

THE BATAVIA HISTORIAN

Vol. XIII, No. 1, Consecutive 49

February, 1972

Published by the BATAVIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I cannot help but feel that the instinctual nostalgia we are now seeing in the young clearly bespeaks their realization that we older Americans once had something they never had - roots and ties, time to contemplate before having to cope, far less preoccupation with material luxuries and far more intimate involvement with all things living.

- U. S, Senator Thomas J. McIntyre (N. H.)

NEXT MEETING

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27th, 1972 - 3:00 P. M.

In The Bartholomew Civic Center

PROGRAM

THE ILLINI INDIANS

BY RAY HAUSER - TEACHER OF AMERICAN HISTORY
AT WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mr. Hauser is working on his Ph. D. at the NIU, dissertation, "History of the Illinois Indian Tribes." He has been President, later Executive Secretary of the Waubonsee Society of Indian Studies.

Refreshments will be served by Miss Ora Mead. Mrs. James Kane and Miss Joanne Kane.

The above program will be preceded by an election of officers.

The Civic Center was filled to the doors at our December meeting when the Junior High School Band gave a Christmas concert. Mr. Charles Christiansen talked on the subject, "The Value of Preserving Our Heritage." "Our needs," he said, "are to keep a journal of events, to preserve the landmarks and to actively collect memorabilia. Tomorrow will be too late. This is a continuing task in a wide-awake community."

The following slate of officers is proposed by the Nominating Committee:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| President | Mrs. Earl (Mary Ann) Judd |
| Vice President | Harold O. Patterson |
| Secretary | Mrs. Norman (Helen) Johnson |
| Treasurer | Neal J. Conde, Jr. |
| Trustee for two years | Mrs. Axel Burkwist |
| Trustee for two years | Jeff Schielke |
| Trustee to fill vacancy | Philip Talbot |

We thank all of our officers who have gone the "second mile" - who have consented to be candidates for officers for this coming year. The meetings have been "super" this past year.

With the Civic Center so crowded at our December Meeting, we just didn't have room to spread out the eight group photos of Challenge Company men for you to identify. We will try again at this meeting.

Since completing our last Newsletter, we have received artifacts from the following people: Mrs. Charles MaCurdy, Duane Treest (a second lot), Mrs. Laura Liedberg, Miss Jennie E. Larson.

Mrs. MaCurdy's artifacts were from the Woman's Relief Corps which disbanded November 2, 1971. This organization was the auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic. Lately there have been only nine members left and it has been increasingly difficult for them to perform their duties as members. When they received their charter, October 18, 1920, there were 37 members. So "Relief Corps No. 325, Town of Batavia, Department of Illinois" is no more.

Our gavel, which we start using at this meeting, is a memorial from the Woman's Relief Corps.

In our December Newsletter we stated that a man had called from Denver, Colorado wanting a history of the Newton Wagon Co. This we sent him but later he wrote wanting more information and enclosing a check for \$10.00 to the Batavia Historical Society. I quote a paragraph from his letter giving the reason for his interest: "On October 1st, I acquired an old Newton wagon. It had been exposed to the elements for the past sixteen years but still is in remarkable condition; the original paint and striping being intact, but rather badly checked, I plan to completely restore the wagon and use it as a chuck wagon on the ranch."

He is also a western artist and a history buff. I sent him nine sheets of Xeroxed material. Hurrah for the Newton wagon!

We commend the members of the Plain Dirt Gardeners for the outstanding flower beds in the Center Park. It was more than a spot of color all summer; it was a harmony of several colors and was noticed by most people in town and by those going through town. Maybe some day we will become famous and people will say, "Batavia!, Oh that's where the beautiful flower beds are"

Wm. B. VanNortwick of New York City tells us that his book about the VanNortwick family will be in our hands by next February. It has been a big project.

We are growing! We welcome the following new members into our august assemblage:

Mrs. Jean Conde	431 N. Prairie St.	Batavia
Miss Dorothy McKenna	347 Elm St.	Batavia
Miss Loretta McKenna	347 Elm St.	Batavia
Mrs. Lois Robertson	21 S. Mallory Ave.	Batavia
Rodney Ross	5335 S. Dorchester	Chicago

We will sell you one or more of our books - Batavia, Illinois Past and Present for \$1.00 ea. See Miss Eunice Shumway.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Ansgar Carlson. Ansgar died December 19, 1971. We will miss him.

HAPPENINGS A CENTURY AGO - IN 1872

March 10. The Challenge Mill Co. and the Batavia Mills north of it burned down this Sunday afternoon. The Challenge loss was \$45,000, with \$20,000 insurance, but because of the tremendous loss to the insurance companies by the Chicago fire in 1871, the Challenge only got \$150. in insurance.

The Batavia Mills was owned by McKee and Moss. It contained three run of stone with a capacity of 500 barrels of flour per week. It was not rebuilt.

April 24. The Challenge Co. was rebuilt and in operation again.

March ___. The Swedish Bethany Lutheran Church was organized with 52 members dismissed from the Geneva Swedish Lutheran Church. They purchased the old school house on S. Washington Street (now Lincoln Street) and converted it into a church which was dedicated September 1, 1872,

March 13. Charles W. Shumway who has been in business at the same place longer than any other person in Batavia, has sold his hardware store on Batavia Avenue to H. O. Snow and Mathew Burton. They intend to move the goods to the store occupied by Harvey & Co in Hall's Block.

Barker & Co., quarrymen, are putting up two new horsepower derricks, and a current wheel for pumping that, with other improvements, will double their present facilities for shipping stone.

March A Board of Trade was organized at Elgin for the benefit of the dairy men. Quotations from the Elgin market controlled the price of butter and cheese throughout the U. S.

Officers of the Batavia Paper Manufacturing Co. are – J. VanNortwick, Pres.; Wm. M. Van Nortwick, Sec. and Manager. They were making a hundred tons of paper a month.

November 8. Weston McCullough has torn down his old ice house and is building a much larger one, 32 ft x 50 ft.

November 8. Horses in Batavia have been stricken with a contagious disease. Some of those affected are - - horses of the U. S. W. E. & P. Co., three belonging to J. B. Howe and nine belonging to C. E. Smith.

November 6 A. E. Carrier is President and C. H. Starkey is Corresponding Secretary of the Batavia YMCA, meeting in the Anderson Block, E. Wilson Street.

November 15. Sixth annual firemen's dance in Firemen's Hall, Sheets' building. Held by the Batavia Fire Co, No. 1.

Merrill & Shumway Foundry was organized primarily to make iron castings to reconstruct the buildings and machinery destroyed the previous year in the Chicago fire.

December 23 200 feet of the rear of the Newton Co. buildings burned down. This was rebuilt.
Batavia Presidential vote: Grant (R) 358. Greeley (D) 118.

Miss Eunice Shumway's report for December 14, 1971 on the sale of the book, Batavia, Illinois Past and Present shows the following totals:

Total Receipts, 1302 books sold to date	\$3129.75
Total Disbursements	<u>\$2961.18</u>
Balance - Profit.	\$ 168.57

There are about 1200 copies yet to be sold.

We received a letter on December 21st from Mrs. Robert T. Clifton, of Texas, enclosing a clipping stating that Mr. Clifton had died on December 11th. He was the man who was writing a book on windmills. We had corresponded with him several times giving him information about Batavia windmills and factories. Last summer he told me he traveled all through the West taking pictures of windmills for his book. Previous to this he had authored a book on barbed wire. We do hope that the book was nearly enough to completion so that it can be published.

Items of interest are everlastingly bobbing up about early Batavia history. As an example, Ralph Larson brought out a copy of a page from "Chicago-Growth of a Metropolis," which is a monthly collection of photographs from the Mayer and Wade book. This page shows a photo of the eastern terminal of the Chicago, Harlem & Batavia Ry., about 1885. This steam railway line connected here in Chicago at 40th Avenue (later Crawford Avenue, finally Pulaski Road) and Randolph Street, with the western end of Chicago's West Side street railways. By 1888 the Oak Park Reporter could declare that "facilities for reaching the city from the western suburbs could not be surpassed. The accommodation to the traveling public is incalculable." There is a sign in the picture of the station reading, "Station of the Chicago, Harlem and Batavia Railway." There is also the letters "C, H, & B. Ry," on the old fashioned locomotive which stands in front of the station.

Has anyone heard of this railway before? I haven't.

If it wasn't for that date of 1885, I would think it might be another name for part of the Galena & Chicago Union Railway. On September 2, 1850 that railway was extended from Turner Junction (West Chicago) to Batavia. From then until October 21, 1850, when it reached Aurora, Batavia was the terminal. This was called the Aurora branch after that date.

According to our records, you are in arrears for the years _____ .

Total _____ Dues are \$2.00 per individual, \$3 00 per couple per yr. Please pay dues to Neal Conde, Jr., Treasurer.

THE BATAVIA HISTORIAN

Vol. XIII, No.2, Consecutive 50

May, 1972

Published by the BATAVIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A past one respects is essential for intellectual life, as parentage is for physical life; as an individual cannot think without a memory, neither can society think without a tradition.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen

NEXT MEETING

SUNDAY, MAY 21, 1972 - - 3:00 PM.

IN THE BARTHOLOMEW CIVIC CENTER

PROGRAM

HISTORY OF THE BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH BY REV. GUSTAV LUND

The Bethany Lutheran Church was organized in March of 1872, one hundred years ago, with 52 members who were dismissed from the Geneva Swedish Lutheran Church. They purchased the old school house on S. Lincoln Street and converted it into a church which was dedicated September 1, 1872. Rev. Lund started his pastorate here on October 1, 1954.

Roger Beels will sing a solo in Swedish as an added attraction. The Barber Shop Quartette may also sing.

Refreshments will be served by Miss Eunice Shumway, Mrs. Marguerite Brown and Mrs. Irene Kreitzer.

There will be artifacts on display from the Bethany Lutheran Church and from the Capt. D. C. Newton and Carl N. More estates.

The February meeting was extra interesting with an attendance of 80 or more. Officers for the ensuing year were elected. Mr. Ray Houser of the Waubensee Community College, the speaker, gave an informative talk about the Illinois Indians. My sister Alice wrote out an excellent summary of his talk which I regret I do not have the space to print. If you missed the program, you missed one of the most instructive meetings that we have ever had.

This is the fiftieth consecutive issue of our Newsletter. Now I must resign as its Editor at the end of this year, stepping down for a younger person. I do have several articles ahead for the succeeding issues for this year. Of course, I will always do everything possible to aid the Society.

We all appreciate the effort in writing 50 (J. G.) issues. Let's all THANK John Gustafson personally, for his devotion and work, beneficial to Batavia, and the Historical Society.

h. p.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Mr. Dewey Swan.

Since our last Newsletter we have received artifacts from the following people. They have all been thanked by mail - we do this so that the donors have a receipt for their gifts. Ed Hampton, Mrs. Carl N. More, Mrs. Marguerite Brown, Claude L. Hanson.

We want to thank all who helped to identify those whom they recognized in the factory group pictures as well as the church and athletic groups. We still have many more photos of groups to be identified.

We went through the Batavia-Geneva Township School Trustee's Reports from 1862 to 1954, classifying all of the important items included between these two dates. These reports were received from Roy Weaver.

We are in receipt of a very fine history and report of the Batavia Police Department written by Robert A. Popeck, Jeff Schielke and others.

F. C. (Bud) Richter remembered to give us a copy of the Fire Department Report, for which we are always grateful.

Bud, some time ago, lent us six books of the old East and West Fire Department, the old Hose Companies. These gave the rosters of the two companies, the minutes of their meetings, and also a list of the fires in Batavia from 1895 to 1948. With Bud's permission, we copied some of this material. He also gave us a 5" x 7" photograph of the East Batavia Company taken about 1913.

We have sorted out Capt. D. C. Newton's letters that he wrote to his wife during the Civil War. There are 52 letters written in 1862, 1863 and 1864, given to us by Mrs. Carl N. More. The letters are quite clear, although of course there is some fading of the ink. Now I am trying to read them but I find it difficult and I will have to surrender that job to some one else with better eyes than I have. There are other letters also - Mrs. Newton's letters to her husband and some miscellaneous letters.

Towards the end of the War, writing-paper must have been scarce because when he was stationed in Rome, Georgia, he wrote across the paper in black ink as usual: but then he turned the paper at right angles and wrote across the other writing in red ink.

Mrs. More gave us a total of 43 artifacts of Capt. D. C. Newton's and Carl More's, besides the letters.

Kenzie B. Harris, who wrote so many fine articles for the "Illinois History" while he lived in Batavia, is keeping up the good work since his family moved to Bartlett. In the December, 1971 issue, he wrote on "Eradicating Electrical Pollution" and this month he has a story called "A Modern Day 'Poor Richard's'" under the subject of Illinois' Printers and Publishers.

One of our members is interested in the biography of Charles E. Hall, colored, who was a clerk in the Census Office, Washington, D, C. from 1890 on. Charles E. Hall came to Batavia with his parents in 1866. He was the son of Rev. Abraham T. Hall who lived at 208 N. River Street here. Mr. Hall was educated in the Batavia Public Schools, then went to Wilberforce University.

This member found an article about Mr. Hall in the "New York Age" for June 8, 1935. We quote from this article.

". . . During the forty-five years of his clerkship in the Census Office, Mr. Hall has maintained a high efficiency and has often been assigned to special tasks in connection with Negro statistics. He compiled the statistics and wrote the bulletin on the clay products of the United States in 1906. This was the first report on a commercial subject compiled by a Negro and published by the Federal government. He arranged the tables for Bulletin 129, "Negroes in the United States, 1790-1915. Mr. Hall has been compiling data for a new volume, the title of which is, "Negroes in the United States, 1920-1932." It covers twenty chapters and is supplementary to the volume on the same subject which covered the same field from 1790 to 1915 . . .

"In recognition of his long sustained efficient service, Mr. Hall was recently promoted to the rank of "Specialist in Negro Statistics." This new position which Mr. Hall has created will be a permanent part of the Census office and, in all probability, will be filled by colored men of special training, experience and fitness in this important branch of inquiry."

Now, we would like to know more about the latter part of Mr. Hall's life, from 1935 on. If you have any information please let us know.

The following is from "Energy Sources for the Future" by Donald E. Bunyon in the Yearbook of Agriculture for 1971:

"The wind was one of the first nonbiological sources of energy to be used by man. It drove his ships and windmills, lifted his water, ground his grain, aired his mines.

“Harnessing wind provides a source of energy which is free. It exhausts no natural resources, and it produces no pollution. As long as the earth turns, the wind is available.”

The time may come again, for reasons of cost and pollution prevention, when we will be compelled to use less gas, oil and coal and use more wind power whenever that is feasible. That is something to think about anyway. As an example, the windmill can be used to store energy by generating electricity through a dynamo and storing it in batteries until needed.

STORIES FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH,
BATAVIA, ILLINOIS - As told by Mrs. Michael Schomig

It is nearly impossible to imagine the privations of our early settlers when they first came to Batavia.

The Lars Bengtson family illustrated that. They came here in 1867 and were some of the organizing members of the Bethany Lutheran Church in 1872. They settled on a fifteen acre farm three and one-half miles southeast of Batavia in the Big Woods area. They built a log cabin here.

Having no clock, the mother made a crude sundial by nicking a south window sill so that the shadow of the mountain fell across the sill and, as it crossed the nicks, would tell the time of day. The first year they walked a mile to a neighbor's home to get drinking water.

When they first came here, they united with the Geneva Lutheran Church and often walked all the way, summer and winter, from their farm to the Geneva church.

Three of the sons of Lars Bengtson became pastors, the fourth, James, started here as a decorator in 1887, founding the company still doing business as the Bengtson Decorators.

Mrs. Schomig goes on with the church history telling about her father, Rev. Andrew Challman, who lived in Chicago at the time of the big fire, serving as assistant to Doctor Erland Carlsson, pastor of the Immanuel Church. This congregation was considered the mother church, and was situated on the near north side. The night of the fire, the family, along with neighbors, piled their furniture against a gas tank and fled. That night David Challman was born on one of the fire boats crossing the Chicago River, each boat having a doctor aboard. Incidentally, the furniture was still intact four days later when they returned.

We are seeking information about the life of Hamilton Browne, who lived in the large frame house south of Campana Road and on North Batavia Avenue.

The only data we have of him is taken from the book History of Kane County, Illinois, written by R. Waite Joslyn and Frank W. Joslyn. Vol. II 1908.

Mr. Browne was in railroad construction work and coal mining in Iowa from 1872 to 1904 when he came to Illinois and bought the Calumet Stock Farm between Geneva and Batavia. In Illinois he was also engaged in railroad building and was the biggest stockholder in the Elgin and Belvidere Electric Company when it was organized. From 1908 we know very little about him. Being such an important industrialist he must have been written up by several people, but so far we have not found any of this information.

During the year we receive many inquiries for information about Batavia people, past and present, also on many other Batavia subjects. Recently a man from Alabama wrote in for information about the Halladay Standard Windmill. He was going to make working models of the four most important mills in his mind: the Halladay, Aermotor, Eclipse and Vaneless. I told him any windmill could be made vaneless.

The Society has an old U. S. Company catalog so we had five pages of that copied showing Halladay pictures including a Repair Chart - these we sent him.

Then on February 29th, Mr. and Mrs. Goodson of Missouri visited us. They wanted information about the Spears and Whitmarsh families, early pioneer settlers here and in Virgil Township. We had some data but they gave us much more than we gave them.

We have helped others with genealogy charts, maps, copies of articles, etc. So you see, your Society is important to Batavia and the national outreach.

Following are some of the arrivals in Batavia in 1872:

John A. Anderson - Dry-goods and groceries.

Isaac B. Kinne and his son, Myron M. Kinne - Kinne & Jeffery Co.

William Urch - Farmer

Frank Carr - Farmer from Bangor, Maine.

Today one can hardly pick up a local newspaper but what there is news of an automobile accident with people killed or injured or both. That seems to be one of the results of our times and we are apt to long for the serenity of the old days and the slower pace of living. But these times had their accidents too, although from different causes as witness the following accidents in the

horse and buggy days. The Bible says that a horse is a vain thing for safety and these items prove it. They are from the Batavia column of the Geneva Patrol:

June 15, 1888 . . . Theo Wood's farm team ran away Tuesday and smashed the wagon badly but did no other damage.

July 20, 1888 . . . Mrs. S. Conde's horse took fright at the cars and ran away, throwing Mrs. Conde out. Three of her ribs were broken and she was unconscious for many hours but was considered better on Wednesday.

July 20, 1888 . . . Mr. Barker's horse took fright at a wheelbarrow Wednesday and threw two ladies from the carriage. They were considerably bruised.

THE BATAVIA HISTORIAN

VOL. XIII, No. 3 Consecutive 51

September, 1972

Published by the Batavia Historical Society

An institution is the lengthened shadow of one Man:: all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Ralph W. Emerson in Self Reliance.

NEXT MEETING

SUNDAY, September 24, 1972 at 3:00 P.M.
IN THE BARTHOLOMEW CIVIC CENTER

PROGRAM

Mrs. Peg Bond - - - - -Speaker

Subject to be announced later.

Museum, Depot, Planning Zoning, Teaching, Art, Educational) ??

Refreshments will be served

Rev. Gustav Lund, pastor of the Bethany Lutheran Church was the speaker at our May meeting. His subject was not so much the history of the Bethany church as it was about the Swedish Migration to Illinois and especially, to Batavia. He answered the questions, why did they leave Sweden? Why did they come to Batavia, or the Fox Valley?

Old Timers don't like to see changes in customs, changes in the ownership of stores and homes. However, change must come. So, we regret to announce the transfer of the old W. L. Anderson store (Mary Anderson owner) to Ms. Donali. And the transfer of Cornelia Snow's home to the LaSalle National Bank, as Trustee. We welcome the new Owners and Operators to Batavia, and know the former owners will always support and be loyal to Batavia.

JULY 20 We had a good visit with Pauline Campbell and Ruth Northrup. Pauline told us of her plans to leave the Ranch at Ridgway, Colorado and move to a nearby Motor Court. She has found the work at the Ranch beyond her endurance, even though enjoyable. She brought here to give to the Society, a number of her lovely photographs, including 23 prints, mostly 10 x 14 inches in size mounted on 16x20 matt board; they are superb -- Prize winners.

On August 9th Wm. B. VanNortwick, the author, sent us two copies of his book entitled, "Van Nortwick Genealogy". One was for the Batavia Public Library and the other for the Historical Society.

Bill has given the printing of this book much time and loving care. He traces the Van Nortwick line clear back to the Children's Crusade. The section from 1833 on will be most interesting to Batavians because of the local history. There are several letters between William and John Van Nortwick. The Father-Son relationship is cordial.

The Board meeting was August 16. The chief concern was the opening of the Museum in the old Burlington Depot maybe by late Fall. Mary Snow, representing the Park Board, presented a possible procedure of a joint venture. This would include clean and decorate the first floor for immediate use and the second floor for future development and improvement. Immediate repairs would include proper installation of utilities, the cleaning and refinishing of the floors and walls. Maybe a door replacing the west window to give an entrance away from the tracks.

Harold Patterson and Phil Talbot were appointed by the board to meet with two members of the Park Board to draw up specific proposals. At the present time, the Historical Society will only use the big north room for records and exhibits while the Park Board will utilize the two smaller rooms on the other side of the foyer for offices.

The chief riddle is -- how to make \$8,000, which is the amount of Historical capital, cover the architect's estimate of \$24,000 for a complete remodeling project.

Lucile Gustafson, reporter

This is the year of the Centennial of the C. W. Shumway and Sons Foundry, a business owned by the Shumways for the entire 100 years. If you have any contributions or stories about the Foundry, send them to our Historian John Gustafson.

We received some artifacts from Mrs. Emerson Phelps and Ralph Finley, Santa Barbara, California.

Remember, that we still have copies of the book, "Batavia Past and Present" on sale at Johnson's Drug Store and the Library for \$1.00.

History is made by Us and preserved by Us

THE ICE INDUSTRY IN BATAVIA

PART I - HARVESTING

J.G. 1/26/71

The passing of Allie Johnson brought to my mind the importance of the ice industry here in days gone by. Allie visited me in November of 1961 and told me about his father's interest in ice harvesting. In fact, his long life, his life, was seeing that some of the ice houses along the Fox River were filled with ice, consequently he even was nicknamed, "Ice-boss Johnson." Allie said his father was foreman for the J. P. Smith & Sons of Chicago who had a huge ice house on the east side of the river about where the Boat Club building now is. Then he was foreman for a while of an ice-cutting company at Williams Bay, Lake Geneva. They wanted him to take charge of a big plant at Lake Calumet but he didn't want to leave Batavia.

Allie said that J.P. Smith & Sons, later the Knickerbocker Ice Company had a house just east of the late L.E. Wolcott's home, north of Batavia on the west side of the river, also. An elevator, made of an endless chain with oak cross-pieces about every four feet, went under the tracks and out into the water thirty or more feet. This was operated by steam power. The ice blocks were hoisted into the huge house with this elevator. The structure burned down in the early 1900's.

The company harvested two sizes of ice blocks, one was for large ice boxes of the meat markets and saloons, the other size was for the homes. All of this ice went to Chicago at the rate of two carloads a day. This company also had a large house in Aurora near Broadway. John Benson ran this plant. Allie said that the local concerns were small compared with the houses owned by the Chicago companies. They employed 125 men in the harvest.

My memory is hazy about much of the ice harvesting and I can find very little in books or magazines to jog my memory. I was a very poor skater so I didn't go skating very much, therefore I didn't observe the harvesting procedure too frequently. As I recall it, the south part of the Pond, just north of the West Wilson Street bridge, was used by skaters. Then a section north of this and opposite the first ice house, was operated by John Micholson. The west bank of the river was used as an ice field. I remember the elevator from the ice house that extended down into the river in the west end of the channel cut from the field. This elevator consisted of two link chains about fifteen inches apart to which the oak cross pieces were attached. There were sprocket wheels at both ends of the elevator which operated it, driven by steam power.

I recall that the area from which the ice was to be harvested, was cleared of snow. Then a man with a marker drawn by a single horse marked the field both ways about twenty-four inches apart. The marker was followed by a plow which, as I remember it, was a flat blade with coarse teeth on the bottom side and steered with two plow handles. This followed the marks made previously and cut grooves in the ice to nearly its full depth. If the field was small, the ice was sawed by a man with a hand saw. Thickness was a variable and ran from eight-to twenty-eight inches thick. Ice ten to twelve inches thick was just right. Only rarely, when the winter was open and it was a case of now or never, was ice harvested less than eight inches thick.

After the ice cakes were thus nearly separated by the plow, men with long-handle chisels pried the cakes loose, starting at the channel end. Other men guided these chunks with pikes to the elevator where they were raised by the elevator to the proper level and slid down to their proper place in the increasing stock pile. If my memory does not fail me, the blocks were stored on end, one against the other with shavings packed between the ice pile and the inside wall of the building, a space about one foot wide. The harvest was continued until the house was filled or the weather turned too warm to harvest good ice.

There were several ice houses along the river, most of them along the Pond where there was little or no current. The late Frank Smith in his articles entitled, "Batavia of 1875" published in the Batavia Herald in April of 1948, lists three houses. The first one was north of the old Norris & Doty building, the red frame structure on the northwest corner of N. Water and Houston Streets. "This was a large building," he said, "probably built as an ice house by a man named McCullough. I don't remember that any ice was put in there but it was used to store ice cutting machinery and also as a barn." Then Mr. Smith said there was an ice house east of the late L.E. Wolcott's home on N. Batavia Avenue, confirming Allie Johnson's report. Also, a third one east of the Fox River Sanitarium.

William Davis sent me a letter and a sketch of the Fox River locating the ice houses as he remembered them. Following his sketch, the first ice house on the west bank was John Micholson's, a little north of Houston Street. North of Maple Lane, the L. E. Wolcott location, was a small house along the C&NW tracks. North of that and east of Timber Trail was the location of the Knickerbocker ice house. Mr. Davis says that on the east river bank between Logan and Gore Streets, were the two ice houses of Jerome Parce and William Eager. He also says that at one time artificial ice was made in a north basement of the B.D. Price building.

There are some discrepancies in the names and locations of the ice houses by the three recorders which is understandable. It seems to me, however, that it is better to record this industry as those of us remember it even if there are some errors and blank spots in our memories.

I have a note which appeared in the BATAVIA NEWS of November 8, 1872 that a Weston McCullough was tearing down his old ice house and was building a much larger one. In 1910 the Challenge Company purchased the Knickerbocker property and used it as a lumber yard.

There were other dealers here who harvested and stored ice but my notes do not locate their houses. John Micholson sold his ice business to Gus Peterson and Gus Lundberg. This partnership later sold out to Henry Kahlke. In 1900 Hunter & Griffith went into the artificial ice business and had a large quantity of ice stored in a house on South Water Street. This ice was made from city water.

We lived in the last house on South Water Street from 1903 to about 1908. Just east of our house on the quarry bank was a lot of wood shavings. Dad took advantage of these shaving and tried to raise a crop of potatoes in them with miserable results-they were 'nubbins' because of lack of nourishment. This must have been the location of the Hunter & Griffith ice house which was removed before we moved down there. Bellevue Place Sanitarium harvested their own ice from the quarry and stored it in a ice house on their own premises. All of the ice houses mentioned have been torn down.

I don't think there were many out-of-towners who came here to work on the ice. Most of the men were Batavians who had summer jobs and looked to this winter work to eke out a living. About twenty-five men were needed to set up a complete organization to handle the ice harvest. If the weather and ice were good, the dealers here supplied as many as 500 carloads to the surrounding towns. Of course, some years, fortunately only a few, produced little or no ice for storing. In 1891 there was only a little five to seven inch thick ice produced and that in the month of March. In 1921 the winter was open, there was no ice harvest.

-----To Be Continued-----

THE BATAVIA HISTORIAN

VOL. XIII No. 4 Consecutive 52

Dec. 1972

Published by the Batavia Historical Society

A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about.

WOODROW WILSON

The above quote was used at the Masthead of the Newsletter for Vol. 1, No.1, 13 years ago. Now I am using it for my last Newsletter. My eyes have failed me so that I can't carry on anymore, so someone else must write the Newsletter. However, the Historical Society is my first love and I will always do everything I can to help it.

NEXT MEETING
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1972, AT 3:00 P.M.
IN THE BARTHOLOMEW CIVIC CENTER, BATAVIA, ILLINOIS

Christmas Musical Program by the Junior High School
arranged by Mike Scardino & Mr. Rotolo, Principal

Refreshments: Gustafsons, Talbots and Hamptons

Nominating Committee for officers for 1973
Mrs. Svea Erd, Miss Ora Mead, Raymond Patzer

Since our last Newsletter we have received artifacts from the following for which we are most grateful; Mrs. Cornelia Snow, Mrs. Arthur Leske, Nicholas Kronsbruck. If I have forgotten anyone please forgive me.

John's part II of the Ice Industry will follow but we should acknowledge and thank him for editing 52 Newsletters for us and collecting and dispensing Batavia History, maybe a Thank You Christmas Card from all our members would be appreciated.

If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer Thee.
Make my mortal dreams come true
With the work I fain would do.

All good befortune you, and every day some ray of golden light fall on your way.
(Whittier)

The Directors of the Batavia Historical Society met in the Basement room (which has changed hands) and decided to move our showcases and artifacts, if possible, to a better location and arrange a mini museum until something more permanent is available. The Batavia Park District has named Dave Sawitoski, to head a Blue Ribbon community committee to formulate plans for the renovation of the Historic C.B. & Q. Depot. We are unique in R.R. history so we should have a large R.R. display if we have a museum with an old parlor scene, a dining room setting, a kitchen scene, an Indian display, small tools collection, art handicrafts, books, personal history items plus an office. It is obvious that our temporary mini museum will have to be a permanent project.

THE ICE INDUSTRY IN BATAVIA

PART II - DELIVERY

The matter of delivering ice to stores and homes was a year-round job, but was much, much more important during the hot weather, of course. Many families did without ice during the cold weather and kept perishables in their cool or cold basements. That was before the days of central heating plants. Now basements are as warm, or warmer than any other room in the house. One doesn't have to go back too far in time to recall the covered ice-wagons drawn by two rugged horses. When business was good, two men rode the wagon, one man took the houses on one side of the road, and the other man, the other side, in delivering ice. Usually the ice man would note the sign in the window, in the proper position with the amount of ice required printed on the top spot. He would go to the rear of the wagon, step up on the foot-board, throw back the canvas curtain protecting the ice from the sun and haul down a chunk of ice, stacked in the front part of the wagon. Then he would estimate the amount required, per card, chip and cut off that amount with an ice-pick, axe and saw, weigh it, grab it with the tongs and haul it to the ice-box on his shoulders, protected by a leather apron. Sometimes the block needed some reduction before it was put in the box, but not often. Then he would tear off a coupon with the weight on it of the block just delivered. The coupon book hung nearby.

Oh, I forgot to mention the arrival of the ice-wagon was an enjoyable occasion for the youngsters in the neighborhood. The minute the ice-wagon came in sight, they were lined up ready to grab any cool, refreshing pieces of ice chipped off and discarded by the iceman. This was unsanitary, no doubt, but how deliciously cool and who cared about sanitation in those days. The icemen, most of them, were kindhearted and let the youngsters help themselves. Many of these icemen were husky school or college students in training for the coming football season. It was an excellent way to increase one's brawn.

The icebox was usually located in the kitchen near the backdoor or in an entryway, convenient for the iceman and also convenient for the emptying of the pan under the box which caught the drippings of the melting ice. This pan got full too frequently and sometimes overflowed onto the kitchen floor.

When was the use of natural iceboxes replaced by electric or gas refrigerators? This was over an extended period of time because refrigerators were new-fangled and expensive and many people could not afford them at first. The last note that I have of ice harvesting on the Pond was in January of 1925. William Bowron said that there was some ice harvested in 1933 but very little. Thus closed an industry which brought some financial gain, some healthy outdoor rugged labor and the satisfaction of having one's food and drink preserved in a cool atmosphere. Another cycle in Batavia's industry gone forever, but, I hope, never to be forgotten.

I'll close with a note of humor. A man recently coming from Sweden, was asked what he did. He said, "I got a yob on de ice. I get a dollar a day-hundred day, hundred dollar."