The vault is a good one and it is thought the currency and other contents are not damaged. The owners of the bank have concluded not to open the vault for three or four days yet.

Following is a list of the establishments which went down before the flames: C. W. Ellis' Lumber Yard, office and other buildings together with two large barns – George Rapp's residence – William Fordon's Restaurant – W. T. Pierce's coal bins containing 140 tons of coal – three Illinois Central box cars – G. L. Galvond's Furniture Store – Carrington, Hannah and Company's two grain elevators – J. H. Hennessey's Hardware Store – Ezra Harrison's Dry Good Store – The Odd Fellows' Building occupied by Perring Brothers with a general stock – Watson and Reynolds Grain Office – Perring and Woods' Grain Office – Gallagher Brothers Implement Warehouse – Miss Kittie Taylor's building occupied by Erdwin Brothers – C. W. Ellis' building occupied by McHenry's Harness Shop – the Taylor building occupied by Erdwin's Meat Market – H. Steward's Barber Shop – the Morse Bank building owned by Levi Wooldridge who also lost his residence property and barn – Joseph Sheuring's Shoe Shop – and the Bullock Block in which were located Miss Early's Millinery Store, Harry Elmore's Pool Room and George Harrison's Grocery. None of the goods in these latter establishments was saved. Gallagher Brothers saved a few of their implements but their hardware stock was a total loss.

All possible effort was made to keep the fire away from the two grain elevators, but they caught and then fairly melted away under the heat of it. It is estimated that fully 100,000 bushels of grain was stored in the two buildings and while much of it has been wholly destroyed it is feared that all the rest of it has been damaged. Early in the afternoon two traction engines were brought to town and put to work pumping floods of water on the heaps of grain, and before evening it was thought the fire had not entered the heart of the pile. The intense heat from the elevators warped the railroad track out of shape and three box cars which were in position where they could not be rescued were burned. A number of other cars were saved, however, by being pushed out of the way of danger. Michael Collins was also one of the losers. He lost a large double corn crib and 700 bushels of corn. The fire got a start on his

premises when but few were around and it soon got out of control. Heije Busboom, a prominent farmer, had a cornsheller and traction engine standing in the street at the time and both were destroyed before they could be moved to a place of safety.

Men and women alike worked heroically but accomplished very little. The greatest excitement prevailed during the fire. Men rushed into the burning buildings to rescue goods and furniture and carried them into the street only to have them burned there. By 6:00 o'clock the fire had spent its force as nothing was left in its way, and the villagers, who were blackened and burned, went home to their breakfasts. While the fire was practically out, a great heat was rising from the burned district and at times a blaze would start up. Men were on watch and kept the fire where it could do no further damage. Between 9 and 10 o'clock last night a brisk wind came up from the northwest, fanning the smoldering embers into life again, and it was feared for a time that the church and residence portion of town might catch fire. The situation was realized, and every man and woman in town was in readiness to resume the fight. A second rally was not necessary. Never before in the history of the village was there such restlessness during a whole night. A majority of the people remained up all night on guard duty, and those who did retire slept with one eye open.

Today the excitement has died out and now, in their sober moments the losers from the devastation are just beginning to realize its seriousness. At the best it will be late in the Fall before the burned district can be rebuilt and at present there is no possible way of carrying on business, for no business rooms are left. George Galvone, the furniture dealer, has already decided to open with a new stock in the old Reynolds Tank Shop. Perring Brothers have decided to rebuild with the hope of getting started at once, and a majority of those burned out will follow their example. Morse and Company, the bankers, have set up a desk in the Post Office and are conducting their most important business there. The Perrings are preparing to open with what they have saved of their stock in a temporary building.

It appears almost a miracle that a number of persons were not killed during the progress of the fire. Men appeared to have no fear. They rushed to the top of burning buildings, into them, and into places of greatest danger without the least hesitancy. So far as can be learned, no one was seriously injured, although a number were more or less burned. O. B. Sawdey and James Watson were among the

worst burned. Their injuries are not dangerous, as they were able to be about town.

At this time it cannot be told what the exact loss will be, but it is estimated that it will reach over \$100,000. As far as it is figured now the total loss is \$97,500 on buildings and stock. As far as can be learned now the total insurance amounts to \$24,450 but the list of policies is yet incomplete, and the exact figure will not be known for some days yet. Many of the sufferers had no insurance at all. An incomplete list of the losses and insurance is as follows:

Name	Buildings	Stock	Insurance
W. Fordon	\$ 800	\$ 700	\$1,000
H. R. Perring and Brother		8,000	6,000
George Rupp	800		600
George Galvond	1,000	1,800	1,300
Mrs. George Galvond		600	
McKinney and Johnson	800	2,000	
Drs. D.R. and J.T. McKinney		2,000	600
John Gallagher	2,500	2,600	2,800
Ezra Harrison	800	4,000	2,400
Mrs. Russell		800	
J. H. Hennessey	1,500	1,000	1,500
C. W. Ellis	4,000	7,000	3,500
Perring and Wood		500	
Miss Kittie Early (Taylor?)		600	250
H. U. Elmore		150	
George Harrison		1,500	800
J. W. McHenry		1,000	500
Erdwin Brothers		500	
H. Steward	400		
W. Wooldridge		100	
Levi Wooldridge	2,500	300	900
Odd Fellows	2,500		2,000
William Stickrod		200	
E. J. Morse and Son		100	
Heije Busboom		600	
James Watson		2,000	
Harrington, Hannah and Company	15,000	25,000	
Mrs. A. E. Early		100	

## MURDER IN GIFFORD???

"Yes, I shot him four times" the defendant told the sheriff.

"A painful tragedy in the Town of Gifford. The result of a local feud. Thomas Gallagher, a well-known hardware merchant, fatally shoots Charles Taylor, local butcher, then comes in town with his friends and gives himself up to Officers of the Law" —(*Champaign County Gazette*, February 2, 1894)

Apparently the story was that Johnny Taylor, 18 year old son of the slain man, came into the Gallagher Hardware Store carrying a bottle of whiskey and wanted Mr. Gallagher to have a few drinks with him. (Oh, those terrible teenagers . . .) Gallagher refused and the boy became angry about it. Young Taylor returned later in the day and Gallagher threw him out. All this upset the boy's father, Charles Taylor, who went about town saying that he would kill Gallagher within 24 hours. He showed up outside Gallagher's bedroom window that night armed with a shotgun and calling for Gallagher to come out. Gallagher paid no attention to him (?) and Taylor finally left after firing a few blasts from his shotgun for effect.

The two men did not meet after that until the day of the shooting. "I had gone to the depot," Mr. Gallagher explained to the Sheriff in Urbana, "and just as I was stepping out of the office I was attacked by the older Taylor who struck me in the face. I retained my feet, however, and when he came at me again I pulled my revolver and shot him. . . . Then I got on the train and came down here to give myself up."

Gallagher was 35 years old at the time and was doing quite well in the hardware business. Mr. Taylor ran a meat market and it is alleged that he drank considerably and that he and his son were quarrelsome and somewhat feared by their neighbors when drinking. Gallagher seems to have been a man of good reputation and was accompanied by his twin brother and two other business men of Gifford on the trip to the Sheriff's office. He spent several days in jail, but was released on \$10,000 bond, pending the trial.

"He is Acquitted — Final Results of an Exciting Criminal Case — A Long Seige of Arguments — Followed by the court's instructions to the jury given at extraordinary length — The testimony in the trial of Thomas Gallagher was concluded Friday afternoon. . . . At 5:40 p.m. the jury returned the verdict finding the defendant NOT GUILTY."

(*Champaign County Gazette*, May 2, 1894)

# Four Gifford Buildings Are Destroyed by Fire; Estimate \$30,000 Loss

## TAVERN STOVE IS BLAMED FOR START OF BLAZE

Paxton, Urbana, Rantoul Firemen  
Aid in 4-Hour Fight

GIFFORD—Fire starting from an overheated stove in the backroom of a downtown tavern swept the west side of one block of Main street here shortly after 3 a.m. today to destroy four buildings and contents valued by owners at between \$30,000 and \$35,000.

Fire trucks and men from Urbana, Rantoul

and Paxton were called to aid local bucket brigades in the four-hour fight. Firemen were handicapped by the fact that the only water supply was from cisterns

## Store Loss \$30,00

The fire started in the rear of the tavern operated by Barney Bartell and was swept along by a strong early-morning wind to destroy the two-story building owned by Jerome Hylbert, housing a barber shop and the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Varner, the Fay Wooldridge Drug and Jewelry Store, and Joseph Sheuring harness shop.







WOOLDRIDGE AND SIDDENS INSPECTING THE REMAINS OF THE DRUG STORE THE MORNING AFTER THE FIRE

## THIEVES HIT GIFFORD BANK IN EARLY MORNING ROBBERY

*(Rantoul Press – January, 1961)*

The Gifford State Bank was broken into during the night by burglars, the loss which is as yet undetermined confined largely to the safety deposit boxes. The robbers were only able to break through the outer wall of the safe so were only able to rifle the safety deposit boxes and were unable to get into the vault itself.

Entry was made into the safe by pounding a hole large enough for a man to get through in the double wall of the vault, which is of brick and plaster construction. The authorities have found no evidence of "jimmying" or broken locks and have not determined the means of entry into the bank building itself. Papers from the deposit boxes were strewn all over as the robbers went through them taking any negotiables they could find. This along with the plaster and brick made a shambles of the Bank building.

The break-in was first discovered by Osie Alcorn, who has been Janitress for the bank for thirty years, as she came to work just before 8:00 a.m. She immediately called for help. Mr. Henry Peters, Gifford Chief of Police, and formerly a member of the Rantoul Police Department, arrived

on the scene just after 8:00 a.m. and notified the Champaign County Sheriff's Office and the FBI.

Richard Davenport, former Chief of Police for Rantoul and now a sheriff's assistant, and three FBI men from Urbana and operating from the Springfield branch office of the FBI were on the scene this morning.

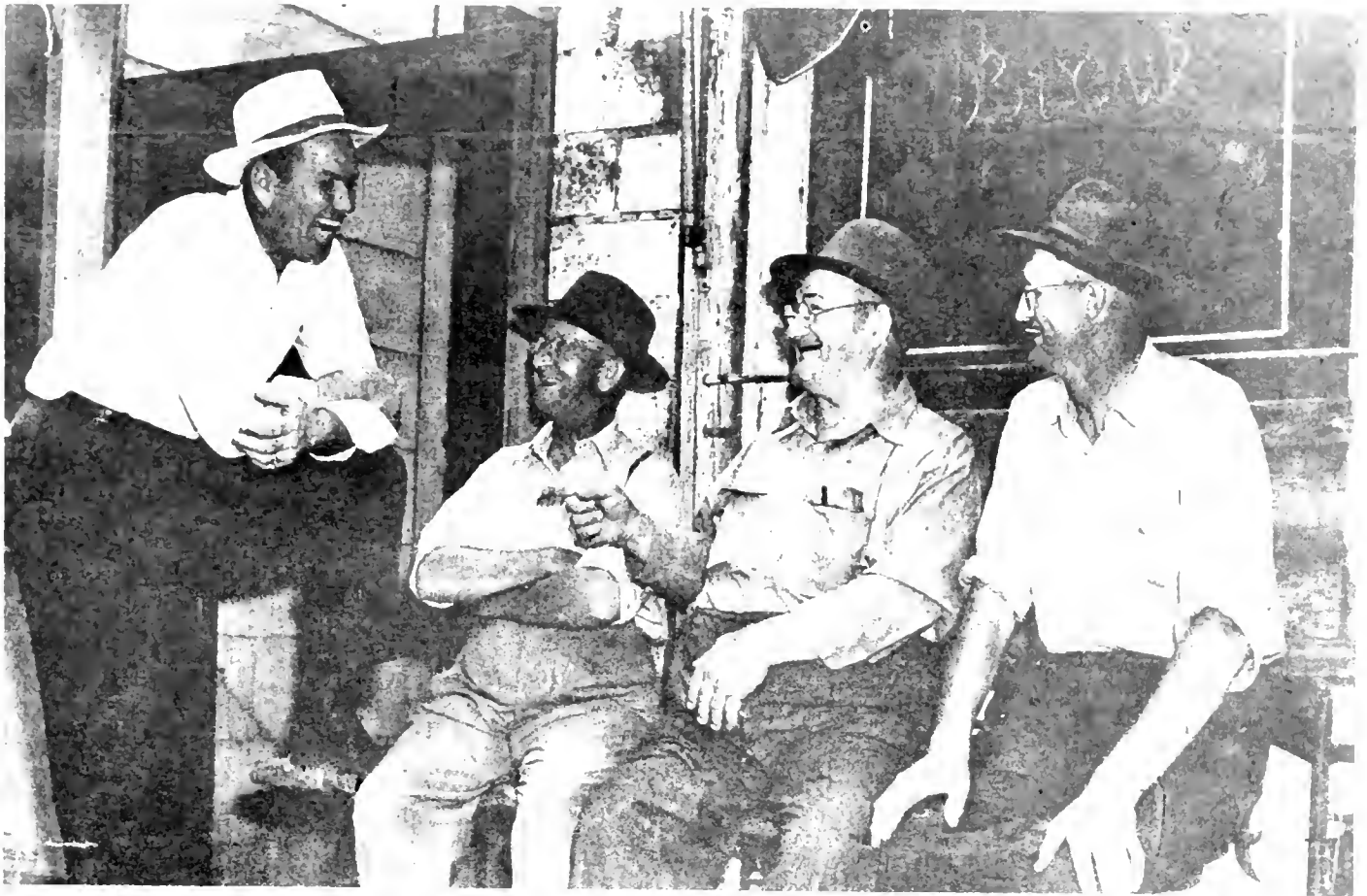
The Gifford residents, following the first flush of excitement this morning, are taking their loss in stride. Mr. D. E. Goodwine, president of the bank, stated, "This is the first time anything like this has happened. We want everybody to know that the safety deposits are insured. It will take some time, however, to sort through the material and identify belongings and determine just how much the loss is."

Mr. Peters, Gifford police Chief, states, "When I was summoned, the room was filled with tear gas—more than a person could stand—which happened when the door to the vault was opened from the inside. Whether this happened as the robbers were leaving or as they needed more room, of course, is not determined." Tear gas was automatically released when the door was opened.

## THE VISIT OF DIZZY DEAN—1943

And who was Dizzy Dean? Well, in 1943 he held a place in the baseball world about like Hank Aaron in 1974. He was the hero of the time. For him to come and play in a game with the Gifford-Flatville team was about like having Kareem Abdul-Jabbar come and play a couple of quarters in a local high school basketball game. It was a Great Day—as the accompanying pictures show.





The youngsters in the first picture:  
 Standing, L to R—Roy Hall, Harry Fox,  
 Henry Crocetti, Dean McCartney, Buddy  
 Schluter and Jimmie Varner  
 Seated – Junior Hoch and Gene Morrison.  
 The girl – Mildred Siddens



Above: Dizzy Dean stops to swap rural jokes  
 with H. V. Hardin, M. E. Rowe and John  
 M. Franzen.

Left: Norman Franzen learns how Diz threw  
 that fast ball.



## GIFFORD FALL FESTIVAL INC.

In 1972 a non-profit corporation was formed by nine Lion's Club Members from Gifford and its surrounding communities. The purpose of the corporation are to promote, advertise, manage and operate a Fall Festival Celebration emphasizing the vibrancy and vitality of the greater Gifford area for the benefit and edification of the community. The board of directors forming the corporation were: Theodore Turza, Elmer Bergman, Werner Roessler, Robert Baker, Herbert Sage, Derald Ackerman, Kurt Wheat, Delmar Johnson, and Jack Kaler.

The proceeds from the German Fall Festival Celebrations for the past three years were used to purchase the Ball Park for Gifford and surrounding communities. Future plans of the corporation are to build a community center building to benefit the people and organizations of the Gifford Community and surrounding area.

The Gifford German Fall Festival started out to be an "October Fest" but they scheduled it in September. No end of us worked ourselves to a frazzle to put it on, but credit for the idea and most of the drive to get it done has to go to Ted Turza, owner of the Cabin. The Lions Club helped Turza to nurture and develop the thing until it got too big and had to be splintered off into a separate, not-for-profit corporation. It was intended to renew and increase our community "spirit," to make a little money for a lot of organizations, and for general community betterment—and it worked. Held in 1972, 1973, and 1974, estimates of the crowds attending run as high as 20,000, and the accompanying pictures give an idea of how it all went.





## GIFFORD WAR PRISONER

### COMES HOME

There are good days and bad days in the story of a community—as there are in the lives of individuals—and surely one of Gifford's best days was the day Walter Roessler came home from that Communist POW camp on the Manchurian border, Labor Day, 1951.

Corporal Roessler, who was a prisoner of the Chinese Communists for more than two years, was greeted at Midway Airport, Chicago, by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Roessler. He was in a Red prison camp identified as Compound No. 1, among the largest the enemy operated. The happy reunion occurred on Labor Day and the following day the soldier was greeting old friends in the hometown and having the time of his life.



## COUNT SOBIESKI

There really was a "Count Sobieski."

Almost every previous account of Gifford's past has made a point of the fact that a Russian-Polish Count by the name of Sobieski once lived here. Two newspaper accounts of him, prepared at the time of his death, give a dramatic view of his adventuresome life but fail to mention that he ever lived here. For that we rely upon the memory and veracity of some of our older citizens.

The newspaper stories tell us that Colonel Sobieski was the sixth lineal descendant of King John III, the last of the Polish monarchs. His father took part in an uprising against the Russians and was executed for it when "our" Sobieski was six years old. He and his mother were driven into exile in Austria.

Sobieski arrived in the United States as a stow-away at the age of twelve. The key points in his life thereafter are shown in the accompanying inset.

For his help in deposing the Emperor Maximilian, a grateful Mexico offered him 10,000 acres of land, but he turned it down. In this country he was a true progressive. As a legislator in Minnesota

in the early 1870's, he introduced bills favoring such "wild ideas" as the prohibition of alcoholic liquor, the prohibition of capital punishment, and the granting of voting rights to women. These were heresies in his day, and his sponsorship of such far-out things ended his political career.

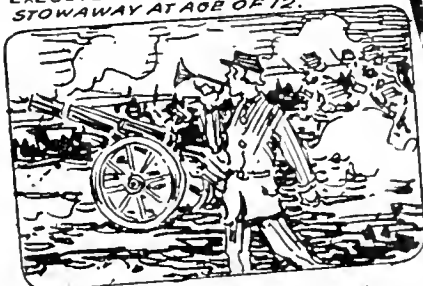
There is a story about his naturalization as a United States Citizen. When the presiding judge asked if he renounced all princes and potentates and in particular the sovereign to whom he had previously owed allegiance, he didn't know what to say. As an exile since the age of six he did not feel that he had ever owed allegiance to any "potentate." He turned to his lawyer for advice, and then, adopting the lawyer's words as his own he answered the judge, "Yes, sir. I renounce the whole damned bunch."

In the course of the First World War when it appeared that Poland would be restored as a nation. Sobieski was urged to return and become the new Polish king but he refused and spent all of his later years lecturing and working for the causes he had adopted—temperance, woman suffrage, and the abolition of the death penalty.

### *Dramatic Episodes in Career of Intrepid Adventurer*



LINEAL DESCENDANT OF KING JOHN OF POLAND, FORCED TO FLEE WHEN FATHER, COUNT JOHN SOBIESKI, WAS EXECUTED. CAME TO AMERICA AS STOWAWAY AT AGE OF 12.



AT AGE OF 22 A BUGLER AT BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG.



*Colonel John Sobieski*



AT 24, COLONEL IN MEXICAN ARMY, WAS PRESENT AT THE EXECUTION OF MAXIMILIAN.



RETURNED TO UNITED STATES AND SPENT REMAINDER OF LIFE AS CHAMPION OF TEMPERANCE AND OTHER REFORM MOVEMENTS.

## OUR CENTENNIAL QUEEN CONTESTANTS



Left to right:

front row:

Barbara Gehrt sponsored by Gifford Woman's Club

Patricia McFadden sponsored by Gifford United Methodist Church

Patricia Buenting sponsored by German Fall Festival, Inc.

Donna Busboom sponsored by Nu Iota of Beta Sigma Phi

second row:

Denise Herbert sponsored by Gifford Lions Club

Kristi Buck sponsored by Corky's Auto-Truck Service Center

Sandra Kopman sponsored by Country Health Auxiliary

Robin Busboom sponsored by Gifford Fire Department

third row:

Jody Olson sponsored by Gifford Pool & Lunch

Marla Mennenga sponsored by St. Paul's Luther League

Mernice Mennenga sponsored by Gifford Homemaker's Extension

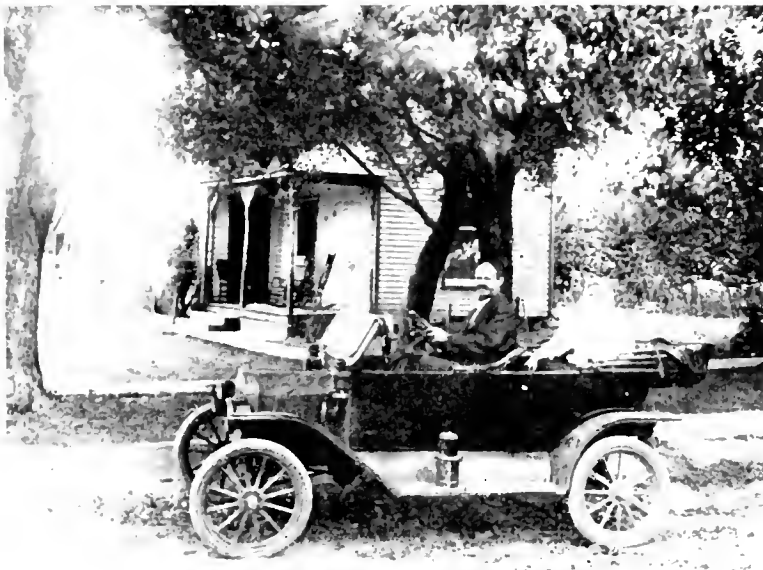
Marci Marikos sponsored by Schenck's Hardware

(Editor's Note— We cannot report who won the crown, for the judging has not yet taken place.)



Mrs. Ora Stewart and two of the women who worked for her in the restaurant, probably about the early thirties, Mrs. Nancy Alcorn on her right, Mrs. Caroline Sheuring on her left. The picture was taken behind Dr. Axtell's office which now forms the front half of the Gifford Pool Hall.

Editor's Note: From childhood I remember Mrs. Alcorn being one of the nicest and surely one of the hardest working women around. She was left a widow and raised a bunch of boys when there was no Social Security, Public Aid, no Aid to Dependent Children, or anything else. She made her living doing laundry for other people—on a washboard, in a tub. And, except for rain water she could catch from time to time in a couple of barrels, she pumped hard water by hand from a deep well and carried it next door to her house. She heated it on a wood stove and went to work. And, of course, she ironed all those clothes—with a flat iron heated on that same wood stove. No "Perma-press" in those days.



Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Hickman in front of their home, about 1915. Mrs. Hickman was formerly Mrs. Burdette and was grandmother to Oscar, Russell and Raymond Burdette and Dora Faye. Were there others? The house is where Alberta Carley now lives.

Courtesy of  
Doc and Mike's Bicycle Shop  
Rantoul, Illinois



## *In Tribute*

TO MR. ELDON SCOTT, KNOWN TO ALL AS "SCOTTY," WE HEREBY DEDICATE THIS 1953 *EAGLET*. . . . SCOTTY IS A FRIEND TO ALL AND IS WILLING TO HELP IN ANY WAY. WE SAY "THANKS A LOT FOR A JOB ALWAYS WELL DONE."

The dedication of the 1953 Yearbook of the Rantoul Township High School was to a Gifford man—Eldon Scott.



W. J. H. — 1923





# Street Scenes . . .



The Centennial Committee sponsored a fund-raising Square Dance on May 18, 1975, in the Knights of Columbus Hall in Rantoul, Illinois. Bob Ackerman and his band provided the music, and it appears that everyone had a good time. No, Leland Albers (left) and John Emkes (center) are not squaring off to fight it out.

Chairperson Brenda Faught has announced *another* fund - raising Square Dance to be held on July 13th at the same place and with the same wonderful musicians. Donald Sjoken is to be the caller. There will be door prizes, cake walks and all the rest to provide a good time for all who will attend.

The "Then and Now" Style Show was held in the Gifford Grade School gymnasium on the evening of June 18th, 1975.

Fashions were modelled from the 1800's to the 1970's. Styles were presented by decades, beginning with the oldest ones available. Mrs. Dorothy Henry served as narrator, explaining the background of each item and telling of the present owner.

Humor became a factor in the show when models appeared wearing night clothes or long underwear—and carrying candles. Debbie Chalk modelled a "hustler" dress and sang a song enjoyed by all. Mrs. Margaret Ann Herbert presented a lively version of the old-time "Charleston," and barber-shop quartets of local men and boys added to the pleasure of all those present. Those singing were: Pastor Melvin Blobaum, Pastor Dan Cox, Bill Henry, Sr., Maynard Duitsman, Garrelt Duden, Robert Busboom, Elmer Bergman, Robert Ackerman, Craig Henry, David Henry and Tim Griffith.



John and Grace Johnson playing on the farm — 1914

## and Miscellaneous

# GIFFORD'S HONOR ROLL

## WORLD WAR II

Gifford has had sons in all the nation's wars of the last 115 years, at least. Some of the original settlers were veterans of the Civil War. But there is no satisfactory record of them, and this man, at least, is afraid to tackle the risky job of making up a list. To my personal knowledge we have had men killed in the First and Second World Wars, and in the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts. Someone had the above honor roll prepared for men who served in the Second World War, but no such scroll was made for the service men and women of more recent times—perhaps because the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts were, themselves, less popular in our nation. Be that as it may, surely we all join in paying honor to all those who did serve in any war and in a fervent prayer that no such service will ever again be required.



<b>VICTOR</b>	<h2>Leonard Bros.</h2> <h3>FUNERAL DIRECTORS FURNITURE DEALERS</h3> <p>Rantoul, Illinois</p>	<b>EDISON</b>
<p>J. D. Morse, Pres. H. M. Wooldridge, V. Pres. E. B. Wooldridge, Cashier</p> <p>Established 1885 . . . Incorporated 1912</p> <h2>The Morse State Bank</h2> <p>of Gifford</p> <p>Capital and Surplus \$33,500.00</p> <p>GIFFORD, ILLINOIS</p>		

Mary B. Ellis	Francis Ellis	Herbert W. Ellis
<h2>Ellis Lumber Co.</h2> <p>Lumber, Lath, Shingles, Sash, Doors, Lime and Cement, B.P.S. Paints</p> <p>Frank D. Hamilton, Manager</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gifford, Illinois</p>		
<h2>BUSBOOM GARAGE</h2> <p>Buick, Overland and Willys-Knight Cars</p> <p>Service Station Philadelphia Batteries Samson Tractors Ford Accessories Delco Light Products Bosch Magnetos Tires and Tubes Expert Repair Work</p> <p>Telephone 23</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gifford, Illinois</p>		

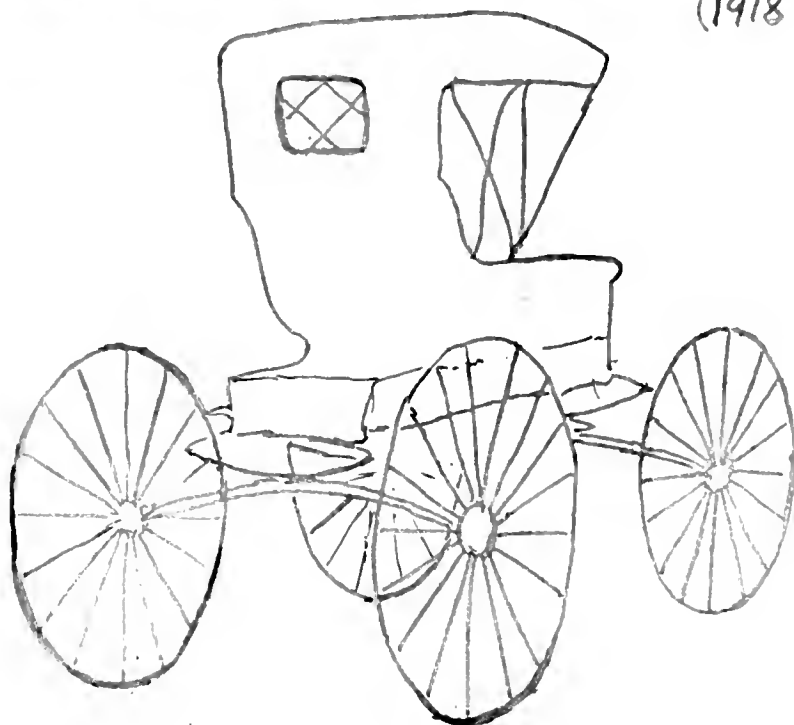
FROM AN OLD PLATBOOK OWNED BY JAMES A. MARTIN  
Apparently published some time in the 1910 to 1920 era.

# AUCTION SALE OF BUGGIES

We will offer at auction one car of  
Ames Buggies at

**GIFFORD, ILL., SAT. MAY 12**

(1918)



Every buggy offered, sold without  
reserve. All buggies guaranteed.

Terms:- 3, 6, or 9 months to pay,  
notes drawing 6 per cent interest

**STOP! LOOK! LISTEN!**

AT GIFFORD MEAT MARKET



AIR VIEWS OF GIFFORD - 1944





The Havana, Rantoul and Eastern Railroad Depot in Gifford? We are not quite sure, but we think so. If so, it was on the south side of the railroad, just west of the John Deere building—in the middle of

Howard Varner's garden. The man on the left is probably Major Vallandingham, and there is no doubt about the man next to him. He was known as "Shorty." At least that's what Joe Curtis says.



**THE GIFFORD BAND PLAYS IN PENFIELD on Labor Day, 1911**

Left to right, regardless of row: Clint McCoy, Jim Barnes, Jr., Paul Reagan, ———, Edson Wright, Roy McKinney, Winn Hennessey, Lock Carley, ———, Frank Oehmke, — Alcorn, Fay Wooldridge, ———, ———, Floyd McCoy, Walker Turner, ———, Jim Wooldridge, Hallie McCoy, Gene Wooldridge, John Miller, Patsy Dailey.



“Threshing oats—on the George Ihnen farm, about 1907.” It was usually pronounced “thrashin’” in those days, and this picture catches it all. The steam engine, the long drive belt, the “separator,” the bundle wagons, the men up there in the dust and chaff, stacking straw, the water boy—and the women who’ve come to cook up a big dinner. Say what you will for modern combines, they will never create the glory and romance of a “Thrashin’ Run.”

Moving the rig from farm to farm, “thrashin’” might go on for six or eight weeks. The men enjoyed working together. The women tried to outdo each other in fixing big dinners. And the “water boy” got a chance to earn his first real money. Even though it was August, you had to haul out a load of coal to fire the engine, and the enginemens tended the engine all night long to have steam up for an early start next day.

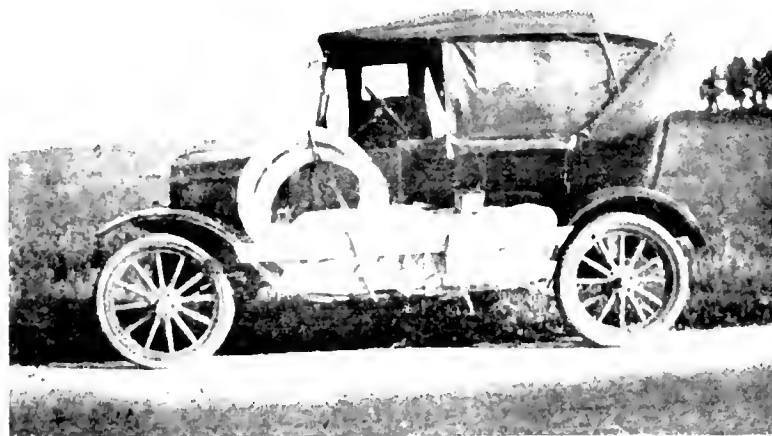




"MAKING HAY – 1922"



"CUTTING OATS – 1922"



"On rare occasions the farmer went traveling—  
This is how."



"BUTCHERING ON THE FARM – 1924"



Mrs. Buenting's grandfather, William Schluter,  
cutting hay – 1921.

Mr. and Mrs. George Buenting have presented these views of farm life in the twenties. The captions are from the backs of the pictures.

Editor's Note: My folks and I made a trip to Iowa in 1928 in a car exactly like that one, I believe. We got up early and drove hard all day long—and spent the night in Sterling, Illinois. It took us three days to make the 500 miles—only 30 miles of which was paved.



## NEWS ITEMS

*Rantoul Press – January 5, 1917*

Mrs. Jim Barnes is on the sick list this week.

Dick Douglas of Champaign spent the weekend with friends here.

Miss Evenly Pierce of Paxton visited several days last week with relatives here.

Miss Edith Wood visited several days last week with Miss Mary Hornel at Rantoul.

Misses Birdie and Frances Barnes spent Sunday with Miss Nellie Miles.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson Miles spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hoch.

Miss Berneice Wright suffered several days last week from an attack of la grippe.

Mrs. E. B. Williams was operated upon last Saturday in a Chicago hospital.

Mrs. Charles Cain and son Charles returned to their home in Champaign Saturday after several days visit with friends here.

Miss Pearl Hogg of Potomac visited friends here last week.

Misses Flossie and Blanche Wood and Messrs Forest Rusk and Winifred Lovejoy were Rantoul callers on Sunday night.

Grandma Heffington from Rantoul spent Thursday with her son Clyde Heffington.

Prof. J. Miner was a Danville caller last Thursday.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Sprague of Hope spent New Years Day with Mr. and Mrs. Emory Otis.

Miss Guelda Wynegar from Henning visited several days last week with Miss Louise Wooldridge.

Miss Mildred Heffington was sick the first part of the week with la grippe.

The new officers were elected at the B.Y.P.U meeting Sunday evening.

Myrle Heffington was on the sick list the first part of the week.

Martin Oehmke of Champaign visited his mother, Mrs. Louise Oehmke, last week.

Mrs. John Hoch is on the sick list this week.

Mrs. Florence Strine returned home Thursday from a two-weeks visit in Paxton.

Mr. and Mrs. Rush Carley of Buckley were callers here last week.

Revival meetings commenced at the M. E. Church Sunday night.

A special number on the program Sunday morning at the Baptist Sunday School was a horn duet played by Miss Minnie Hoch and Jim Morse.

*Rantoul Press – February 21, 1917*

Howard Rodgers spent Sunday at Sidney.

Elmer Hoch was a Rantoul caller Sunday.

Rev. E. B. Williams returned home Saturday.

Earl Jeakins visited in Penfield last week.

Mr. Carley is visiting his son, Rush, at Buckley

Miss Sabe Steward was a Rantoul caller Sunday.

Dennis Collins of Chicago is visiting friends here.

Allie Hoagg of Potomac called on friends here Sunday.

George Harweger and family were at Cissna Park Sunday.

Mrs. Frank Hedrick of Rantoul was in town Saturday.

Miss Mabel Jeakins was a Champaign caller Thursday.

Miss Pearl Hoagg of Potomac is visiting Mrs. Frank Stover.

Fred Miles and Dan Reardon were Kankakee callers last week.

## MORE NEWS ITEMS

Noel Exton of Detroit, Michigan, visited friends here Saturday.  
Mr. and Mrs. Rush Carley of Buckley were visitors here Saturday.  
Mrs. John Schoone spent Sunday with her brother, Clark Johnson.  
Mr. and Mrs. John Wood spent the first part of the week in Champaign.  
Miss Gertrude Newlin spent the weekend with her parents in Paxton.  
Mr. Pittman of Rantoul was working on the Telephone lines here Friday.  
A number of people attended the dance at Mr. Shubach's Thursday night.  
Miss Nellie Miles spent the weekend with Misses Birdie and Frances Barnes.

### *Rantoul Press – May 10, 1917*

Miss Blanche Wood spent the weekend with relatives in Paxton.  
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hoch of Gerald visited here Saturday.  
Misses Minnie Hoch and Dorothea Polin were Rantoul callers Wednesday.  
John Schoone of Champaign spent the weekend here.  
Miss Georgiana Hopkins spent the weekend at Hoopeston.  
The Y.L.M.S. of the Baptist Church will meet Saturday afternoon with Miss Minnie Hoch.  
Miss Marian Johnson spent the weekend at her home in Normal.  
Mr. and Mrs. George Johnson and family expect to leave soon for a visit in Nebraska.  
Howard Rodgers spent Sunday in Sidney.  
Mr. and Mrs. Park Beeler attended the Orpheum in Champaign on Thursday night.  
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Siddens and Miss Georgiana Hopkins and Miss Berneice Wright attended the movies in Rantoul Wednesday night.  
Miss Jessie Pierce of Champaign spent Friday and Saturday here.  
"His Honor, the Mayor" will be presented by eight High School students at the Opera House, May 18th.  
Hiram Draper of Indianapolis, Indiana visited last week with his daughter, Mrs. E. B. Williams.  
The Y.L.M.S. of the Baptist Church will have charge of the meeting at the church Sunday evening.  
Elmer Hoch was a Rantoul caller Sunday.  
Mr. and Mrs. Ekblaw of Dillsburg spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. C. Carlson.  
Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Draper and Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Morse were Champaign callers Thursday.  
Miss Gertrude Newlin visited the weekend with her parents in Paxton.  
B. Johnson of Danville was a business caller here last week.  
Mr. and Mrs. Ed Standofer entertained at dinner Sunday Rev. and Mrs. E. B. Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Draper and Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Morse.  
Daisy and John Chambers returned to their home in Chicago Wednesday after a week's visit with Hallie McCoy and family.  
Earl Barnes quit school last Friday. He is working for Lynch Jones.  
Miss Mary Stewart of Normal was hired as Assistant Principal for next year.  
Misses Birdie and Frances Barnes and Miss Berneice Wright were visitors in Champaign Monday.  
John Busboom is working in a garage in Champaign this week.







# A Letter to the "Bi Centennial Committee"

First of all, are you there? There are alarmists in our generation who are sure the human race will have blasted itself right off the face of the earth before 2075 A.D. Or that we will have so overpopulated the globe that we will all have starved to death . . .

But most of us are more optimistic. We think Gifford will still be here, and that there will be a Bi-Centennial Committee.

In this book we have shown you something of how we were—and of how we are. Oh, how we wish

we could see what life and civilization will be like in 2075. Our space satellites and 747 jets may look as primitive to you as the wagons and walking plows of our great-grandfathers look to us. Most important, perhaps, have you eliminated the scourge of War? Has Man learned to live at peace with his fellow man?

Our heartfelt best wishes go out to all of you—the grandchildren of a generation not yet even conceived.

The Centennial Committee of 1975

## THE CENTENNIAL COMMITTEES

**Chairmen** Mr. and Mrs. Donald Duden  
**Treasurer** Mr. and Mrs. Vernon (Pete) Buenting  
**Members** Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Kopmann  
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert (Pete) Sage

### Special Assignments

The Centennial Queen Contest—Mrs. Evelyn Buenting  
Mrs. Linda Sage

The Centennial Pageant   Scenes   Kenneth McCoy  
  Writer   Katie Flesner  
  Director Al Sheffield  
  Committee Earl Smith  
  Theda Smith  
  Kenneth McCoy

The Now and Then Style Show—American Lutheran Church Women  
United Methodist Women

The Antique Display—the "Gifford Hobos" Citizen Band Club

## CENTENNIAL COMMITTEES, Continued

- The Ice Cream Social – The Country Health Auxiliary
- The Culinary Arts – The Gifford Women's Club  
The Penfield-Gifford American Legion Auxiliary  
The Gifford "Busybee" 4-H Club
- The Bicycle Races – The Gifford Lions Club, Joe Chalk
- The Kids and Pets Parade – The Gifford Homemakers
- The Children's Games – The Luther League  
The Methodist Youth Fellowship
- The Grand Parade – The Nu Iota Sorority, Barbara Busboom
- The Little League Ball Game – The Penfield-Gifford Little League, Charles Traficano
- The Sisters of Swish – Epsilon Rho Sorority, Carol Severins and Jean Chalk
- The Brothers of the Brush – The Gifford Lions Club, Ernest Crozier
- The Community Church Service – St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Gifford United Methodist Church
- The Centennial Book – Theda Smith, Earl Smith, Freda Behr, Emma Busboom,  
Gertrude Barnes, Bernice Albers, Rita Buenting,  
Jimmie Nell Duden and Donna Kopmann.  
William Jarret Hylbert, Editor – and a special  
"thanks" to all who contributed items.
- The Old Timers Games – I. I. Baseball League
- The Girls' Softball Game – Carol Severins and Linda Roberts
- The Clean-Up – The Gifford Cub Scouts, Pack 27

# Centennial Days Program

## FRIDAY, JULY 18, 1975

### Friday Morning

Set up Culinary Arts Exhibits and Antique Displays

### Friday Afternoon

Judging of Culinary Arts Exhibits

### Friday Night

7:00 Opening Prayer, Mayor's Speech Crowning of  
Mr. & Mrs. Pioneer, Honorary Citizen and  
Centennial Queen

8:00 Free Movies  
Square and Round Dancing (Reitmeier Brothers Band) till 11:00 p.m.

## Saturday, July 19, 1975

10:30 a.m. Displays Open & Bike Races

11:00 – 2:00 Dinner

12:00 Noon Kids and Pet Parade

12:30 – 2:00 Games and Rides Open

12:00 Gifford Hymn Singers

2:00 Centennial Grand Parade

4:00 Little League Game - Gifford Pee Wee vs. Penfield Pee Wee

4:00 – 6:00 Games and Rides Re-open

4:30 Judging of Sisters of Swish and Brothers of Brush

5:00 – 7:00 Supper Hours

6:00 Centennial Historical Pageant

8:00 Free Movies

Square and Round Dancing (Bob Ackerman Band) till 11:00 p.m.

## Sunday, July 20, 1975

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Community Church Service

11:00 a.m. Displays Open and Bicycle Races

12:00 Games and Rides Open

11:30 – 2:30 Dinner Hour & Music by the Rantoul Township High School  
Band

1:30 p.m. E. I. Old Timers Game at the E. I. diamond

1:30 – 3:00 p.m. Games and Rides Open

2:00 Mixed and Chorus and Sing-a-long

2:30 Girls Softball Game at Gifford Grade School diamond

4:30 Centennial Historical Pageant

Closing Ceremony after Pageant

Dinners and Snacks served by Robert Glazik Family

# Other Sponsors

Em's and Rhonda's Beauty Shop  
Gifford, Illinois

Boots' Bowling, Billiards, Tavern and Lunch  
201 East Grove, Rantoul, Illinois

Carpenter's Pool Hall  
Gifford, Illinois

Springer Ford, Inc.  
406 North Century, Rantoul, Illinois

Bull's Upholstery Shop  
Gifford, Illinois

Farlow Studio  
410 South Century, Rantoul, Illinois

Grant City  
Route 136, Rantoul, Illinois

Village Floral Shoppe  
505 East Champaign, Rantoul, Illinois

Rantoul Home Beverages  
204 East Grove, Rantoul, Illinois

Frazier's Pontiac and Buick  
109 South Tanner, Rantoul, Illinois

Rantoul Western Auto and True Value Store  
120 North Garrard, Rantoul, Illinois

St. Joseph Drugs, Inc.  
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St. Joseph, Illinois 469-7631

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Ray's Market  
Ogden, Illinois 582-2560

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Robert Chapman - Honey and Vegetables  
Transplants in Season  
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Penfield, Illinois

Jim Head Appliance  
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Paul's Radiator and Air Conditioning Service  
Route 136 East, Rantoul, Illinois

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Harry Ellis - Roof Mowers  
Gifford, Illinois

Geo's Gas Service  
217 South Maplewood, Rantoul, Illinois

Duitsman Driveway Chimes and Harrogator Sales  
Ogden, Illinois

Tim's Pharmacy  
109-111 East Sangamon, Rantoul, Illinois

Jim's Barber Shop  
108 Sangamon, Rantoul, Illinois

The First National Bank  
201 East Sangamon, Rantoul, Illinois

Rantoul First Federal Savings and Loan Association  
121 North Garrard, Rantoul, Illinois

John Parks - Livestock Dealer  
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