

REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY DAYS

The Building of the Plank Road—Last Article From the Pen of Frank A. Rogers.

During the past year Frank A. Rogers, one of the earliest settlers of this township, has been writing articles for THE REPORTER on the early days of the community.

The last article from his pen about the building of the Plank Road is printed below. He had others in the course of preparation and we can only say that the present generation is the loser by not being able to get the fund of information of the early days which Mr. Rogers had stored in his memory.

BY FRANK A. ROGERS

The building of the old "Plank" road from Chicago to Naperville, is as fresh in my memory as though it were yesterday. My brother, Theodore S., was one of those who worked on the road and a number of the men engaged in building it boarded at our house.

It was constructed of oak planks from Naperville to Lyons and of pine planks from Lyons to Chicago.

Before the building of the road there were three hotels or taverns on the route. The first was at Lyons, kept by a man named Doty and afterward by William Lunn, who later kept a hotel at Silver Leaf Grove also known as the three mile house. The next one was kept and owned at Brush Hill by Benjamin Fuller. The next place west was kept by Horace Aldrich in the early days at what was known as Prospect Hill. Mr. Aldrich kept this hotel from 1834 to 1838. He was a veteran of the war of 1812.

I well remember the droves of hogs which were driven over this road to the market in Chicago and the droves of long horned Texas cattle also on their way to Chicago. Then in the other direction the long lines of ox teams on their way to the west to settle on government land.

During the harvest season farmers from all over the western part of the state would hit the trail at Naperville and follow it into Chicago.

In the townships of Downers Grove and Lisle there were three toll gates. The one near Naperville was kept by Mark Beaubien. He also kept a hotel known not only for the fine meals but also for the parties that were given there. The dancing was kept up until the sun rose in the morning. Everyone in the county knew Mark Beaubien and he was quite a power in the politics of the day.

The next toll gate was in the west part of the township of Downers Grove and kept by Wingate, who also ran a small store. This place is now owned by Mrs. Alice Lacey.

The next one was at Brush Hill, now Fullersburg, and was kept by a man named Hansen.

With the announcement that the old road is to be the Cannon Ball Trail and surfaced with cement, I look for it to become more famous than it was in the fifties back in the palmy days of the old Plank Road.

One of the principal events in the neighborhood in the year of 1848, happened in the family of Edward Mertz, who had recently purchased the adjoining farm on the north side of the Plank Road from Willard Lyman, a relative of Walter Lyman, still residing here.

All of a sudden the news spread throughout the neighborhood that there was a new baby boy at the Mertz home and the next thing in order was the selection of a suitable name for the new boy and after many consultations of the family, the name of Levi was decided on. It was from the windows of this home that he watched the building of the Plank Road and the large number of oxen and horse teams which passed by daily until six years later when the farm was sold to Charles Venard and is still the home of the grandson, Charles Venard.

I will here state that the mother of Levi is still living in the State of Oklahoma, having reached the venerable age of 99 years and bids fair to reach the century mark.

Of Levi, I need not say anything further as everybody knows him still as Levi, the head of the prosperous firm of Mertz & Mochel of Downers Grove.

It is with a regret which we can not voice that we here write the word FINIS to this interesting series of articles on the old days of the village.

Mr. Rogers had in preparation articles telling of the old "Plow Boys" who toured the country in the interest of the candidacy of Abe Lincoln for the Presidency; of the building of the railroad and of the later political developments of this section.

THE LEGION AND THE BOY SCOUTS

Mr. Joseph Lee, President of Community Service, has pointed out one of the fundamental reasons why the American Legion is called upon to serve and why it cannot escape its responsibility for a large share in the promotion of activities which count in the training of America's future citizens.

He states: "American Legion members, with their soldier experience and with the actual war record which many of them have, are heroes to the boys growing up in their respective communities, and it is up to them, more than to any other group of people, to say what kind of citizens these boys shall grow up to be. The rising generation will eat out of their hand. It will be for them to decide what kind of moral sustenance it shall receive."

Peace time patriotism will call upon each post to do all it can to promote the common welfare, stimulate good citizenship by example and precept, and strengthen the power of individuals and organizations that are working to the same end.

The Boy Scout movement is one of the most important organizations toward the making of good citizenship. It deserves and will receive the warm hearted support of the American Legion in all its activities, for this organization of the youth of our land is proving one of the most potent means in inculcating and developing those sterling qualities of character—honesty, loyalty, obedience, courage, helpfulness, love of country together with physical training that creates clean minds and clean vigorous bodies.

It is the Legion's earnest desire that the Scouts know we are keenly interested in their splendid work, that we want them to feel that we are a big brother organization to them, and proud of the stalwart Americanism which they are promoting.

Judge Victor P. Arnold of the Juvenile Court, Chicago, recently made the statement in addressing a group of the Scouts that in his five years experience in the Juvenile Court, where he has dealt with twenty-five thousand (25,000) delinquent boys' cases, that but five Boy Scouts have faced him across the bench. "That," he declared, "answers the question of whether this boys' organization is doing good work."

As Judge Arnold says—"The boys of today, even more than in times past, need direction, but it must be through proper channels. We train colts to run wild in the pastures. These animals are useless until they are trained. This direction is what does the business."

The proper direction, supervision and training of the growing generation Judge Arnold pointed out, is the greatest movement for good citizenship in the country.

Downers Grove Post of the American Legion intends to create a closer relation with the Boy Scout troops of our community and we are sure the future will see a constant growth in the cooperation of these two organizations whose aim and objects are the same.

The Villain. A rural exchange tells of an old woman being "knocked unconscious by a chauffeur, who then speeded away." We have our own opinion as to which was the unconscious party.—Boston Transcript.

ROMEO—MECCA OF LOCAL FOLK THIS SUMMER

Downers Grove People Taking Advantage of Fine Bathing Beach Reached by Truck.

Downers Grove people are enjoying one of the finest recreation spots in this part of the county during the spell of hot weather. When the perspiration begins streaming from your brow and you feel like laying on a chunk of ice and your breath comes in short gasps, "Go to Romeo," is the slogan of local folks, young and old, girls and boys, men and women, and take a dip in the cool, clear water of that now rather prominent oasis in the desert.

If you do not own a car, why, there is another way of getting there without walking. Three enterprising young men of the Village have provided the way out of just such a predicament. They have equipped an Ace truck and for a nominal charge will take you to this mecca—Romeo.

Romeo is situated between Lemont and Lockport and is drawing people from the surrounding territory to bathe in its cool waters. An old quarry, it has been fitted up as a modern bathing beach, filled with clear, cool water as it is, makes a delightful place to take a plunge. Even lockers have been put in for the patrons use for which the usual small amount is charged. The beach is graduated and life lines have been set out. Life guards are also employed so that everyone can go in the water in safety.

This beach fills a long felt want in this vicinity. It is much harder to reach than the Chicago beaches and does not make such a long and hot trip. One can jump on the truck of an evening in their old clothes, the whole family, children and all, in fact and in a short time can be enjoying the water and be back in time for moderately early retiring. A large number of home folks are taking advantage of this opportunity.

Parrish, Bertolin & Erickson are running a new new Ace truck, fitted with cushion seats, and are trying to arrange with the management of the beach to have all charges included in the fare. The truck runs on a regular schedule four days a week and can also be hired for special occasions.

Stockholders Must Be Natives. Stockholders in private banks in Sweden must be natives of Sweden.

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TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO IN THE REPORTER

From the issue of June 29, 1899.

The following delegation from the Grove attended the laying of the corner stone for the addition of the County Poor House at Wheaton last Saturday: Messrs. and Mesdames Edwards, Worley, E. O. Stanley, Bartle, Palmer, W. W. Peet, John Stanley, Naramore; Mrs. C. B. Blodgett, Harry Blodgett and J. A. Richards.

W. S. Carpenter has installed one of those concert gramophones in his drug store for the pleasure of his music loving patrons.

Miss Caroline Huling of Chicago, spent Sunday with the family of her brother, J. B. Huling.

Edward M. Diener of Downers Grove, graduated from the commercial department of the Northwestern College at Naperville, last week.

Mrs. A. R. Heckman of Rogers Park has been visiting in Downers Grove this week.

President Gallup of the Village Board appointed the following officers for the year: J. W. Rogers, Lucas; V. Simonson, Collector; M. Slusser, Attorney; J. D. Fowler, Supt. of Waterworks; W. H. Mertz, Street Com. and Pound Master; Geo. Hoffer, Police Constable and Health Officer; C. F. Davis, Fire Marshal; Louis Klein, Asst. Fire Marshal.

WHY THE SPIDER WAS THERE

When Mark Twain, in his early days, was editor of a Missouri paper, a superstitious subscriber wrote to him saying that he had found a spider in his paper, and asking him

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whether that was a sign of good luck or bad. The humorist wrote him this answer and printed it: "Old Subscriber: Finding a spider in your paper was neither good luck nor bad luck for you. The spider was merely looking over our paper to see which merchant is not advertising,

so that he can go to that store, spin his web across the door and lead a life of undisturbed peace ever afterward.

Eyes of Night Birds Large. The eyes of the birds that fly by night are usually nearly double the size of those that go abroad by day.

WANTED A woman with ability as office manager and book-keeper, this position is open with a local establishment and will pay good wages. Apply by writing only. Address P. O. Box 577

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We have students enrolled from 12 different states.



NOTICE! We wish to announce that on June 1st. we secured the agency for the "Badger De Luxe All Season Tops" These tops are made to fit most any make of car. We will have some "BADGER DE LUXE TOS" in our DISPLAY ROOM within the next thirty days. WE TAKE ORDERS NOW FOR FALL DELIVERY Automobile Painting, Trimming and Auto Body Repairing Our Specialties KASTORY MANUFACTURING COMPANY PHONE 647 LA GRANGE, ILL.

