

977.362
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FORD COUNTY (ILL.)
CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE.

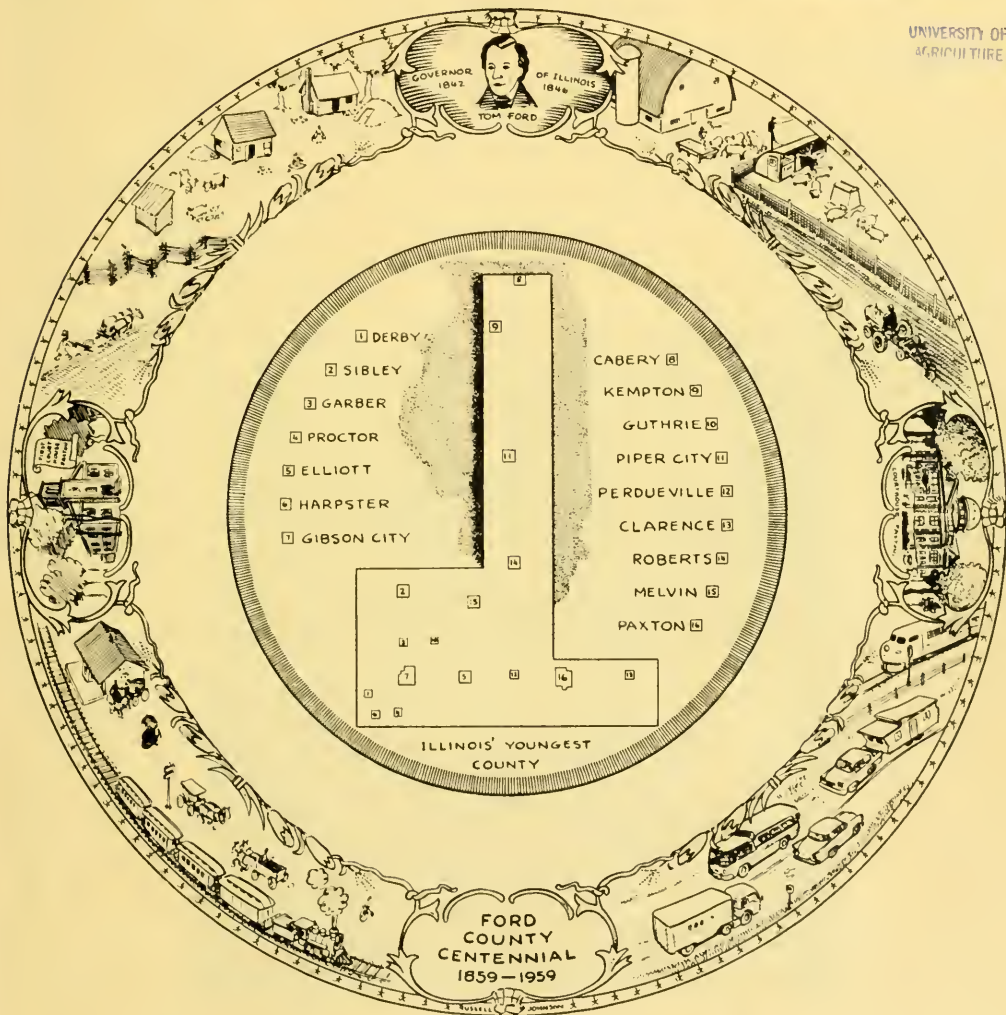
CENTURAMA.

(1959)

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

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FORD COUNTY, ILLINOIS

1859

1959

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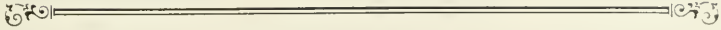


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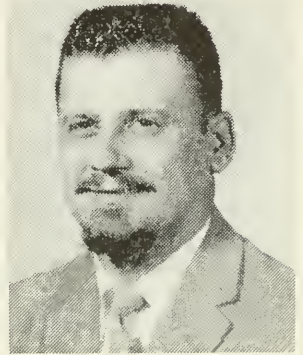
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Dear Friends . . .

Ford County, Illinois, founded in 1859, is celebrating its one hundredth birthday this week.

This celebration, in recognition of those brave and sturdy pioneers who filled the last gap in the map of Illinois counties, is intended to be a fitting tribute to those who laid the foundations for the Ford County we know today.



We are attempting to re-line some of the days of long ago, and to rekindle within ourselves some of the spirit of adventure, daring, pioneering, and an abiding faith in the future which was abundantly evident in the lives of our founding families.

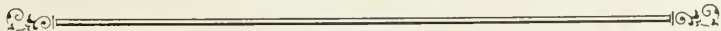
It has been gratifying to note that every community in Ford County, from the smallest to the largest, has entered enthusiastically into the task (and the fun, too) of contributing to the success of this undertaking. We have been united, county-wide, in this program, to a greater degree than the people of Ford County have ever before been united.

Without exception, citizens of Ford County have given generously of their time and resources to support this Centennial Celebration. No request for help by the Centennial Committee has gone unheeded, and this spirit of zeal and co-operation already has assured the success of the entire program.

When our Celebration is over, when our beards have disappeared, our pioneer costumes back in mothballs, the pageant grounds cleared away, and the bunting taken down, I am sure we will all agree that Ford County is a better place to live, and that we are all better citizens for having paid this tribute to the past and for having re-affirmed, as our founders first affirmed, our faith in the future.

OLIN OSTENDORF, General Chairman,

Ford County Centennial Committee



4297

[Vertical handwritten note]

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To foster and perpetuate a one hundred per cent
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To preserve the memories and incidents of our
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To inculcate a sense of individual obligation
to the community, state, and nation;

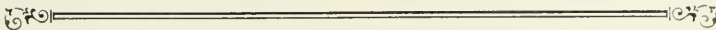
To combat the autocracy of both the classes
and the masses;

To make right the master of might;

To promote peace and good will on earth;

To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles
of justice, freedom, and democracy;

To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by
our devotion to mutual helpfulness.



FOREWORD

We hope and believe the pages which follow will prove interesting and informative to all who would know a little more of the background of Ford County, the youngest county in Illinois, and probably the youngest county east of the Mississippi River.

The story does not concern itself with the rise of a city, or of a township, but of a whole area, with its rich farm lands, busy municipalities, and peaceful communities. All their histories are intertwined and bound together by the forces which pushed back this last frontier in our state.

Our story will give some clues to the question of why Ford County was so late to flower; what brought our forefathers here, and will present some vignettes of life as it was lived on our prairie land a century ago.

Credit for this presentation goes to Mrs. Richard Adams and her father, Mr. Frank E. Anderson, who have done a thorough and painstaking job of gathering facts, sorting them out, and presenting them in this book. Because of space limitations, there has been much condensing, and elimination of detail, but the result is a clear and broad panorama of our background years.

Ford County can be justly proud of this story, and proud, too, of its authors.

The center eight pages of this book contains the Centennial Celebration program, Schedule of Events, Committee personnel, Centurama pageant synopsis and cast, and other important and official information about the many and varied activities that are a part of this Celebration.



The Personnel Of
FORD COUNTY COURT HOUSE

Congratulates Ford County on its Centennial

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FLOY J. THORSON,
ASS'T. SUPT.

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COUNTY JUDGE

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JOSEPH RAMSHAW,
BAILIFF

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CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES:
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JESSIE CARSON,
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SECRETARY

N. V. LATEER,
SUPERVISOR OF
ASSESSMENTS
(IN MEMORIAM)

SHIRLEY MEECE,
SECRETARY

A. R. BENZ,
STATE'S ATTORNEY

MARIANNA BRETHORST,
SECRETARY

1859 — FORD COUNTY — 1959

There is more than one reason for Ford being the baby county of the state—the baby by a margin of 18 years. Politically, this boat-shaped area was a no-man's-land because it was not incorporated into any county government, as an entity. But for decades previous it had been viewed with less desire than surrounding areas, by Indian tribes and immigrant settlers alike. The most southern parts of Illinois had been sites of action in the Revolutionary war. The Mississippi Valley had been explored and settled in spots by early French explorers.

But as Illinois historian T. C. Pease in *The Frontier State* points out: ". . . Although the population had by 1830 grown to over 157,000, it was confined to the south and central portions of the state along the wooded rivers and streams. The prairie country was still almost superstitiously avoided . . . The whale of the north country was a trackless wilderness except to the fur trader and the Indian; even to them much of it was unknown."

But even our neighboring counties of Champagne and Iroquois were organized by 1833. Why was this area so late in being settled? It is now typically rich Corn-Belt farmland with cities, villages and farms like its neighbors. What was different in 1850?

Area Divides Rivers

The answer may be found in the geography, the topography and more specifically the hydrography or water structure of the land in this region. A study of the map of Ford County shows that it is the dividing line between the waters which flow into the Illinois River toward the northwest, and those flowing into the Wabash to the southeast. The Vermilion, which has its source in the Panhandle, flows up past Pontiac toward LaSalle. Near Sibley in Sullivan township, the Mackinaw has its source. Continuing south, the two townships which are furthest west in the southern base of the county drain into and help form the Sangamon River. Two townships forming the eastern part of the base of Ford flow into the Vermilion River which flows southeasterly to the Wabash River. Central townships of Peach Orchard, Lyman and Wall see the origins of the Middle Fork of this Vermilion River. (These two rivers of the same name are not joined at any place, and are not distinguished by any difference in spelling.)

When we recall that early immigrants usually followed water streams, and sought woodlands

because they had proved the fertility of the soil, this bit of local geography tells the main reason why Ford County was the last part of the state to be settled enough to be organized.

When the Illinois Central Railroad was surveyed from Chicago to Cairo, it was found that the highest point in its survey lay in Patton Township; also that from Lake Michigan to the Ohio river on another line the highest place is said to be near Sibley.

Indian Lore of the Area

The most common relics of Indian days found, same yet today, are Indian arrowheads of stone. At a spot northwest of Perdueville, along the North Fork of the Little Vermilion, collectors Tam and Nelle O'Hare have found numerous arrows, tomahawks, spears, and bits of broken pottery, indicating there had been Indian homesites, but of a temporary nature, not tribal settlements. It seems that generally the Illinois tribes were found to the west of the water divide in our county, while the Pottawattomies were dominant to the east. At the Treaty of Greenville of 1795, this tribe notified the Miami tribe that they "intended to settle upon the Wabash." They supposedly gave as reason that they were tired of eating fish and wanted meat. They settled on the north and west banks of the Wabash where the various streams flowed into the Wabash above where the Vermilion joins it. Thus their country was mostly east of present Ford County. Later came the Kickapoo tribes, driven southward by the Sioux tribes. These Indians and the Pottawattomies are reported to have almost annihilated the Kaskaskias, a band of the Illinois, at Battle Ground Creek. The principal towns of the Kickapoos were on the left bank of the Illinois near Peoria, and on the Vermilion of the Wabash. That area of which Ford County was formed must have been hunting grounds of the Kickapoos after removal of the Illinois tribes.

In the 1890's, the name Kickapoo was well advertised in Ford County. Kickapoo Indian Remedies were sold by a company which always had a group of Indians with them at medicine shows to entertain the people. They would also at times be on hand for Fourth of July gatherings, where they would exhibit their skill at archery and foot races. After the federal government passed the Pure Food and Drug laws, these medicine shows ceased.

Early white settlers in this county sometimes

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Paxton, Illinois

were visited by occasional Indians, but there seems to have been no serious trouble. This is undoubtedly one result of the later date when the county came into existence. By Congressional enactment in 1830, all Indian tribes east of the Mississippi had been compelled to vacate their lands and homes and resettle west of the Mississippi. By 1840 most of this so-called Indian removal had been completed.

Perhaps unique in the state, this county took no Indian names for its new villages, townships, and cities. There is no evidence of Indian burial mounds of early tribes closer than the Peoria area.

A Prairie Fire Described

Instead, this area was in the center of a large strip of grassland with only minor wooded areas, shown on older maps as the Grand Prairie. To the earliest settlers, this prairie grass seemed to go on forever. An account by John R. Lewis of a prairie fire originating in the Panhandle pictures this expanse:

"On or about September first 1856 a prairie fire started in the south part of what is now Ford County and the wind being from the south drove the fire over the country at a frightful speed, burn-

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Gasoline, Motor Oils, Fuel Oils and Greases*

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Paxton, Illinois

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CARL

DORTHA

WHERE

FRIENDS MEET

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

ing all the prairie lying west of the Illinois Central to what was known as Indian Timber and as far north as the Kankakee River . . . the low sloughs continued to burn for fully three months." Some flat grassland sloughs became lakes and ponds, and much timber in Oliver's Grove was destroyed. "In some places the fire burned holes fully three feet deep, and these spots were barren for several years. Also before the fire herds of deer could be seen grazing quietly on the prairies but these beautiful animals were now driven to other localities and consequently deer meat was scarce."

If the Indians left us little history, there was an invaluable heritage in their crop of Indian corn. It has always been the chief grain raised in Ford County.

* * *

Need For A County Seen

By the late 1850's, it was no secret that a new county was needed to take in that land left over after the formation of Iroquois, Champaign, Livingston, and others, all some 20 to 30 years earlier. Residents of the area forming the Panhandle wanted a county seat closer than that at Danville. With the Illinois Central Railroad already building up new communities, and land being sold

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PAXTON, ILLINOIS



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rapidly by the federal government, land speculators became interested.

There is no doubt that the railroad could make or break budding cities. Loda to the north, and Pera (now Ludlow) to the south of the open prairie were business centers for the scattered settlers of the late 40's and early 50's. Further, the railroad had a policy of not establishing stations closer than 10 miles apart. So it is obvious that Paxton did not just grow in 1859.

Could we today find a better account of the why of Ford County's birth than the words of the man who planned it? Allowing for his single view, and fully appreciating his occasional tongue-in-cheek explanations, it is a fascinatingly frank account. We quote from "Reminiscences by R. R. Murdock" as published in E. A. Gardner's 1908 History of Ford County:

"My first visit to the western—now the middle western—states was in the autumn of 1852. I came by canal packet boat to Buffalo, by rail to Cleveland, by steamer to Toledo (the railroad between the latter places was not in operation) and by Michigan Southern railroad to Chicago.

"From Chicago, a side trip was made to Milwaukee by steamer, returning by rail and stage (an open sleigh) via Madison, Wisconsin, and Rockford,

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Paxton, Ill.

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Centennial Celebration

When in Roberts

Stop at "Vals"

Dinners on Friday & Saturday evenings

Thank You

Illinois. This was not a "Homeseeker's" trip, for at that time I had no thought of making a home in the west, but the microbe got in its work and in due time developed into a case of genuine western fever.

"In the spring of 1853 Mr. E. R. Fay and myself came west together and without much delay he decided to locate in Ottawa, Illinois. He opened an office there and in due time became a leading banker of the place. This time I did not stay west long but came again the following spring prepared to make some investments.

"Three or four of us joined together and employed a surveyor (Major Hitt) and he and I made many selections from government lands in Livingston county but . . . it was claimed that other filings were ahead of ours. Returning from Danville via the Danville and Ottawa travel road, we evidently passed over the present site of Paxton, but there was nothing in sight, not even a railroad stake, as I believe, to fit the location in my memory, but I claim this was my first visit to Paxton.

"About 4 P.M. our road led us near to D. C. Stoners' house, which he had built and moved his family into a short time before. Learning that there was no house of any kind on this line of road nearer than Oliver's Grove, twenty miles or more

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Phone 242

Paxton, Illinois

away, we decided to remain with the Stoners over night. This was my first night in Ford County.

"My second trip through Ford county was in 1854 . . . to Decatur via the Illinois Central main line, thence to Danville by stage coach. Rain and mud interfered with further progress. Finally, learning that the Illinois Central (Chicago branch) was laid as far south as Pera (now Ludlow) and that a mixed train left that point for Chicago at about two P.M. each day, we took it and we got into Chicago at about 1 A.M. next morning. We were the only passengers and we left the train at Hyde Park, then outside the city limits.

"This second passage over the present site of Paxton, like the first, left no special impression on my mind. It was only a part of the great grand prairie. The spring of 1855 found Leander Britt, a personal friend from my native town, and myself in Chicago, and fully decided to make the west our future home.

"The Illinois Central Railroad lands had just been put on the market and a few interviews with the officials and their promise of special inducements to early buyers, soon decided us to investigate along their lines, and with a horse and buggy shipped from New York and with railroad passes in our pockets to use if needed, we set out by

Happy Birthday Ford County

We are happy to have been a part of the business community of this county for over a half a century ourselves.



PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Sept. 1875

Sept. 1959

"84 Years Of Steady Growth"

In September this store will complete 84 years of serving Paxton and community and Ford County its wants and styles in apparel for Women and Children, and floor coverings.

A small beginning, with co-operative support of loyal patrons, selling standard merchandise at uniformly fair prices with the motto of "Quality Never Fails To Please."

A loyal force of men and women anxious to please, to serve you.

Many other business and professional groups have been here for some time, some longer than ours, with similar programs. We congratulate these folks, especially the Stevens Printing Co. and P. Larson Co., founded 19 years before.

We thank the buying public for all kindnesses shown this store, Paxton's Shopping Center for many of them.

We greet the many organizations and groups, the churches, lodges and other professions, and legal groups--We greet the Chambers of Commerce of Paxton, Gibson City, Melvin, Roberts, Piper City and other cities in Ford County and nearby cities as we work together to celebrate the first 100 years of service in this stable community, with few booms, but stable growths, with one well known characteristic--"of demanding standard merchandise at a fair price."

"Quality never disappoints!"

Glad to have
the chance today
Good wishes on
this special day.

And glad to wish
the best for you,
Today and always,
all year thru'.

A.J. Saurence & Sons
PAXTON'S SHOPPING CENTRE

**Congratulations to
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100 years
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ourselves on a prospecting tour southward.

"It was lovely spring weather, and fairly good roads, and, but for the poor board and poorer lodgings, it would have been in every way enjoyable. However at Loda we found things in this line quite satisfactory . . . We were favorably impressed with the country in the vicinity of Loda and southward, and after going as far south as Champaign, then the terminus of the railroad, returned to Loda and made a sort of headquarters there.

"About this time we visited Middleport, now Watseka, and in an interview with a former resident of our native county in New York and who was than a judge of Iroquois county, he stated that the county seat of a new county could be located on the Illinois Central Railroad where it crossed the proposed new county. Previous to this time, we had selected with the view of purchase three and one-half sections eastward from the present town of Paxton, and with this new thought in mind, we added to our list the eighty acres covering the central portion of this city as it stands today . . .

"Our purchase of the eighty acres and our scheme for a new county and county seat were carefully concealed at that time. Plans for a new county with Loda for county seat were already

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P. LARSON CLO. CO., Gibson City, Ill., Celebrates Its 72nd ANNIVERSARY

. . . As FORD COUNTY Celebrates Its 100th ANNIVERSARY

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167 YEARS



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PAXTON, ILLINOIS

talked of and symptoms of a boom for Loda were manifest. (Mr. Murdock returned to New York for a brief period after making further land purchases, both for city development and for resale of farm-lands, then returned to Illinois to make his home.)

"A few days before my final departure from New York, I made known to W. H. Pells our plans and prospect for a new county. He then proposed to join us . . . Land was purchased and the firm of Pells, Britt & Murdock created . . .

"The new firm controlled three hundred and forty acres—all that was most desirable for town site purposes. After Mr. Britt's death, Mr. Pells arranged for the Britt undivided one-third interest. Having secured all the land we cared to purchase ourselves we then proposed to certain persons to purchase land adjoining our own and thus become interested in the scheme.

"Mr. James Mix was one of these persons and he promptly acted on our suggestion. The purchase proved profitable to him and he was very useful to the enterprise. Until this time--midsummer 1856--our plan, even the fact of our owning any lands at this point, was carefully concealed. Paxton then consisted of three small houses, located near the south railroad crossing of the present town. There were no other improvements in sight, not even a stoke

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to indicate that a town had ever been thought of. Meantime, Loda was booming in anticipation of its becoming the county seat of a new county.

(After describing their success in getting a railroad station and postoffice for the newly created Prospect City, Mr. Murdock continues:)

"Promptly on the convening of the 1857 session of the Illinois state legislature, delegates from Loda appeared with their plan for a new county, of course so shaped that Loda must become the county seat.

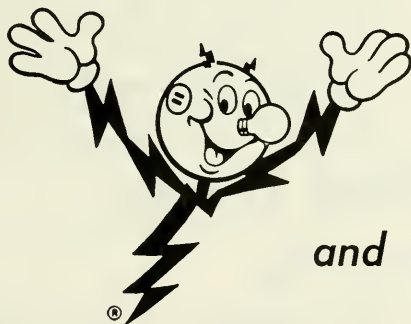
"Our hope lay in postponing the issue two years. The law provided that the legislature may

authorize a vote on the question of new counties, and when made up from two or more counties, must have a majority vote of each and every county interested.

"We had reason to believe Iroquois county would not consent to separate any portion of its territory for any purpose whatever, but we felt obliged to make some sort of fight in the matter and to have a delegation in Springfield to care for our interests there. It was arranged that Mr. Britt and Mr. Mix should do this work and the duty was well performed.

"Such questions are practically settled in the committee room; the legislature simply sanctions

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Paxton, Illinois

by formal vote what the committee recommends. In the committee room much haggling and loud talk were indulged in. Many different plans were proposed. Several such sessions were held. Finally a new county bill was submitted, promptly passed and signed by the governor.

"The Loda delegates had asked for six miles off the west side of Iroquois county and that part of Vermilion county now in Ford county, but perhaps due to a confusion in the committee room, a mistake was made and the bill as passed called for twelve miles off Iroquois county and six miles square out of the northwest corner of what is now Vermilion county. Both counties voted against the new county as proposed. The Loda delegation never quite understood how this mistake occurred.

"Loda's plan for the new county necessarily involved a portion of Iroquois county. Our plan was Ford county as it now exists. There was no other town in it and our chance to become the county seat was thus assured. It was plain that Vermilion county would vote off that much and no more for a new county. The issue was with Iroquois county. Would the voters favor cutting off any part for the new county? Those favoring the Loda scheme declared they would.

"We declared they would not and furnished

the committee a written declaration signed by a majority of the voters of the county to that effect. The fact that there was a large county debt, and that two-thirds of the voters of the county lived in the eastern half of the county were factors in our favor.

"But our competitors, too, provided a document signed by a majority of the voters of the county declaring in favor of the Loda scheme. This demanded a reconavass on our part and this again on their part, each new document demanding another, the fight growing hotter and more earnest as time went on.

"Finally, Mr. J. R. Lewis and Marston, representing the people of the north part of the Pan Handle, appeared before the committee and calling attention to the fact that the then county seat (Danville) was more than one hundred miles distant and demonstrating the inconvenience thereof, stated they had no interest in, or choice between plans, but begged the committee to adopt the one most certain to be accepted—to take no chances on another defeat of a new county and reminding them that the Loda plan had been once rejected by the voters of Iroquois county.

"This plain talk from apparently disinterested parties evidently turned the scale in our favor, and

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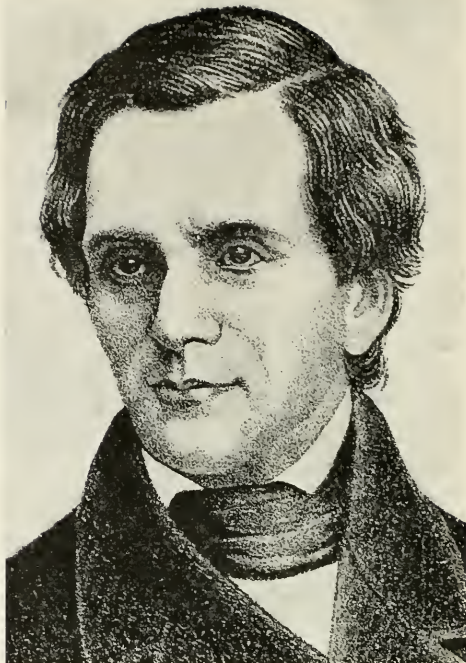
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THOMAS FORD

County Named In His Honor

a bill creating Ford county on our plan soon became a law, but subject to the approval of the voters of Vermilion county, the vote to be taken at the regular spring election, then only about three weeks distant.

"Both parties promptly lined up for the final grand fight, which had thus been suddenly transferred from Iroquois to Vermilion county. Our opponents spared no efforts to defeat us by a vote against the new county. I was delegated to watch their moves and to lay the plans for the great battle. I spent practically all the three weeks in Vermilion county.

"Every town but one gave large majorities—some of them almost unanimous votes for the new county. A few amusing election tricks and one or two fights were the sum total of special election events.

"Loda had lost and was sad. She had been outgeneraled and her county seat boom was bust-

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PAXTON, ILLINOIS

ed. Paxton had won the battle and was happy." * * *

So Ford county might have been bigger; there might never have been a Paxton; Iraquois county might have been smaller; Lada might have been a bustling county seat; Buckley, its larger neighbors to the north, might have been dwarfed, had it not been for the railroad going where it did, and the speculators, with a knowledge of politics, getting together when and where they did. * * *

Flax Mills In County

Flax was also a popular first crop to help rot the sod after it had been turned over. Flax mills to make use of the fiber were built in various parts of the county. Sometimes the flaxseed only was used, bringing a good price.

At an early date hemp was grown near Paxton and a hemp mill was in operation nearby.

In Mona township, some four miles east of Kempton, Ben Turvin planted broom corn on a large part of a 240-acre farm, built sheds to cure it in, and employed as many as thirty men. He began this about 1877 but it failed to pay.

Some forty years ago Mike Griffin also tried raising broom corn near Paxton, but also found

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87 YEARS

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H. A. PARSONS, Prop.

it unprofitable.

During the 1870's W. H. Pells of Paxton raised broom corn on a tract north of Clarence. This was in Iroquois county, but his headquarters two miles west of Rankin were at a village named Pellsville, long since extinct.

Experiments With Ginseng

Roy Horner experimented with raising ginseng southeast of Paxton some 30 years ago. Sweet corn has been grown in the county and sent to canning plants in Paxton and Gibson City, the latter still a large and active business. Other successors to the native Indian corn are large crops of soybeans, oats, alfalfa, some wheat, and crops for pastureland.

But over a century ago some pioneers, either experimental or lazy, found they could grow a crop of corn by cutting a gash with a hatchet in the tough sod and dropping in seed kernels, proving the fertility of a soil much earlier believed no good because it grew only grass, no trees.

The Power To Build Cities

If Indian corn and prairie farming were the parents of Ford county, railroading and its power to build cities may well be called the foster parent

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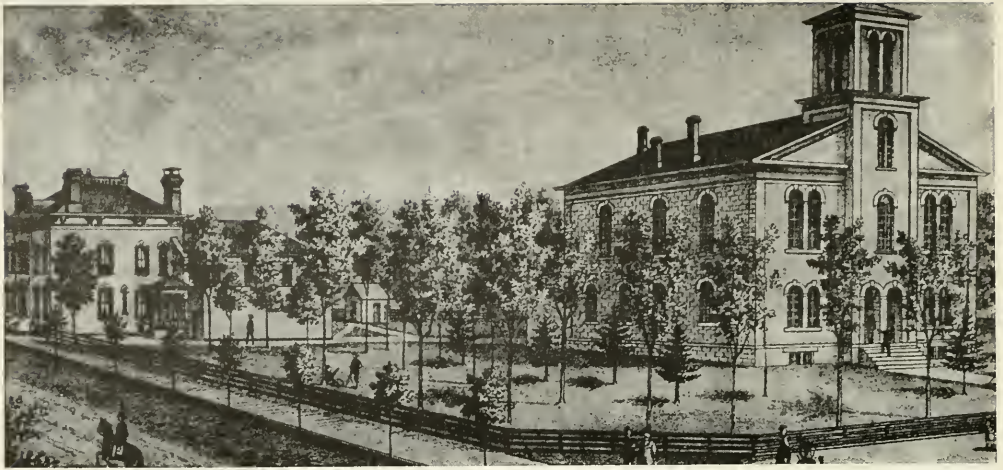


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Roberts, Illinois



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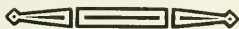
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Roberts, Ill.

that made the area come to life and develop in its present form.

Early settlers had come from Europe, then to Western Indiana by canal, and could travel no farther into this area by water. Another means of mass transportation had to enter the picture before the empty prairies filled up.

Land Settlement

Unlike many other regions, this area was fully surveyed several years before homesteading began. Most of the county was surveyed eastward from the third principal meridian (a north-south line approximately through Bloomington) into present Button township. At this point surveyors coming from the east, the second principal meridian, met those from the west. But their lines did not meet squarely, resulting in a jog of nearly a quarter mile, those from the east being further south. This is evident in the swing south that Illinois Route 9 takes.

Land At 12½c to \$1.25 Per Acre

Before the very first settlers came here in the late 1840's and early 1850's, considerable land had been sold to purchasers at prices from \$1.25 per acre down to as low as 12½ cents per acre. The federal government seemed quite anxious to

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dispose of the public lands. The largest owner of lands in our area was Michael L. Sullivan who is reported to have owned 40,000 acres. The Hiram Sibley heirs today own about 14,000 acres which were at one time part of the Sullivan land.

Evidently many other speculators also owned land in various parts of this area. From the north, the Illinois and Michigan Canal Company had been allotted some sections of land which they later sold. The land grant which the Illinois Central procured from the state of Illinois to help them finance the building of their railway also extended in a westerly direction into Wall township as well as the Panhandle to the north part of the county, even though the bulk of this branch of the railroad ran through Iroquois county to the east. There were also many hundred acres of so-called swamplands which were sold for a low price per acre.

County Notes Railroad Aid

When, in 1867 and 1868, an east to west railroad planned to build for about 28 miles through the south part of the county, the county voted to aid in the building of this road, now called the Nickel Plate.

The Illinois Central also had a companion

company, the Illinois Central Land Company, which concerned itself with disposal of the 2,595,000 acres it had acquired through the land grant.

This land company sent agents to northern European countries, mainly Norway, Sweden, and Germany. In England, where much of the capital was raised to begin the building of the railroad, these Illinois prairie lands became known.

Among financiers who became stockholders were Richard Cobden and Sir Joseph Paxton, who had designed the first Crystal Palace in London and after whom Paxton was named.

Also in New England, New York State, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio and Indiana, and even in parts of Canada much advertising was done. "Homes for the Industrious in the Garden State of the West" was the caption of some of their pamphlets.

CORN IS KING

Corn has always been the chief crop raised in Ford county, and its importance throughout the history of the area is tremendous.

Not only is corn the largest crop; its growing, marketing, processing, use in feeding, and treatment of by-products all have formed a large part

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of the trade, marketing, and manufacturing in the towns.

Among the early settlers, one lady sat down to remember the days and years of the area's growth. Mrs. Jane Patton in 1904 had published a book, *Remembrances of a Pioneer*, capturing much of the spirit and life of earliest settlers in present Button township. Having arrived there in 1854, she writes thus of their next year:

"That winter was one of the cold, stormy winters of that time, and we got the full benefit of the winds and the snow. I think the snow stayed on the ground perhaps six weeks or more, and cold all the time and only two rooms to our house, and a smokehouse and a stable for the horses and two caws; no fence, only a pen for the corn fodder for the cows and horses. We bought that, and the cows would stay for the feed, for there was no fence to keep them.

"Mr. Patton hired the rails made to fence 160 acres of land, and Mr. Patton and Obe Marlatt hauled all the rails to fence it, through the storms and snows. Sometimes the snow would blow and drift so that we could not see the tracks of the wagon of the next load.

"I could see them when they left the timber and get almost any kind of a dinner, except cook

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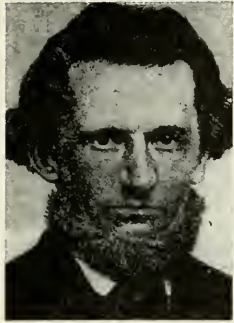
PIPER CITY, ILLINOIS

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PAXTON, ILLINOIS

dry beans, before they would get home to dinner. It was a mile and three quarters straight west of the house where we lived to the edge of the timber



JAMES P. BUTTON

. . . Township Named
For Him

where they got the rails, and I could see them very plainly.

To Bloomington For Plows

"In the after part of the winter, Obe Marlatt went to Bloomington after plows to break the

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prairie; that was as near as they could be gotten. He bought five, some for the neighbors. I think if some of the people had to do as we did they would think they would have a hard time now.

"Well, that spring it was break prairie with our own four-horse team and an ox team. The man broke by the acre, \$2.50 per acre, broke and planted sowed corn, about one hundred and forty acres, and raised the best vegetables of all kinds, melons, pumpkins by the wagon-load, and the best corn. We sold one hundred acres of it to cattle feeders the next fall for five hundred dollars, and were pleased with our year's work.

"In the spring we built two rooms to our house and dug a cistern, fenced in a garden and put an addition to the stable.

"Money was very plentiful that summer or spring. John Adamson, at Covington, brought two hundred and over of four-year-old steers to be herded on the prairie and they were large and got fat on the grass without any expense, except to pay the herder and for salt, the prairie grass was so fine.

"Another year of improvement was 1856. We set out the fence to take in more land, hauled more rails, and built two houses on the farm that winter for two tenants to move on the farm in the

spring.

Too Much Corn

"That summer everything was corn. We could not see the country so far away and the people had come to the country so fast that there were now houses on all sides of us. There was lots of corn and no sale for it unless cattlemen came in with cattle to feed the corn to. Corn would grow then if you planted it without any trouble. The weeds had not got a start then, only the tumble-weeds, and they would roll over the field and lodge against the fences as high as the fence.

"1857 . . . This summer was the same; plow, raise corn, cut and have prairie grass, and cut up corn, and have lots of men to work, as we always had."

Before The Corn—Grass

Before corn, there was prairie grass, and not much else. Many early settlers commented on the long view for miles in any direction, a sea of grass with no trees or trails. The first step of breaking the sod was some places done by oxen, but most Ford county land was first turned over by horse or mule-drawn plows.

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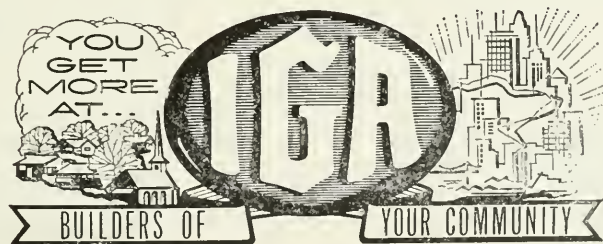
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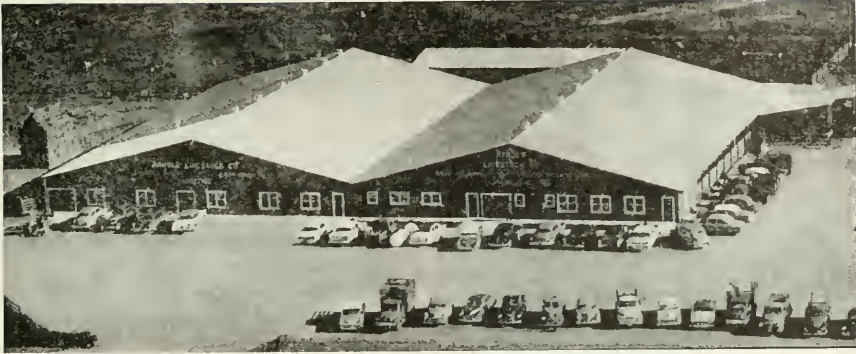
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Gibson City, Ill.

widths have become popular. With newer methods of cultivation and harvesting, cross checking is sometimes omitted.

By the time Ford county farming began, the hoe as only means of cultivation was about outdated. One early tool was a two-shovel cultivator drawn by one horse, requiring a round trip each side of the row to cultivate and weed one corn row.

Soon walking cultivators were built with a tongue and frame set on two wheels; again this was changed so that it became a riding cultivator. Later, two-row cultivators were pulled by three or four horses. As tractors have come into common use, the number of rows covered has increased to six at one trip.

Marketing A Problem

The corn grew in those early days, but what to do with it was sometimes a problem, as evident from Mrs. Patton's account. Other early settlers tell of marketing their crop at Pera (Ludlow) to the south. Stories of husking bees and other harvest activities are familiar tales.

How to get the corn to market was more of a problem. It was shipped on the ear until corn shellers were developed, sometimes being shoveled

from farm wagons directly into box cars.

The Rural Skyscraper

Commercial shellers such as the Sandwich, Ottawa, Joliet, and Marseilles came into use, and the grain elevator became the familiar skyscraper of every town, hamlet and shipping point.

Two or three teams of horses furnished power



WRIGHT KEMP

. . . Railroad Named
Town For Him

for these early shellers, and for grain separators too. Steam and later gasoline engines were to replace them but the term and measure "horse power" remains.

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Five Members Of The Peterson Family Have Operated The Business Over These Past 71 Years.



WILLIAM H. PELS

... Father of Paxton

Early horse-pulled corn planters were made to plant two rows at a time, by means of a lever to move back from right to left, each move dropping a hill. This was often the task of a boy who sat on a seat over the runners. As all farm machinery became more automatic, various devices were used as check rowers to keep the cross rows aligned.

THE BEGINNING OF GOVERNMENT

In 1787 Congress passed an ordinance for the government of all territory northwest of the Ohio River. Arthur St. Clair was appointed the first governor.

Welcome

To The

Ford County Centurama

-- Centennial Celebration --

From

FORD COUNTY'S LEADING

JEWELERS FOR 63 YEARS

Ben Overstreet & Son

"Jewelers in Paxton Since 1896"

CONGRATULATIONS TO FORD COUNTY ON ITS PROGRESS

We are keeping up with Progress by Continued modernization and new equipment to meet modern day needs.

WATCH THE NEWSPAPERS FOR GRAND OPENING of our new modern Feed Mill.

Our new services will include:

1. Grinding and Mixing Feeds
2. Molasses Mixing
3. Bulk Feed Delivery
4. Cob Crushing for bedding. (Special Equipment)

Grinding and Mixing will be done the Blue Streak Granular Grind Method.

Let us grind and Mix Master Mix Concentrates with your grain, to make a definite feed for your definite needs.

Come in. See our new mill, our added services and talk with us about your feeding needs.

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Feed—Grinding & Mixing

**Roberts
Grain Co., Inc.**

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Roberts, Illinois



In 1803 Indiana, including Illinois and Wisconsin, was made a separate territory. In 1809 the present state of Illinois was made a separate territory.

On the 3rd of December, 1818, Illinois was admitted into the union as a sovereign and independent state.

Soon after Illinois was made a territory two counties, St. Clair and Randolph, were formed. On November 28, 1814, Edwards county was created; Crawford county followed December 31, 1816; Clark on March 22, 1819; Edgar county on January 3, 1823; and Vermilion county January 18, 1826.

Thirty-three years after Vermilion county was formed it relinquished its previous control to the newest county of the state, Ford. This was done by an enabling act passed by the state legislature on February 17, 1859. Then in June, 1859, an election was held, and the one hundred second county in the state was legally organized.

Three Townships At First

At this time the county was divided into three townships. Prairie City township was formed out of Middlefork township of Vermilion county on

February 16, 1856, and on September 15, 1857, that name was changed to Patton.

On September 14, 1858, Drummer Grove township was formed out of Patton township. This included the present townships of Lyman, Brenton, Peach Orchard, and Sullivant.

Stockton township was organized out of Patton township on March 15, 1859, and included the townships of Lyman, Brenton, Pella, Mona, and Rogers.

Patton, at the time of the formation of the county, included also what is now Button and Wall townships. David Patton was elected as the first judge of the county. William Swinford and Andrew J. Bartlett were associate justices. The latter left the county and was replaced on April 3, 1860 by Edmund F. Havens.

At the election on November 6, 1860, township organization was adopted by a vote of 265 for and 76 against. The first supervisors were: James P. Button from Patton; Andrew Jordan, Drummers Grove; and George B. Winter from Stockton.

Suffrage came to the qualified voters, all males, in Ford county for the first time, when in June, 1859, they voted to accept the responsibility of a county government and elected their first set of county officers.

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Ford County Farm Bureau

Serving Ford County Agriculture Since 1919

MELVIN, ILLINOIS

PHONE 14

Illinois Agricultural Association

American Farm Bureau Federation

Farm Bureau Members Do Things For Themselves

Through Farm Bureau For A Better Farm Living By:

INFORMATION—PUBLICATIONS, RADIO, TV, FILMS, MEETINGS

LEGISLATION—DISCUSS ISSUES, ADOPT POLICIES VALUABLE TO FARMERS

COOPERATION WITH UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

SERVICE AND QUALITY PRODUCTS THROUGH AFFILIATED FARM COOPERATIVES

Ford County I.A.A. Insurance Service

C. G. Miller & Associates

The Country Companies

Life, Accident, Property, Auto, Liability, Crop Hail

Farm Bureau Office

Melvin, Illinois

Phones: Office 14

Residence 184



The Ford County Service Company

THE FORD COUNTY SERVICE COMPANY, A FARMER OWNED SERVICE, IS PROUD TO HAVE HAD A PART IN A CENTURY OF CONTINUING PROGRESS, THAT SO MANY HAVE ENJOYED HERE IN FORD COUNTY.

WE ARE CONFIDENT OUR SERVICE AND SAVINGS IN PETROLEUM, FEED, PLANT FOOD, AND GRAIN THROUGHOUT THE NEXT CENTURY WILL BE EVEN MORE INFLUENTIAL IN MAINTAINING PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY IN FORD COUNTY.

Welcome to Paxton and Ford County!

For A Refreshing Cup of Coffee,

Fountain Drink or Lunch

Stop at the

Arcade Cafe

"Where Friends Meet"

Phone 188 for Private Party Reservations

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At the outset each of the three townships was represented by one supervisor.

Since then, there came into existence a total of twelve political townships covering an area of a little more than 13½ congressional townships of 36 sections each. Also since 1909 Patton township, because of its population, has been entitled to and has been represented by an assistant supervisor, thus the Board of Supervisors consists of 13 members.

First National Vote for Lincoln

The first national election in which Ford county participated was that held in November, 1860, when Lincoln was elected president. Again in 1864, Ford County had the choice of helping choose between re-electing Lincoln or voting for George B. McClelland, the nominee on the Democratic ticket. McClelland was the man who had helped secure for Paxton a railway station on the Illinois Central railroad, which, in turn made it possible for Paxton to become the county seat.

Here are some interesting "ifs:"

If after the T.P. and W. railroad had been built across Brenton township, the residents of that township had platted Piper City immediately instead of waiting ten years, Piper City perhaps could have become the county seat.

Again, if Iroquois county had released Loda and Pigeon Grove townships from that county so they could have been added to Ford county, then Loda could have been the county seat today.

Or, if the upper panhandle had favored Gibson City in its bid for the removal of the county seat from Paxton after the turn of the century, when the proposition was brought to a popular vote, then Gibson City might have achieved its goal.

The role of individuals in pioneering new towns cannot be overlooked. The spread of railroads across the face of America is often credited for rapid development of the West.

But in one case in our county, a man bent on development of a city turned the tables and brought three rail lines through the site of his town.

Changed Railroad Routes

Jonathan B. Lott, who had purchased the town site of Gibson in 1869, was a young Civil War veteran who, according to E. A. Gardner, by his energy and personal influence, secured such changes in the surveys of the different railroads that brought about their junction at the present location of Gibson.

(Continued on page 63)

Ford County Home Bureau

Professional Organization

for Homemakers

Sponsors an Educational Program for

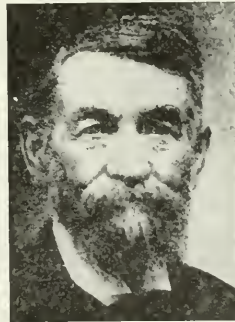
Adults and Youth in Ford County

Organized August 1935



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Ford County Centennial, Inc.



PROUDLY PRESENTS

"FORD COUNTY CENTURAMA"

*A Dramatic Historical Spectacle
By The Citizens Of Ford County*

Queen

Coronation

Pre-Show

Entertainment

Fireworks

Display

Costume

Awards

Beard Shaving

Contest

Performance Time: 8:30 P. M.

JUNE 15-16-17-18-19

A John B. Rogers Production

Directed By

RICHARD R. FRENTZ

Scenario Research By

EVELYN BURTON, CHR.

"FORD COUNTY CENTURAMA" is based on historical outline and slight changes have been made to meet demands of staging and for dramatic effects.

This is the Ford County Story. An epic of a tidal wave of freedom loving men and women sweeping into a new world, rich with natural resources beyond the dreams of the ages. Over the prairies, through the timberlands and along the heartbreaking trails the settlers came.

FORD COUNTY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Sustaining Events

- * Merchants Historical Window Displays—all day
- * Hospitality Headquarters for Visitors and Guests—Centennial Headquarters.
- * Centennial Midway and Fun Zone — Clara Peterson School Grounds, 1 p.m.
- * "Ford County Centurama", outdoor spectacular historical pageant based on the history of Ford County, with a cast of 350 on a 250-foot Panoramic stage and featuring the Centennial Queen "Miss Ford County" and her court in the prologue each night, June 15 through 19, 8:00 P.M.—Paxton Memorial Field.
- * Nightly June 15 through 19, mammoth Fireworks and Pyrotechnics display as the finale to the pageant—Paxton Memorial Field.

PROGRAM OF DAILY EVENTS

SUNDAY, JUNE 14th—Faith of Our Fathers Day—
Rev. Floyd Brewer, Chairman

A.M.—Regular services in all Ford County churches with special emphasis placed on religious growth and development for the past century.

7:00 P.M.—"Faith of Our Fathers"—special inter-denominational Services — Gibson City Football Field.

MONDAY, JUNE 15th—Governor's and Parade Day—John Short, Chairman

9:00 A.M.—Centennial Headquarters Opens
Registration and Information for Old Timers and Home-comers—Opposite Post Office.

1:00 P.M.—Centennial Midway and Fun Zone Opens — Clara Peterson School grounds.

2:00 P.M.—Governor's Parade—featuring many bands, floats, marching units and dignitaries—Market Street.

5:00 P.M.—Invitational Reception for Visiting Dignitaries—Middlecoff Hotel.

5:30 P.M.—Governor Stratton Dinner—Middlecoff Hotel.

7:45 P.M.—Paxton Band (HS) Concert—Directed by Harry Swenson.

8:25 P.M.—Coronation of Centennial Queen "Miss Ford County" by Governor Stratton in Prologue of historical pageant.

8:30 P.M.—Premier performance of spectacular pageant "Ford County Centurama". A cast of 300 Ford County citizens in authentic costumes on a 250-foot panoramic stage, with special lighting effects, special scenic effects, special musical effects. Wagons, buggies, horses and old autos, re-enacting the 100 years' growth of Ford County—Memorial Field.

10:00 P.M.—Fireworks and Pyrotechnics display will climax "Ford County Centurama", ninety-minute spectacular.

TUESDAY, JUNE 16th—Agricultural & Transportation Day—M. Sommers and A. B. Rowand, Co-Chairmen.

9:00 A.M.—Centennial Headquarters Opens—
Opposite Post Office
Registration and Information for Old Timers and Home-comers.

1:00 P.M.—Centennial Midway and Fun Zone Opens — Clara Peterson School grounds.

3:00 P.M.—Century of Progress Parade featuring horse-drawn vehicles, old and new vehicles, bands, floats and horses—Market Street.

4:00 P.M.—Kangaroo Kourt Session — Market Street.

5:30 P.M.—Agricultural Dinner—Dinner-Speaker, Howard Koufus.

7:45 P.M.—Concert by Gibson City High Band—
Directed by Gene Anthony.

8:30 P.M.—Second performance of the spectacular historical pageant "Ford County Centurama"—Memorial Field.

10:00 P.M.—Mammoth fireworks display following pageant performance.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17th—Ford County Youth Day—Lee Swengel, Chairman.

9:00 A.M.—Centennial Headquarters Opens—
Opposite Post Office
Registration and Information for Old Timers and Homecomers.

- 1:00 P.M.—Centennial Midway and Fun Zone Opens — Clara Peterson School grounds.
- 3:00 P.M.—Youth Parade, featuring costumes, dolls, Decorated Bikes, and Pets—Market Street.
- 4:00 P.M.—Kids Kangaroo Kourt.
Youth Talent and Costume Show.
- 8:00 P.M.—Pre-Pageant entertainment—Memorial Field.
- 8:30 P.M.—Concert by Paxton Junior Hi Band—Directed by Harry Swenson.
Third performance of the spectacular historical pageant, "Ford County Centurama"—Memorial Field.
- 10:00 P.M.—Fireworks Display will climax pageant.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18th—Pioneers & Good Neighbors Day—Art Seng, Chairman.

- 9:00 A.M.—Centennial Headquarters opens—Opposite Post Office.
Registration and Information for Old Timers and Homecomers.
- 1:00 P.M.—Centennial Midway and Fun Zone Opens — Clara Peterson School
- 3:00 P.M.—Time Capsule Ceremony at Court House.
- 8:00 P.M.—Pre-Pageant entertainment at Memorial Field.
Gibson City Chapter of SPEBSQSA Chorus and Quartette.
- 8:30 P.M.—Fourth performance of the spectacular historical pageant "Ford County Centurama"—Memorial Field.
- 10:00 P.M.—Giant fireworks display will climax pageant.

FRIDAY, JUNE 19th—Brothers of the Brush and Centennial Belles Day—Hubert Snyder, Mrs. Jim Woodworth and Mrs. E. T. Grove, Co-Chairmen.

- 9:00 A.M.—Centennial Headquarters opens—Opposite Post Office.
Registration and Information for Old Timers and Homecomers.

- 1:00 P.M.—Centennial Midway and Fun Zone Opens — Clara Peterson School grounds.
- 3:00 P.M.—Kangaroo Kourt—Market Street.
Brothers of the Brush and Centennial Belles Costume Promenade.
- 4:00—Brothers and Belles Program — Market Street.
Old-Fashioned Style Show, Costume Contest and Bathing Beauty Contest.
Beard judging—county-wide.

- 8:00 P.M.—Ceremonies honoring Centennial Belles Costume winners and awarding of prizes—Memorial Field.
- 8:15—Pre-Pageant entertainment—Sibley Girl's Trio.
- 8:30 P.M.—Concert by Roberts-Thawville High School Band — Directed by Dick Alderman.
Fifth and Final performance of the spectacular pageant, "Ford County Centurama".
- 10:00 P.M.—Remington Rand Beard Shaving Contest following pageant.
Fireworks.

SATURDAY, JUNE 20th—Armed Forces, Veterans and Queen's Day—Leonard Coplea, Chairman.

- 9:00 A.M.—Centennial Headquarters opens—Registration and Information for Old Timers and Homecomers.
Opposite Post Office.
- 1:00 P.M.—Centennial Midway and Fun Zone Opens — Clara Peterson School grounds.
- 3:00 P.M.—Grand Military Parade featuring floats, bands, veterans units, military equipment, armed services, horses and vehicles.
- 9:00 P.M.—Centennial Queen's Ball featuring nationally famous Ralph Flanagan and his orchestra — Melvin Fairgrounds.
Gen. Ganey—Chanute Field, Reviewing stand.

PROLOGUE: OUR 100TH BIRTHDAY

NARRATORS: Dr. R. A. Richter, Rita Watkins, Ted Johnson, Thompson Shields, Richard Guthrie, Virginia Benjamin. Alternate, Nita Morris.

TRUMPETEERS: Mary Ellen Wiles, Madelon Pfoff, Linda O'Neil, Shiela Burkler, June Mills, Jerry Williamson, Carolyn Jesse, Grace Strebeck, Sylvia Stoker — Gibson City High School Band Drum Majorettes.

COLOR GUARDS: As announced each evening.

CADETS: Ramona Andrews, Patty Turner, Mardella Andrews, Marsha Hancock, Pamela Sue Price, Eileen Jamison, Judy Treach, Barbara Reep, Ruth Eppelheimer, Peggie Ferran—Paxton 4-H Girls.

BOY SCOUTS: Bill Hanson, Mike Kingston, Dick Sandberg, Jim Rasmussen, Bob Peterson, John Whitcomb, Jerry Rodeen, Larry Turner, Dennis Tucker, John Drinkwater, Nicky Lewis, Lester Benson, Ricky Richter.

CUB SCOUTS: Mike DeShasier, Jimmy Joyce, John Joyce, Tommy Brown, Dick Westphal, Bobby Richter, John Edwards, Mark Parsans, Teddy Spanhook.

GIRL SCOUTS: Mary Polillo, Patty Cambridge, Kathy Barr, Cheryl Vaughn, Janet Guthrie, Janet Boone, Linda Westphal, Jackie Muller, Gerrie Storm, Peggie Hill, Darla Darr, Cathy Casey, Mary Krukoski, Sandra Troxel, Julia Branson, Barbara Shreves, Carol Carlson, Jill Wilson, Patty Hummel, Terrie Marshall, Linda Adkins.

BROWNIES: Troop #108—Linda J. Parsons, Barbara Goodwin, Peggy Kunce, Janice Shumate, Marlena Goodwin. Troop #297—Delores Carlson, Cheryl Rabertson, Patty Carlson, Delores Spanhook, Susan Froyd, Margot Foster, Kathy Robinson, Jane Polillo, Maryann Rasmussen, Christy Bracksmith, Gwen Bauer, Jackie Marshall. Troop #253—Hope Ostendorf, Diane Burkland, Judy Jones, Diane Johnson, Kathleen Miller, Nancy Frette, Margaret McNeil, Brenda Mills, Cathy Bankston, Peggy Hanson, Becky Rodeen, Mary Hudachek, Kitty Larson, Paula Bertrand, Linda Gritton, Cheryl Rabertson, Patty Carlson, Bunny Spanhook, Diane Wilson, Bonnie Meuser, Patty Purtell, Nicki Houston, Marcia Hill, Nancy Blanchet, Jenny Joyce, Donna Hale, Cathy Overstreet, Delores Carlson, Susan Froyd, Carol Meusen, Trudy Gordon, Addy Schofield, Wendy Workman, Celeste Casey.

SAILORETTEs: Elaine Nuss, Maryann Hilt, Carol Clement, Sheila Stewart, Donna Carlson, Kathy Martin, Carolyn Herriott, Cheryl Hoyt, Wilma Watson, Sherri Sanders, Barbara Ulrich, Terry Ostendorf, Peggy Hill, Rhonda Rattenborg—Junior High School Students, Paxton.

EPISODE ONE: "IN THE BEGINNING"

The dynamic story of Ford County didn't begin just 100 years ago. Here the Miami, Kickapoo and Potawatomie Indians pitched their tepees long before the white man came; and the smoke from many council fires drifted above the prairies. But all this will soon end in a "Trail of Tears." The White Man is coming.

CAST: Sponsored by Roberts Centennial Belles & Melvin Home Bureau.

INDIAN CHIEF: Cecil W. Kennedy.

RIDING CHIEFS: Ronald Rasmus & Steve Foster.

RIDING BRAVE: Raymond Price.

INDIAN BRAVES: Ken Holiday, Terry Hustedt, Jack Hustedt, Larry Noble, Don Muller, Pete Larson, Carl Hudson, John Hanson, Gale Streff, Vernon Benson, Charles Morin, Frank Drendel, Jerry Guy, Gary McCullough, Jack Lierly, Steve Lierly, Danny Phillips—Paxton Explorer Scouts.

Rodney Fairley, Wayne Kesting, Glen Mies—Roberts.

INDIAN SQUAWS AND CHILDREN: Mrs. Bill Sherfey, Billy Sherfey, Norman Steven, Laretta Garrelts, Bob Garrelts, Mrs. Emerson Seng, Danny Seng, Diane Seng, Rose Roetzel, Mrs. Wayne Kesting, Janis Ann Kesting, Virginia Lee Rulison, Betty Joe Roetzel, Erma Kennedy, Lucille Mehrings, Jeannie Seng.

INDIAN MAIDEN'S DANCE: Nancy Beland, Sarita Darsey, Lola Henson, Bonnie Mueller, Renelda Frump, Lila Archer, Marietta Bruce, Sally Marshall, Barbara Drinkwater, Sandy Cruise, Elaine Nuss, Maryann Hilt, Carol Clement, Sheila Stewart, Donna Carlson, Kathy Martin, Carolyn Herriott, Wilma Watson, Sherri Sanders, Barbara Ulrich, Terry Ostendorf, Peggy Hill, Rhonda Rattenborg, Cheryl Hoyt.

EPISODE TWO: "THE COMMON GLORY"

The pioneer spirit leaped forward. On came the covered wagons bringing the settlers and their worldly possessions. Over the prairie they came into the unknown. With determination and fortitude they gathered courage to face an uncertain future.

CAST: Sponsored by Paxton Parent-Teachers Association.

SCOUTS AND OUTRIDERS: Henry Bertrand, Hub Terrell, Joe Brewer, Gene Glazik.

WAGON DRIVERS: Runyon Sadler, Ken Stanford.

EARLY SETTLERS: Colleen McCabe, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Saldeen, Mauri Saldeen, Mrs. Roy Martin, Christie Martin, Max Martin, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Currie, Mr. and Mrs. Mason Younker, Sandra Younker, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Foster, Mrs. Perry Phillips, Gregory Phillips, Barbara Phillips, Richard Elliott, Earl V. Johnson, Laura Morris, Mr. Elijah Adkins, Linda Adkins, Mr. and Mrs. Art Flannery, Larry Flannery, Melissa Dunnan, Mr. and Mrs. Nobel Skonberg, D. C. Hummel, Patty Hummel, Harvey Workman, Ed Hallaway, Mr. Phil Todd.

SQUARE DANCE: Sponsored by Sibley Centennial Belles. Mrs. F. Gentes. Caller: Mr. Gravlin.

DANCERS: Mr. and Mrs. Russell Douglas, Mr. and Mrs. Herb Persons, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Wurmnest, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Larson, Mr. and Mrs. James Brucker, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Underwood, Mr. and Mrs. James Brownlee, Mr. and Mrs. Art Mabry. Alternates: Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Brucker, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Brucker, Mr. and Mrs. James Radliff.

EPISODE THREE: "THE SEVENTH DAY"

The strength of the pioneers and their persistence in the face of overwhelming odds was founded on a simple but enduring faith in God.

CAST: Sponsored by Paxton Junior Women's Club.

EARLY SETTLERS: Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Gordon and Trudy, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Sypult, Mr. and Mrs. Dean Rule and Linda, Mr. and Mrs. Bill McBride, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Tharnburgh, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Thompson and Rick, Mark and Bobby, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Thompson, Dorothy and Mable Blomquist and Barbara, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Logan, Marilyn Behrens, Barbara Skarstad, Mr. and Mrs. Daryl Fifield, Royce Boier, Mr. and Mrs. Llayd Elliott.

CIRCUIT RIDING MINISTER: Joe Brewer.

HORSE RIDERS: Mrs. Orrin Price, Gene Glazik.

EPISODE FOUR: "COMING OF THE IRON HORSE"

A look back on an early day when the Illinois Central combination freight and passenger train was due to arrive. Many of the citizens were on hand to see the event, and even the working men took time off from their dollar a day jobs to watch the black monster chug into town.

TOWNSPEOPLE: Same as in Episode Three.

VIRGINIA REEL: Sponsored by "Brothers" and "Belles" of Clarence. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Golden, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Bowen, Mr. and Mrs. Dwaine Riggleman, Mr. and Mrs. John Perry, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Riggleman, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Shumate, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Parsons.

HORSE RIDERS: Henry Bertrand, Ronald Rasmus, Steve Foster, Hub Terrell.

EPISODE FIVE: "BIRTH OF FORD COUNTY"

After a battle in the legislature and a vote of Vermilion County people, Ford County was created in February 1859. Shortly thereafter an election was held among the 1500 residents of the new county.

CAST: Sponsored by Kempton American Legion Auxiliary.

TOWNSPEOPLE: Mr. and Mrs. Leon Malone, Paul Malone, Margaret Malone, Melvin Malone, Gayle Malone, Barbara Malone, Janet Bruner, Frank Stewart, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Farley and Linda, Stanley Farley, Mrs. Eugene Earing, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Scott and Debbie and Craig, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Jacobs and Steve, Mr. and Mrs. Elmo Freed, Mrs. John Moore and Jill and Holly, Mrs. Glen Hanson, Sharyl Sadler.

WAGON DRIVER: Runyan Sadler.

EPISODE SIX: "WAR BETWEEN THE STATES"

As the new county grew, tragedy struck and engulfed not only the county but the nation as well, tearing our country asunder and plunging it into Civil War. We see a contingent of Ford County boys preparing to leave for war.

TOWNSPEOPLE: Same as in Episode Five.

UNION OFFICER: Stanley Farley.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: Orrin Price.

UNION CALVARY: Raymond Price, Ronald Rasmus, Steve Foster, Martin Lewis.

LINCOLN'S BUGGY: Ken Stanford.

EPISODE SEVEN: "DAWN OF EDUCATION"

Dear Old Golden Rule Days! Schools were some of the first institutions founded in Ford County, for although most of the early settlers possessed a limited education, they realized the importance of education in the lives of their children. Here we see a whimsical and humorous portrait of a "school of yesteryear."

CAST: Sponsored by the Paxton Girl Scouts.

SCHOOLMASTER: Wendell Johnson.

STUDENTS: Carol Carlson, Kathy Overstreet, Julia Branson, Hope Ann Ostendorf, Diane Johnson, Gerri Storm, Darla Darr, Patty Cambridge, Michael DeShasier, Alan Storm, Edwin Peterson, Bob Siebert, Bob Peterson, Stephen Fox, Jim Fox, Rodney Bixby.

HORSE RIDER: Rosemary Petersan.

EPISODE EIGHT: "THE CABERY FIRE"

The Cabery fire of 1885 will long be remembered and talked about. It is 1:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning and the small town lies sleeping.

CAST: Same as Episode Nine.

EPISODE NINE: "MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS"

Ford County at the turn of the Century—Chatauquas, Picnics, Waltzers—and there you are with your hair slicked down and your mustache waxed. Yes, those were the days . . . the horribly gay, gay nineties.

CAST: Sponsored by Gibson City American Legion Auxiliary, Junior and Senior High Schools, and Paxton Hospital Auxiliary.

WALTZERS: Mr. and Mrs. Lial Muller, Mr. and Mrs. Herb Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Orrin Price, Mr. and Mrs. Ceacil Fields, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Schimanski, Miss Irma Gillespie, J. H. Benjamin.

SOLOIST "Naughty But Nice": Mrs. Durwood Hummel.

GERMAN BAND: Paxton High School Band members—Larry Kelley, Judy Voorhees, Dudley Schwartz, Karen Volden, Virginia Bowen, Sally Peterson, Jerry Guy, David Chapman, Jim Hazen.

TOWNSPEOPLE: Lena Johnson, Viola Frederking, Mae Brading, Anna Borchers, Ruth Barr, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lorenzen and George, Delmar Merritt, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Hudson, Mary and Beck Merritt, Ruth Gilmore, Denny Kallross, Gary and Jimmy Cothorn, Mr. and Mrs. Max Elliott and family.

FIREMEN: Leo Pinckley, Don Taylor, Dale Fasking, Ernie Schroeder.

BASEBALL PLAYERS: Larry Riblet, Don Munson.

JENNIE: Joyce Cothorn.

"BIRD IN A GILDED CAGE": Ruth Branson.

PHOTOGRAPHER: George Barr.

BRIDE & GROOM: Mr. and Mrs. Ivan D. Sloat.

CAN-CAN DANCERS: Jean Schroeder, Judy Osman, Joan Tate, Linda Jordan, Ann Tjardes, Chris Shaner, Margaret Culbertson, Janette Craig.

WORLD WAR I SOLDIERS: Gale Sunderland, Jim Foster, John Swanson, Mike Robertson.

BUGLER: Kenny Holliday.

HORSELESS CARRIAGE: Maurie Baier.

EPISODE TEN: "DECADE OF FABULOUS NONSENSE"

In the 1920's prosperity abounded. It was the era of flappers, bobbed hair, ukeleles, flag-pole sitters and home brew . . . and the dance craze was "The Charleston."

CAST: Sponsored by the Paxton Service Club, Rotary, Lions, Chamber of Commerce and High School.

PARTY FLINGERS: Bud Larson, Maurie Baier, Bill Overstreet, Art Sandberg, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Meyer, Patty Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Watkins.

COP: Bob Banksan.

CHARLESTON DANCERS: Sarita Dorsey, Bonnie Mueller, Virginia Bowen, Carolyn Wheeler, Barbara Drinkwater, Lila Archer, Joyce Claytor, Pat Scheer, Marcia Cambridge, Terry Ostendorf, Renelda Frump, Sally Peterson, Janice Peterson.

OLD AUTOS: Maurie Baier, Jim Anderson, Paul Higgins, Don Froyd, Merle Frump.

EPISODE ELEVEN: "WORLD WAR II"

Ford County boys were scattered in battles that raged to the four corners of the Earth—Anzio—Normandy—New Guinea—Guadalcanal. Here we relive a tense war moment of some of our boys.

CAST: Sponsored by National Guard, Headquarters Troop, First Recon. Squadron, Urbana, Ill. Captain Robert Shart.

SOLDIERS: Pfc. Clark Sebring, Pfc. Perry Steiner, Pfc. Roger Bond, Pfc. Gerald Johnson, Pfc. Donald Cookson, Pfc. Robert Hanson, Pfc. Everett Kirby.

BOY AND GIRL: Jerry Heller and Judith Sauer.

EPISODE TWELVE: "CITIZENS OF TOMORROW"

Today our boys and girls enjoyed themselves, and at the same time they are serious about their futures. Because today they are standing on the threshold of a new world . . . The Space Age.

CAST: Sponsored by Paxton High School.

EPILOGUE: "SALUTE TO FORD COUNTY"

The cast in its entirety returns for a Finale of a commemorative performance of the "Ford County Centurama".

Division Chairmen, Sub-Committee Chairmen, and Members of Committees of The Ford County Centennial Celebration

REVENUE DIVISION—Charles Show, chairman, Paxton; Celebration Ball, Dixon Brothers, Melvin; Novelties, Warren McCarten and Fred Crouch, Roberts; Concessions, Olav Stenson, Paxton, and Souvenir Booklet, John Silence, chairman, Mrs. Richard Adams, and Frank Anderson, all of Paxton.

PARTICIPATION DIVISION—Mrs. B. N. Stephens, Piper City, and H. P. Larson, Jr., Paxton, co-chairmen; Brothers of the Brush Chapters, Remus Curtis, Melvin; Kangaroo Kourts, Hubert Snyder, Paxton; Caravans, Bill Archer, Paxton, and Sales & Distribution, Thompson Shields and Ralph Harrell, Paxton, co-chairmen, and all the School Principals of the County units.

Kangaroo Kourts Town Committees—Paxton,

Hubert Snyder, Fred Kemp, Ray Burklund, and Lial Muller; Roberts, Lyle Kief; Gibson City, Lee Donner, and Kenneth Meredith; Sibley, Marion Ackerman, and Clarence, Clarence Richards.

PUBLICITY DIVISION—A. B. Rowand, chairman, Melvin.

SPECTACLE DIVISION—Charles Newman, chairman, Paxton; Casting, Dr. R. A. Richter, Paxton, and Herb Smith, Gibson City; Construction, Harold Darr, Paxton; Properties, Mrs. Maurie Baier, Paxton; Costumes, Mrs. Lloyd Elliott, Paxton; Scenarios, Mrs. Charles M. Condit, and Mrs. Evelyn W. Burton, Paxton, co-chairmen; Miss Ruth McCracken, Paxton; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Anderson, Paxton; Mrs. Roy Benjamin, Paxton; Miss Esther Runneberg, Perdueville; Miss Florence Garth, Cabery; Mrs. Mary Baird, Cabery; Mrs. Frank Stewart, Kempton; Mrs. Ida Tarnowski, Roberts; Miss Mary Montelius, Piper City; Miss Clara Bishop, Piper City; Mrs. A. W. Johnson, Sibley and Gibson City; Mr. W. B. Holmes, Melvin, and Miss Emma Waldenschmidt, Cabery; Sound, Leo Streff, Paxton; Grounds, Clyde Van Antwerp, and Floyd Shunk, Paxton.

SPECTACLE TICKET DIVISION—Mrs. Dave Woolsoncroft, Roberts, and Mrs. Margaret Frederick,

Paxton, co-chairmen; Advance Tickets, Mrs. Margaret Frederick, Mrs. Earl Swearingen, and Mrs. Max Niccum; Nominations, Mr. David Kramer, Gibson City; Mrs. Maurice Smith, Paxton; Mrs. Ralph Harrell, Paxton; Mrs. Delmar Boog, Melvin; Mrs. Lowell Dueringer, Melvin; Mrs. Emerson Seng, Roberts; Mrs. Phyllis Shambrook, Roberts; Mrs. Harlan Carpenter, Piper City; Mrs. LeRoy Miller, Piper City, and Mrs. Melvin Malone, Kempton; Arrangements, Piper City Women's Club, Junior and Senior; Mrs. Annette McGlasson, Gibson City; Mrs. Elizabeth Walker, Foolsland; Mrs. Floyd Gordon, Paxton; Mrs. Muryl Sturm, Roberts, and Mrs. Dale Nettlingham, Kempton; Awards, Mrs. Rose Rasmussen, chairman; Mrs. Alice Ogg, Gibson City; Mrs. Jack Minch, Roberts; Mrs. George Conner, Roberts; Mrs. Evelyn Freehill, Melvin; Mrs. Bob Morgan, Melvin; Mrs. Melvin Malone, Kempton; Mrs. Pete Rasmussen, Paxton; Mrs. Donald Schiff, Paxton; Mrs. Delmar Elson, Paxton, and Mrs. Bob Enkoff, Paxton; Audience Area, Mrs. Dave Woolsoncroft, Roberts, chairman (ushers to serve from each town at pageant); and Cashiers and Gates, Clyde Wilson, chairman; Wendell Johnson, co-chairman, Paxton.

SPECIAL EVENTS DIVISION—Allen Campbell, Paxton, chairman; Special Days: Sunday, June 14, Rev. Floyd E. Brewers, Gibson City, chairman, and the Gibson City Ministerial Association; Monday, June 15, John Short, Paxton; Tuesday, June 16, A. B. Rowand, Melvin, and A. Sommers, Gibson City, co-chairmen; Wednesday, June 17, Leland Swengel, Paxton; Thursday, June 18, Arthur Seng, Roberts; Friday, June 19, Hubert Snyder, Mrs. James Woodworth, and Mrs. E. T. Grove, co-chairmen, all of Paxton; Saturday, June 20, Veterans' Day, Leonard Coplea, Paxton, and Centennial Ball, Dixon Brothers, Melvin; Parades, Orrin Price, chairman, Donald Karr, assistant chairman, L. Merle Frump, Donald Miller, Rudy Wheeler, all of Paxton, with Lions Clubs from Gibson City, Melvin, Piper City, and Paxton assisting; Horse Committee, Mrs. Lola Price, and Historical Windows, John Lanz, Sibley.

CENTENNIAL BELLES—Mrs. B. N. Stephens, Piper City, and Mrs. Gordon Watkins, Paxton, general chairmen; Town Committees on Belles: Paxton—Belles, Mrs. Gordon Watkins, and Mrs. Don Karr, co-chairmen; Mrs. Arnold Burklund, Miss Audrey Carlson, and Miss Diane Brown; Bonnets, Mrs. Jim Davis, chairman, Mrs. Wayne Beeth, and Mrs. Herb Coplea, and Kangaroo Kourt, Mrs. James Woodworth, Mrs. E. T. Grove, Mrs. Ray Burklund, and Mrs. Roy Martin.

Roberts—Erma Kennedy and Rose Roetzel, co-chairmen; Loretta Garrelts, Anna Kesting, Donna Thompson, Lucille Mehrings, Peggy Rulison, Annie

Conner, Virginia Gaines, and Darlene Shambrook. Kempton—Mrs. Ida Dowse and Mrs. Stanley Falter.

Sibley—Mrs. Jenny West and Mrs. Fern Brucker.

Melvin—Belles, Miss Marian Simon, chairman; Mrs. Roy Thackeray, Mrs. Melvin Beecher, and Mrs. Don Trimmer; Bonnets, Mrs. John Donovan, Mrs. Robert Boundy, and Mrs. Herman Schneider, and Kangaroo Kourts, Mrs. John Pool, Mrs. O. E. Lippincott, and Mrs. Ralph Busick.

Piper City—Mrs. Vera Soren.

Gibson City—Mrs. Delmar Donner, and Mrs. Valerie Hunt.

Elliott—Mrs. Harvey Ulrich, and Mrs. Melvin During.

Clarence—Mrs. Edwin Hazen.

HOSPITALITY DIVISION — Mrs. Walter H. Arends, Gibson City, chairman; Mrs. Wm. L. Day, Gibson City; Mrs. John Hatteberg, Elliott; Mrs. O. E. Lippincott, Melvin; Mrs. R. W. Chambers, Sr., Piper City; Mrs. Henry Hafer, Sibley; Mrs. J. A. Meis, Roberts; Mrs. Clarence Dowse, Kempton; Mrs. Viola Slater, Paxton, and Mrs. Harold Peabody, Paxton.

STREET DECORATIONS DIVISION — W. H. Gullett, Paxton, chairman; Meredith Drew, Cabery; Clyde Korlaske, Kempton; George Kemnetz, Piper City; Raymond Schuler, Roberts; LeRoy Arends, Melvin; Clifford L. Shaner, Gibson City; Fred Meyer, Sibley, and Donald Craig, Elliott.

FIREWORKS DIVISION—John Larson, Paxton, chairman; Ralph Nafziger, Art Smith, Del Beckstrand, and John Wolfe, all of Paxton.

INSURANCE DIVISION—Edmund Johnson and Wendell Johnson, Paxton.

OPERATING CAPITAL DIVISION — D. C. Hummel, Paxton.

Friends of the Ford County Centennial

Among the many who lent financial support to the Centennial, and are not listed in the advertising columns of this souvenir booklet, is the

Paxton Grab-It-Here Store.

Credit and thanks also is due to the American Legion Auxiliary women of Ford County for their thorough and excellent job of soliciting the advertisements for this book.

W E L C O M E

To The Ford County Centennial!

1859-A Century of Progress-1959



The Businessmen and Citizens of Paxton are truly proud of this community's growth during the past Century... Paxton's Businessmen recognize that this progress has been possible only with the help and backing of other communities in Ford County.



**--- Paxton Feels A Deep Sense Of Responsibility
In Its Position As County Seat Of Ford County---**



Paxton Chamber of Commerce

"PAXTON—The City With A Future"

Congratulations
To Ford County
On Its 100th Birthday
D & R Drugs
The Rexall Store
Paxton, Ill.

SPECULATOR'S SIDE LINE

R. R. Murdock, land speculator and incorporator of Paxton, also had a good reputation in his trade as nurseryman. When wet weather had delayed spring planting of corn some years near the end of the century, a farmer might seek out a crib of Murdock corn from one of his neighbors, and thus select an early-maturity corn to make his late planting. Also many of the Osage orange and other hedges once quite common here are supposed to have come from his stock.

* * *

THE IRON MAN'S EARLY DAYS

In 1894 and 1895 Paxton had a semi-professional baseball team competing with others. It had as their main pitcher a young coal miner from down Springfield way. He was Joe McGinnity who later became famous as a pitcher for the New York Giants. He would on occasion pitch two full games of a double header and became known as Ironman McGinnity.

FORD COUNTY

(written by Remus Curtis)

Melvin, Ill.

(to be sung to tune of "Far
He's a Jolly Good Fellow")

These are the towns that go to make up Ford County. Hello Cabery, Kempton, and Piper. These are part of Ford County.

(Chorus)

And then Roberts, Melvin, and Sibley. These are a part of Ford County.

(Chorus)

And then there is Garber, Gibson, and Perdueville.

(Chorus)

And there is Harpster, Guthrie, and Derby,

(Chorus)

And then Clarence, Elliott, and Proctor.

(Chorus)

Then there is Paxton the county seat. It is part of Ford County too. These are all the towns that go to make up Ford County.

(Chorus)

We are from Ford County the County that we love, the county that we love, the county that we love, the county that we love.

HOME TOWN PRIDE

A former citizen of Elliott, a Mr. Pollack, who made a success in manufacturing overalls at Oshkosh, Wis., remembered his home town in recent years by having built and presenting to that village, a community center building, a unique gesture of home town pride.

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Satisfaction Guaranteed

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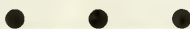
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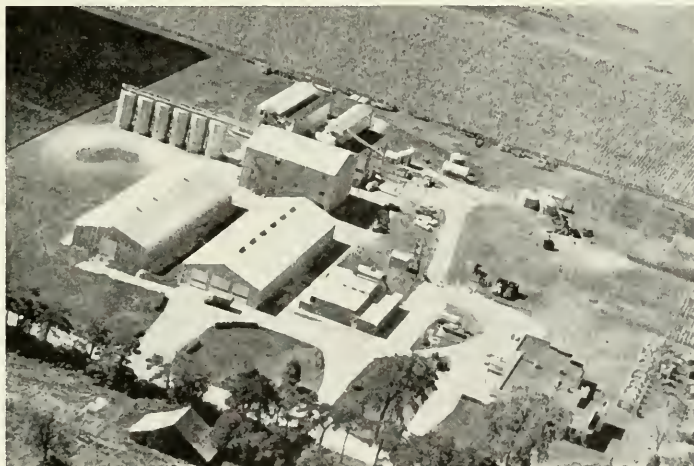


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To the Citizens of Ford County: It is a privilege to extend our congratulations on your 100th anniversary:

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Kempton, Illinois

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The Paxton Bootery

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PAXTON, ILLINOIS

In 1870 he secured the Gilman, Clinton & Springfield, now the Springfield branch of the Illinois Central. The Lake Erie & Western was surveyed three miles south of this place, and the Chicago & Paducah, now Wabash, was projected and surveyed through Saybrook, but Mr. Lott succeeded in getting them to pass through this town. He lived only to age 39, but saw the beginnings of a rapid growth for his town, or rather his wife's town, for he picked her maiden name when the prairie land was platted.

One unique fact in the history of Ford County is the absence of Indian names. The only exception is that of the small streams which have their sources in this county, and they had received their names before any part of the county had any white settlers within its boundaries.

How Names Were Acquired

Rogers Township, at the upper end of the Panhandle, received its name from Jeremy W. Rogers, its first supervisor. The village of Cabery received its name from John R. Caberry of Chicago, who helped furnish the lodge room of the Masons. The Post Office was named Caberry, but one "r"

was soon deleted. Cabery was moved about a mile to the west when the Kankakee and Bloomington branch of the Illinois Central was built in 1878. The main street separates Ford and Kankakee Counties.

On May 3, 1885, a fire destroyed 24 Cabery business buildings and 14 residences, sparing only a hardware store and a livery barn. Today the businesses consist of two garages, a barber shop and pool room, one general store, one hardware store, three taverns and eating places, one grain elevator and coal and seed dealer, and a post office.

Platted in 1867

Piper City was platted in 1867 from Dr. William A. Piper of Philadelphia and Samuel Cross of Chicago. Originally it was confined to Section 4, Brenton Township, but later one addition has been extended into Section 33, Pella Township. Thus it, like Cabery and Kempton, is located in two different townships.

In 1857, a railroad running westward to Peoria was built. It traversed the northern tier of sections in an east by south of west direction. It was not until 10 years after the building of the railroad that the village was laid out.

John R. Lewis was the first postmaster at

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Piper City, Illinois

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BUILDING MATERIALS

REDI MIX

Phone 167

Piper City while the first station agent was John Allen and the first station was called New Brenton. John A. Montelius established the first Piper City bank in 1870. J. C. Culbertson established a bank in

originally part of the land granted to the Illinois Central in the early 1850's.

Marion H. Scott a practicing attorney at Piper City for about sixty years, who was born in Mona Township, relates that there used to be ponds in Kelly Creek in sections 9 and 10 in Mona township up to seven acres in size, which had been formed in early days by herds of buffalo which had used the water stream as wallows to free themselves from flies and mosquitoes. That they once roamed over these prairies of Illinois may be news to many.

Origin of Kempton

Situated on the Kankakee and Bloomington branch of the Illinois Central in the Northwest corner of Mona Township is Kempton. It was named for Wright Kemp.

A little to the south of the town was a hill which, because of its shape, was named Sugar Loaf. Here a post office was established with a store, blacksmith shop, and wagon repair shop. When the railway was built in 1877, the present village of Kempton was platted and Sugar Loaf moved to the new site beside the railroad.

Kempton is the only village in Mona town-



WILLIAM PIPER

. . . Town Named
In His Honor

1901. At one time about 50 years ago there were three weekly newspapers at Piper City, the Pan Handle Advocate, the Piper City Advertiser, and the Piper City Journal. Only one, the Journal, survives.

The section on which Piper City is located was

ARENDS and SONS

Your John Deere Dealer

Phone 192

Gibson City, Ill.

Kentland Dairy

Products Co.

GIBSON CITY, ILL.

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First National Bank Bldg.

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From

The Fashion Shop

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GIBSON CITY, ILLINOIS

COMPLIMENTS

OF

The Farmers Grain Co.

GIBSON CITY, ILLINOIS

ship, which was largely settled by people who came from the Isle of Man, an island about the size of Ford County lying in the Irish Sea between Scotland, England, and Ireland.



JONATHAN B. LOTT

. . . Gibson City Founder

Some Manx names of these immigrants Kelly, Keighin, Corkill, Killip, Kewley, etc., survive in the area. The Isle of Man was also known as Mona's Isle and the township was named Mona. The Isle of Man had been called Mona by the Romans.

Grain Shipping Points

Well served by railroads as Ford County is, and also by hard roads, the several other small villages are today in the main grain shipping points. In the southeastern township of Button, Clarence is one of these. Originally named Kirk's Station, it early also was a fairly busy place with several stores and a bank, and at one time three grain firms.

Four miles west of Paxton, Perdueville is another such grain shipping point. It has also been named Henderson Station, Perdue, and now Perdueville. This station is named after one of the earliest permanent settlers in Ford County, Don Perdue.

A few miles farther west, Elliott serves the Dix township community as a trading place. It boasts two elevators for handling the grain grown in its trading area.

Along the Gilman - Springfield railroad in Upper Dix Township the village of Guthrie also serves that community as a grain center mainly. U.S. Route 54 also gives all season access to it.

Dummer township not only has more railroad service than most cities of several times its size, but it also has on these lines four other small

The Farmers Grain Co., Inc.

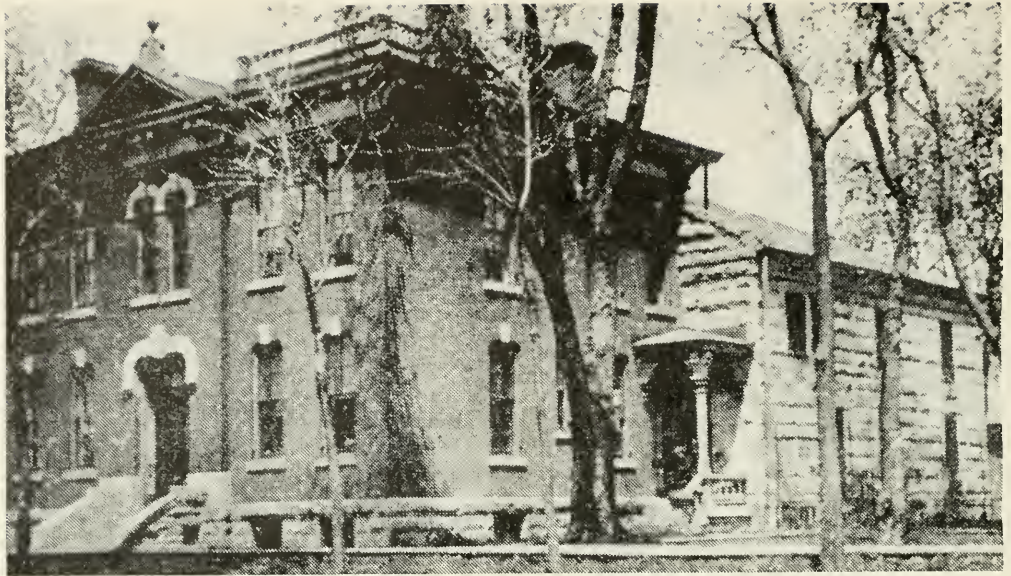
Piper City, Illinois

Grain, Feed and Seed

Custom Grinding and Seed Cleaning

Bulk Feed Delivering

George A. Bayless, manager



SHERIFF'S RESIDENCE AND JAIL IN 1910

Cender Gas Company, Inc.

Gibson City, Illinois

Phone 127

*COOKING AND
HEATING GAS*

*FARM TRACTORS
AND TRUCKS*

Francis Swanick

Custom Corn Shelling

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Western Auto Associate Store

12 West Peoria Street

PIPER CITY, ILLINOIS

JOE HOLMES

Phone 28

Ford County Council

OLSON-BUTE
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Kempton, Ill.

GIBB
Post #588
Piper City, Ill.

WAGNER-DAVIS
Post #641
Roberts, Ill.

PRAIRIE
Post #150
Paxton, Ill.

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*American
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Auxiliary*



MELVIN
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Melvin, Ill.

MARTIN H. SUNTKEN
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Sibley, Ill.

LEE LOWERY
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ROY MILLER Phone 56F13

PIPER CITY, ILLINOIS

stations; Proctor, Harpster, and Derby to the south and Garber to the north.

Center of Farm Area

The center of Sullivant Township is Sibley. Besides the large elevator and grain storage facilities of the Sibley Estate Farms, it has a second grain firm.

The early settlers near Paxton were used to fairs where they lived in the east. They soon had a fair association, with fairs in the fall season, usually featuring agricultural products, but not neglecting horse racing. Later at the south edge of Paxton, Hunt's race track was a popular place for horse lovers, as well as for Fourth of July celebrations at which bicycle races as well as harness and running horse races.

Site of County Fairs

Of recent years Melvin has been the site for County fairs, with good buildings erected to supplant the earlier tent accommodations. Melvin has for many years been the home of the Farm Bureau organization, the Home Bureau, and the Farm Supply Company, dealing principally in

petroleum products and feeds.

T. D. Thackeray's Ford County Press serves as the local newspaper and printing establishment



JAMES ROBERTS

. . . Early Lyman Settler

both for Melvin and Roberts.

Roberts, near the center of Lyman township, is its trading center. Included in its businesses are implement, building supplies, electrical appliances, a bank, fertilizer supplies and a Funeral Home in addition to those stores supplying food and clothing.

PURITY BAKERY



"Wedding Cakes

of Distinction"

. . . .

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Paxton, Illinois**

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MARSHALL & DELMAR ELSON, Owners

Routes in PAXTON, GIBSON,

LUDLOW, LODA AND BAYLES LAKE

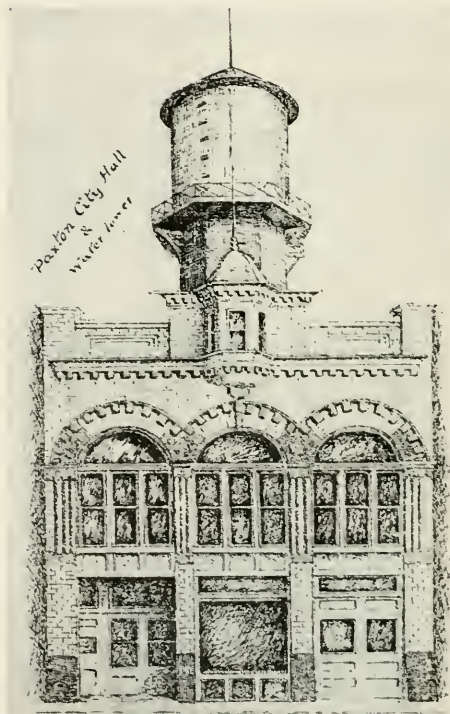
The Hicks Company, one of the largest in this part of the state, is a wholesale dealer and distributor of petroleum products.

Paxton A Growing City

Paxton's population of 3795 in 1950 has since grown by several hundred. Its creation when the Illinois Central was built has already been told.

Paxton boasts an important retail shopping center, two grain and feed firms, one large dealer in fertilizers, three automobile agencies, a hosiery factory, an electronic components factory, a broom factory, a plywood concern, and a corn cob processing plant.

* * *



PAXTON CITY HALL
AND WATER TOWER
IN 1905

* * *

COLLEGE FOOTBALL IN PAXTON

Rice Collegiate Institute had a good football team in 1893 and it played successfully such teams as Millikin university at Decatur, Illinois.

Western Auto Associate Store

Paxton, Illinois

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A Consolidation of the Cullom Chronicle

The Saunemin Headlight

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R. L. VAN ALSTYNE & SONS, Publishers

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Rhode Motors

CHRYSLER - PLYMOUTH

New and Used Cars

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Emory Harford and Son's

MINNEAPOLIS - MOLINE

SALES and SERVICE

PIPER CITY, ILLINOIS

Phone 117

Charles R. Warlow & Co.

Bookkeeping and Tax Services

Roberts, Illinois

Phone 25



GIBSON CITY'S SANGAMON AVE. IN 1907



General Insurance

(We Stand Between You and Loss)

Real Estate

(Equipped to Sell)

Roy D. Thackeray Agency

Green Street

MELVIN, ILLINOIS

Phone 119

1859 - FORD COUNTY - 1959

DAVIS CITY DRUG STORE is proud to have had a part in the last 38 years of the first 100 years FORD COUNTY has contributed to the progress and prosperity of this great State of Illinois.

We join with our friends and the people of FORD COUNTY in the celebration of the

1859—"CENTENNIAL YEAR"—1959

Davis CITY
DRUG STORE
PHONE 28 PAXTON, ILL

Ray R. Davis, R.P.H.

1921-1959

The Friendliest Staff in Ford County Serving Your Shoe Needs!



Oli Ostendorf
Owner



June
Wycoff



Bessie
Anderson



Gladys
Niccum

*Shoes To Fit The Entire Family
Quality • Service • Economy*

OLI'S SHOE STORE

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

When You Think of Shoes — Think of Oli's

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Stewart Funeral Home

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Serving Cabery, Kempton and

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Mutual 9-4741

Alternate No. 9-6755 9-4401

Leather's

SUPERMARKET & PRODUCE

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WITH

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Brown's

East Side Garage

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AUTO BODY

REPAIRING and PAINTING

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EDUCATION

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of

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The American Lutheran Church

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SKETCH OF THE ORIGINAL TOWN OF SIBLEY

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COB CRUSHING - COMBINING

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Fred Tjarks

TV-Radio & Electric Service

Zenith Television

Phone

Shop 36
Residence 41

Sibley,
Illinois

Success To The Ford County Centennial
Paxton Farm Equipment Co.

John Deere Sales and Service

General Electric Appliances • Dodge Trucks

Paxton, Illinois — Phone 46



The
Evergreens Cafe

Home Cooking Always Pleases
Breakfast Lunches Dinners
Private Parties

VIOLA CLARK PHONE 188 MELVIN, ILL.

* * * *

JOHN CLARK'S BARBER SHOP

Congratulations to
— Ford County —

Lachenmyer's Shoe Store

GIBSON CITY, ILLINOIS

Jacqueline — Connie

Class Mates

Weather Bird — Red Wing

Join Our Shu Club

THE HIGH AND LOW GROUND

According to official U.S. Geological Survey maps, the highest points of elevation in Ford county are over 870 feet above sea level. One such "mountain" is 1½ miles east and 1½ miles south of Sibley. The other is about 4 miles west of Gibson City, half a mile south of Route 9. These points are in the ridge, noticeable on topographic maps if not to the senses, that runs northeast-southwest across that corner of the county, from Chatsworth in Livingston, to Saybrook in McLean. Land dips to its lowest "valley" in a line through Melvin, and to the east of the Panhandle. Flat land

is dominant through most of the Panhandle, accounting for extensive drainage work that has been necessary there. True marsh-land is shown in only one spot, a few miles northwest of Roberts.

HOW TO STOP SMOKING

A Mona township farmer was returning from Clifton with a pair of mules, drawing a three-box wagon filled with straw. He was smoking a pipe, and a spark from it lit the straw, which excited the mules, and they continued to run on the road until all of the straw was finally burned. He never smoked again.

CONGRATULATIONS TO A
PROGRESSIVE COUNTY!

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Earth Moving Contractor

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COMPLIMENTS OF

Adent's Grocery Store

CABERY, ILLINOIS

From Ford County's Oldest Business To The Finest County In The World Our Fondest Congratulations On Your 100th Birthday



N. E. STEVENS . . . Founder of Stevens Printing
Co. and The Paxton Record in 1865.

*Now, In Our 95th Year of Serving
the People of Ford County, the Pax-
ton Record and Stevens Printing Co.
Are Proud of Being Ford County's
Longest Established Business . . . And
We Are Showing Our Confidence in
the Future of This Area With A
Major Expansion Program in 1959.*

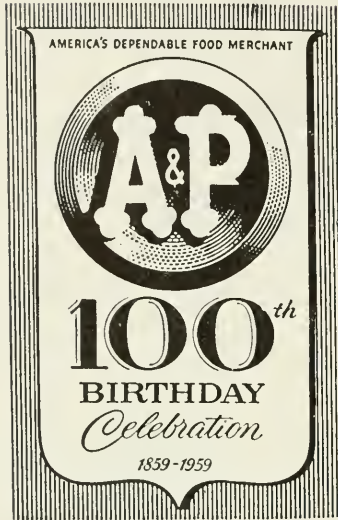
The Paxton Record-Daily & Weekly and Stevens Printing Co.

HERBERT N. STEVENS,
Publisher

ESTABLISHED JANUARY 1, 1865

HERB STEVENS, Jr.,
Editor, Business Manager

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO
FORD COUNTY**



Compliments of

O. J. Vevig, Contractor

334 W. Center

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

A VOYAGE

During one spring, Kelly creek near Piper City was so high that it washed out a couple of bridges so that, in using the public road it became necessary to ford the creek.

One farmer had just bought a new wagon that had a tight fitting box upon it, and was standing in his wagon, driving his team across the stream when the water raised the wagon box above the running gears and floated the box, with the farmer, down stream, while the team, with the running gears, clambered out of the stream.

The farmer floated for about a quarter mile down stream, where the wagon box grounded in a pasture.

Inducement To Settlers

This campaign bore fruit. Many of the more educated men came here as well as a good class of farmers, carpenters, masons, and other laborers.

Also, the railroad workers, mainly Irish and Germans who helped to build the roadbed, lay rails and drive the spikes, took a fancy to the land and became settlers on farms and in the towns. They had been recruited mainly in the East with offers of one dollar a day, and a low rate of \$4.75 from New York City to Chicago as passenger fare. Board and lodging at \$3.00 per week were

PAXTON

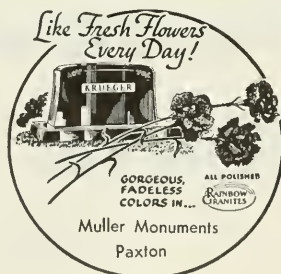
Firestone Dealer Store

107 North Market Street

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

JOHN W. THOMPSON, Owner

Monuments Are Our Business



Phone 54 or 723J

Tank Wagon Service

Cliff Hendricks

Shell Agent

FUEL - OIL - GAS

Office: Hustedt's Shell Station Paxton, Illinois

Rasmussen Implement Company

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DEPENDABLE
SERVICE
AT LOW
COST



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YOUR
HEADQUARTERS

Paxton, Illinois

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ALDEEN & VANCE DAVIS

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PAXTON, ILLINOIS

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Building & Repairing

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(INCORPORATED)

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GRAIN, COAL, LUMBER, BUILDING MATERIAL

FEEDS, SEEDS AND FENCING

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Kempton, Illinois

CLARENCE

MARGE

Higdon's Repair Shop

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PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Ford County Took A Giant Step

From 1859
Covered Wagons

To 1959
Automobiles



H. D. Darr

BUILDING CONTRACTOR

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Wilbur Turley

GENERAL TRUCKING

Phone 85

ROBERTS, ILLINOIS

Roberts Locker Plant

J. E. FREEHILL & SON

ROBERTS, ILLINOIS

Phone 9

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ELSIE

JOHN

HUBERT

Snyder's Produce

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Erwin Roy Conoco Service

Washing - Greasing - Tires - Towing

Batteries - Accessories

Phone 134

Rts. 9 & 45

Paxton, Illinois

succeed and then moved to another place, where our well is at the present time. also promised. Railroad building proceeded at a rapid rate, land buyers and farmers came, and the county was settled.

At the census of 1860, the population of the county was 1,979; in 1870, 9,103; in 1880, 15,050 and in 1900, 18,259. In 20 years or less, the land, except some swampy and wet land, was divided into farms and put under cultivation. As farm mechanization increased, there was less and less need for rural manpower, and in 1950 Ford County's population had fallen to 15,901, a loss of 2,358 in 50 years.

Search For A Simple Necessity

We quote from Mrs. Patton's book an account of the search for a simple necessity—water:

"The new year had dawned upon us in quiet beauty and the sunshine of God's love is over us. The dear old year was kind to us. Each day brought some new blessing to us. The new year brought to us a deep well, with fine water after three months of hard work and many discouragements, Mr. Ketchum and Mr. William Le Fever sank a well or made a trial for a well, and did not

"The well was completed that June and the windmill make was put up and ready for work and the well-house finished and a tank for the milk put in.

"There was not any place that enjoyed at our house so much as the well-house, and why should I not, after twenty years of getting water sometimes one place and sometimes another? One shallow well would go dry and we would go to another and then when it rained they would all have water in and would overflow, and the water would not be fit to use."

Street Corner Water Supply

In the pioneer days not even the town or cities had deep wells or a public water supply. A well with a pump manned by hand and a cup chained fast, also perhaps with a trough at which horses could be watered, stood at some street corner in town.

Here birds and dogs could also slake their thirst when there would be water in the trough.

Today the water fountain has replaced both the common drinking cup and the manual labor of pumping one's own drinking water, and let us not neglect the soda fountain and ice cream bar.

In the older days the family sized ice cream

Sibley Triangle, Inc.

*Mobil Service — Garage
Class A Truck Test Lane
Goodyear Tires
Auto Lite Batteries
Bottle Gas
Tank Wagon Service
24 Hour Service*

*Restaurant
Home Made Pies
and
Home Cooked Food
Steaks — Chicken — Short Orders
Dining Room Available For
Parties — Facilities For 45
We Never Close
Call 57 for Reservations*

SIBLEY, ILLINOIS

Uptown Beauty Shop

149 S. Market

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Phone 447

DONNA McALISTER, Owner

Hi-Way Inn

N. Railroad Ave. — Paxton, Illinois

MAY GOD BLESS THE
PROGRESS OF
FORD COUNTY

RICKIE and STELLA E. REYNOLDS

freezer was the factory producing the home made delicacy. In those days, also, many farm women would club together and make cheese, some 16 to 18 inches in diameter and about six inches thick.

Other homemade dairy products were cottage cheese, Swedish Ost-kaka, sweet cheese and of course butter, colored in winter with an artificial dye purchased at the grocery store.

An outdoor root cellar, filled in the fall with various roots and vegetables, was common.

Early Housing Described

Log cabins were the earliest type of houses built in our area. But from the earliest days lumber

also was available when shipped in. Brick also was manufactured and used along with limestone for foundations and cellars.

While some houses may have had fireplaces in which logs from the nearby woods provided fuel for heating and cooking, stoves were also available mainly separate units for heating and for cooking.

Early farmers and teamsters would drive to get loads of coal from the mines in the Danville area. Later, hard coal for heating stoves was shipped in from the Eastern anthracite mines. These "hard coal" heating stoves could maintain a fairly steady heat for several hours with a minimum of attention. Later, central heating units with furnaces in the basement became more common.

Glen Kietzman

SCOTCH SHORTHORN CATTLE

5 Miles South of Roberts, Ill. on Route 115

LODA, ILLINOIS

COMPLIMENTS OF

A. E. Sandberg

Mens & Boys Wear

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Kietzman's Texaco Service

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ROBERTS, ILLINOIS

COMPLIMENTS OF

Marion's Barber Shop

ROBERTS, ILLINOIS

CONGRATULATIONS

TO

FORD COUNTY CENTENNIAL

Swanstrom Radio and Television Shop

Zenith Sales and Service

Phone 2641 — Buckley, Illinois

WALTER & EVERETT SWANSTROM

Prop. Serviceman

P.O. Box 59

Phone 506

Dale Bayles and family extend their congratulation's to Ford County on it's 100th Birthday.

Living in Loda and having a business in Buckley doesn't change our warm feeling for Paxton and Ford..County.

Buckley Plumbing & Heating

DALE C. BAYLES

BUCKLEY, ILLINOIS

TRANSPORTATION

Ford county was unique in having two pioneer pre-Civil War railroads, according to C. C. Burford, central Illinois historian. Trains were running on the Illinois Central in 1854, although there was no sign of a station at what was to be Paxton; and the Toledo, Peoria and Western lines through present Piper City were running trains in 1858. He notes that from Peoria eastward, all the small towns on this line would have 15 or 20 passengers, on and off each of many daily trains. From that high peak of 50 years ago, the drop in train travel is familiar to all older residents of the area.

The Illinois Central Railroad main line from Chicago to New Orleans passes through the eastern part of Patton township. Its Gilman to St. Louis road serves Lyman, Peach Orchard, Dix and Drummer townships, while still a third branch of the Illinois Central system bisects Rogers and the northwestern corner of Mona township; thus only Pells and Wall townships are without any railroad within their boundaries.

Brenton township is crossed by the T.P. and W. with Peoria its western terminus. The Wabash has more than 15 miles of track through Sullivant and Drummer townships, and the Lake Erie and West-

ern, now part of the Nickel Plate system, traverses the four southern townships for about 28 miles.

Road Older Than County

Of these the earliest built road which passes through Paxton is also the only double track one. This road dates 1851, as the year it obtained its charter. One hundred years later or in 1951 this railroad observed its centennial at a public celebration in the pavilion at Pells Park in Paxton. Several of the officers of the system were speakers. At this time a plaque was affixed to the north end of their Paxton Freight house as a reminder of the end of their first century of existence.

A Record In Railroading

Undoubtly the peak load of passengers using this mode of travel were those attending the Worlds Columbian Exposition in the fall of 1893. On Chicago day—Oct. 9 that year—the suburban lines with their little steam engines handled over 500,000 passengers, still an all-time record in American railroading.

There were many special trains, some even box cars, to accommodate the crowds from downstate, including many from Ford county. A bunch

AUTO SERVICE

Washing - Greasing - Lee Tires

Batteries - Accessories - Electronic Wheel Balancing

Road Service

We Give S&H Green Stamps

Weakly's Phillip 66 Service

140 S. Market — Paxton, Illinois

Call 66

Compliments of

Annex Cafe

Next to Theater

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

GENE & MICKEY WHITMAN

& Frankie says, "Me Too"

COMPLIMENTS OF

Dietterles Royal Blue

ROBERTS, ILLINOIS

LAUNDRY

Hours: Mon. & Sat. 7 A.M. to 6 P.M.

Tues. to Fri. 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.

WASHING
DRYING
STARCHING

WET WASH
BLEACHING
DYEING

Paxton Laundromat

327 E. Franklin

PAXTON — 823

of Paxton lads, later in October boarded the early morning train for a couple of days at that great Worlds Fair.

They expected to reach the city at 8:30 A.M. and have a whole day sightseeing.

Instead they spent two hours at Gilman when they were carried to Sheldon, for another two hours, when they were switched over to Kankakee to wait another two hours until they again rode over I.C. rails to Chicago.

There had been a wreck between Gilman and Kankakee on the one track of those days.

Stories Of Early Trains

Pres. Wayne A. Johnston of today's I. C. system tells of how the North Western road had an awkward little engine unloaded from a boat onto wooden rails covered by strap iron, and that by 1850 that little engine was transporting freight and passengers back and forth out of Chicago over the prairies.

He also relates how their trains when first serving this area entered the city on trestles on the lake front, the city wanting the railway as a buffer or break water to protect its shoreline, but after the Chicago Fire, mountains of debris from

the burnt city were shovelled into the lake until the railway found its foundation solid land. This process is continuing today.

In Paxton a cut was made in 1923-25 to lower the grade through town. The railway built five bridges for crossings and two smaller ones for foot crossing only.

Highways And Air Lanes

After rail transport had its heyday the state began to build state-paved roads, mainly of concrete or asphalt. While one has to go out of the county to find licensed airports, there are a few private landings with accommodations for small planes.

When the various townships were laid a majority of the sections were laid out with public roads on all four sides. Exceptions to this lie in townships such as Sullivant, which being mainly under one person and later a family ownership, could dispense with roads at various places.

Next we find that Drummer has saved a number of miles of road building and upkeep both north and south of Route 9 as well as east and west of Route 47, because these paved roads are built in the middle of sections and can consequently

MONUMENTS - MARKERS

Clinton T. Weerts

130 SOUTH TAFT

PHONE 60

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Chicago Motor Club A.A.A.

Car Insurance and Financing

World Wide Travel Service

CHARLES W. LUNDSBERG, Mgr.

143 S. Market

Paxton, Illinois

Clearview Stock Farms

Registered Hampshire Hogs & Holstein Cattle

ARTHUR B. STEVENSON & SONS

LUDLOW, ILLINOIS

G. A. Kingren

General Contractor

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Phone 170L

PAXTON GAS COMPANY was organized in 1906. For more than half of this century, Paxton Gas Company and its successor, Allied Gas Company, has served Ford County communities with piped gas service.

Many of the employees, who have been the backbone of this Company's service, have grown up right here in Ford County.

They and the Company will continue to try to serve you well in the next 100 years of progress!

Allied Gas Company

*Serving: Paxton, Gibson City, Elliott, Saybrook, Ludlow, Rantoul,
and Rochelle, Illinois*

Gullett-Trees Agency

H. R. Gullett - Dale E. Trees

ROBERTS, ILLINOIS

Frank Salvage

Painter and Decorator

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Phone 591-J

M. J. Mains Company

Office Supplies - Printing

Advertising Specialities

206 N. Market - Paxton, Illinois

Serving Central Illinois

For 22 Years

Arthur D. Seng

CORN SHELLING

and

COMBINING

Roberts, Illinois

Phone 124

John Deere
Farm Equipment
Kewanee
New Idea

MECHANICAL WORK ON ALL TRACTORS

Arends & Sons

MELVIN, ILLINOIS

Call 29 Melvin

Irvin Eshleman

Farm Tile Drainage Contractor

PIPER CITY, ILLINOIS

PHONE 77R3

BOX 41

Sauerbier Rexall Drugs

PIPER CITY,

ILLINOIS

have parallel roads laid out one and a half miles from the state roads.

Boundary Roads Lacking

Patton, Wall, and Button townships have some twenty miles of section boundaries without

COOK WITH GAS

Dr. Frederick Cook, bogus North Pole explorer, spoke at the Paxton Chatauqua, at the time he was being accused of false claims of having reached the Pole.

Somebody sent in the quip to a Chicago newspaper referring to an ad in a Paxton newspaper. A box ad "Cook with Gas", was printed near the ad for Frederick Cook's lecture notice.

any roads on them. However these were usually lacking where it did not change the early rule that no school pupil should have more than two miles from his or her home to the school house. The school district usually comprised four sections of land in each district.

Until the rural delivery of mail was put into operation, many farm families called at the local

C. R. Wisher & Sons

Contractor

and

Cabinet Maker

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Paxton Skateland

Roller skating nightly for everyone

Mondays for private parties.

Hours 7:30 - 10:30

"Get off your seat and on your feet"

Edward W. Ogle

postoffice for their mail, perhaps only once or twice a week.

If heavy snow falls should delay the rural mail man, farmers would get in touch with their neighbors and if it was found necessary they would help open the roads for Uncle Sam's postman to get through.

How Roads Were Kept Up

In earlier days there was a "poll tax" levied on each man for road upkeep and he usually worked out this tax with a man and team for a day; or two days without a team.

The local highway commissioners would be in charge, each man being notified which day he should come to work and where to go. This of course was for farm families.

Later, graveling was done with a team, gravel board bed on a wagon, and a hand shovel or scoop. Then, not to be outdone, some cities began to pave their streets with brick laid on a gravel or sand base. In 1893, Paxton laid three blocks of such pavement on Market, its main business street.

The first experimental pavement of country roads was also built with brick. This was a few

The State Bank of Piper City, Illinois

PIPER CITY, ILLINOIS

Insured by Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

A good bank in a good town!



Phone: 602

GEORGE A. ROBINSON, Owner

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Compliments of

Cash & Carry Cleaners

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Phone 909

Silver Bros. Construction Co.

Washington Street at C.&E.I. Railroad

HOOPESTON, ILLINOIS

WILLIAM SILVER

Phone 1251

HARRY SILVER

Phone 476

Compliments of

V. C. Peterson

Blacksmith & Machine Shop

Portable Welding

LODA, ILLINOIS

Dorotha Mae's Beauty Salon

659 S. Washington St.

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Phone 201

Paxton Salvage Co.

Dealers In

SCRAP IRON AND METALS

Paxton, Illinois

Lenard Belson

Hecht's Market

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

PROPRIETORS:

Mrs. Adrienne Hecht & Harry Turley

ROBERTS, ILLINOIS

Phone 155

Hilt Repair Service

KENNY HILT

109 S. R.R. Ave.

PAXTON, ILLINOIS

Peoples Loan Company

Loans On Personal Property

Telephone No. 156

Paxton, Illinois

EDWARD W. WOLFE, Owner

miles south of Roberts on what is now State Route 115. The earliest cement pavement was in the western part of Patton township on what is now Route 9. Both of these were only one lane wide, so called single-slab width. The system of county-supervised roads and the appointment of a county Commissioner of Highways was a great step forward in promoting improved township roads.

Good Soil—Poor Roads

The good agricultural soil of our county did not make for good roads. Dust, mud and ruts made travel inconvenient, slow and sometimes treacherous. Spreading a good type of road oil did however improve them.

There were times when, as in Paxton, the streets were so bad that singletrees on carriages would crack or break. In the earliest years the sidewalks in front of the stores were two to three feet higher than the street to make it easier to get into or out of the wagon, buggy or carriage, as well as to load up the barrel of salt or other bulky items.

Hitching places were usually on the side streets. The right of way for streets and country roads were mostly four rods or 66 feet wide, a distance fairly uniform throughout this part of the state as right-of-way width. Public roads have a notably wider space between fences in Illinois than are found along many state highways in neighboring Indiana, as a result of this.

* * *

Schools a Major Concern

As the county settled, among farmers and store keepers and other townspeople, the subject of schools became of major concern. In 1855, only a few years before the formation of Ford County, a law had been enacted to assess property for the support of public schools.

A few schools were begun and school houses had been erected in what now is Button, Patton, Wall, and Brenton townships, before the county was organized. They raised the money through personal contributions.

Early teachers were often men; among these were David Patton and Rev. W. W. Blanchard in Patton township; Simon P. Mitchell in Button township. Among women teachers were Mrs. Salina Allen, Miss Loretta Goodrich, Miss Polly Dopps, and Miss Jennie Lyon who was the first school teacher in what is now Paxton.

Miss Mary A. Blanchard also taught in 1859 in the Patton school district, while her father became the first superintendent of schools when the county was organized in June 1859, and David Patton was elected as the first county judge.

A Great Big
CONGRATULATIONS
To Ford County
On Its 100th Birthday

From The
Ford County Retail
Liquor Dealers Association

—:—
*We Are Proud Of Our County, Which Was Developed From A Prairie Wilderness
By The Courage And Hard Work Of An Industrious Group Of People.*

—:—
Local 71 Of Ford County, Illinois



MEMBERS

PANTON—

102 Lounge
Towne & Countrie
Matty's Dugout
Joe's Package Store
Hatties Package Store

GIBSON CITY—

Park Grill
Jake & Kate's
Triangle Package Store
O.K. Cafe
Oscar Bosing Pool Hall

PIPER CITY—

Pat's Tap
Bob's Place

ROBERTS—

Val's Tavern

MELVIN—

Melvin Tap Room

Seng's Garage

Auto - REPAIR - Tractor

Refrigeration - SERVICE - Radiators

Rt. 115 & 54 Roberts, Ill. Phone 32R3

George Benz

GENERAL AUCTIONEER

Phone me for dates at Thawville or see
me at the farm at Buckley, Ill.

Thawville Phone 70F11

COMPLIMENTS OF

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112 Districts In County

As the county settled and roads were laid out along section lines, four sections of land were commonly made into a school district. There resulted as many as 112 elementary school districts in Ford County.

Ford County today has no schools except the public school system. But from 1863 to 1875, Augustana College and Theological Seminary was located in Paxton, on part of the very grounds on which this year's Centurama is being produced. A memorial stone with a bronze plaque is located at the southwest corner of this square, memorializing its location here. This school was moved here from Chicago and was controlled by Norwegian and Swedish Lutherans, but as early as 1870 the former withdrew and established a school which they also named Augustana at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where it still is located. Of the 77 who attended here and were ordained, 27 completed their training after the school was moved to Rock Island, which had become more nearly the center of Swedish settlers in America.

Soon after their removal, a new school was located in Paxton, Rice Collegiate Institute. A nondenominational, they made use of the former Augustana school buildings while a school and dormitory of brick were being erected on Pells

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street, the dormitory later becoming the nucleus of the present hospital building. Courses included scientific, liberal arts, a commercial department and normal training.

There had been high school training with a few graduating classes in Paxton, before the establishment of R. C. I., then for a few years there were no high school classes in Paxton. This school began in 1878 and closed in 1901.

During the school year 1927-1928, or 31 years ago, the number of one-room country schools numbered 95. Elliott and Clarence each had two elementary teachers with no high school. Kempton and Cabery had two grade school teachers, while

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Cabery had two high school teachers plus the superintendent. Kempton Consolidated had only one high school teacher and the superintendent. There were a total of 95 teachers in one-room schools, 57 teachers in town grades, or 152 in all, while the high schools required 46 teachers and administrators.

Consolidation Begins

Since that year, Cabery and Kempton have combined the high school instruction into one unit located in Kempton. Melvin and Sibley have one common high school located in Melvin. Roberts has joined with Thawville in Iroquois County for high school in Roberts. Clarence students go to Paxton, and Elliott territory is mainly in the Gibson system. Also in the edges of the county there is some mingling of school attendance with the adjoining counties.

Today the schools in Ford county are all built into six units, with high schools in Gibson City, Paxton, Roberts, Melvin, Piper City and Kempton. Elementary schools are in the above six places as well as in the following towns or villages: Foolsland, Elliott, Clarence, Sibley, Cabery, as well as in Thawville.

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enrollment of 1039 with instruction in 3 places. Unit #2, Paxton has 1063 enrolled at two places. Unit #3, Roberts-Thawville, 262 at two schools; Melvin-Sibley, 343 at the two towns; Piper City, Unit #5, has 289 pupils, while at Kempton-Cabery, Unit #6, 250 elementary pupils are taught in two places, or a total of 3246 for the 1958-1959 school year. High school enrollment totals: Unit #1, 325; #2, 299; #3, 104; #4, 129; #5, 102, and #6, 95 or a county total of 1054. Thus a grand total of 4300 students are enrolled in county schools with a total of 225 teachers and administrators.

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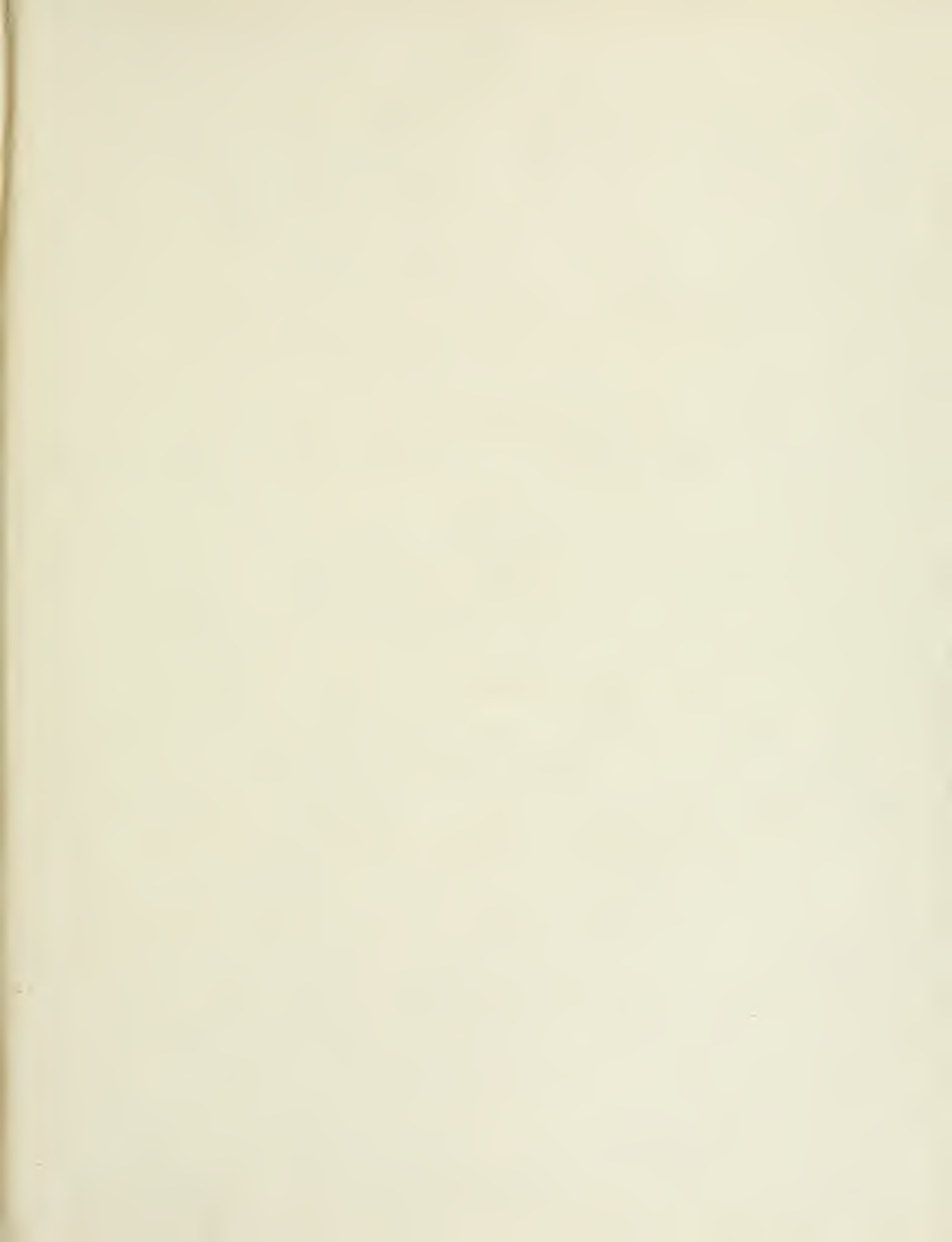
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