

the

Story

of

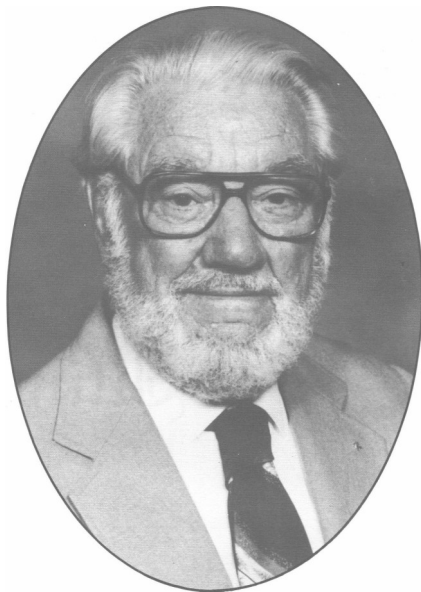
Oregon,

Illinois

Sesquicentennial

1836 — 1986

Dedication



Charles W. Mongan, Sr.

February 19, 1906—July 27, 1988

In memory of Charles Mongan

from Oregon Republican Reporter, August 3, 1988, Page A4

I am not his oldest friend, but I am one of his many friends.

Charles Mongan died today Wednesday, July 27 at age 82, doing what he liked to do alone, taking on a special job. Today it was burning a pile of brush behind his home just north of Oregon.

Charlie died, doing this task but he died believing he could accomplish the job, and that was Charlie's philosophy all the years he was a bricklayer, carpenter and contractor. After he retired he and his wife Jenny enjoyed life with several overseas tours and sharing them with many of us. He was a very devoted husband and loving father and grandfather.

Charlie was going to be a minister back in the late 1920's and early 30's, and one day my father asked him if he would build a fireplace in our home at 710 Washington Street, Charlie looked it over and said, "Yes". When finished, my dad said, "Well Charlie you sure make a better bricklayer than you would of made a preacher", Charlie laughed and said, "that our fireplace had been his first, but it was not to be his last."

Charlie enjoyed early history and was a good authority on Oregon and Ogle County history. He put in many long hours on the new Oregon History Book which will be published soon. This will leave a part of him with all of us.

Oregon will miss Charles W. Mongan and so will I. "God gives us memories, so we might have roses in December"

E.G. (Tim) Landers

Obituary

from Oregon Republican Reporter

Charles Mongan

Charles W. Mongan Sr., 82, Route 3, Oregon, died Wednesday, July 27, 1988 in his home after a short illness. He was a self-employed building contractor for many years, prior to his retirement.

He was born Feb. 19, 1906 in Pine Creek Township, to Richard and Lydia (Wernick) Mongan. He was married to Jennie Stouffer Oct. 23, 1926 in Oregon. She preceded him in death Jan. 9, 1984.

He was also preceded in death by one daughter Nellie Martin.

He was a member of the Oregon United Methodist Church, Oregon Masonic Lodge No. 420, Tebala Shrine in Rockford, Mount Morris Moose Lodge, Ogle County Fair Board, Oregon Development Association and president of Riverview Cemetery Association.

Survivors include a son, Charles, Jr., of Oregon; daughter, Sharon McGowan of Winchester, Va.; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and special friend Viola Myers of Oregon.

The funeral was Saturday at the Oregon United Methodist Church, with the Rev. E. Maynard Beal, and Richard Eldred, officiating. Burial was in Riverview Cemetery. Farrell-Holland Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

A memorial has been established.

Greetings from Oregon
The Rock River Valley

The brooding figure of Blackhawk,
Arms folded, with majesty gazes
On meandering Rock River below,
On farms where the horse still grazes.
Gone are the plains of the Indians,
But through the morning haze,
It seems as if ancient tom-toms
Still whisper from other days.
The deer still lurk in the thickets,
The maize still grows from the soil,
Springs still feed the river,
Natives the land still toil.
The same snow falls on the landscape,
Fox chases the rabbit through fields,
Coon in his tree, muskrat by the stream,
The river its fish still yields.
The heritage of the past still lingers,
And its people will pridefully say,
“Timeless beauty still lives in our valley;
Those who pass by our way will stay.”

— Rosemary Miller Walker

The Story of Oregon, Illinois Sesquicentennial 1836–1986

Published by The Book Committee

Edited by Charles Mongan, Sr.

Coordinated by Lynne Seger Kilker

Moral support and hours of cooperation by Viola Myers and Anne Jones

Photos by The People of Oregon; special thanks to Donna Kennedy who donated many hours of her time in photographing each business listed by the Chamber of Commerce.

Typesetting and layout by Combined Communication Services of Oregon, Illinois

Dustcover illustration by Jon Spoor of Oregon, Illinois

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Oregon, Illinois is the County Seat in the heart of the wooded Blackhawk Country. Near beautiful palisades of the Rock River and noted White Pine Forest of Ogle County. Fittingly called by the Indian name “Oregon,” meaning “River of the West.” (Quoted from the “Burlington Route—Mississippi River Scenic Line.”) Printed in U.S.A.—Poole Bros., Inc. on March 1, 1955. (Provided from the collection of Jon Schwartz)

This could be called a disclaimer . . . it could be called an excuse . . . it could also be called a rationalization! You call it whatever you wish.

The Book Committee takes no responsibility for the spelling of names in this book. We have not had the time or the people-power to check spelling. We have used most common spellings or whatever we could find in the phone book. All else failing we invented something that may give you the idea.

We also have not checked out all the stories to be sure they are historically accurate. In fact they may not even be grammatically accurate . . . in fact they probably have grown with time. Stories seldom shrink. In most cases we have given you a reference for more

The Book Committee

My name is Lynne Seger Kilker and I am the newest member of the Book Committee.

I came into the job in May of 1986. Charles Mongan asked me to attend a meeting to talk about the printing of a history book about Oregon. When Charlie asks me to do something, I always try to cooperate. I have a special love for this man since visiting the Holy Land with a group of which he and Jennie were a part. We enjoyed celebrating his 75th birthday in Jerusalem . . . now that's really throwing a party!

Anyway, Lester Sanderson of Combined Communication Services agreed to do the typesetting, layout and camera work necessary for the book. It was decided to have the book printed in time for the Sesquicentennial Celebration in October of 1986.

When I found they planned a 300-page book, and when I realized they were just beginning to collect the information to be published, we had our first "Book Committee Meeting." It was agreed that more time was needed . . . a lot more time!

I have always considered myself an Oregonite . . . even though as a child I lived in Chicago and my family moved all over the United States because of my father's trade. Always though there were the summers when my sister, Susan Kapla of Rolling Meadows, IL, and I would return to Oregon to be with Grandpa Fred and Grandma Katie Hardesty on the farm. That was coming home!

I remember riding on a cart with Howard McAnly taking water to threshers. I remember trailriding with Frank Adamson. I remember going to the free show on the lawn of the Chana School during the summer evenings. Then waiting on a very high chair in the pool hall for Grandpa to "get done" while Grandma Katie visited with the ladies waiting in cars outside.

After my parents settled in Rockford, I met and married a Rockford Swede, David Seger. We found some land four miles north of Oregon and built a home. In 1979 David was killed in a car accident in the driveway of our country home. That Fall I moved into town with my two school-age children, Katie and Matt. My older son, Steven, was on his own.

In December of 1983 I married Richard Kilker from Freeport. And we plan to live happily ever-after!



I would like to thank my business partner, Chris (Boyden) Snyder for her patience while I have labored over this book. She has carried a heavier load at our shop, S&S Computype Service, due to the many hours required for this project. She has never complained about the many copies made on the copier, about the many visits by folks stopping by to chat about the book or to bring stories or some more pictures, and she has made many pots of coffee to keep me smiling (and awake). Thank you, Chris.

I would like to introduce the rest of the committee:

Charles Mongan, Sr.

He holds the title of Historian for the Sesquicentennial Celebration Committee. To quote Charlie:

Born February 19, 1906, at 806 South Fourth Street, Oregon, IL. Son of Richard and Alice (Wernick) Mongan; grandparents were William H. and Margret (Boyer) Mongan and Charles H. and Annie Traver Wernick. Attended Pleasant Valley country school located north of the Catholic cemetery—then because of distance from home on Rt. 2 a mile east of Castle Rock, and due to severe weather, was taught by his mother at home until parents built a home at 610 South Seventh Street in town.

On September 1915 I became a student in Grade 4 Oregon Elementary School, Jennie Potgetter teacher, Professor Taylor principal. Began working at Beck fruit and vegetable farm located Tenth and Jackson Streets during vacation between sixth and seventh grade. I received 10¢ per hour for 10 hours per day, six days per week. By working at other jobs and clamming in Rock River, I saved enough money to purchase a vacant lot (606 Seventh Street) in September 1919 from Judge Reed.

During high school summer vacations I worked at Ziegler's Garage on West Washington Street. In 1921-22 participated in Oregon High School track and basketball teams. Played in the first basketball game played in the Oregon Coliseum during Christmas vacation 1922. Before that the games were played in the Opera House on South Fourth Street.

After June graduation 1924 I worked for Fred Gale, "plumber." Work ran out so I took a job with DeKalb-Ogle Telephone Company and worked at Rumery Bakery for a short time. The winter of 1924 I attended trade and brick-laying school in Chicago and in June of 1926 became a journeyman bricklayer working in Rockford. Married Jennie E. Stauffer on October 23, 1926 and lived in Rockford. Returned to live in Oregon in 1931 and commuted to Rockford to work on Sanitary Project then under construction. In the summer of 1932 helped build Lighthouse Church. In 1936 started mason contracting business and in 1940 added general contracting; 1947 real estate developer partnership Mongan and Etnyre subdivision, and in early 1950s added materials and yard—Ogle Lumber Company partners Mervin Rhoads and Charles Mongan, now Patterson Lumber Company.

Became semi-retired after rebuilding the Koontz Building (Ben Franklin Store) which I had built for Mr. Clyde Koontz in 1940.

My friend Charlie Mongan died before finishing the "Story of Oregon." Much of the material included in the front matter was already written and approved by him . . . so we are using it as he approved it. This book is dedicated to Charles W. Mongan, Sr. (1906-1988). I miss him.—LSK

Viola Amber Koontz Myers

Although she was born to Clyde and Amber Tholen Koontz on a farm north of Mt. Morris, Illinois on March 11, 1918, Viola Amber Koontz Myers has lived all but two years of her life in Oregon or its vicinity. So, her desire to get a written record to date of Oregon's history is sincere. Her only regret is that she did not become interested sooner.

The Nash School is her alma mater from first grade through high school, and it was there that she met her future husband, Eugene L. Myers, whom she married on October 10, 1937. He was the second son of Lester N. and Edna Myers. He died September 29, 1984.

They have three children—Phyllis A. (Mrs. Javier Vertiz) of Rockford, IL; Judith E. (Mrs. Raymond R. Ehnen) of Oregon, IL; and Gary Eugene Myers of Oregon, IL. There are six grandchildren.

Before World War II, Eugene was in the grocery and meat business with Viola's father. Then a couple of years after he returned from the service, the family moved to a farm at Paynes Point which is eight miles east of Oregon.

Viola is a member of the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith, a life member of the

Oregon Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 8739, a long-time member of Whale Watchers (which is a nature study group), a helper at the Chana Food Cooperative, and is a part-time cook at the Oregon VFW Club. She is also a member of the Lighthouse Home Extension group. Her hobbies are varied but reading and gardening are the main ones.

In her life-time she has bottled milk and delivered it, washed the milk bottles, separated the cream with a hand-turned separator, and washed the many disks inside, churned butter in a flip-flop churn, fed chickens, gathered the eggs and dressed chickens, picked up bushels of potatoes for the grocery store, stacked bundles of oats and barley, and helped with feeding the threshers, slopped pigs, brought cows in from the back field, and posted bills and clerked in the grocery and meat store when people called in their orders which were charged by the week or month, put up and delivered—all before self-service and computers.

Times and methods of doing things have really changed in her lifetime—what will the next seventy years be like!

Naturally, every committee has to have a recording secretary and we were most fortunate to have Viola Myers keeping track of us.

During the million meetings we had, Viola took notes, recording our every thought (we have since erased the tapes), and reminding us to stick to the subject at hand. When working on a history it is so very easy to become side-tracked and wander down a path that leads . . . to another story.

Viola has worked on writing the many captions found with the pictures in this book. She is a very cheerful lady and always remained calm and organized.

We would suggest something that might be done and by the next meeting Viola would have the necessary information. Thank you. It's been a pleasure.

Anne Heurman Geiken Jones

Since Anne refuses to write up a brief story of her life, let me say that Anne served as President of the 1986 Sesquicentennial Committee, attended at least a million meetings of the various sub-committees, and even found time to enjoy the celebration. All this while holding down a full-time job at Stronghold.

Anne volunteered (after we all refused to do it) to put together the section of this book dealing with the many businesses established in Oregon. She and Charlie Mongan have researched the history of the present business locations and will show you quite clearly how the city developed as she guides you on a buggy ride through the City of Oregon.

This section of the book was a monumental task. It meant reading old abstracts and deeds. It meant pouring over maps of streets, sewers, and water pipes. I know you will find the buggy ride one of the most fascinating chapters in this book.

During the time we have been working on "The Story of Oregon" Anne also found time for surgery and planning a wedding . . . her own!

Acknowledgments

There are some people in this fair city who have gone the extra mile on this project . . . have put up with us for over two years . . . and have maintained a cheerful attitude and a cheery greeting. They are:

Donna Kennedy

This young lady has walked many miles, climbed, crawled, and drove in pursuit of the many pictures found in this book. She is personally responsible for the complete set of pictures of all businesses listed by the Chamber of Commerce for 1986. (There are a couple missing, but that is because the business owners preferred to remain out of the book). Donna has also attended Scout meetings, ribbon-cuttings, flag raisings, parades, and even spent one day taking pictures with no film in her camera . . . she says those were her best shots!

Once, as she scrambled out of a weed-filled ditch after shooting pictures of a local bank, she ended up face-to-face with the local arm of the Law. After a brief explanation, the word was passed that "Donna is the official photographer for the *Story of Oregon* and just leave her alone."

Dawn Burke

Now here is a rare individual. She has coordinated all our typesetting, camera work, and changes of mind all along the way. Never once has there been a complaint or frown. She even still speaks to us! Dawn is employed by Combined Communications Services in Oregon, Illinois and we certainly appreciate her good nature and valuable advice.

Dawn Cline Burke, daughter of Don & Pat Aulls of Oregon and the late Donald Cline has lived in the Oregon area her entire life. She attended St. Mary's Catholic School and when they closed went to Oregon and Mt. Morris Public Schools.

She and her husband Bob have five children: Carrie & Brett Burke, Jason, Rebecca and Zachery Coffman. They live at 1400 Koontz Place in Oregon.

Working at CCS Oregon she was given the opportunity and *task* of working on this book.

It was very interesting working on the book. I enjoyed looking at the old photos and reminiscing and learning a lot about the history of Oregon I did not know.—DCB

Jon Spoor

Jon Austin Spoor is a native of Oregon, Illinois with family ties going back over one hundred years in the area. His family had owned and operated two of Oregon's landmark motels. Jon has a wide variety of artistic interests including both fine art and commercial art. He participates in various art shows, doing commissioned works, displaying artwork in one of the area restaurants, and also a local gallery in Oregon. Jon has a love of history, antiques and of nature. He also is an outdoor enthusiast and enjoys camping, hunting and fishing, all of which can be done so well in the Oregon area.

We thank Jon for the dustcover on this book and for the lead-in picture for the "Buggy Ride" section.

The Entire Staff of CCS

Combined Communication Services receives a special thank you for the fine cooperation they have provided. Their talents and services have helped make this book a reality. Some of the materials we gave them to photograph were tattered remnants. All were treated carefully and reproduced with superior quality. Our manuscripts were prepared by amateurs and often were not retyped. Our spelling has been corrected where possible, and careful notes have been written to us with questions regarding dates, etc. We are sure there are typesetters, keyliners, and camera people who are breathing a sigh of relief now that *The Story of Oregon* has been told.

Marie (Hardesty) Black

One day in the middle of October, 1987, I found my arm twisted by my cousin, Lynne Kilker. This led to my becoming a working member of this Book Committee. This experience has shown me that I really know little about the early history of my "native city."

I was born in rural Ogle County and Oregon was always the "big city" we came to on Saturday evenings, after chores. When my grandmother moved to Oregon in 1946, I spent

many weekends with her and attended the Methodist Church and made many friends, who became good friends later, as my folks left the farm in December of 1952, to move to Oregon.

I started high school in Oregon in the fall of 1952. I met and married an Oregon native, Donald Black. Don was a history enthusiast and served as both Vice President and President of the Ogle County Historical Society. His involvement led to my involvement. He died from cancer in 1976 after seeing our daughter, Laury, graduate from Oregon high school and our son, Stanwood, start third grade.

My parents are Paul and Ethel Hardesty, who many of you know from their involvement in the Ogle County Historical Society, church activities, Senior Citizen Center, etc.

I have enjoyed what time I have spent on helping with this "Story of Oregon" because it has truly been a learning experience for me. I hope this story will help my grandchildren and all children know a little more about their roots.

Editor's note: Early in 1988 Marie was forced to stop working on the book due to health problems. We thank her for her organizational efforts and for the section on "Railroads" which she prepared.

Dean Bacon

Dean provided the lead-in art for the Military section of this book. He would accept no payment and we are well pleased with his offering. Dean is a graphic artist working at E.D. Etnyre and Company. His recent painting of Blackhawk is enjoyed by many of us. Thank you, Dean.

Lois Cline

Lois (Mrs. Howard) Cline has retyped pages and pages of manuscript. She has corrected spelling, punctuated, nagged, pleaded, and caused many of us to feel guilty about our missed deadlines. Her encouragement and enthusiasm have kept us pushing for completion.

Mary Krogh

I was born Mary Reynolds near Polo, Illinois and attended country schools. I graduated from Oregon Community High School.

I married Harvey Krogh, Jr. of Blair, Nebraska. He served as pastor of many Churches of God and served the Oregon Church of God during the fifties. My husband died while serving a pastorate in Ohio. We have two children and three grandchildren.

In 1972 I moved to Oregon and served as Women's Dorm Director at Oregon Bible College for four years. During the last ten years I have worked part-time at S&S Computype as a proofreader.

Editor's note: Mary Krogh volunteered to proofread every word of this book . . . and there are lots of words. She has questioned us repeatedly on dates and names. Her donation of time and energy and talent is most appreciated.

Deb Wuebben

Deb Wuebben voluntarily (and for no \$s) agreed to prepare the Index for this book. When you consider how many names there are and how many pages to coordinate, Deb has really provided a service. Following is some information provided by Deb about her business and her family:

Computer Services was founded in 1984 with the idea of providing businesses with computer services for their business without them buying the computer. A homebased business, services range from misc. typing, word processing, mailing labels, to desktop publishing for catalogs, brochures, newsletters, etc.

My community involvement consists of 1988 President of the Oregon Area Chamber of Commerce, member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Paynes Point, Past Secretary Oregon's Women Bridge League, Chairperson Cancer Society, Oregon Township.

A former computer supervisor, I have kept up my skills while raising two sons, David age 5½ and Matthew age 4, and keeping very active within the community. My husband, Ray, works for Commonwealth Edison at the Byron Nuclear Plant. We both enjoy gardening, golfing, playing bridge, and raising our sons.

And now a very special thank you to the people of Oregon, Illinois. You have contributed your stories and your treasured pictures. Please accept our "thank you" for without you there would be no *Story of Oregon*.

A limited edition of 1200 copies of this book was printed. There is no second edition planned.

Copies of all materials collected in putting this book together have been turned over to the Ogle County Historical Society located in Oregon, Illinois.

Our purpose has been to update the history of our city and to include some of the stories that might otherwise have been lost. It is the people and the stories about the people that make a city!

Enjoy . . .

Charles Mongan, Sr.
Lynne Seger Kilker
Viola Koontz Myers
Anne Jones

Preface

Concerning Oregon's beginning, taken from the autobiography of John Phelps (1796-1874) page 63: "I moved the family up in the spring of 1835. We arrived on the 17th of May, and found that all of our corn had been taken by the Indians. I had to depend on grass to support my teams to haul our provisions from Galena. We laid out the road from Chicago to Galena in the fall, and early in the spring laid out the town of Oregon."

To err is human . . . many people have asked: "Why the 125th anniversary in 1968 and the 150th in 1986 . . . it simply does not add up." The answer is this; the committee for the 125th used the wrong birthday; when the error was discovered, it was too late and they had to go on with the celebration. Also . . . I have been told by a number of older people that while John Phelps was away from his farm between Oregon and Mt. Morris during the winter of 1834-35 the Indians took his corn and burned his cabin. In his biography, Mr. Phelps only states: "They took my corn." If they had burned his cabin, I am sure he would have mentioned it. So what I have always thought was that John Phelps second cabin (remembered by many of us) was the first and only cabin built on that specific farm location. Likewise, there will be similar errors in "The Story of Oregon" because many of the stories in this book came from the memory of people living at the present time.

The Book Committee has spent many hours checking with people, looking at pictures, checking city maps (namely 1893, 1899, 1905), which show the location of structures on their respective block and street, checking out minute-books of Oregon, from the 1878 history of Ogle County, the 1905 biographical history of Ogle County, the bicentennial history of Ogle County, school year books, many newspaper articles, and the writings of lovers of the past history of Oregon.

If there are things omitted, which we are sure there will be, this is what happened. Letters were sent to manufacturers, organizations, churches, lodges, and others asking if they wished to be included in this book. We asked for a written article from them; some refused, others did not respond. We, the Committee, have had pictures taken of all the businesses recorded in the membership book of the Chamber of Commerce. Many of these are not located within the city limits of Oregon but are very important to the well-being of our city. If any have been missed, it was unintentional and we apologize.

A Quote from 1878 History of Ogle County: "For these reasons it is not to be expected this volume will be entirely accurate as to names, dates, etc., or that it will be so perfect as to be above and beyond criticism, for the book is yet to be written and printed that can justly claim the needs of perfection; but it is the publisher's hope, as it is their belief, that it will be found measurably correct and generally accurate and reliable. Industrious and studied care has been exercised to make it a standard book of reference, as well as one of interest, to the general reader. If in such a multicity of names, dates, etc., some errors are not detected, it will be strange indeed." It is this editor's opinion that this quotation be applied to this book and many others already written.

Phelps Autobiography page 82. *Editorial comment:* Although Phelps had businesses from Texas north to New Diggings, Wisconsin, laying out two other towns and making them the county seats, he always returned to his family and his favorite farm and home on the Galena to Chicago Trail which he laid out, half way between Oregon and Mt. Morris. The original brick home burned down in the early 1930s, replaced by a square two-story frame house, but the Grove (planted by John Phelps) which extends from the home to the Galena Chicago Trail (now Rt. 64) can be seen on your trip from Oregon to Mt. Morris.

At this home John Phelps died on Wednesday at 9:00—a.m. or p.m. not provided—on April 1, 1874. He was buried in River View Cemetery on Good Friday, April 3, 1874

In Conclusion

The Book Committee and all who worked so diligently on this project express the sincere hope that when Oregon celebrates its Bi-Centennial others will have recorded the changes and historical events which will have occurred, so that those who follow will be able to continue the Story of Oregon, the city we love, and have had the pleasure to enjoy during our lifetime.

Charles W. Mongan, Sr.
Editor, "The Story of Oregon"

Foreword

In 1970, Oregon held its first Fall Festival. The booths were located on Third Street and were few in number; there was no parade and the weekend was wet and cold. The biggest drawing card was the Oregon Woman's Club Antique and Hobby Show.

Each year Autumn on Parade has grown until now the town fairly groans with the people visiting the festival. Our townspeople work from the closing of one year to the closing of the next to insure a success. What kind of people, what kind of town has this much pride to work so hard for a Friday-Sunday festival? Most small towns are alike, only the faces and names differ. Starting with one or two houses and gradually gaining more homes and businesses—growing slowly and creating their own history and story as they grow.

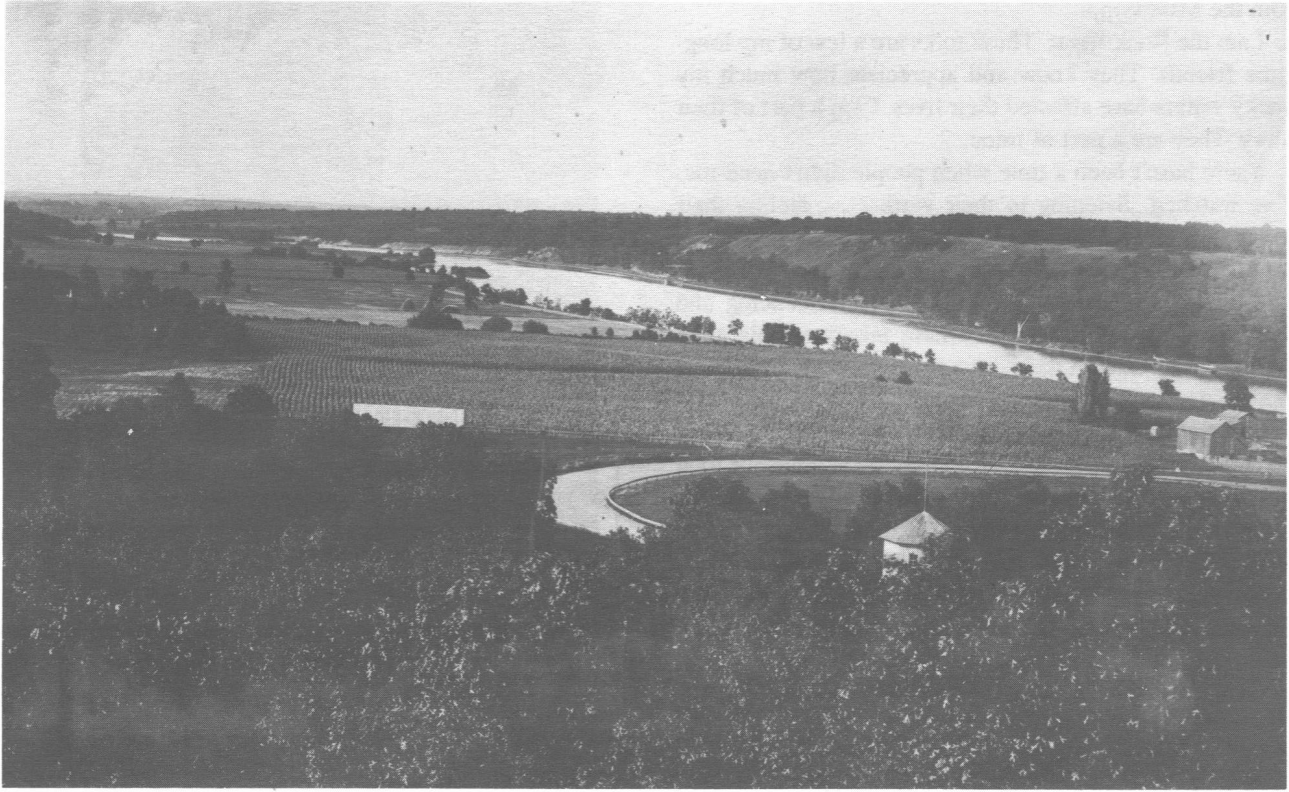
This is Oregon's story, and we invite you to share it with us.

The Book Committee

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River



Compiled and written by Mrs. Lillian McCanse.

THE RIVER

By Mrs. Charles (Irma) Robbins

The river, in summer lazes along, flowing contentedly
So slow in his tempo, it seems to me I would hurry a
bit if I were he
And ever expected to reach the sea. Down stream a
short way, he flows up to a dam
Which long, long ago was laid there by man. He dashes
frantically 'gainst both sides
The only way out is up, he decides. So he bulges his
chest and takes a big leap
And tumbles right over, all in a heap
He takes a great fall, it upsets him, no doubt, and he
swishes and swirls around and about
He runs very swiftly away from this barrier, then
slackens his pace As though he'd consider it folly to
race and scurry madly along
And I seem to hear a faint bit of song with rippling
accompaniment as he ambles by bearing reflections
of earth and sky.

The river in winter presents a drab picture on earth's
surface resembles a fixture
Uninvitingly stolid, no beckoning glance for those who
wander his shores by chance
So placid his face, no ripple is seen. He rests, with
nature's intelligence keen
Strengths to be gathered this time of year to carry spring
rains from far and near
Icy patches, persistently cast . . . O'er lap one another
in effort to pass
Dark is the water, no silvery sheen no heaven's blue, no
glossy grass green
No rushing and pushing down at the dam. Rather, he
parts his icy lips
Through which the overflow calmly slips
No look of content as his waves lap the shore
And well may he flow on forevermore.

ROCK RIVER

From the Pecatonica, the Kyte and the Kishwaukee, the Pine, the Green and a hundred creeks and gullies, rich waters spill into me as I cut my way through wooded bluffs and wander through the field-rimmed valleys to join the Mississippi.

I am the Rock River. These folks are a few of my long-time friends. They know and appreciate how much my rocky waters have affected their lives. I am a part of their story. They are a part of mine.

There hasn't been a time when people didn't need me. I've watched, listening to their work . . . feeling their every movement between my borders and on my banks. I know that I am their reason for being here. I've watched, and heard, and shaped their lives . . . influencing and influenced by the people who have inhabited this great Rock River Valley. Listen, and share with me the events that made this land what it is today.

The Sauk and the Fox were my friends. They saw my splendor and felt my strength. I attracted animals for food and clothing. The trees of my valley provided wood for their fires. My waters quenched the thirst of their bodies while my beauty quenched the thirst of their souls. It came as no surprise to me that Black Hawk would lead his people into rallying against the white man's claim of ownership of this land.

(The preceding passages were written about me by Nancy Miller for "Livin' on the River" '86.)

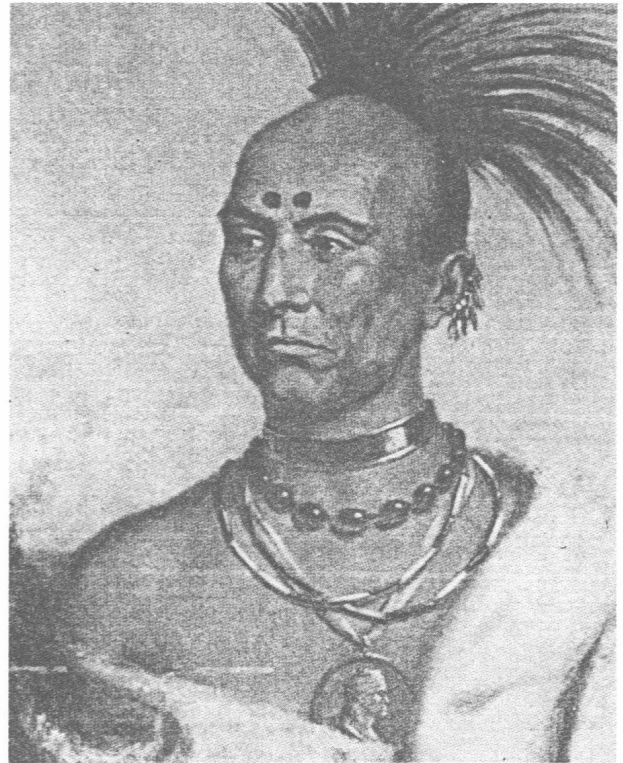
INDIANS

Although numerous Indians in canoes from many Indian tribes traveled upon my waters, the most notable of these was Chief Black Hawk, leader of the Sac. Let me quote from a brief biography written by Mr. Leonard Jacobs, Betsi McKay, and Don Hammerman for the Oregon Chamber of Commerce.

A popular dictionary of today describes Black Hawk briefly "Indian name Ma-ka-tae-mish-kia-kia, 1767-1838. American Indian; leader of the Fox and Sauk Indians in the Black Hawk War (1832)." However, that capsule description is unable to capture the terror that gripped the white settlers of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin when the Black Sparrow Hawk and his "British Band" of Sauk and Fox moved into a forbidden area; the Rock River valley. This crossing of the Mississippi into Illinois in April of 1832 was in violation of a treaty signed in 1804.

At about the age of 30 Black Hawk was described: "He was of medium but strong build. His sharp, dark hazel eyes, unshielded by eyebrows, peered over a Roman nose. His generous mouth overhung a slightly receding chin. Only a scalp lock adorned his otherwise shaven head. Not unpleasant, his features, with his light yellow complexion has a slight Chinese cast." He was born at the confluence of the Rock and Mississippi rivers, and became a warrior at the age of fifteen.

In the War of 1812, Black Hawk fought on the side



Black Hawk was a prisoner of war when Charles Bird King painted this portrait in 1833. It is probably the least known of the Black Hawk portraits. (From book entitled "Black Hawk", edited by Donald Jackson and published by University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1955. Book furnished to us by Harold Beatty.)

of the British and for some years thereafter received "gifts" from the British as a reward. With the bold thrust across the Mississippi, Black Hawk was counting on help from the British as well as other Indian tribes to re-establish freedom of movement for his followers to the area.

At the Prophet's village (now Prophetstown), Black Hawk learned he would be without help from any of the above, and felt betrayed as well as infuriated.

Illinois Governor John Reynolds had by this time put Illinois militia into the field. Aided by the regular army, the troops followed the British Band. One of the militia was Captain Abe Lincoln.

Short on food and supplies, Black Hawk moved north up the Rock River, past present day Oregon, into the vicinity of (now) Stillman Valley. By this time, military units had arrived at Dixon's Ferry (Dixon).

On learning that Black Hawk was only 30 miles upstream, Governor Reynolds ordered Major Isaiah Stillman's battalion to pursue the band and "coerce them into submission." Traveling light, except for a keg of whiskey, the militia left early May 13, 1832, arriving late that afternoon making camp on Old Man's Run (Stillman Creek).

Aware of his precarious position, that being a short food supply and an overwhelming military force close at hand, the Black Sparrow Hawk sent out a party, bearing a white flag, to Stillman's camp, hoping to be



Map of upper Illinois and lower Wisconsin, showing the route of Black Hawk's band during the Black Hawk War. In the shaded area the route was confused and varied, and is not exactly known today. (Map courtesy Oregon Chamber of Commerce, "Black Hawk, The Warrior Leader 1767-1838")

allowed to recross the Mississippi and thereby lead a peaceful life.

Itching for a fight and fortified by a "liquor courage", the militia fired on the small party. The furious Black Hawk and his warriors retaliated, savagely striking the militia at Stillman Valley, killing eleven, thus setting off the Black Hawk War. Coming up from Dixon the next day, Abraham Lincoln helped to bury the dead.

What followed was, in general a long retreat by Black Hawk and his followers who lived (and died) on starvation rations, until the "disgraceful affair" ended, mercifully at the Battle of Bad Axe in Wisconsin on August 2, 1832.

Ma-ka-tae-mish-kia-kia (the Black Sparrow Hawk) has been remembered kindly down through the years, even though he relished a good fight and was a grim opponent of the United States government. Commercial ventures and civic organizations in the area have used his name. Athletic teams of Oregon High School are known as the Hawks, and Chicago has named its hockey team the Black Hawks.

High on a bluff near Oregon is the Black Hawk statue. Originally, the statue was intended as a study in the character of the American Indian, but we Oregonians now recognize it as a representation of Black Hawk, the warrior-leader. Ma-ka-tae-mish-kia-kia would have loved the view and, militarily, the high-ground position."

Of further interest concerning the Black Hawk Wars of 1832 is the following from the introduction to Black Hawk's Autobiography edited by Donald Johnson: (p. 18, 19, 20).

"The Black Hawk War of 1832 was barely a war. It lasted just fifteen weeks. It cost the lives of but seventy settlers and soldiers, and the invading force was not a band of marauding redskins on the warpath, but a migration which included Indian women and children. They were surely migrators, it is true, and they were ready for trouble. The warriors were armed and determined. Black Hawk, deceived by chiefs and medicine men, thought he was leading his people to an alliance with the Winnebago, the Potawatomi, and even the British in Canada—an alliance that would help him rescue from the white settlers the site of his ancestral village and the corn fields that surrounded it. But he did not expect to fight unless attacked. He could not know that he was leading his people to starvation and slaughter.



Lincoln saw few hostile Indians during his service in the Black Hawk War. He was pleased and proud when his fellow volunteers elected him captain of his company. (From book entitled "Black Hawk," edited by Donald Jackson and published by University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1955. Book furnished to us by Harold Beatty.)

A notable aspect of the Black Hawk War is the number of public figures and future public figures that were assembled for a time in the Rock River country of the Mississippi Valley. There were future presidents and statesmen, future generals, soldiering beside national heroes who had survived the War of 1812. Among the names on the muster rolls:

Abraham Lincoln, a captain of Illinois Mounted Volunteers in the first army of citizens, and a private in two later companies.

Interesting excerpt from "BLACK HAWK" re Lincoln: p. 154 and 155:

General Atkinson, pursuing Black Hawk, decided at about this time to dismiss some of the volunteer companies not attached to larger units. He mustered them out in mid-July and sent them back down toward Dixon's Ferry. One of the men sent back was a private named Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln had enlisted April 21 at New Salem, where he was a clerk in Denton Offutt's store, and had been elected captain of a company in the Fourth Regiment, Whiteside's Brigade. After a month of service his company had been discharged and he had reenlisted for another twenty days—this time remaining a private in another company. His company had marched to Galena in search of Indians, then back to Dixon's Ferry, then to Fort Deposit. When his second enlistment had expired he had reenlisted for thirty more days as a private in an independent spy company. With this unit he had marched to Kellog's Grove the day after Major Dement's battle, then back again to Dixon's Ferry. He had gone as far north as the Lake Koshkonong country before he was mustered out.

After his discharge Lincoln returned once more to Dixon's Ferry and continued on to Peoria, where he bought a canoe and paddled it down the Illinois River to Havana. From there he walked over land to New Salem. When he read in a back issue of the *Sangamo Journal* a list of Sangamon County candidates for office who had served in the militia, and did not find himself listed although he was running for the Illinois legislature, he asked the publisher to print a correction. The issue of July 19 carried this statement: "Some weeks ago we gave a list of those candidates of this County (omitting by accident the name of Captain Lincoln, of New Salem,) who were on the frontier periling their lives in the service of their country."

Reflecting on his service in the war, Lincoln wrote to Jesse W. Fell in 1859, "I was elected a Captain of Volunteers—a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since."

A paymaster's receipt roll in the General Accounting Office, NA (photostat in IHI), shows that Lincoln earned \$26.15 during the three weeks of his first reenlistment as a private. This included base pay of \$6.66 a month plus allowances for travel, for supplying his own horse and arms, etc.

For a detailed account of Lincoln's service, see Harry E. Pratt's summary in *Lincoln, 1809-1839*, a volume in the *Lincoln Day by Day* series.

Also on the muster rolls were: *Colonel Zachary Taylor*, leading troops in the field and later commanding the Fort Crawford garrison at Prairie du Chien. *Jefferson Davis*, a lieutenant selected to escort the captured Black Hawk down the river to prison. *Major General Winfield Scott*, hampered by cholera, who would later become General-in-Chief of the United States Army. *Colonel David Twiggs*, who lost most of his command from cholera, and who would defect to the South in the Civil War—taking with him his troops and valuable supplies. *Lieutenant Robert Anderson*, the Assistant Inspector General of troops in the field, who would distinguish himself at the defense of Fort Sumter. *Lieutenant Albert Sidney*

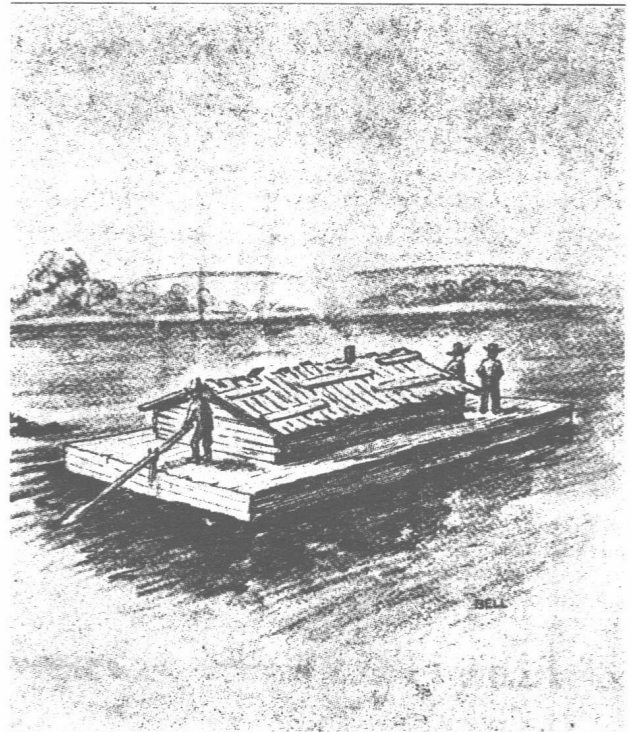
Johnson, Aid-de-camp to the commanding general, who would command the Confederate forces at the Battle of Shiloh.

Political figures, present and future were everywhere. In addition to Governor John Reynolds, commanding the militia, the volunteer horsemen included such future Illinois Governors as Thomas Ford, Joseph Duncan, and Thomas Carlin. Colonel Henry Dodge would one day become governor of Wisconsin. Orville H. Browning, a private in Whiteside's Brigade, would become a United States Senator and Secretary of the Interior."

SURRENDER . . .

"You have taken me prisoner with all my warriors. I am much grieved for I expected, if I did not defeat you, to hold out much longer and give you more trouble before I surrendered. . . . Your guns were well aimed. The bullets flew like birds in the air and whizzed by my ears like the wind in trees in winter. My warriors fell around me. . . .

"We looked up to the Great Spirit. We went to our great father (the president). We were encouraged. His council gave us fair words and big promises, but we got no satisfaction. . . . We called a great council and built a large fire. The spirits of our fathers arose and spoke to us to avenge our wrongs or die. We all spoke before the council fire. It was warm and pleasant. We set up the war whoop and dug up the tomahawk; our knives were ready, and the heart of Black Hawk swelled high in his bosom when he led his warriors into battle. He is satisfied. He will go to the world of spirits contented. He has done his duty. His father will meet him there and commend him.



Type of early day flat boat used on Rock River. (Taken from Republican-Reporter article.)

“Black Hawk is a true Indian, and disdains to cry like a woman. He feels for his wife, his children and friends. But he does not care for himself. He cares for his nation, and the Indians. They will suffer. He laments their fate.

“Farewell, my nation! He can do no more. He is near his end. His sun is setting and will rise no more. Farewell to Black Hawk!” . . . Thus spoke Black Hawk at Prairie du Chien on August 27, 1832.

Donald Jackson says of Black Hawk: “Black Hawk was never a great Indian statesman like Tecumsek or a persuasive orator like Keokuk. He was not a hereditary chief or a medicine man. He was only a stubborn warrior brooding upon the certainty that his people must fight to survive.”

Thus ended the saga of the Indians in my river valley as the area was now safe for rapid settlement by adventurers from the east and abroad.

SETTLING OF THE AREA

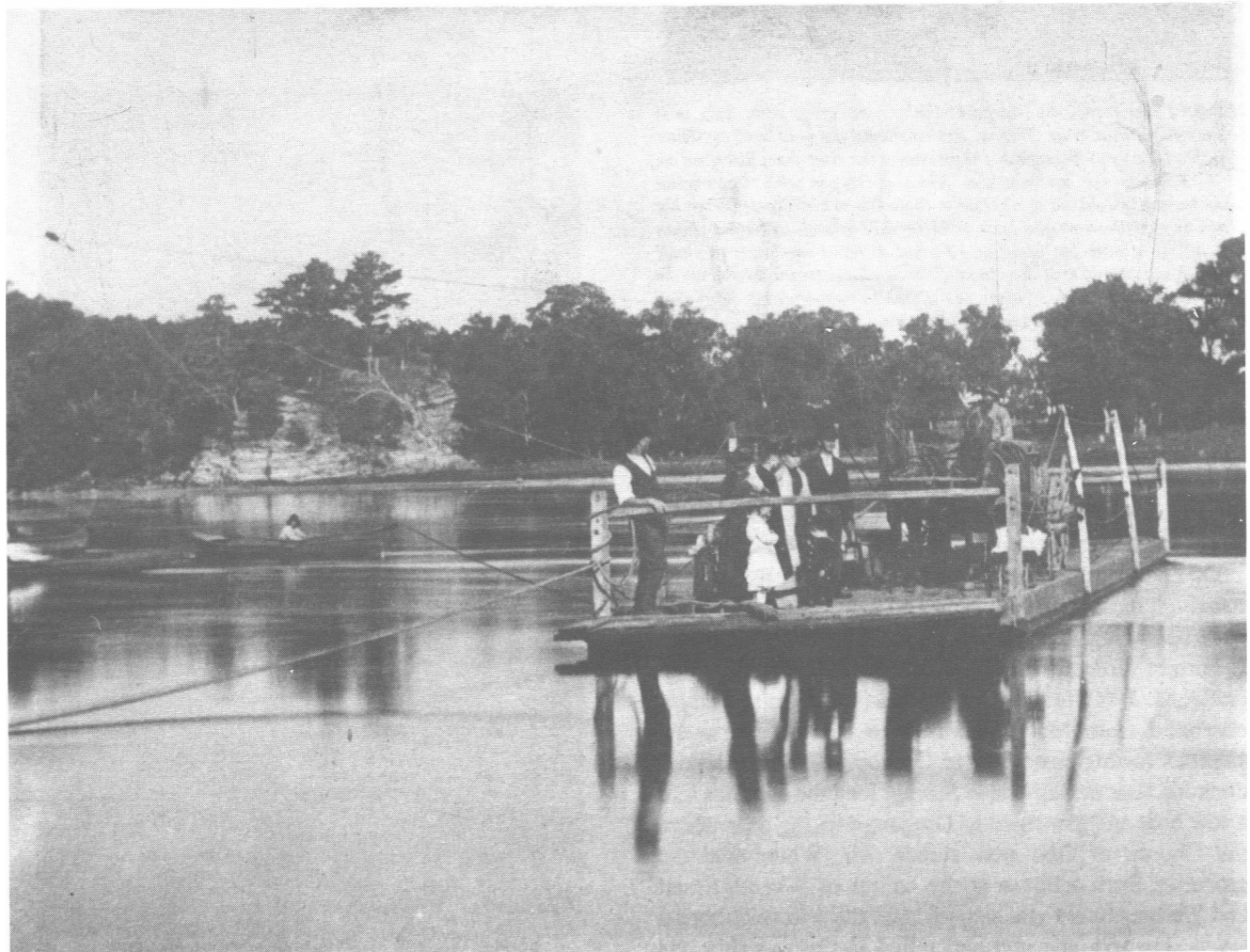
Perhaps some of the early settlers (before mid-1800s) arrived in flatboats. According to the 1940 Journal of the Historical Society, my river remained an important artery in the inter-connecting system of waterways that carried

hunters and fur traders up the Rock River and by portages they could reach the Wisconsin River, proceed down the Wisconsin, the Mississippi, and return up the Rock River. However, as a link in this system of waterways I was more important to trappers, hunters and traders than to settlers.

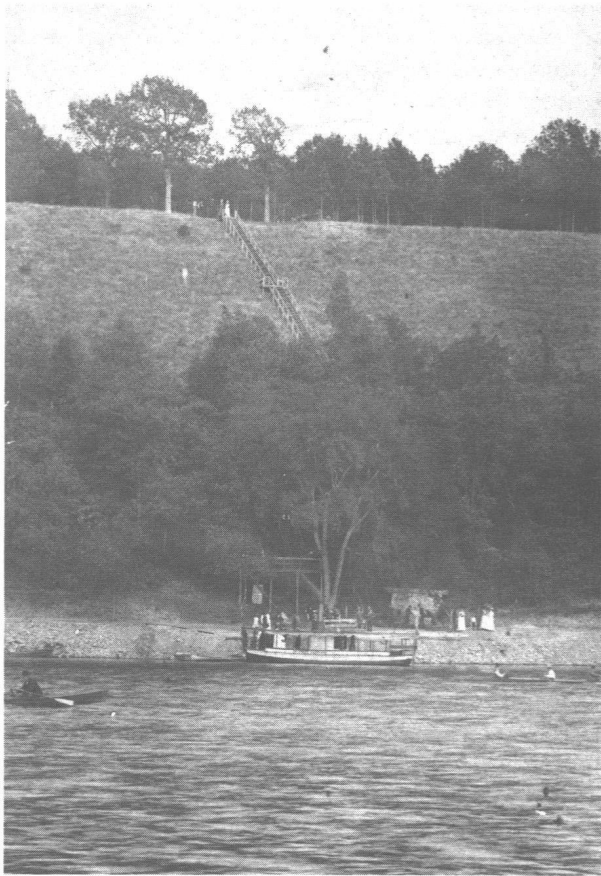
As the town of Oregon grew and homes were built and farms established along my river banks the need “to get to the other side” became evident.



Looking East—The ferry ran just below the rock at the right-hand side of photo. (E. G. Landers photo)



Ferry South of Railroad Bridge. Went across to Daysville. Middle of the 1800s. Harry Stiles ran a pole ferry across the Rock River near the village of Daysville in 1837. It was afterwards run by Aaron Baldwin, William J. Mix, and others ending with Simon Wilson in 1860. (E. G. Landers photo)



The ferry was owned by Margaret Fuller who spent some time in a cabin on an island near Oregon. She chartered the boat to M. J. White (The Tea Man) who brought his wares down the river from Rockford on it. M. J. White was uncle to Jim White of Oregon who remembered when his uncle sold tea and coffee in Ogle County. White delivered his wares by wheelbarrow and once delivered 872 pounds of Grand Union rice in one month. He used the railroad to bring his wares to small towns in the county and then loaded his products on the wheelbarrow for delivery. That is M. J. White in the small rowboat at left-hand side of picture. (Photo courtesy of Edith Fridley)

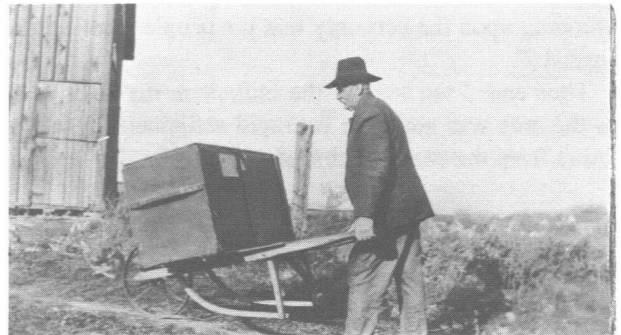
According to the *Oregon Republican Reporter* Sesquicentennial paper, October 1986, Harry Stiles ran a pole ferry across the Rock River near the village of Daysville in 1837. It was afterwards run by Aaron Baldwin, William J. Mix, and others, ending with Simon Wilson in 1860.

Other types of boats began to appear on my waters. Although most were for utility and business some people were beginning to use my waters and boats for pleasure.

Former Oregon resident Jim White recalls when his uncle, M. J. White, traveled to Rockford in his steamboat chartered from Margaret Fuller to buy groceries and supplies for his customers in Oregon. Mr. White would dock his boat at Ganymede Spring, load the supplies into a row boat and row them to Oregon, docking near where the Church of God now stands. Mr. White sold the groceries from a house at the corner of Seventh Street and Webster Street and also peddled them to neighboring towns. He was arrested and jailed in Polo as this was evidently illegal, but Judge Zick, father of Leon Zick, took the case to the Supreme Court and won, thus

enabling salesmen from that time on to peddle their wares without interference from the law.

One of the earlier (1870's) pleasure boats on the river was the "Ada G" which was a pleasure launch equipped with an engine which, according to Jack Putnam (Ada G's son), ran on naphtha. Again, the *Oregon Republican Reporter Sesquicentennial Edition* says: "The 'Ada G' was the first boat of its kind to be found on the Rock River south of Byron. The boat carried twelve people comfortably, although 'more could be crowded in.' The 'Ada G' was owned by Attorney H. A. Smith, Attorney



M. J. White wheeling his produce to his home on corner of Seventh and Webster Street in Oregon. (Photo courtesy Edith Fridley)



M. J. White taking new order and delivering produce to one of his customers. Even in those days, purchases of a certain amount made customers eligible for a "premium" of dishes, etc. (Photo courtesy Edith Fridley)



The "Ada-G" launch. A pleasure launch was equipped with a gasoline engine. The first boat of its kind on Rock River south of Byron. It would carry 12 people comfortably (more could be crowded in). Boat owned by Atty. H. A. Smith, Atty. Jos. Sears, Jr., Charles M. Gale (Ogle Co. Recorder), his brother, B. Gale, and Richard McKinney, a brother of Mrs. Charles Gale. The launch was christened "Ada-G" honoring the youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Gale. The owners built a fine boat house at the foot of the river bank of the H. A. Smith home, 515 N. 4th St. Wooden steps down the bank led to the interior of the boat house. (E. G. Landers photo)



Peter Newcomer with a fish caught "in October 1906 over by the old mill on East Side of river. Weight of Fish: Pike 11# 13 oz.; Bass 3# 15 oz.; Bass 4# 3 oz." (From picture postcard courtesy of E. G. Landers)

Jos. Sears, Jr., Chas. M. Gale, (Ogle County Recorder), his brother B. Gale and Richard McKinney, a brother of Mrs. Charles Gale. The launch was christened 'Ada G' honoring the young daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gale. The owners also built a fine boat house at the foot of the river bank at the H. A. Smith home located at 515 North Fourth Street."

My waters have to this day, provided fish for those who fished for pleasure and food.

The postcard tells the story of a catch that would make anyone proud.

The following article from an area paper tells of fishing after the dam was built in the 1860's:

With the opening of the fishing season in Rock River, as well as in all other streams in the state, the banks of the staid old Rock at Oregon were lined with eager fishermen from early in the morning until dark.

The season didn't open with a bang, when figured in the number of catches. One Byron fisherman landed a three pound pike and others a few smaller pike, but on the whole we couldn't say the day was a howling success so far as results in fish were concerned.

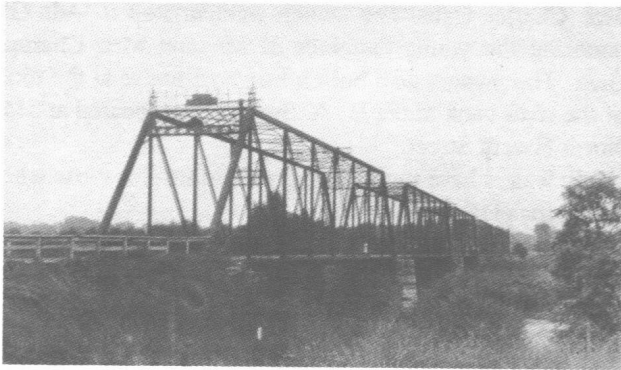
Early in the morning State fish wardens dumped about a half million very small pike into the river near the dam. These had just been hatched at the Rockford hatchery and it is said they will not live in the spring water of the hatchery, so the next best bet was to get them located in the river.

It is claimed by state employees that about twenty per cent of the small fry placed in the river here will be immediately gobbled up by their large brothers of the bass, pike and pickerel families, which also may account for the reason that no fish were biting Sunday, May 1st. Why run around all over the river looking for a tempting hook when plenty of good substantial food had just been placed there with no lines attached?

At any rate it is said the small fry placed in the river Sunday will double in size this year, and each year succeeding for



Taken from postcard cancelled August 1909. (Photo courtesy of John Remour)



Wagon bridge over Rock River, Oregon, Illinois (Photo courtesy of John Remour)

several years until they will be sufficient size to attract fishermen. Other countless thousands of small fish were placed in the river at Byron and neighboring points.

Close to 150 fishermen took advantage of the opening of the season to toss in a line and try their luck at Oregon. They had plenty of everything but luck so far as we could see.

My waters gave many advantages to the riverside dwellers and towns along my banks not found away from rivers or lakes. One of these was the harvest in the winter months after I had a nice thick layer of ice on my surface.

The people along my river were as industrious as they were ingenious. If a need became evident and an opportunity arose they were willing and eager to take the advantage.

See page 71 and 72 in *Bicentennial History of Ogle County* (1976) for details of clamming in Rock River.

“Mrs. Martha Cann and her daughter Stella were the first ones to cross our new bridge in 1937 in their horse and buggy. They lived on the Franklin Grove Road where the Newcomer home is now located. Martha was my grandmother.”

(contributed by Gertrude Cann)

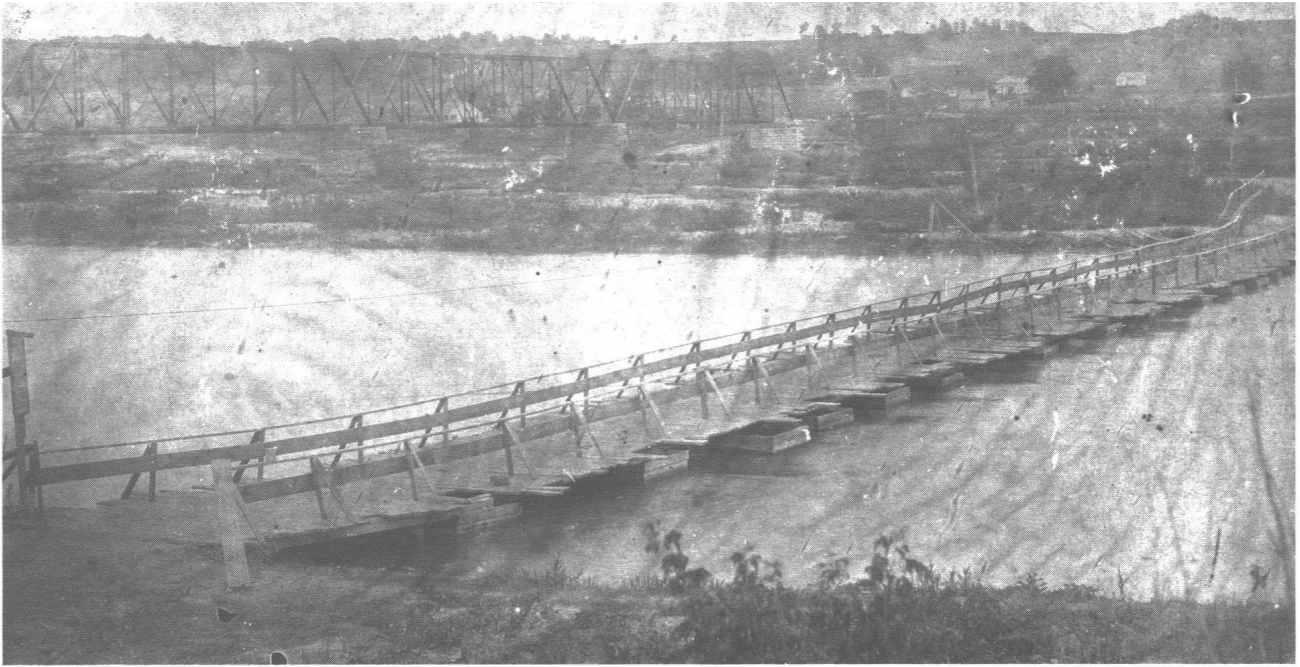
In the 1970’s the 1936 bridge was redone. The two lane bridge from which several generations of families fished my waters, was made into a 4-lane bridge (with no fishing) which is now standing.

DAM

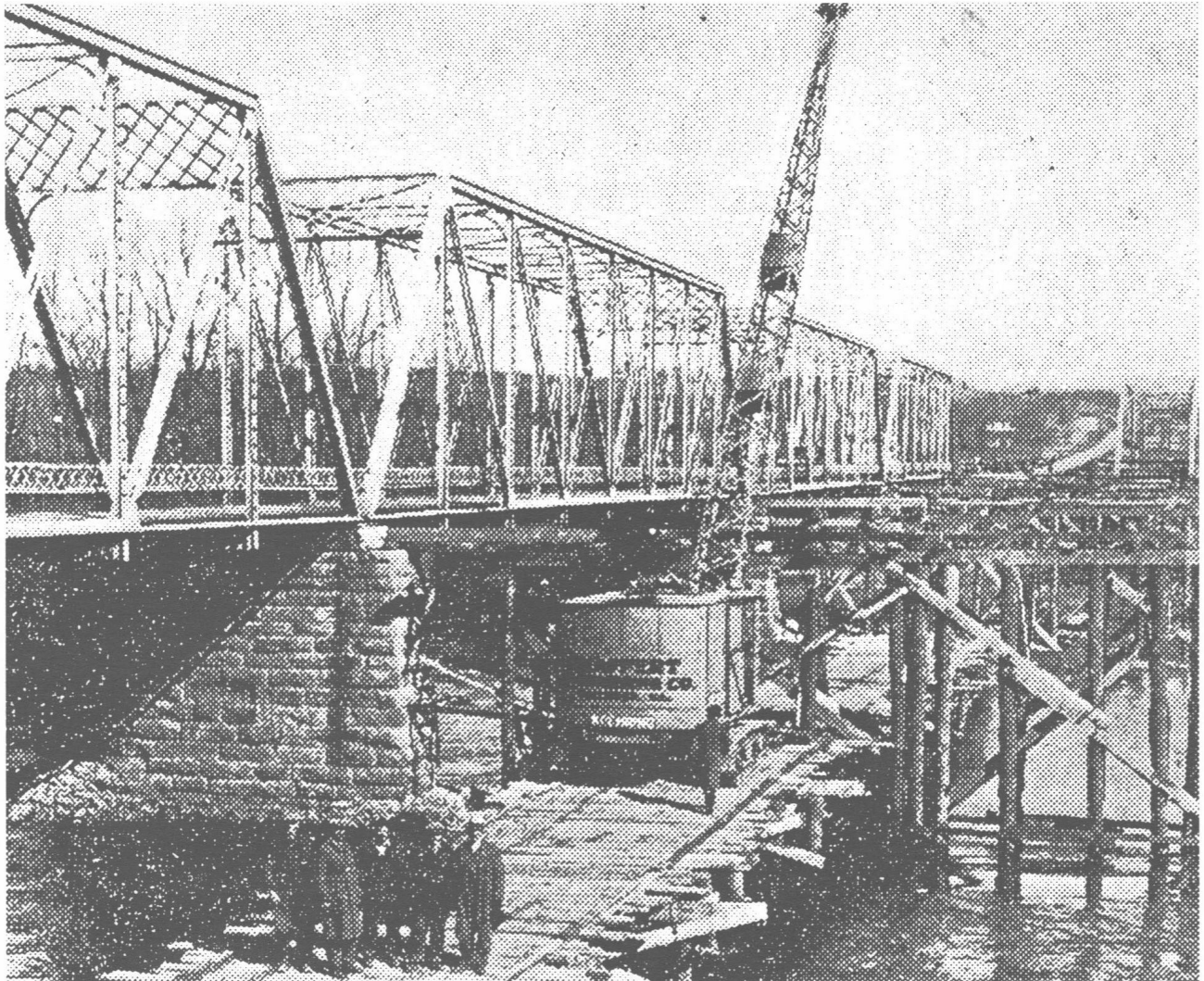
Prior to the time the first dam was built, settlers, traders, trappers etc., could come from New York by way of the Erie Canal, the Great Lakes, Lake Winnebago and into my waters and on to the Mississippi and down to New Orleans. The old hotel in Grand Detour was just one of many along the way that provided food and lodging for the travelers.

An earthquake (according to Charles Mongan) in the 1840s changed the direction of flow of Lake Winnebago back into Lake Michigan and then my river carried less water and was not navigable for the larger boats.

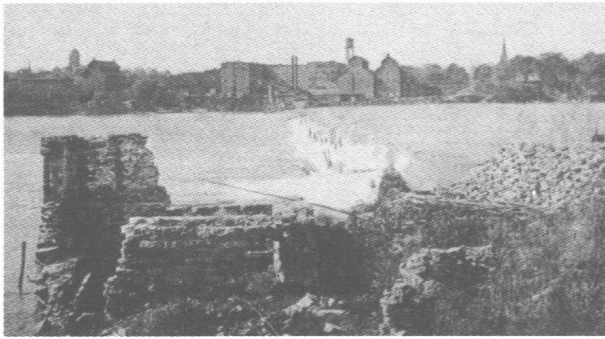
By the 1860’s people had learned to harness the power of the rivers and F. G. Jones, Chester Nash, Mr. Bardon and the owner of the foundry built the first dam at Oregon.



Pontoon bridge to island while building new bridge. Used to carry materials to construction site. (Photo courtesy Jule Baker)



Unusual photo shows how bridge over Rock River at Oregon is being moved to make way for new one. Two spans had already been moved to temporary trestle when this photo was made. (1939 "Morning Star" photo)



The dam across Rock River from Old Mill ruins, Oregon, Ill. (Photo courtesy Charles Mongan)

After the dams were built on my river it ceased to be used as a waterway for commerce although the Northern Illinois Utilities were required to portage boats around the dam on a large flat-bed. This pertained to larger boats and was discontinued after a time.

The first dam was rebuilt several times before 1919. The repairs made at that time lasted until about 1952 when it was redone again. About 1977 the base of the dam was again refortified and all has been well since that time.

The following gives you a story in pictures and with newspaper clippings of the dam, built and rebuilt many times, across my river. This rebuilding was made necessary by the seasonal changes which have occurred since time began.

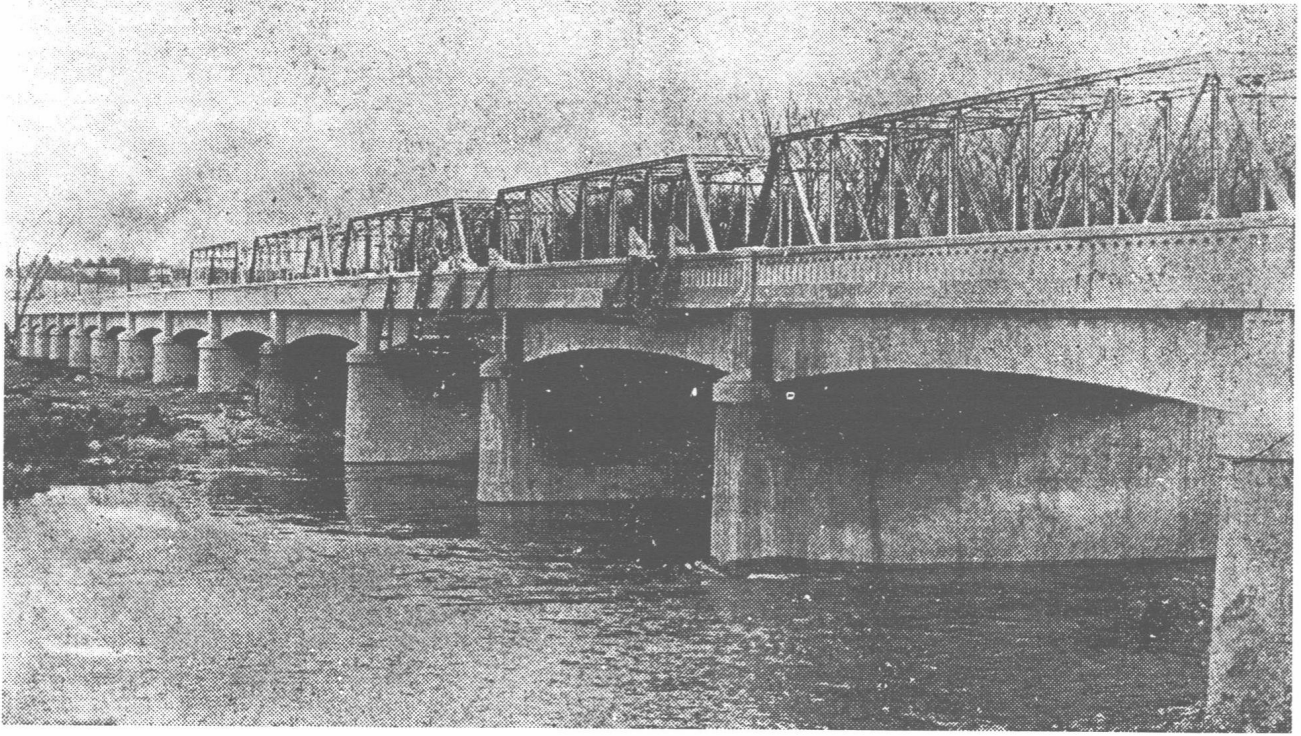
FLOODS

I guess I have always been here. A river is a powerful force, yet my power is only the result of that water which comes to me through the fickle weather and its ever changing moisture pattern. There are times when my water is low and I move slowly on my way to the Mississippi; however, one of the more awesome sights to behold is when I am in flood. Very little can be done to stop me or change my course when warm rains melt thick packs of northern snow over frozen ground and the trickles and creeks become raging streams which pour into me. If this happens before my ice breaks up and has moved downstream I cause even more trouble.

Spring, early or late is the time of the most severe floods because of the winter snows. The following pictures were taken of the flood of 1937 (right after the new bridge-remember?) and although there were floods before and floods since, this is one many people remember.



These men are building a crib which was sunk and filled with rock. The apron went over the top. Picture taken after 1906 while working on the dam. Note the timber hook over one man's shoulder. This kind of hook was also used on the railroads to carry ties. The buildings in the background from left to right are: Schiller, two Mills, Stan Jones house, St. Mary's church spire, old Conference Building of Church of God. (Photo courtesy E. G. Landers)



New bridge over Rock River at Oregon, Illinois part of the State Route No. 77 built with Federal funds by Shappert Engineering Company of Belvidere, Illinois. Completed in less than one year. Length 966 feet, width of roadway 30 feet, sidewalks 5 feet each side. 13 piers, 2 abutments, 12,413 barrels of cement and over 900,000 pounds of steel used in construction. Said to be one of the best built bridges in the entire state. Picture also shows spans of old bridge. (Photo by Rockford Newspapers)



Dam from East side of Rock River.



From left margin we see timbers stacked to make another crib. Then the crib itself before they push it into the water and fill it with stone. Just behind the men is a narrow gauge railroad track. The stone was brought down in little cars on this track all the way from Wooley Spring Hill quarry. Luckily it was all down hill. The right margin of the picture is the East end of the dam. Dutch Moore was drowned during the building of this dam. Robert Early wrote on the back of the photo dated March 11, 1917 that the people were: "Hossenton (engineer), Fred Hamilton (boss), Kandergarden Kid (laborer), John Miller (engineer)." Photo courtesy E. G. Landers.



Rebuilding of the dam—1919. Noted on back of photo by Robert Early were the following names: left to right taken March 17, 1917—Bob Early (pile driver), Dick Mongan (strawboss), Bill Smith (carpenter), Ralph Bucker (laborer), Hossenton (engineer/pile driver), Fred Hamilton (quarry boss), Calvin Young (quarryman), "Woddy" Swanson (timekeeper) was not shown. (Photo courtesy E. G. Landers)



Photo by C. V. Mattison shows the bridge at Oregon at time water was up to top of arches on Monday, February 22, 1937. A drop of several feet two days later again left the ice free to pass under the arches without damage to the bridge. (Courtesy Charles Mongan)



1937 flood. Water is up behind what is now Oregon Auto Supply. (John Remour photo)



Photo by Arlene Waggoner of Lowden Road taken Monday, Feb. 22, 1937, as water surged over river bottoms for two miles and buried the black top road from the Burlington tracks to Kyte Creek bridge at Daysville to a depth of from 10 to 20 feet. Note cross-arms of telephone poles just out of water. All traffic to and from Daysville is detoured through Chana.

EAGLES NEST TREE

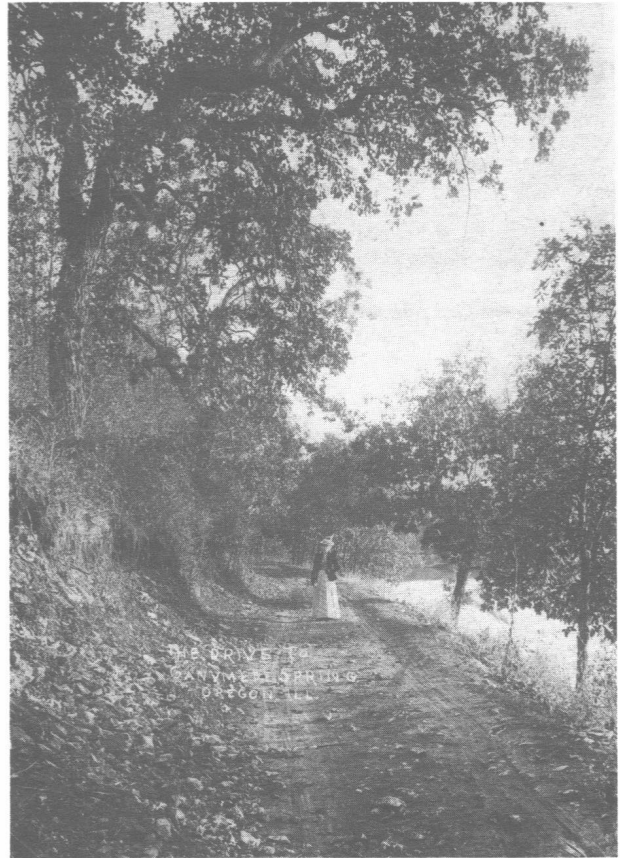
Margaret Fuller

As Nancy Miller wrote in *Livin'-on-the-River '86*, Oregon and my scenic banks "have attracted many creative personalities: poets, writers, painters and sculptors."

One of the earliest of these was Margaret Fuller. The following articles from an old paper tell her story.

History of Margaret Fuller's Ganymede Spring (An Old Clipping sent in by Mrs. John Coulter of Mt. Morris, taken from an old paper.)

For a few days in the summer of 1843, Oregon (population, 225), had an unusual visitor, Margaret Fuller, who was an outstanding author, critic, and editor. Miss Fuller came from



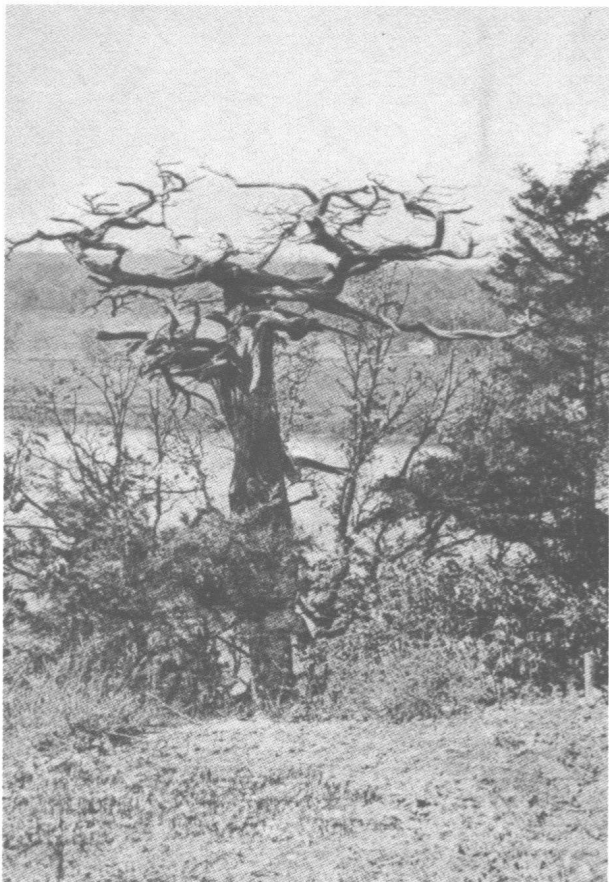
The drive to Ganymede Springs. (Photo courtesy E. G. Landers)



Ganymede Springs, Oregon, Illinois. Postcard cancelled December 1911. (Courtesy Gretchen Warmolts)



"Our bus teams Geo. Twogood driver, Spoor, T. O. Johnson and three Chicago newspapermen. 1890-1900" taken from back of photo. (Courtesy E. G. Landers)



Historical Cedar on Eagle's Nest Bluff. About 1909. (Courtesy John Remour)

Boston to visit her uncle, William W. Fuller, who practiced law in Ogle County. She traveled by boat from Buffalo to Chicago and then west by lumber wagon to Oregon. She was quite carried away by it all, for this was the first long journey she had ever taken through the country.

Upon her return home, she wrote her first book, "Summer on the Lakes in 1843." She was charmed by the Rock River Valley and the countryside surrounding Oregon. She recalled that "Two of the boldest bluffs are called the Deer's Walk . . . and the Eagle's Nest. The latter I visited one glorious morning; it was the fourth of July, and certainly I think I had never felt so happy that I was born in America. Woe to all country folks that never saw this spot, never swept an enraptured gaze over the prospect that stretched beneath. I do believe Rome and Florence are suburbs compared to this capital of nature's art."

While visiting the bluff named after an eagle's nest in a red cedar tree high up on the height, Miss Fuller saw the eagle swoop down to the spring to get a drink. It reminded her of the Greek God Zeus, who changed himself into an eagle to seek a cupbearer and found Ganymede. So on the height she wrote the poem, "Ganymede to His Eagle." The following lines are taken from the poem:

"A hundred times, at least, from the clear spring,
 Since the full moon o'er hill and valley glowed,
 I've filled the vase which our Olympian king
 Upon my care for thy sole use bestowed;
 That at the moment when thou should'st descend,
 A pure refreshment might thy thirst attend."

After publication of her book, Miss Fuller became literary critic for Horace Greeley's "New York Tribune." Later she traveled to Europe and married an Italian revolutionary, the Marquis Ossoli. They and their young son were drowned in a shipwreck near New York on July 19, 1850, just a few miles short of completing their voyage from Italy.

On September 17, 1880, many people assembled at the foot of Eagle's Nest Bluff to dedicate a marble tablet inserted in the stone above Ganymede's Spring, commemorating Miss Fuller's visit and poem. An island south of the bluff on Rock River was named in her honor.