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Moweaqua Centennial 1852-1952
Souvenir Program

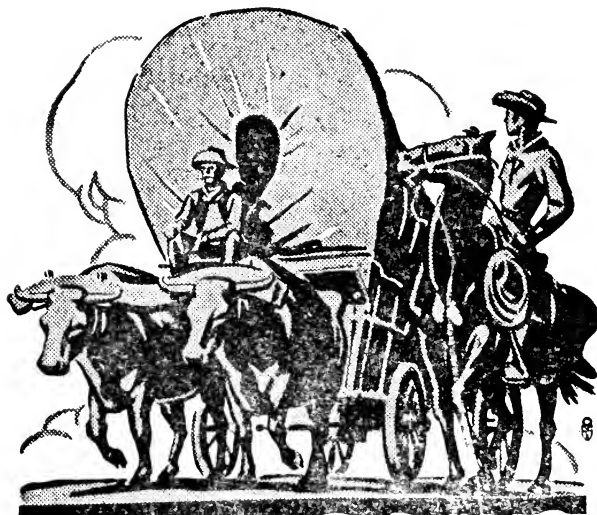
FLORIDA HISTORICAL SURVEY



Moweaqua Centennial

1852 - 1952

Souvenir Program



October 2-3-4, 1952

MOWEAQUA, ILLINOIS

Price Fifty Cents

RESEARCH SURVEY

MOWEAQUA CENTENNIAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of Moweaqua
October 2, 3, 4, 1952



Michael Schneider, Founder

HISTORY OF MOWEAQUA

“MOWEAQUA”, there is magic in the word. We hope every citizen loves it as much as the author of this brief record of its very early history.

Named by Miss Wells

Our little village was named by Miss Mattie Wells, an early settler, who called it Moawequa, an Indian word, meaning in English, muddy water, from the neighboring creek which we know as Flat Branch. In honor of the lady who bestowed upon the plat this romantic name, she was presented a gift of two lots of its fertile soil. All the soil of Moweauqua is susceptible of cultivation. You have but to “tickle it with a hoe and it will laugh with a harvest.”

The original name was spelled “MOAWEQUA”, but in 1890 when the name of the town was registered to be put on the map, the recording clerk misspelled it, writing “MOWEAQUA”. Once recorded, it had to remain. Our village has the distinction of being the only MOWEAQUA in the world.



Margaret (Kautz) Schneider

Centennial—1852-1952

The time has come when it becomes the duty of the people of Moweaqua to perpetuate the names of their pioneers in a Centennial Celebration.

This is a brief record of their early settlement of our village, of the men and women who in their prime entered the wilderness and claimed the virgin soil of Moweaqua as their heritage.

These hardy pioneers, their achievements, the work they accomplished through toil and hardships would be forgotten were it not for a record. Space forbids only names of early settlers and mention of the trades which their posterity continued to the present day.

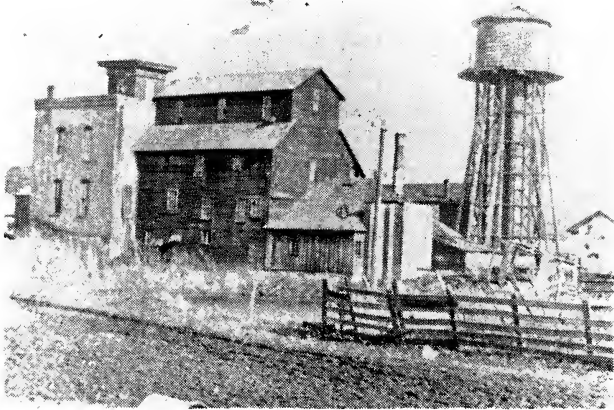
Town Laid Out In 1852

The village of Moweaqua was laid out by Michael Snyder in the fall of 1852.

Chester Wells built the first saw mill in 1852 and sawed ties for the Illinois Central Railroad Company, immediately after the town was laid out.

Mr. Michael Snyder erected the first store building, immediately after the town was laid out and John Middleton & Son put in the first stock of general merchandise. The building stood in the rear of the brick store later occupied by B. F. Ribelin and this was the first brick store, in the town. It was built by W. G. Hayden & Co. in the summer of 1854.

First Flouring Mill—1850



The first flouring mill was erected in 1850 with solid oak sills, one foot square, on which was written with black paint (apparently) by the builder, these words, "This mill erected in 1850." The words are still clearly visible.

The flouring mill was operated by Goodwin, Shay, and Cowle in 1850. The engine in the mill was a marine engine out of a Mississippi steam boat with a fly wheel of iron, 13 feet across. The mill was erected in the midst of the open prairie, four years before the railroad was built. The brick addition was built by Simon Spears in 1856 or '57. It was later used by J. T. Coffman as a custom mill, but, today 1952, it is run by the sons of J. T. Coffman, under the name, "Coffman's Mill", but not retails only groceries and feed.

First Brick Residence

The first blacksmith shop was built in 1853 and carried on by Ezekiel Prescott, who also erected the first brick residence in the spring of 1854. When Mr. Prescott came to Moweaqua, there were but four houses in the place two log, and two small frames. Mr. C. Wells and Phillip Ennis occupied the log house. R. Smith and Simon Spowler lived in the frame building.

Railroad—1854

In the spring of 1851 there had been three surveys for Illinois Central Railroad and Michael Snyder told the Company he would give them every other block of 40 acres if they would locate it here and he also gave ground to build a saw mill and grist mill.

He also gave the square for the public park for which the town will never forget him.

Illinois Central Railroad was finished through this part of the country in 1854 and the land which had not been entered or turned over to the Railroad Co. could be bought for \$2.50 per acre, a vast empire of land worth millions of dollars now, but of little value, then.

In the winter of 1855-56 Ambrose Gilliland was made section foreman of Illinois Central Railroad in Moweauqua. After the Civil War he became station agent in 1867 for Illinois Central until 1887 and invested in land at \$60 per acre.

The Moweauqua station greatly increased during this time because of the large stock shipments.



**Illinois Central Depot
First Preaching—1835**

The first preaching occurred in 1835 at the log cabin home of Michael Snyder and the organization of Methodism was about 1840. This society was first formed at the cabin of Michael Snyder, then living one-half mile west of the first plat of the town.

Preaching continued in the cabin until 1854, when it was replaced by a spacious farm residence of unusual charm and beauty, on the same location. W. C. VanLaws now reside in the original beautiful residence with but few changes.

During the years that regular preaching was held there, Wm. Owens preached frequently and held a protracted meeting in the Snyder cabin which resulted in establishing Methodism by forming a circuit in Moweauqua vicinity.

Catholic Church—1895

The first Catholic service in Moweauqua was held at J. W. Hardy home, north edge of the present village, during the building of the Illinois Central Railroad. The priest came from Assumption to say the mass.

Some of the early names of Catholic families included the Donovans, Lynchs, Whalens, Dowds Gavins and Miligans. This little mission was disbanded when the Macon church was built.

No more services were held in Moweauqua until the coal mine was sunk in 1890 when Rev. Joseph Maurer, the Macon pastor saw the need of many families that had come here to help with the mine. He built the St. Francis De Sales, the first and only Catholic church in our village, with his savings which he had intended using for a visit to his home in Germany.

The first Mass in the new church was celebrated April 14, 1895. Since that time Moweauqua has been a mission attended from Macon. Its present pastor is Fr. Thomas Connolly residing in Macon.

First Methodist Church—1854



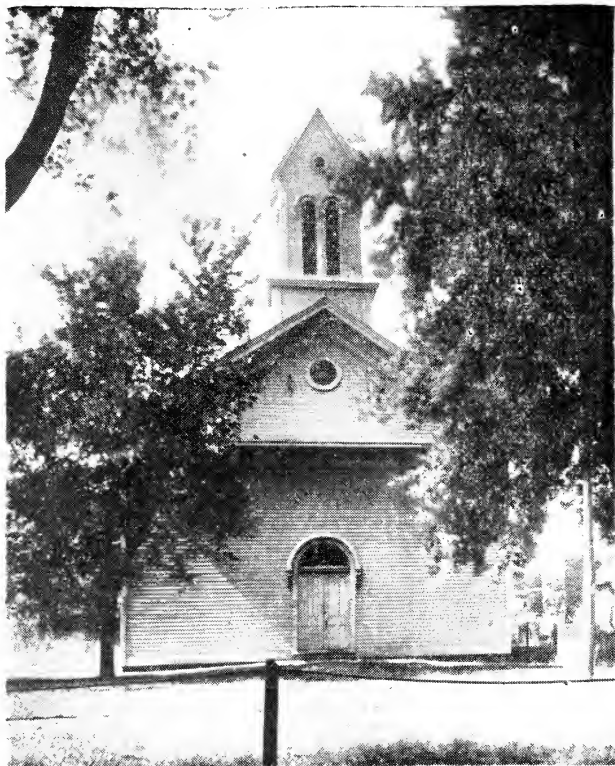
In 1854, the Methodist church was the first church organized, with 30 charter members in a \$2000 modest frame building which served for 21 years in the location of the present Stine Funeral Home.

Miss Mattie McHenry tells us that at the age of 4 years she was among the first persons sprinkled in this first church. Her membership still continues unbroken at the age of 91 years and 7 months. She is a patient in the Moweaqua Hospital where she has resided for several years.

The second Methodist church, built in 1875, costing \$7500, was a fine brick structure with tower and turrett, stained windows and located on the southwest corner across from the city park.

The third and present church was erected in 1908 on the same location as the second church.

First Presbyterian Church—1872



The first Presbyterian Church was dedicated in 1872 and built on the lot where Roger McGee home now stands, west from the park.

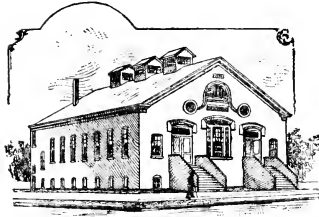
A new \$15,000 church was erected in 1915 on the Thomas Hudson property. The first shovel full of earth was thrown on Monday morning, July 26, 1915, by Mrs. Rebecca Hudson. The corner stone was laid by the pastor, S. A. Teague, Sept. 26, 1915, and the beautiful and modern church was dedicated May 7, 1916.

The home of Mrs. Thomas Hudson was remodeled and made a very convenient Manse.

First Baptist Church—1864

Washington Gregory's home was the first meeting place of the Baptists. In 1864, the First Baptist Church was built with 8 charter members. This building later burned and a new brick building, costing \$7500, was erected in 1890, and is the oldest "church building" in Moweaqua today.

Christian Church—1897



In December, 1896, the Christian Church was organized, following a protracted meeting which was held in the First Presbyterian Church, located west across from the city park. Prominent among the 41 charter members were the families of C. W. Rice, L. D. Kirk, A. W. Smart, G. W. Hyland, W. J. Richart, and J. M. Workman.

In August, 1897, a big tent meeting resulted in the purchase of a lot from Ezekial Prescott and the construction of a brick church, on the Bible tabernacle design, the corner stone for which was laid, Oct. 16, 1897, by A. R. Spicer. E. O. Smith, a member of the building committee gave and hauled, his farm men helping, all the sand, assisted by the teamster, Wm. Moss, a charter member. First service was held February 6, 1898.

On May 11, 1952, Musical Chimes, a gift from Miss Hattie Smith and Mrs. Hester (Smith) Tolson, daughters of E. O. Smith, were dedicated on Mother's Day in loving memory of their deceased parents, E. O. Smith and wife Julia (Rice) Smith. These are the first and only chimes in Moweauqua.

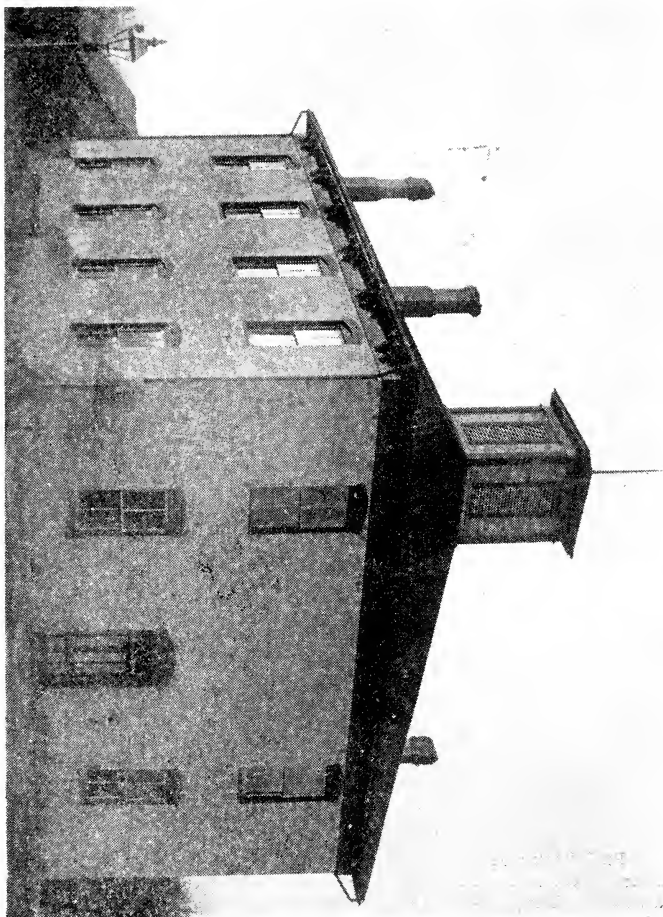
Nazarene Church—1945

The Nazarenes purchased and moved the Ridge Church United Brethren building from Yantisville into Moweauqua in 1945.

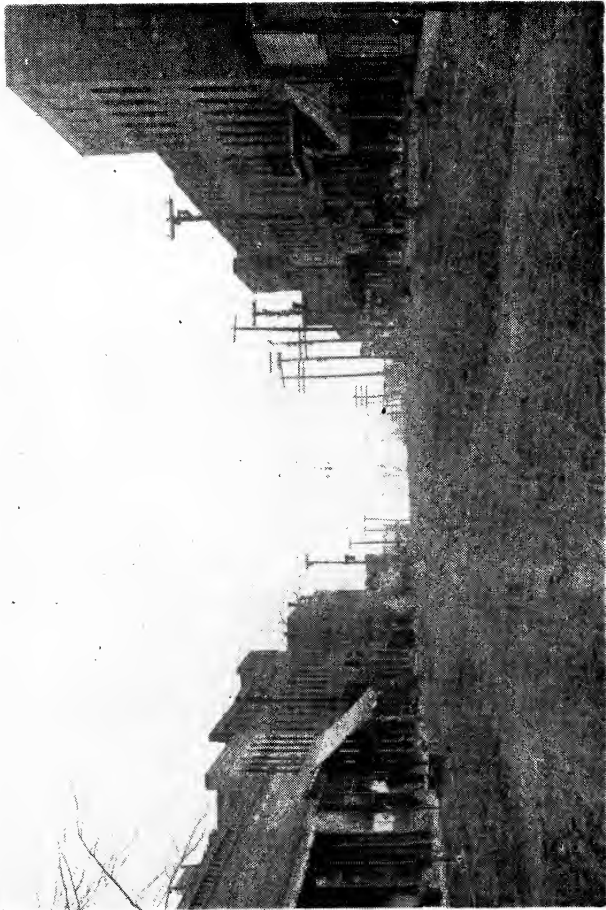
The Grace Baptist and the General Baptist and the Pentecostal denominations have places of worship established in recent years on Main street.

First School—1838

The first school house erected, 1836, was a log building and stood one-fourth mile north of the present town of Moweauqua. It was provided with furniture fashioned by hand, the seats being made by splitting logs, hewing one side smooth and inserting wooden pegs for legs, there being no desks or backs to the seats. A log was taken out of the entire length of the building. Greased paper pasted over the opening made by the removal of a log from the side of the building served instead of glass to light the interior. Holes were bored in the log underneath the window, wooden pins were inserted and a board laid on them served as a desk for the larger pupils to write upon. A large open fireplace was the method of heat.



**Old School House, located west of City Park, where Clyde Hight
home now stands.**

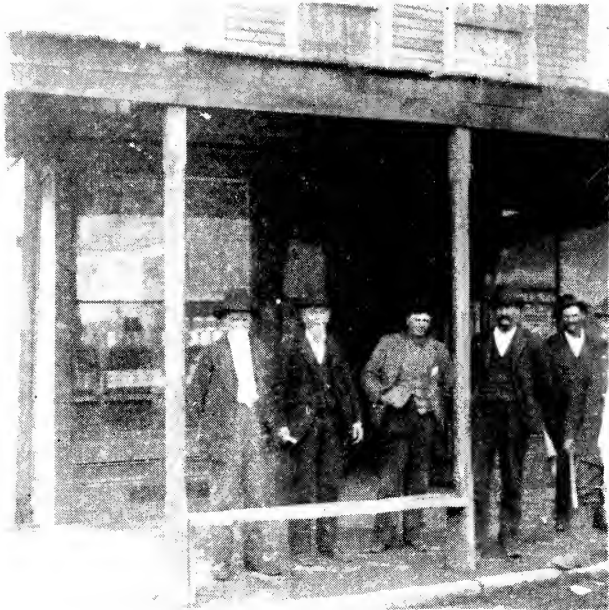


Main Street, Moweaqua, Illinois

First Hotel—1853

Paul Beck was the first regular hotel keeper; he built what was later known as the Potter House in 1853. I. H. Potter kept the hotel after 1854, being one of the oldest settlers. Agnes Rettig remembers Mr. Potter, fat and jolly, sitting under a shade tree by the Hotel, with a gold ring on his thumb. When asked why he wore it, he chuckled this reply, "To make fools ask questions". Mattie McHenry recalls now, from her hospital room, how Mr. Potter gaily rang the dinner bell three times a day in front of the hotel years ago.

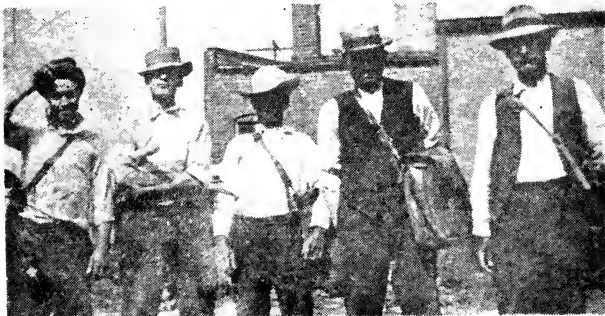
The Potter Hotel building stood where the present Cities Service Station was recently built and the livery barn, so lately torn down on this location was the original barn used for the Potter Hotel guests.



**B. H. McHenry — Post Office and Drugs
First Postmaster**

Records claim that John M. Lowery, one of the early merchants, was the first postmaster of Moweauqua Township.

B. H. McHenry was first druggist where the Corner Cafe now stands, and early Republican postmaster for 25 years. He helped grade for the Illinois Central Railroad in 1852. His daughter, Miss Belle, conducted a successful millinery shop for 27 years. Last surviving member of Mr. McHenry's family is Miss Mattie who resides in the Moweauqua Hospital at the age of 91 years and 7 months, perhaps the oldest living of the old settlers born in Moweauqua. She will be 92 on January 20, 1953.



Five Rural Carriers in 1910. Leslie Moss, left, is the only survivor, having served over 43 years and still in service.



Post Office in 1910. Left to right: Edna Leaf, John Clark, Ada Moss.
This building is now occupied by Esther's.



Leslie H. Moss and Old Tinker

Early Doctors

Dr. Rice, believed to have been the first physician. Dr. W. P. Buck, Army surgeon in the Civil War, settled in Moweaqua in 1866.

Wm. H. Sparling, M.D., was 2 years old when he came to America from Ireland. After a fine education he settled in Moweaqua in 1876 where he became the well beloved physician, bringing healing to those suffering or soothing the last hours of the dying, a partner of the Great Physician.

His son, Dr. James L. Sparling, has followed faithfully in his father's practice and is now the beloved old physician of Moweaqua, still in active practice. He started out as a horse and buggy doctor, as all of these mighty servants of man did before him, but he has lived to experience the modern motor car and the telephone which brings peace to hearts with the doctor's words, "I'm on the way".

In 1924 Dr. James L. Sparling and his wife, Elsie (deceased) established the Moweaqua Hospital which has rendered a blessed service to our village.

First Undertaker—1874

Early records name Leonard Melcher as first undertaker, 1874. He was the step grandfather of Mrs. Dave Adamson.

In 1878, R. M. Stine started an undertaking business over S. M. Adams furniture store. His son, Roy, took over his father's business down town, but later, 1937, established in the residence section, the Stine Funeral Home, the first in Moweaqua. After Roy's passing the business has been carried on by his wife, Essie, and her son-in-law Chester Hodge and his wife, Jean.

First Cemetery—1876

In 1868, a committee was appointed by the Odd Fellows Lodge to choose a burial ground. Their first consideration was land north-east of town, but they abandoned the location because of poor drainage. However, in 1876 they started West Side Cemetery, north-west of town and the first burial there was Joseph H. Pollock on February 6, 1876.

In later years, previous to 1890, when the drainage system was perfected the Odd Fellows laid out a second burial ground on the first site they had considered, known now as Odd Fellows Cemetery.

First Bank—1874

In 1874 Valentine Snyder Jr., John M. Friedley and George A. Kautz established the first bank. After the retirement of Mr. Friedley and Mr. Kautz, the two sons of Mr. Snyder, Karl and Ralph, later, Cedric, were taken into the firm. V. Snyder Jr. passed on in 1909 and his sons continued business until January 1918, when they consolidated with the First National Bank.

Later, the Ayars Bros., Ralph and Mart, conducted a bank. When Ralph retired the bank became the Ayars State Bank with Mart president. At his passing, his son, Haldon, became president and is now the only bank in Moweaqua. The widow of Mart, Addie (Buck) Ayars is still residing here.



First Newspaper—1872

The first newspaper was issued in June 1872. A. M. Anderson, editor, and John Marnell, publisher, and called "The Moweaqua Register". In 1875 Anderson sold to Arnold Hughes. In the years that followed were changes of ownership until April 1, 1893, Bryce P. Smith purchased the paper, "The Call Mail" and made it a money-maker and an influence-maker.

It is owned today, 1952, by C. V. Snyder, son of the late Eugene Snyder, and has almost a world wide circulation since World War I.

It is worthy of note that Reed Wilson, nephew of the first editor, Mr. Anderson, is still a resident of Moweaqua. Reed's father, Robert B. was a carpenter who constructed many buildings in our village, one of which was the present Lina Tolson home, built originally for E. Prescott family. Also the McHenry house, lately remodeled by Roy Snyder.

First Telephone—1887; Water Tower—1907

Moweaqua Telephone Co. was first established by Charles O'Dell as a private enterprise in 1887, until 1904 when John Moll took charge. There were 350 phones in the village and vicinity and the company was valued at \$10,000.

In 1907 Mr. Moll was elected Mayor and during this period the water tower was erected and he was instrumental in securing other improvements.

In 1910 the telephone company was purchased by P. L. Drew, who rebuilt the line and put in underground cable and built a new building in 1916. Today, 1952, there are 700 phones and Don, the son of P. L. Drew, operates the business with his father.



Champion Amateur Base Ball Team of Central Illinois for 1903
Won 24 Games; Lost 6 Games

First Coal Mine—1889

October 3, 1889 coal was discovered almost on top of the ground, 540½ feet to the top of the vein. A shaft was soon constructed and within a few months coal was mined successfully until December, 1932, when the mine disaster took the lives of 54 miners and the mine ceased to operate.

First Clubs—1899

In October 1899 the "English Literature Club" was organized for the study of English literature with 15 members.

Later in the same year, December 1, 1899, the "Matrons' Club" was organized for reading and sociability and in 1904 it extended its work to include the "West Side Cemetery", which was incorporated under the State Law in 1908.

Previous to 1904 this first cemetery had been under the supervision of the Odd Fellows Lodge.

First Library—1922; Woman's Club—1913

In 1922 the "Mary and Martha" class of the Methodist Church started a small circulating library within the church for public use. A program was given with admission fee, "a book".

In 1923, Mrs. Dudley Porter was president of the Moweaqua Woman's Club which had been organized November 1913, and it was around her hospitable fireside that the Moweaqua Public Library was born through dreams of its members, whose one obsession was a library.

In 1925, Mrs. Edna Sollars was elected president of the Moweaqua Woman's Club and she made real the fireside dreams of the former years. A street Carnival October 21, 1925 under the auspices of the Woman's Club was given for the benefit of a free public library.

The original circulating library of the Methodist Church was then donated to the public library. Late in 1926 the library was transferred from private to civil control.

Mrs. Mary (Kautz) Gregory, wife of Wilbur, was the first librarian and today, 1952, her sister-in-law, Mrs. Madge (Adamson) Gregory, wife of Glenn, is librarian.

Hard Road—1924

In December 1923, Main street was being paved. The State Hard Road was started in the summer of 1924 and advanced at the rate of two miles a week. It was finished October 22, 1924, when a big barbecue celebration in Pana fed 15,000 people with 15 beeves and coffee was made by tractor steam boiler. The feature of the day was an address by Gov. Len Small whose influence brought the hard road down state.



Left to right (seated): Kit Day (Mrs. Karl Porter), Cora Snell (Mrs. Karl Snyder), Mae Miller, Elizabeth Armentroat, Julia Hudson. Left to right (standing): Edna Day, Rachel Jarvis (Mrs. Jas. Jacobs) Rose McKay (Mrs. Harry Day), Adelaide Buck (Mrs. M. S. Ayars), Daisy Kirkman, Flo Goodwin (Mrs. Metz), Nellie Ponting.

INTIMATE GLIMPSES OF EARLY SETTLERS

Michael Snyder

In 1833 Michael Snyder, born in 1812, and Margaret Kautz, born in 1811, both of Germany, were married in Ohio. In 1835 Mr. Snyder bought 40 acres of government land adjoining the present site west of Moweaqua. When they settled on this land in 1837 the country was wild and tractless; deer, wolves, and wild game were numerous and neighbors were few and far between. They lived undergoing all the privations and hardships of early pioneer life with little to encourage them but their strong arms and willing hearts to labor and struggle. To such as these the present generation owes its prosperity.

Mr. Snyder had to draw all his grain to St. Louis with ox teams where he sold it for 37¹/₂¢ a bushel and his hogs brought \$1.25 to \$1.50 a hundred pounds.

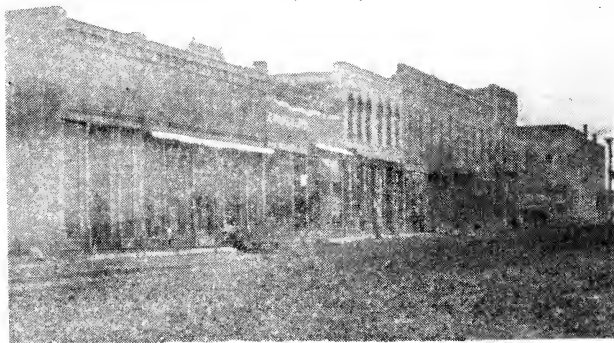
They worked early and late in the upbuilding of their new home. He invested his money judiciously, buying other land near his original purchase until he owned 2000 acres of surpassing fertility which included the land upon which the thriving village of Moweaqua now stands.

Attracted by the unrivalled beauty of the spot he determined to plat the land, giving to Shelby County one of its brightest ornaments, one of the prettiest villages in the state. He was a public-spirited man and believed there was a bright future for Illinois.

In 1852 he owned the land and laid out and platted the now beautiful little village of Moweaqua.

In 1882 his foresight prompted him to give the town a site which he did by generously donating and dedicating for public park purposes, a beautiful block of ground in the center of the town plat, 400 feet square, to be used perpetually by the public as a park. We lament, today 1952, that the beautiful elm trees which have adorned the park for 100 years, are dying of a Dutch elm disease which is caused by a European bark beetle which carries the disease.

Michael Snyder the honored founder of the village of Moweaqua, whose name is indissolubly linked with its rise and growth, will always be remembered for his progressive public spirit and generous benefactions.



Main Street, Moweaqua, Illinois



The Howell Store, which is now the City Hall. Notice sign on window, "Men's All Wool Suits \$7.50 up"



The Rural Mail Wagon used by Leslie H. Moss in 1910.

PROGRAM

THURSDAY—OCTOBER 2—

- 1:00 p. m. Official Opening. Dr. J. L. Sparling, Judge Robert J. Sanders; Mayor Charles E. Howard; Village Board of Trustees, Earl Jacobs, John Funk, Frank Simpson, Tom Bilyeu, Earl Cheatham.
- 2-3 p. m. Free Entertainment Acts.
- 4-7 p. m. Free Bean Meal — Ansar Shrine Clown Band
- 8-9 p. m. Free Entertainment Acts.
- 9-12 p. m. Free Square Dancing.

FRIDAY—OCTOBER 3—

- 10-12 a. m. Children's Activities at New Athletic Field.
Bicycle Parade, Children of all ages. Prizes will be given for decorated bicycles
Prizes Will Be Given In Silver
- Candy-kiss scramble, pre-school age;
Marble shoot and bubble gum contest for ages 6 to 9 .
Balloon blowing contest and marshmallow contest, ages 9 to 12.
Sack Race, Girls 12 to 14.
Pie Eating Contest, Boys 12 to 14.
Ball Throwing Contest, Girls 14 to 18
Greased Pole Contest, Boys 14 to 18.
Greased Pig Grand Finale
- DOLL SHOW at Fire House to be on display Friday. Entries to be in Thursday night between 7 and 9 p. m.
Prizes will be given for these:
Best Home made doll; Prettiest Old Doll; Best Dressed Old Doll; Most Unusual Doll; Smallest Doll; Largest Doll.
- 2-3 p. m. Free Entertainment Acts.
- 3-5 p. m. "505" Chanute Field Air Force Band and Drill Team.
- 6:30-7 p. m. Decatur V.F.W. Clown Band. Speakers Mr. Bland and Mr. Whitney .
- 7-8 p. m. Contest Judging and announcement of winners in Doll Contest.
- 8-9 p. m. Free Entertainment Acts
- 9-12 p. m. Free Square Dancing

SATURDAY-- OCTOBER 4—

- 10:30 a. m. THE BIG PARADE.
- 12-1 p. m. Old Timer's Get-together— Free Lunch
- 1-2 p. m. Free Entertainment Acts
- 3-5 p. m. FREE PAGEANT AT NEW SCHOOL SITE
"Mirror of Moweaqua—Reflections of a Century"
- 7-8 p. m. Free Entertainment Acts
- 9 p. m. Steer and TV Event
- Balance of evening—Free Square Dancing and Dancing Contest.

Next Centennial—October 2052

MIRROR OF MOWEAQUA

REFLECTIONS OF A CENTURY

by
HOWARD PAUL

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

1. God's Mirror and the virgin wilderness
2. Black Hawk
3. First Family — Jack Traugher
4. Last of the Kickapoo — Black Hawk War
5. Civilization on the Long Grove Branch
6. Serpents of Steel
7. A City is Born
8. The First Wedding
9. Death Comes to Moweaqua
10. When Johnnie Comes Marching Home
11. School Days
12. A Day in 1890
13. A Day in 1916
14. A Day in 1952

INDUSTRIAL REFLECTIONS

1. Tillers of the Soil
2. The Mill
3. Git Along Little Doggie, Git Along
4. Black Gold
5. Industry in Moweaqua Today

RELIGIOUS REFLECTIONS

1. The formation of the faiths in Moweaqua

REFLECTIONS OF AMERICANA

1. A Place in the Sun
2. In Memoriam
3. Moweaqua's Gift to Posterity
4. Our Community Today
5. Finale

Tom Candy Ponting

The records show the names of some men who have risen above the average of their neighbors. Perhaps no one man did more to raise the standard of the cattle business than Tom Candy Ponting, who was connected with it for more than half a century. Mr. Ponting was born in England in 1824. He came to Christian County in 1847 and began buying cattle paying six to eleven dollars a head. He drove many cattle to Chicago and New York and other towns and always found abundance of wild pasture all the way. He came to this vicinity in 1850.

On one of these trips young Ponting stopped at the home of Michael Snyder and there met his young daughter, Margaret, whom he thought the most beautiful little girl he had ever seen. Because Margaret looked out of the window as Mr. Ponting started away her mother threatened to whip her.

In the spring of 1851 Mr. Ponting purchased about 350 head of cattle, buying from near Springfield to the Wabash River. After gathering the cattle he penned them up where Moweaqua is now. One of the pens was where the Methodist church now stands.

Mr. Ponting was bringing 150 cattle to market in the East, and reached Attic, Ind. on Sunday, just as two church bells were ringing and the cattle in between. Mr. Ponting was near the head and stopped the oxen and "I talked to the cattle as if they were children. They listened a moment and then moved on."

Mr. Ponting, as author, recorded in his book of 102 pages, that the most successful investment of his life was in 1856, when he married the pretty little girl Margaret, daughter of Michael and Margaret (Kautz) Snyder. So active was his life that he barely stopped dealing in cattle long enough to get married. Seven children were born to this union. It is remembered that when Mrs. Ponting was just a slip of a girl she dropped corn from a basket on her arm where the business houses now stand, after the ground had been broken by her brothers, with ox teams and rude plows. She remembered Indians roaming over the prairies and that they were given bacon, sugar and coffee by her parents.

In later years, this remarkable old gentleman, Tom Ponting, and his devoted wife took many trips, one of which was to England. Their closing years were spent peacefully together in Moweaqua.

Their only living child is Everett Ponting of nearby Stonington. Two granddaughters are residing in Moweaqua, namely Mrs. Alta (Adams) Hight, wife of Clyde Sr., and Mrs. Lois (Adams) Lowe, wife of Wayne Sr., who are children of Jessie (Ponting) Adams, and her husband Wheeler.

Capt. A. C. Campbell

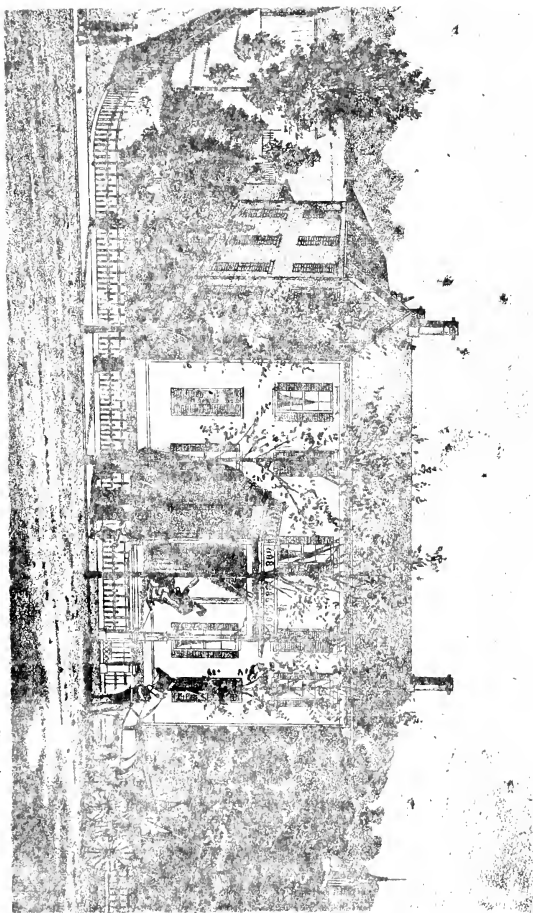
Capt. Alfred C. Campbell, a distinguished veteran officer of two wars and a leading farmer, came to Moweaqua in 1851 at a time when the settlements were mostly in the timber. He attended primitive pioneer schools held in log houses where slabs served for benches and greased paper for window glass.

His grandfather, Jeremiah Campbell, was a soldier in the Revolutionary War, and Capt. Alfred Campbell was prominent in both the Mexican war of 1846 and the Civil War of 1861.

He was one of the enterprising men of Moweagua and in 1880 was elected Representative from the 33rd Senatorial District of Illinois.

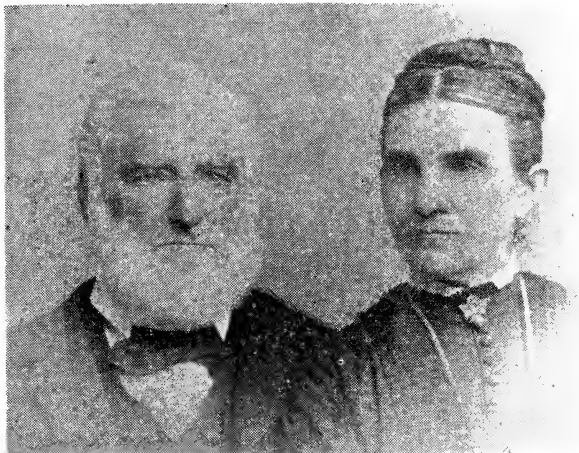
He married Polly Foster in 1833 and their daughter Elzira Clark was the mother of the late Polly (Clark) Jolly, who resided in the original Campbell homestead until her recent passing as a patient in the Moweagua Hospital.

Residence of Captain A. C. Campbell, Moweagua, Illinois, Shelby County
Recently known as the Jack Jolly residence



Ezekial Prescott

Ezekial Prescott, a young pioneer, heard about the railroad so, he arrived in Moweaqua in 1853 with \$1.75 after walking all the way from Springfield. He swam across rivers and forded streams. On June 16, 1853, he married Mary Elizabeth Taylor, who was the first bride in our village. They began housekeeping at once, first taking boarders, at one time accommodating 19. Mrs. Prescott had no way of lodging her guests except on straw ticks laid on the floor, but they were glad to get even such.



Ezekiel and Mary Prescott, the first couple to be married in Moweaqua.

When the railroad was finished in 1854, Mrs. Prescott and all the other women put on their bonnets and hurried to the railroad track where they boarded a flat car and rode all the way to Decatur and return. There was yet no depot.

Mr. Prescott was a contractor for the building of business blocks and houses, one of which is the present Lina Tolson dwelling in which Prescotts lived at the birth of Luther, their son, whom Mrs. Agnes Rettig, a daughter of Ezekial, remembers fell off the steps at the age of two and knocked out all his teeth and broke his nose.

In 1894 the Prescott family entertained Mrs. Mattie McCoy of California, formerly Miss Mattie Wells of Moweaqua, the lady who gave to our little village its name.

Mr. Prescott served as Justice of the Peace for 16 years in Moweaqua, and resided here until his death. Two of his children are living here now in 1952, namely, Mrs. Agnes Rettig and Mrs. May Porter.



This is the Ezekiel Prescott home, now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Long.

Beverly Armstrong

Beverly Armstrong at the age of 20, entered a tract of Government land in what is now Moweaqua Township in 1847 and did his share in developing the agriculture of this section.

Previous to this, his father, John Armstrong, was one of the original pioneers in Shelby County, having built the first log cabin in northern part of Shelby County in 1825. He killed 3 panthers near his cabin, one of which was the largest in this country, the pelt measured 11 feet 4 inches in length. He made the first land entry in Flat Branch in 1832.



This is a picture of the McHenry home, which from all records, is the oldest house in Moweaqua. It is now the residence of Roy Snyder, Jr.

James W. Gregory

In 1858 the James W. Gregory family moved to Moweaqua when James was 13 years of age. During the seventies he was Mayor of Moweaqua and has been largely instrumental in securing all the improvements in our village, including sewerage, water works, electric lighting, cement walks, and active in school matters. Both he and his wife Carrie (Snyder) were very active in the Baptist Church. Later in 1908 he became Vice-President of First National Bank, having been one of its organizers.

Washington Gregory, father of James W., was a Baptist who helped to organize the first Baptist Church of Moweaqua and his residence, before being torn down in 1908, was one of the oldest in our village.



Washington Gregory

Beverly Armstrong, son of John, lived in the Moweaqua community to the ripe old age of 99 years, perhaps the longest lifetime of any person in Moweaqua. His only son, Wm. F., lived in Flat Branch since his birth in 1827, where he attended the first log cabin school there. Wm. F. married Emma Garey, and they are the parents of Mrs. Essie Stine, widow of Roy Stine, who established the first funeral home in Moweaqua in 1937.

Ephraim Adamson

Ephraim Adamson, a highly respected farmer, settled near Moweaqua in 1868. He married Miss Josephine Scott. His youthful military career was most colorful. His grandfather, Wm. Adamson, a native of Spain, was a soldier in the War of 1812. Ephraim served in the Civil War as body guard to President Lincoln in Washington, D. C. in 1864, and was there at the time of the assassination of the Chief Magistrate of our Nation, and was at the Capitol during the Grand Review, in which he took part. David Adamson, son of Ephraim, has been in the hardware business since 1899 for 53 years, the longest of any man now living in Moweaqua. He is still in active business at the age of 83.

Dudley Watson

Dudley Watson, Baptist preacher and farmer, freed his negro slaves in Kentucky and came to Mowcaqua in 1857, purchasing land where he reared 12 children, one of whom, Rebecca (Watson) Mackey, was the mother of Fannie Moss, wife of Leslie. The Watson farm is now occupied by Ernest Zindel, east of town.



Left to right (seated): Lawson Walker, Jay Shay, C. F. Gaskill.
Left to right (standing): Wm. Morris, Bud Wiley, John Hanson, Robert
Duncan, Mr. Tallman, Charlie Keiser, Jim Shepherd.



H. F. Day

Henry Franklin Day

In May, 1857, Henry Day came to Moweaqua. He crossed the ocean from Birmingham, England, his birthplace, when he was 14 years of age. They were 7 weeks on the water and he was sorry when they landed—a rough voyage.

His uncle, Henry Day the First, of Boston met him and got a position for him as clerk and bookkeeper. Imagine a bookkeeper at 14. This was in 1850.

Later he tried his wings in New York and in 1858 went to Chicago and at the Stock Yards met Mr. Tom Candy Ponting, who advised him to go with him to Moweaqua to locate. He did and remained here until his death on July 16, 1905.

In an old ledger many old time citizens charged purchases—occasionally ten to fifty cents.

Well known names—Joe Adams, John Freeman, W. J. Snyder, Phillip Ludwig, Thos. Hudson, Ezekiel Prescott, Joe and Beverly Armstrong, A. C. Campbell, A. Gilliland, Ab Widick, Geo. Rice and many others.

Henry Day the First wanted Henry F. to marry a Boston girl, Felicita somebody, but H. F. soon fell for the charms of a girl who rode a spirited horse through the tall weeds—she was keeping house for her brother, Charles March, who lived on the farm known as the Grooms farm.

Louisa March finally consented to make him happy and they were married in her home in Jacksonville, June 3, 1862. We have her wedding dress. They went to housekeeping on the corner where the last of their children still live. First there was a small brick house between the big house and another house where now stands the Snyder Garage and there five children were born. They were two years building the present home, completed in 1872.

When Henry Day the First came to visit the young couple, he had his opinion of a girl from the wilds of Illinois. When he stepped in and saw her with a babe in her arms, he knew a gentlewoman at first sight and took her in his arms, saying "My Dear Lou", and to his last days he dearly loved Lou.

When H. F. came here the weeds were taller than a man's head—no sidewalks. He lived at the I. H. Potter Hotel and loved being invited to the Michael Snyder's and Capt. Campbell's.

Mrs. Day spoke of the first mosquito netting which arrived in the home of Mrs. C. F. Hardy. Immediately all the women wanted netting—and got it.

The mud was so deep that a friend from the country came in a wagon and took the Days, the preacher's family, Rev. Joseph Lane, who lived next door, and others to church.

H. F. had a fine bass voice and at a time when transportation was no easy task, he went faithfully to Decatur or Springfield to practice with the choruses which were trained by metronome time and which, joined by innumerable other choruses wended their way to Boston and there took part in the great jubilee in which 10,000 voices sang to the accompaniment of 1,000 orchestral instruments, while prima donnas of the day sang arias.

For 25 years he gave elaborate pig roasts to his friends. He served as Mayor of Moweaqua in 1891 and was postmaster under President Cleveland.

Still dwelling in the original home are his two daughters Misses Aileen and Edna.

—Aileen Day.



This is the Ribelin building, now occupied by Johnson Super Market



Henry (Dutch) Nickan



Moweauqua Base Ball Team. Top row, left to right: Delos Scarlette, Art McKee, Geo. Jackson, Ralph Snyder. Seated, left to right: Doc Kyner, Roy Snyder, Archie Gregory, Karl and Blaine Snyder. Front, Billie Miller.

Earliest Pioneer Life—Prior to 1852

The first pioneer of the land that became Moweaqua Township, was Jacob Traughber, who came March 1831 and resided there till his death 1868 at age of 71.

In 1850 this land was little less than a wild country. Near the town of (later) Moweaqua lived Michael Snyder, a most excellent and noble gentleman, and the Wydick families, James and Wm. Howse, Jonathan and Cornelius Tolly. These men saw the prairie sod broken where the town of Moweaqua now stands.

There was much sociability among the people. There was no feeling of caste or class. Any man who behaved himself was as good as another. Everyone was considered honest and all paid their debts. All were willing to help each other as was proven by all the settlers even from Shelbyville and Taylorville who worked together and built a cabin for John Armstrong, who made the first land entry in Flat Branch township in April 3, 1832. He was the great grandfather of Essie (Armstrong) Stine, who late husband, Roy, established Moweaqua's first funeral home.

Other settlers of this period were John Casey, the Gordons, and Dentons.

Records prior to 1852 in Shelby County tell of the abiding affection and love manifested by children for their parents, brothers, sisters, among the pioneer people and the good effect it produced on the children in early Illinois as compared with conduct of children in the same territory now, thus leading to the belief there was a latent power ruling in the family then that does not wholly dominate it now. Children were not spoiled "by sparing the rod" as many pioneers' memories recalled.

In gathering of the people there was interest and affection for each other but there were few or no attempts at trifling with true affection of the heart, later called "flirting". No such word existed then, states James Haines, whose reminiscences were recorded in 1894. The people were happy and industrious in their cabin homes. Loafing was unknown. That came with the earliest saloons for sale of intoxicating liquors in small towns.

The games of those days did not include cards or dice or any other gambling devices. Vice and gross immorality were almost unknown. Social singing of play or forfeit songs were very popular pastime, which usually closed with singing of well known hymns. One familiar forfeit song was:

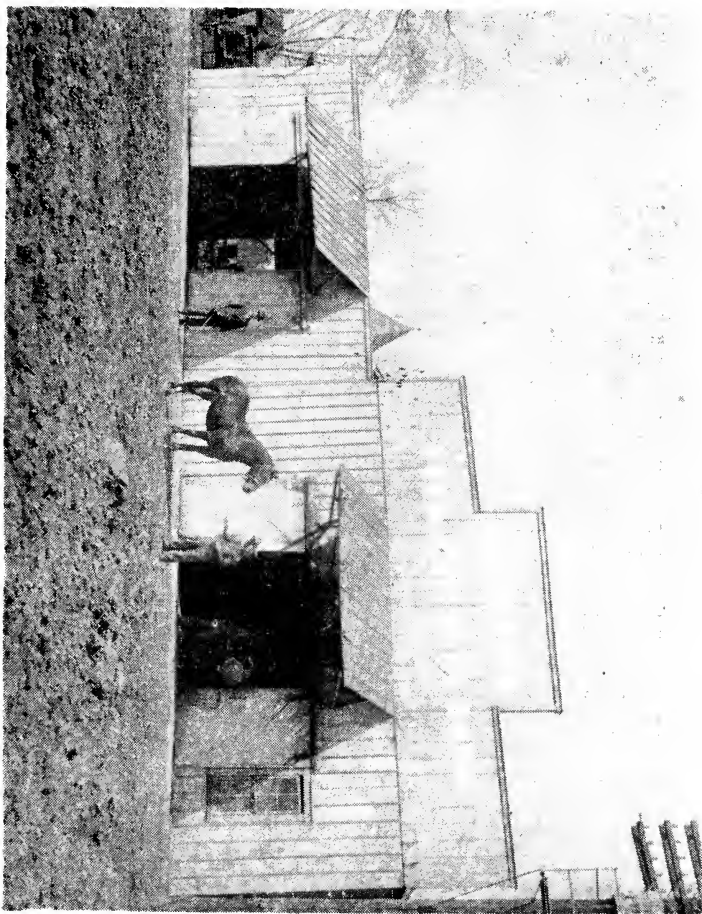
*"The needles eye that doth supply
The thread that runs so truly through
How many a lass have I let pass
Because I wanted you."*



Picture taken in 1890. Minnie Gaskill, Effie Winchell, Ella Gaskill, Emma Rettig Corzine, Jennie Smith Shay, Minnie Pollick Morris, Rebecca Coulter, Anna McDonald Whitehead.

Nearly all the books (known) then were the Bible and Hymn-book, and Pilgrim's Progress. Going to meetings, as church gatherings were called, was popular and practiced in family style in those pioneer days.

Even the weather was somewhat different in those early days as the seasons then were more uniform than now; the winters were severe, but spring came earlier than at the present time. The heat of summer was less oppressive and for a reason plain to be seen. The earth being covered with such a thick coat of prairie grass it did not reflect the heat as the ground now does when made bare.



W. C. Crews barn, located east of where Cities Service now stands.

One important epoch, the "deep snow", occurred the winter of 1830-31, causing much suffering to early settlers. Snow began falling in December and continued without abatement through the winter. In the timber it was 4 to 5 feet deep, roads and fences were blocked so that people passed with their teams over them. For weeks the settlers were virtually buried in their cabins and went forth only from dire necessity for food and fuel. Much of the stock perished, the wild game was found in immense numbers, frozen in their tracks.

Then in January, 1836, came the "sudden freeze", known as the "Manitoba Wave", rarely occurring. Up to noon of that day it was warmer than usual and raining. Soon after midday, a storm broke forth when every puff of wind was like the point of an icicle. Boiling water cast into the air, came down like a sheet of ice. Ponds and streams were locked in ice suddenly, even the frogs had not time to pull their heads below the surface for one passing a pond later saw a bushel of frog heads.

The wives and daughters of the pioneers had to card, spin, and weave the wool and flax raised by the men, to make cloth out of which they made all the family garments. The mothers of this period are faithfully described in the Bible, Proverbs 31—verses 10 thru 31, "A Virtuous Woman".

In lieu of hats the early settlers wore caps made of squirrel or coon skins with the tails dangling at the back and he was regarded as well dressed who boasted a fringed or buckskin shirt and trousers with mocassins. This was in 1827, in early Shelby County.

As early as 1834, postage stamps were not in use and it cost 25c for each letter. The first Shelby County postmaster, 1853, Joseph Oliver, carried the letters in his hat and would hand them to those to whom addressed on meeting them in the village.

Corn sold at 15c per bushel, wheat 25c, hogs for one cent per pound, cows at \$5.00. Market 100 miles, almost impossible trial for ox drawn wagons.

If the main track in the roads got muddy they simply spread out a little, as the new tough sod would make good footing for awhile. The broad prairies furnished the hay for the stock.

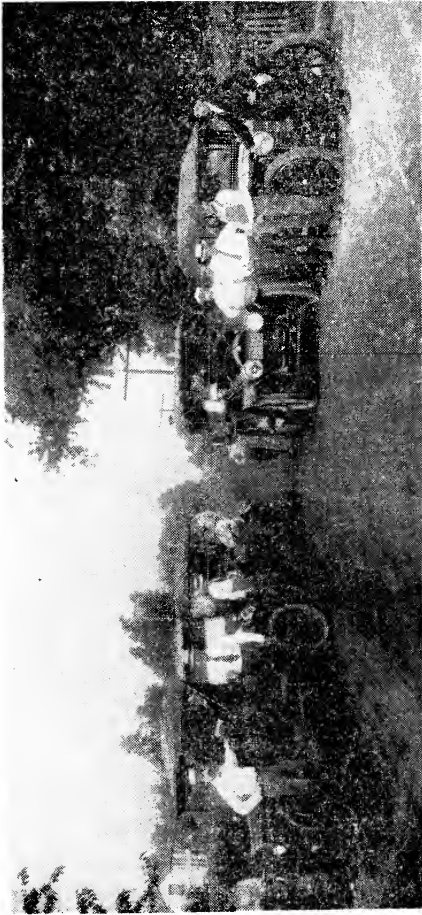
Such was the sturdy pioneers who founded a grand empire in a great wilderness. Gone is that free-hearted hospitality which made of every settler's cabin an inn where the belated, weary traveler found lodging without money or price.

Moweaqua's population in 1952 is 1590.

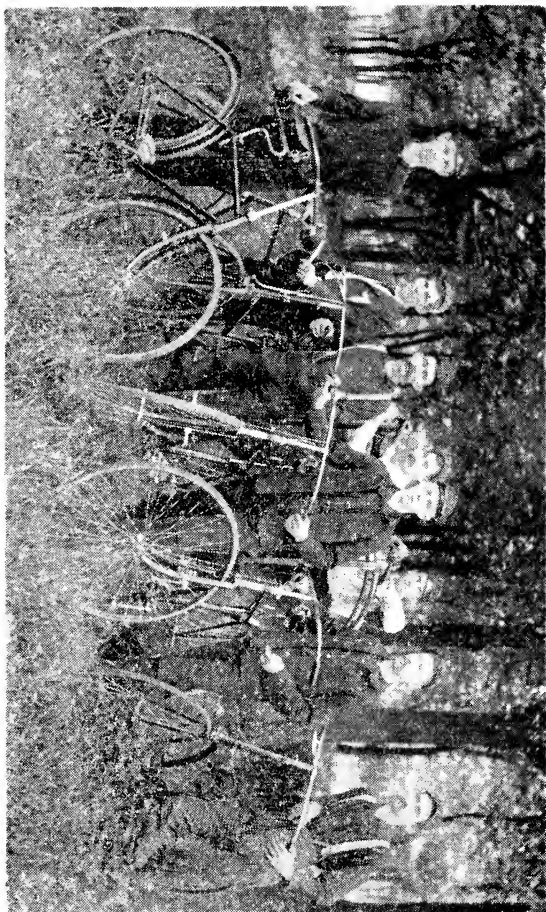
Moweaqua Centennial Historian,
Mrs. Leslie H. Moss,
Moweaqua, Illinois,
October 2, 3, 4, 1952.



Picture taken in 1887. Mrs. Emma Adams Gaskill, Mrs. Mina Gaskill, Miss Ella Gaskill, Mrs. Minnie Notbrook Hudson, Mrs. Emma Rettig Corzine, Mrs. Alina Adams Kirkman, Mrs. Minnie Pollick Morris.



Picture taken at Wallace Gorden's corner.



Left to right: Tom Bowman, Henry Moll, Will Morris, John Buchen, Frank Hudson,
Karl Snyder, Ed Bacon, Will Steidley.

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The General Committee and the Free Bean Meal Committee wishes to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of everyone who helped with this big undertaking in any way whatsoever. We regret that some names have no doubt been omitted, either because they weren't received by the publisher or were received too late.

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