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**Rediscovering ILLINOIS**  
by LB STEPHENSON COLBY  
ILLINOIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

All the world knows Aurora. All the world knows that a couple of times each year the fastest horses in America foregather here for a rattling of hoofs and a flashing of silks; running races, the sport of millionaires! Pretty much all the world knows Aurora as a place where flats and shins are wont to mingle. It is the spot in the central west where the "leather pushers" meet and mill. It's the premier "box fight" town of Illinois.

Out in this middle west country Aurora is especially famed for something else. Thousands of persons take annual pilgrimage to another Aurora event—the Central States Fair and Exposition, one of the greatest country fairs in America.

This fair ground, with its mile track, stands on a level plateau looking down upon the Fox river. The plant represents an investment of about \$1,250,000—which gives some idea of the story of that. Such is the popular birds-eye view of Aurora.

**Other Features**

I have just visited Aurora to make brief inventory of the things Aurora has which the world does not generally know about. So another picture:

Aurora is a vigorous Illinois city of 45,000 people. It lies 38 miles west and slightly south of Chicago's busy loop district. It is partly on the west bank and partly on the east bank of the picturesque Fox river with a goodly part of its business district on an island in midstream.

Two short dams, one on either side of the island, form a large reservoir or millpond upstream. In fact, it was about this two-part dam that Aurora was built.

History has it that Chief Waubensie, head of a soapless tag-end band of the Pottawatomie tribe, ruled over a straggling teepee down at this point when Joseph McCarthy, a New Englander; 480 acres divided by the stream 1834.

He stopped to make survey of the spot. He found the island, a swift rush of clear water over hard rocks. It was a natural crossing, a fine site for dam and water power. Here Indian tribes had long come to trade and barter. A likely spot.

So the McCarthy's stopped. Squatters they were and they laid claim to lands; 480 acres divided by the stream and they made it stick.

**The First Mill**

On the spot where the original mill stood, stands a mill today. Sunk in the concrete sidewalk in front of the ancient mill are the two original millstones used, the bronze plate says, by Samuel McCarthy when he built the first mill there in 1836.

The McCarthy's, Yankee of Irish descent, got in just a wink ahead of the great New England invasion which had this part of the country settled before the 30's were over. Aurora still shows the imprint of its New England origin. It is sturdy, businesslike, substantial; built for usage.

Yet Aurora is devoted to music and art and the better things. It is a town that has more than its share of good oil paintings, some of them rare. You find them on the walls of public buildings. They are hung with marked respect. James Cowan, one of the nation's foremost collectors of works of old masters, has done much to popularize art in the city.

**Many Churches**

Aurora has forty-six churches for its 45,000 people and the churches are used. It has a library of approximately 50,000 books. It has one college, two business colleges and a conservatory of music; two high schools, fourteen elementary schools, eight parochial schools and a girls' seminary; three hospitals, four theatres and four parks.

I asked an Aurora newspaper man what, in his mind, gave Aurora individuality and distinction. He remarked:

"It's goshamighty number of small manufacturing industries. I can count 146 factories, places where something or other is made to sell. Only a few of them can be classed as big ones. Almost all of them work from just a few people up to 400. Of course, there's the Burlington shops—main shobs of the system—employing 2,500 men, but that's our big plant."

**Big Plants**

Aurora has some other plants that might be called "big." Among them is that of the Richards-Wilcox Mfg. Co. which has branches in 16 cities in the United States and three in Canada. It specializes in fire doors, safety doors, overhead tracks, door and window hangers, garage, special builders hardware, etc.

One might say also that Aurora is a center for metal cabinets. Here is found the Lyon Metallic Mfg. Co., the All-Steel-Equipment Co. and the Aurora Metal Cabinet Works. Look at the label on your steel cabinet and likely you will find an Aurora imprint.

Going a bit further, we find that Aurora is the home of the Western Wheel Scraper Co., maker of heavy road building machinery; the Stephens-Adamson Co., conveying equipment; the American Well Works, pumps, and the Independent Pneumatic Tool Co. It has two large corset mills and a plant which takes in cotton in the bale and turns it out as sheeting.

**Sanitary Measure**

Aurora also proudly boasts that it has been the force behind the recent "enabling act," passed by the state legislature which has as its purpose the creation of a sanitary district which will take in the entire Fox river between the state line and Ottawa.

This is the first of its kind in the United States and gives the district power to stop pollution of the stream by either industrial waste or public sewage. This task is one of pioneering. It is leading the way. Aurora sees itself first in the work of reclaiming the nation's streams from spoilation.

But Aurora has pioneered before. It was the first city in the United States to have municipal electric lighting. The experiment was tried in 1881 when three tall towers with flood lights on them were erected above the business district of the city—making it the birthplace of electric street lighting. They called them "beacons" in those days.

Aurora also was the birthplace of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad, the first link of that system running from Aurora to Turner Junction. It was completed in 1849. Last year the Burlington spent \$7,000,000 elevating its tracks through Aurora.

**First City Court**

Another Aurora "first,"—it had the first city court in Illinois. That court was organized on Feb. 11, 1857, immediately after the law making city courts possible was passed in Illinois. Elgin was second to organize a city court, three days later.

First once more—for the first third-rail electric railroad system, commonly known as the Elgin-Aurora line, has as its furthestmost western terminal this same Aurora.

Up the beautiful Fox river, within sight of the city, stands Mooseheart. Here the Loyal Order of Moose has poured in more than \$10,000,000 in cash to build an institutional home for children of members. It is on a hill overlooking the waters of the Fox. Such hills, such green fields, such valleys and such a stream.

Concrete roads lead into this fair valley and each year new hundreds come to build themselves homes. And that is the Fox River valley and that Aurora.

Of course the League of Nations has been having a regular cat and dog time, but at that they haven't fussed much worse than our wet and dry congressmen.

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**DENSEST POPULATION IN DIST. OF COLUMBIA**

**More People to Square Mile in That Section; Comparisons With Others**

A great many people, if asked the question as to which is the most densely populated states in the union would reply that New York bears that distinction. New York indeed has the largest population, but not the greatest density of population. Some of the New England states far outstrip it in the matter of the nearness with which the people live to one another.

Rhode Island has a population of 566 to the square mile and Massachusetts has 500 to the square mile. New York has but 277 people residing in each similar unit.

New York state, of course, gets its reputation for density because of the great number of people residing in and around New York City, although of course, many of these reside in New Jersey and Connecticut, and are not counted in New York City's population. But outside of the metropolitan district there are large sections of New York which are rather sparsely inhabited, and these bring the state's average density below that of some of the New England states.

The average density of population for the entire country is thirty-six to the square mile, which of course makes the United States look almost uninhabited when compared with most of the European countries. Our greatest density of population is in the District of Columbia, if that can be counted as a state, for there it is 7,500 to the mile. Compare this with Wyoming with an average of two to the square mile, New Mexico with three, Colorado with nine, and even with sunny California which has but twenty-two inhabitants to the square mile.

It is said that the Hookah pipe is rapidly becoming obsolete in India as the natives have all taken up cigarette smoking. Thus slowly but surely, civilization is getting in its work.

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**NEWS NOTES**  
*About the North Shore Line*

Published by Chicago North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad Co.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin Week of April 19, 1926 Chicago, Illinois

THE North Shore Line owns its entire right-of-way between Milwaukee and Chicago, except for short distances in a few towns aggregating about three miles. 115 miles, double tracked, costing a vast sum of money, are owned and operated by this high-speed electrically-operated railroad.

20 new steel passenger cars, 3 new dining cars and 5 refrigerator cars are being added to the already extensive equipment of the North Shore Line. Upwards of \$800,000 is being spent for this new equipment alone in order that we may better serve the patrons of this railroad.

THE popularity of North Shore Line motor coaches is growing steadily. 963,503 motor coach passengers were carried in 1925, an increase of 175,376 over the preceding year.

**WAUKEGAN**—a city of industry and homes. Spend an enjoyable day at Waukegan's great factories. Watch them make wire—fence—roofing—and scores of other products. Waukegan's leading industries are open daily to visitors. From Waukegan, you can take wonderful cross-country trips in North Shore Line Motor Coaches

operating on regular schedule to Antioch, the Fox Lake Region, McHenry and other places of beauty.

EVERYONE recognizes the vital part which transportation plays in the growth of any territory. But have you ever stopped to think how, in other ways, a railroad such as the North Shore Line brings prosperity to the territory it serves? In the last ten years, the North Shore Line has paid \$20,756,035 in salaries to employees who live and spend their money in the North Shore territory. In the same period this railroad has paid \$2,380,236 in taxes to the communities it serves. In the last five years, it has paid \$1,396,927 in dividends and \$3,591,502 in interest on bonds, equipment notes and property mortgages, most of which has gone to investors residing in North Shore communities. In these and other ways, the North Shore Line turns back the biggest share of its revenues to the communities it serves to be re-invested with the business institutions of North Shore cities and towns.

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