

as trustees, Chrissie Myers represented the City and Donald Leary and Dale Winterland the rural areas.

On November 2, 1983 land was purchased at 100 Washington Street from Charles Mongan and a new fire station was built at a cost of \$369,578.48. District trustees borrowed \$176,000 from the Stillman Valley National Bank to be repaid over four years at the rate of 8³/₄% interest. Appointed trustees at this time were Jim Rosenbalm, President; Ralph Gelandar, Secretary; and Richard Little, Treasurer. By the end of 1986 the loan was repaid.

A new tanker is soon to be delivered. Other equipment includes three pumpers; a 1979 Ford 100 gallon per minute; 1968 GMC 750 gallon per minute; a 1957 GMC 500 gallon per minute; 1968 1200 gallon tanker, 1984 Chevrolet combination rescue and grass rig, one boat, and one 1981 Chevrolet Squad. The department tries to maintain between 20-24 firemen on the roster.

OREGON COLISEUM

by Evelyn Burright

The following article taken from an issue of the *Oregon Republican Reporter* newspaper under the date of February 20, 1969, Volume 118.

OREGON COLISEUM HISTORY

Questions about the Coliseum asked at the Thursday evening meeting of the Oregon Woman's Club were the motivation for this article. With the help of the files of the Ogle County Republican and the help of City Clerk Evelyn Burright the information on the Coliseum was secured.

The contract for Oregon's new Municipal Coliseum was let on Tuesday afternoon April 25, 1922, by the directors appointed by the City Council.

The general contract was awarded to Holmquist and Peterson of Rockford for \$24,968. P.O. Heckman of Oregon received the plumbing and heating contract for \$4,197. The electric wiring contract of \$650 was awarded to E.E. Taylor of Rockford.

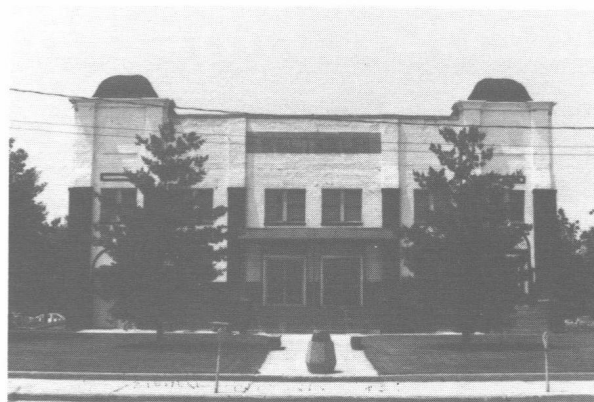
The contract calls for a building 128 feet by 72 feet and one inch with a 2 story front and a basement under the entire structure. The 2nd floor will be turned over as quarters for the local American Legion Post.

The basement will include a kitchen and a space will also be left for the installation of shower baths later on. The auditorium will have a seating capacity of 1200 and a large stage with a width of 70 feet will be built. Dressing rooms will be in the basement.

The contract calls for the completion of the building by September 1, 1922 and work will begin at once.

The directors appointed by the City Council were John D. Mead, B.F. Shelly, W.J. Emerson and directors elected by the Township were Henry A. Smith, Frank E. Reed and J.F. Reed.

The matter of financing the Coliseum was readily taken care of as Mayor Burchell and directors Mead and Shelly



Oregon Coliseum. (Donna Kennedy photo)

spent one afternoon last week canvassing the business houses of Oregon and in that time sold all of the bonds which totaled \$27,000. We doubt if there is another city the size of Oregon in this section where so good a record as this in financing a proposition of this sort could have been made in equal time.

The main cry in all cities the size of Oregon is that there is nothing doing or no place to go, etc. With the erection of the Coliseum we will have an auditorium of sufficient size to handle any entertainment. People will have the opportunity to see the better class of amusements and not be forced to drive to neighboring cities. Construction of the Coliseum means a big step forward for the City of Oregon.

The Coliseum was not completed by September 1, 1922 and the November 2nd 1922 issue of the newspaper reports "Construction progressing nicely."

The December 14, 1922 issue of the newspaper states that the Coliseum was nearly finished. On Tuesday, January 2nd, 1923 the Coliseum had its grand opening with a dance.

Township officials signed a leasing agreement on April 25, 1922 for \$35,000 over a 15 year period. But the township was not able to fulfill its obligations, and the Coliseum came under the sole jurisdiction of the City of Oregon.

The Coliseum was used for trade fairs, a roller skating rink, suppers, basketball games, dances, banquets, plays, proms, operettas, recitals, flower shows, teachers' institutes, American Legion carnivals, medicine shows, meetings of the Bee Keepers, postal employees, Farm Bureau, Grange, physical education classes of the Oregon schools, etc.

Presently, (1969) the Coliseum Board members are Russell Wiles, Robert Murdock and Ralph Beveridge. The Coliseum Board Members are appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council. Terms of office are three years and terms are staggered. Tax rate for the Coliseum is .075 and the assessed valuation of the City of Oregon is \$12,332,093.

Construction of the swimming pool commenced soon after the Coliseum building was completed and is under

the jurisdiction of the Recreation Board (City of Oregon). Expenses are paid by the City through a Recreation tax levy. Present (1969) members are Paul Behan, Roger L. Etnyre and Horace Sharick.

Present members are Bob Adamson, Ken Giese and Duane Geyer.

Note: The above article is on file and available to read at the Oregon Library.

NUCLEAR PLANT COMPLETED IN 1985

Plant generates tax dollars and electricity; safety is still controversial

By Jeanne Shank

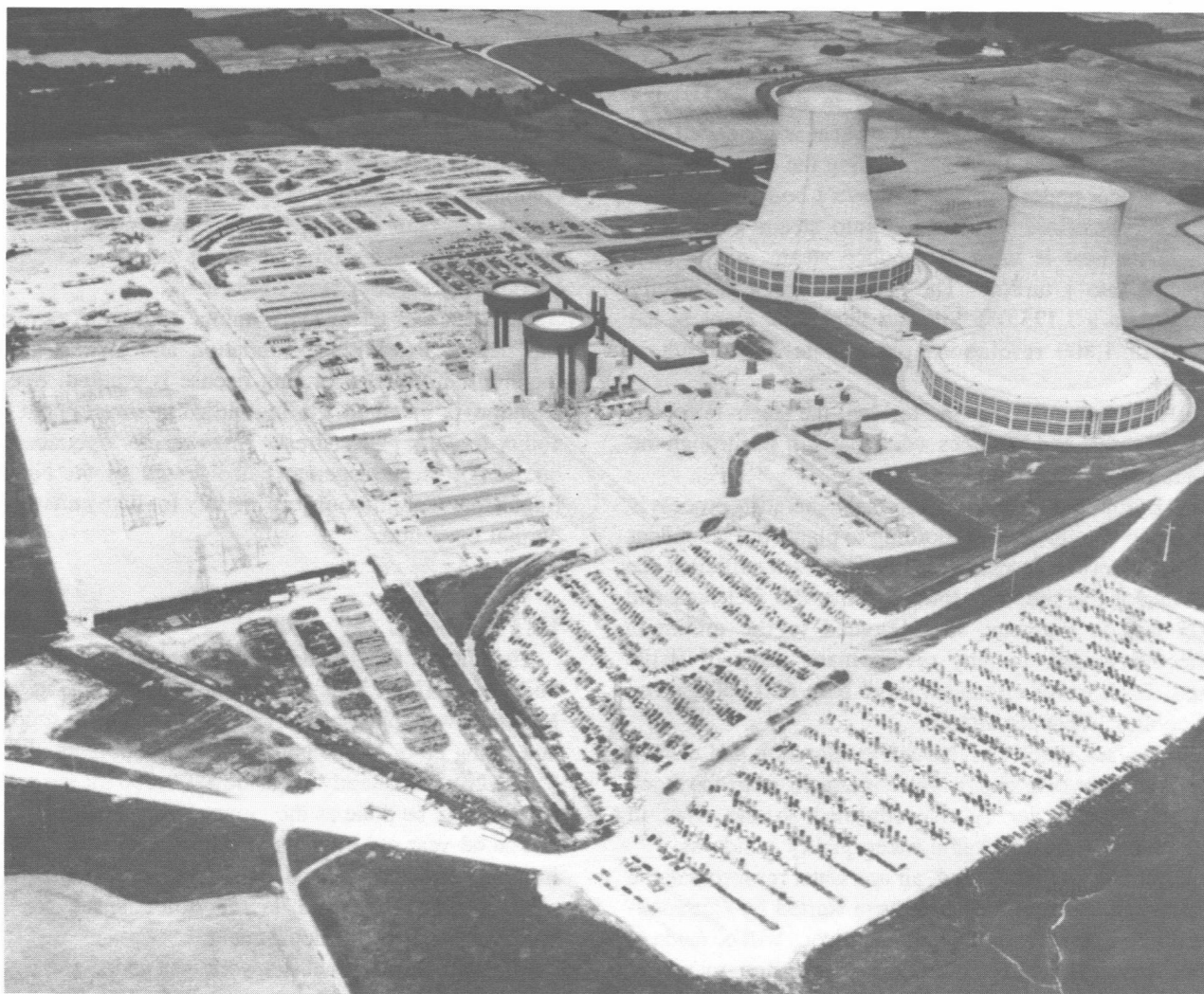
Oregon Republican Reporter, October 1, 1986, Page 8

Oregon got a good look at advanced energy technology in 1974, when Commonwealth Edison purchased 1,782 acres in the Rock River Valley for a nuclear power plant.

While Commonwealth Edison officials take great pride

in the Byron Station, the fifth in its series of nuclear plants, other groups in the area question the safety and necessity of the facility. Proper disposal of radioactive nuclear waste and its effects on the environment are also concerns voiced by local environmental groups. Commonwealth and these groups have co-existed in relative peace, however, despite the latter's attempts to shut the plant down.

The Byron Station is located five miles northeast of Oregon on German Church Road. It is wholly owned and operated by Commonwealth Edison Company; each of its two generating units is rated at 1,120,000 kilowatts. Unit I of the Byron Station began generating commercial service in September of 1985. Unit II, although currently under investigation by the Illinois Commerce Commission, is scheduled for commercial operation in 1987. The Byron Station was built at a cost of \$4.65 billion with admitted cost overruns. All major components were supplied by Westinghouse Electric Corporation with Sargent and Lundy as consulting engineers.



The Byron Station nuclear power plant, built and maintained by Commonwealth Edison Company, first generated electricity in September of 1985. The plant is the source of considerable controversy regarding actual necessity and safety.

During the peak construction period, more than 3,400 craftspeople and support personnel were working at the site with an annual payroll of \$97 million. The station employs nearly 1,000 operating and security personnel.

Since 1974, Byron Station has provided nearly \$55 million in property tax revenues to the local economy, helping to support schools and municipal services. According to Ogle County Treasurer Chris Martin, the facility will pay \$12.3 million in real estate taxes in 1986.

The Byron Station taxes also account for 93 percent of the Byron Fire Protection District, Byron Library and Byron Forest Preserve monies. The Oregon Park District receives 91 percent of its funds from plant taxes.

Martin notes that 60 percent of the assessed valuation in Ogle County is represented by the Byron Station, which also supplies 98 percent of the Rockvale Township funds.

Reactor information

The types of reactors used at Byron, called pressurized water reactors, are made of eight-inch steel and located inside a building made of reinforced concrete. The reactor vessels hold long, metal tubes, called fuel rods, which contain uranium fuel.

When uranium atoms are split in a process called nuclear fission, a great amount of heat is generated and allowed to heat the water surrounding the fuel rods. The water is kept under pressure to prevent boiling.

The pressurized water flows into steam generators, where its heat is used to produce steam that is then directed into a turbine. The turbine, which is directly coupled to a 1,175,055 kilowatt generator, spins at the speed of 1,800 revolutions per minute. The result is energy.

After passing through the turbine, the steam is cooled in condensers and becomes water that will go through the entire process again and again.

At Byron, the water in the thermal generating process is cooled in two 'towers.' According to plant superintendent Robert Querio, the natural air currents are sufficient for cooling at the site. The towers, some 495 feet high and 605 feet in diameter, are designed to the minimum effective height, thereby saving many acres of fertile land. Each tower circulates more than 600,000 gallons of cooling water per minute.

To replace water lost through evaporation and drift, a small amount of makeup water is drawn from the Rock River. Some water is also returned to the river in compliance with applicable water quality standards.

Extensive studies of land, air and water resources in the vicinity of the Byron Station were started by Commonwealth Edison early in 1972. Comparisons will be made of environmental quality before and after station operation. According to CE officials, the plant is designed to have a minimal impact on its environment.

Safety features

The central safety objective in nuclear plant design and operation is to control radioactivity produced in the reactor. The "defense in depth" concept is used to build the plant with redundant safety systems and barriers to prevent or arrest accidents.

1. Containment: The physical structure surrounding the primary system equipment provides a virtual leak-proof barrier to the escape of radioactive fission products, say CE officials. Byron Station's two silo-like containments are constructed of three and one-half feet thick steel-reinforced concrete walls with a welded steel liner in addition to internal structural safety features.

2. Emergency core cooling systems: Automatic and/or manually operated cooling systems deliver water from storage tanks to cool the reactor core after postulated accidents and maintain reactor coolant inventory while providing shutdown capability.

3. Auxiliary feedwater system: A secondary water supply which is used to remove heat from the reactor coolant by heat transfer through the steam generators.

Operating the plant is accomplished in the control room, the central monitoring location for all plant systems and equipment. The Byron Station control room used the "green board concept," whereby green indicates a normal condition.

Human factor engineering includes green board, color combinations, hierarchy of symbols and dark annunciator panels. Operator training involves meeting several standards prior to undergoing advanced technical training to become a licensed reactor operator.

Four years of advanced training, 18 months on-board experience, extensive examination and testing are all required before an operating license is granted. Special attention is given to the individual's temperament and ability to work under stress. Three reactor operators and one senior reactor operator, all licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, are on duty for both units during normal operation.

CITY HALL

The City of Oregon decided to renovate the City Hall building in 1985. This to be done *without* raising taxes. Materials were purchased by the city using local suppliers and hiring labor by the hour for construction.

The city had already set aside \$200,000 for the project and work to be done as the money was available.

The 68 year old building was insulated, new windows installed and an updated heating system added. This allowed for newer and larger office space for city employees and police department.

On the exterior, new brickwork was added and lighted events calendar board was installed. Renovation was completed in July 1986 at a cost of \$230,000.



Flag-raising ceremony at City Hall, Open House July 20, 1986. Our national flag. (Donna Kennedy photo)



Our City of Oregon flag. (Donna Kennedy photo)



Our State of Illinois flag. (Donna Kennedy photo)



Items being placed in City Hall cornerstone. (Donna Kennedy photo)



Charles Mongan lays the cornerstone. (Donna Kennedy photo)



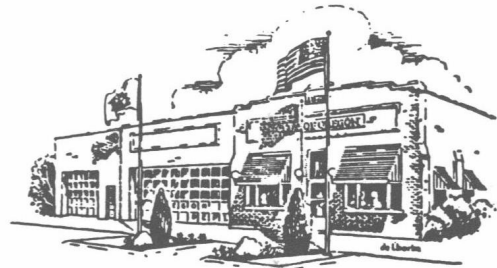
The finishing touches. (Donna Kennedy photo)

City Hall Open House Program

CITY OF OREGON

CITY HALL OPEN HOUSE

JULY 20, 1986
2:00 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.



TOURS CONDUCTED BY:

Commissioner Norman Collins
Commissioner James Ludwig
Commissioner Frank Svoboda
City Clerk Julienne Crowley

Office Staff:
Claudia Robertson
Joan Carr
Pat Boniface
Jo Suter

Chief of Police Thomas Miller
Police Sgt. William Hitchcock

REFRESHMENTS SERVED BY:

Commissioner Elma Braden
Mrs. James Barnes
Mrs. Norman Collins
Mrs. James Ludwig
Mrs. Frank Svoboda

PROGRAM

3:00 P.M.

WELCOME

MAYOR JAMES L. BARNES

INVOCATION

REV. BRUCE SPENCER

INTRODUCTIONS

MAYOR JAMES L. BARNES

FLAG CEREMONY

OREGON AREA GIRL AND BOY SCOUT TROOPS

MUSIC BY COMMUNITY BAND

DIRECTED BY JOHN LINDHORST

NATIONAL ANTHEM

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

GRAND OLD FLAG

STARS & STRIPES FOREVER

CORNER STONE LAYING

CHARLES MONGAN ASSISTED BY JAMES WILSON

CLOSING REMARKS

MAYOR JAMES BARNES



The restored City Hall of Oregon, Illinois. July 20, 1986. (Donna Kennedy photo)

OREGON AMBULANCE

By Fay Forman

In June of 1969, William Tremble, owner of Farrell Funeral Home, gave notice to the City of Oregon that at

the end of the year the Funeral Home would no longer be providing ambulance service to the city.

Dr. Harry Wade, Mayor of Oregon at that time, called for volunteers to serve as a steering committee for the purpose of obtaining ambulance service for the city. Fay Forman was appointed Chairman, with Don Griffin, Dick Little, Sylvia Newcomer, Jack Basler and Don Fuller as committee members.

The committee decided to raise \$25,000 by selling memberships in the organization at \$50 per household. Those members would be charged \$15 for ambulance service and non-members would be charged \$50 per call. It took only three months to raise the money and the first equipment was purchased from Foster Coach in Sterling, Illinois. Oregon Ambulance Service, Inc. began official business on January 1, 1970.

In the fall of 1971 the State of Illinois ordered all Ambulance Services to have at least one Emergency Medical Technician when answering a call. The first E.M.T.'s to attend school were Virgil Richardson, James Ferris and Courtney Pankhurst. School was 12-14 weeks



Oregon Ambulance crew: (1) Bob Eged; (2) Gene Logan; (3) Duane Linscott; (4) Jackie Jacobs; (5) Joy Schuble; (6) Betty Ferris; (7) Lloyd Mason; (8) Bryan Mammen; (9) Jim Barnes; (10) Jeff Whitsell; (11) Joyce Thompson; (12) Brenda James; (13) Katharine Norefalise; (14) Karla Schabacker; (15) Barb Barnes; (16) Jim Ferris; (17) Fay Forman; (18) Edwin Harris; (19) Donald Fuller.

and they were required to spend 1-20 hours in any emergency room in a surrounding hospital. Oregon Ambulance serves everyone in the Oregon Fire Department District.

Equipment charges were made during the years with purchases of a Horton Box-type for \$30,000 in 1974; 1980 a Van-type and 1985 another Horton Box-type for \$45,000.

In the fall of 1984, Joyce Thompson, Brenda James and Jackie Jacobs became the first female personnel. Since then Barbara Barnes, Katherine Norefalisse, Karla Schabacker, and Joy Schuble have been certified. All E.M.T.'s are required to be recertified every two years.

Housing for the Ambulance Service has been provided by the City of Oregon for the purpose of government license and insurance. The Ogle County Sheriff's Department dispatches all calls for service by radio 24 hours a day.

The Oregon Ambulance Service would like to thank the people of Oregon and those in the Fire Protection District for donations and memorials which are used for training and equipment. A special thanks to E.D. Etnyre Company for allowing ambulance personnel to respond to calls during daytime working hours; to James Barnes for devoted service for 16 years; to Bette Ferris for billing and to Don Fuller for serving as Treasurer.

OREGON PARK DISTRICT

The Oregon Park District was formed in December, 1966 and is located in central Ogle County. The district embodies two complete townships and portions of five other townships, a total of 97 square miles, serving a population of 6,550.

The original board of commissioners were Dick Davis, Anne Geiken, Frank Lupton, Dick Meyers and Jim Patrick. Jerry Garard served as the board's attorney at \$1 a year stipend.

Formed with the intent of building a swimming pool, referendums held in 1971, 1975 and 1976 were defeated.

A forward-looking park board saw an opportunity to annex the Commonwealth Edison Byron Nuclear Power Station and after a series of court battles involving the Byron Park District organizers and the Commonwealth Edison Co., Judge Alan Cargerman, in October of 1978, ruled on an election for the purpose of annexing the 525-acre Byron Station. The election was held on December 16, 1978 and the district overwhelmingly voted to annex the plant by a 713-20 vote.

At that time, the office of the Park District was located above the National Clothing Store in the old Fearer & Nye offices. They then rented space in the Ruby Nash School and in November, 1982 purchased the school, which is located at 304 South Fifth Street, Oregon. The original building was built in 1896 with additions built in 1913 and 1949.

In June of 1983, a Citizen's Advisory Committee was

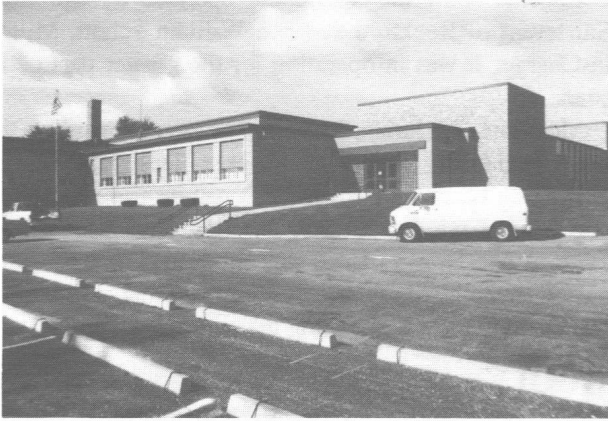
formed to determine the needs of the citizenry and a new pool was the unanimous choice.

In August of 1984, the Park Board unanimously approved construction of a new indoor recreation facility at an approximate cost of \$1,750,000, and in September of 1984 the 1896 and 1913 buildings of Nash were demolished; the 1949 building remained and houses the district's executive offices, kitchen, exercise room, gym and stage. The new facility (area) encompasses a 25-meter, 6 lane heated pool, whirlpool, two racquetball/handball courts, multi-purpose room, locker rooms, snack bar area, sundeck, greenhouse and an information/reception area.

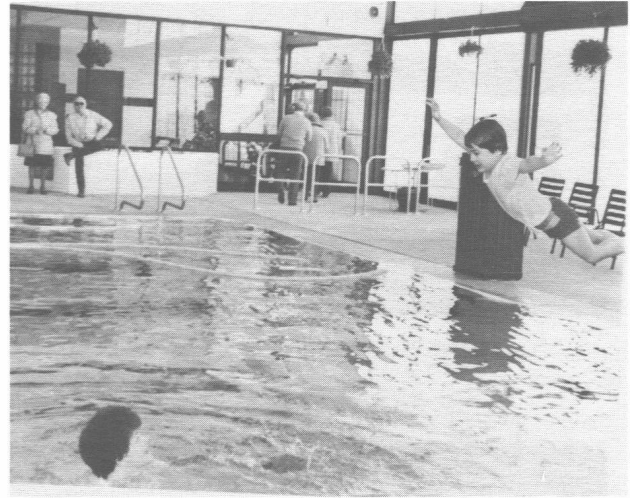
On December 30, 1985, the Nash Recreation Center was officially opened with a Grand Opening and dedication on March 16, 1986.

In addition to the new Nash Rec Center the Oregon Park District owns and manages seven park sites which total 103 acres. Facilities include four lighted tennis courts, four ball diamonds (two lighted), three playgrounds, three picnic areas.





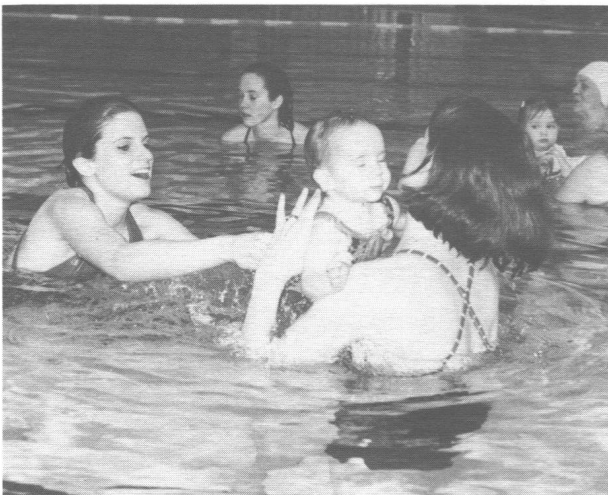
Nash Recreation Center. (Donna Kennedy photo)



Come on in . . . the water's fine! (E. G. Landers photo)



Another milestone was met for our city, when the new indoor pool was dedicated at Nash Rec Center in the Spring of '86. Jim Grove, Park District director was the master of ceremonies. Shown are Father Kearney, St. Brides' Episcopal Church, Kim Krahenbuhl, chairman of the pool committee, Tom Corcoran, Roger Burke, Carol Daniels and Howard Fox, Oregon Park District board members.



Baby swimming classes have been a regular program at Nash Rec Center, sponsored by the Oregon Park District. Mary Alice Wilson introduces her daughter Christine to the pool. (E. G. Landers photo)

The district offers more than 120 recreation programs annually for all ages. The district also operates seven sports leagues and has over 6500 participants in the programs yearly.

The district has an assessed valuation of \$369,825,417 and a current annual budget of \$575,000. There are ten full-time employees and over thirty seasonal or part-time employees.

Current (1986) Board of Commissioners are Tom Corcoran, Pres.; Carol Daniels, Vice President; David Smith, Bob Burke and Howard Fox, Commissioners. James R. Grove serves as Executive Director.

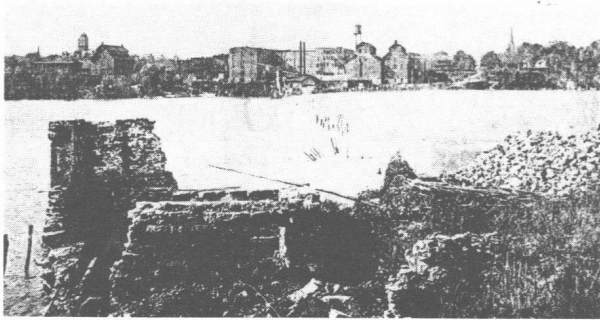
STRAUBES' WATER POWER ADDITION

Straubes' Waterpower Addition was the name given to East Oregon as we know it. The area was surveyed and staked out by J.B. Bertolet, County Surveyor, and notorized October, 1892. The sole owners were William and Jesse Straube. Little is known of the Straube family except they were from Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois.

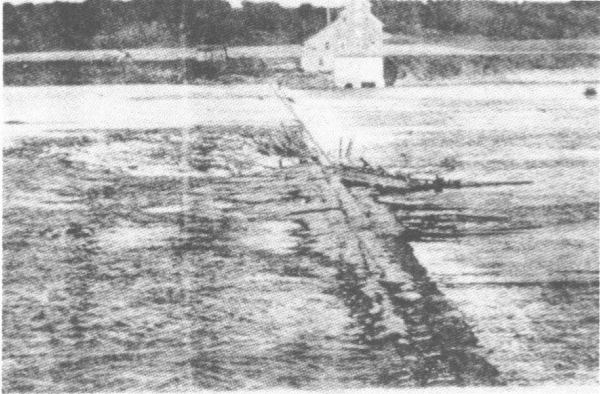
In that year he sold property in the addition to F.J. Kemple for \$100, A.W. Spoor; \$300, Matmiller & Gilbert; \$200, John Cummins; \$100, Charles Etnyre; \$500, Smith; \$100 and Sargent; \$100. It is believed these people were investing in property they hoped would grow and develop. Others must have invested at sometime as the names of the streets are names of prominent people in town.

OREGON GRIST MILL

In 1880, George A. Mix erected the Oregon Grist Mills in partnership with B.F. Sheets and F.G. Pietrie for a cost of \$16,000. The structure is 66x40 feet, 5 stories and basement in height and built of brick and stone. It was furnished with the most improved machinery, the roller process, and had a capacity of 100 barrels of flour every 24 hours. It was operated by water power and was located just south of the dam.



Old Mill Ruins



Oregon Grist Mill. South of Oregon dam on east side of Rock River.

Records show the mill being operated by Mr. Z.B. Sturtevant of Rockford and Mr. William Schott, Miller-in-Charge. It was in operation for the greater part of 18 years.

Mrs. Earl (Bachman) Morningstar (89), remembers the Grist Mill being called the Cracker Rack Factory. Her father was working there when it caught fire and had to crawl out a window to save his life. This was around 1906. A Mr. Evan L. Reed was either in charge of or the owner of the business. It is not known what year it went from grinding corn to plating the racks.

WOOLEY SPRING

Mr. Henry Mix was responsible for building the first of several dams across the Rock River. Stone for the dam was from Wooley Spring Quarry.

Mr. Wooley came to Oregon in 1836 bringing his family two years later. He engaged in the hotel business for one year. In 1838, he was appointed County Treasurer and held this post until 1846. He was Justice of the Peace along with other offices and was also in the mercantile business.

He purchased 160 acres on the east side of the river and from this land came the stone for the dam. Rail tracks were laid from the quarry site to the river. When a load was ready, the slope of the land carried it to the river. Ponies would bring the empty equipment back to the top for another load. (See the section of this book about the Rock River for further stories and pictures about building the dam.)



SCENIC ROCK RIVER is shown in this rare photo taken at Oregon by A.H. Wagoner. At far right across river is the former Dr. Henry Mix mansion, once a showplace of the valley. At left are old mills and mill

race. In the foreground is an early steam launch. (Chicago-American, March 11, 1955)

This area also had a large natural spring and people from the area brought their horses there for water. In the early 1920s, this was an area where gypsies came to camp and people said, "do their mischief".

Wooley Spring Quarry also provided the stone and gravel used in the building of Blackhawk Statue. Mr. Levitt Wernick's father was one of the workers and remembers his dad talking of how dangerous the road was.

ICE HOUSE

The Ice House was located just north of the Oregon Dam. It was purchased from Mr. George Gale by Lester Myers in 1920 and burned around 1928. Earl Arbogast, 78, remembers as a boy watching the ice being cut. "The ice was cut from the channel starting at the dam up to Blackhawk. There could be 50-75 men and horses out on the ice. The ice would be 15-18 inches thick and was cut into pieces 2-foot long and 18 inches wide. A one-man-see-saw, 6-foot long was used. 'Piking Poles' were used to push the ice along and onto boards and sleds to be hauled to the Ice House. A pulley was attached to the top of the chute and a pony would pull against the rope moving the ice to the top. Hay or sawdust was used between the blocks of ice for insulation. This would keep the ice most of the summer."

Levitt (Peck) Wernick's father, Ernest, worked on the river. Mr. Ramsberg, who had a livery stable in town, rented horses for the job. He also peddled ice around town. He was responsible for the hiring of the men. "Peck" remembers a chock rope was put on the horses so that if they went through the ice they could be pulled



Lester Myers' Ice House. (Viola Myers photo)

back out.

After the fire, Mr. Myers moved his business to the west side of the river and began to make commercial ice.

EAST OREGON

Submitted by Berniece (Reed) Nelson

Families started settling in East Oregon in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The biggest immigration came in 1930 as the depression hit. Few had cars, the men were employed by the Foundry, Etnyre's, the Piano Factory, Carnation and the Railroad. This area was owned by William Straube and his wife, Jessie, recorded in 1892, known as the Straube Water Addition.

Keeping house was not easy. It was an endless job keeping the sand out. Thus the area earned the nickname of "Sand Town." No electric, no gas and no phones.

The biggest chore was carrying water. No wonder the dirt got the best of some. There was no grocery store;



Circa 1910 photo showing Carl and John Sverkerson cutting ice on Rock River in West Rockvale.

someone walked to town for groceries, if you had too many to carry, they would deliver. The grocery stores were Siebert Brothers and Murdock's. There was a gas station where we went for penny candy and snuff for dad, it was a dime a box. In 1940-41, George Mumford opened a store in one room of his house. In the middle 40s, George Steinmetz built a house with a one-room store. Mr. Kapperman opened his store in 1951.

The Harry Boyden Sr. family moved to east Oregon in 1917-1918. They lived in a big stone house and had a truck garden where City Park East is now located. He didn't mind if we took a melon as long as we didn't destroy the patch.

Other families were Riley Cox; he was the garbage man over town, John and Julia Arbogast; John worked at the Piano Factory for over 50 years and Julia was a practical nurse in the early years. Later, she was the ticket seller at the Oregon Theater. Robert and Hattie Early; he worked at Etnyre's. They belonged to the Moose and used to tell us about visiting Moosehart Home for Children. M.O. Hill was the Road Commissioner. My dad and Uncle Charlie worked for him. His wife, Edna, cooked at the Sinnissippi Hotel Restaurant.

There was an oasis called "Oregon Country Club." It didn't mean much to eastsiders except that it looked pretty and gave eastside boys a chance to earn some money in the summer. They would go over at 6:00 o'clock in the morning and stay until 4 or 5:00 in the afternoon. That was a long day for boys 11 to 14 years of age, not to mention how heavy those golf bags were. The caddies were paid thirty cents for 9 holes, and of course, sometimes they received tips. They would caddy on Wednesday (ladies' day), thus Saturday and Sunday (mens' day).



Emma Messenger (Courtesy Bernice Reed Nelson)



Front row: Donnie Reed, Rogene Miles, Delores Boyden, Mary Jane Reed. Back row: Bernice Reed Nelson, Buss Reed, Ada Miles. Mrs. Nedrow in background. (Courtesy Bernice Reed Nelson)

We lived on my Granddad Messenger's lot until 1934, when my parents bought a lot across from them and built a four room house. At that time, there were seven houses on the block, which is now Hasting Street. Four of the original houses still stand. Our lot had trees and grass, and in 1937, it was the site for outdoor Sunday School taught by Mrs. Mae Nedrow, fondly called "Mom". The church was built and dedicated in 1943.

For recreation in the summer there was baseball, swimming in Kyte Creek or at Canfield Bridge, with aunts, uncles and cousins, and berry picking in summer. Nut gathering in fall was always a family outing. Winter sledding at the golf course, lots of cards, checkers, domino games, nut cracking and candy making. We would go to Saturday matinees, Mom would come up with the dimes for admission.

It was a long time coming! East Oregon was annexed to the City of Oregon, August 14, 1980. They got their sewer grant in 1983, and their water grant in 1984, for a total cost of \$1,296,806.48.

The census of 1982, showed a population of 283. Some are second generation, original settlers. These people are survivors.



Harry Messenger (Courtesy Bernice Reed Nelson)



M.O. Hill, Pete Reed, Chas. Messenger (Courtesy Bernice Reed Nelson)



Miss Elaine Burd Lace and Mrs. Ella Oakes and Pleasant Hill students. (Courtesy Bernice Reed Nelson).

PLEASANT HILL SCHOOL
submitted by Berniece (Reed) Nelson

The Pleasant Hill one-room school dated back to 1898. It was located 2½ miles east on Route 64. It is now the home of Charles Winterland family.

As you entered school the girls coat room on right, boys on left. Water bucket and dipper on stand in front of room. A big furnace was located in front. Teacher came early and started the fire. Teacher's desk in back, recitation bench in front of her desk; black boards at side of her desk; pictures of Lincoln and Washington on walls and, or course, the flag.

We had outside toilets; boys and girls a good distance apart. There were 35-40 students with 25 of them eastsiders. We walked regardless of weather. Carried our lunch. Don't remember many snow days off. The other

students were farm kids. Luckiest was Bylinowski family who lived across from school.

I attended Pleasant Hill 3rd through 8th grade. Had two teachers Mary Menz and Mrs. Pearle Snodgrass who was a very dedicated & strict teacher. Had all eight grades, taught all subjects. Our art and music education was somewhat limited. Art was making decorations for the schoolroom. Music was singing once a month. We would choose the songs. Some of the favorites were "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean"; "Old Black Joe"; "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia"; "My Old Kentucky Home". Christmas was always special—with a play. Our parents would come.

We had no playground equipment. Our games were "Andy over", jumprope, tag, baseball, and "rabbit" which was like tag only the hunter threw a ball to hit the



Seated 1st row left to right: Royetta Morris, Christine Helle, Kathy Boyden, Bonnie Fuller, Marylyn Boyden, Dottie Mitchell. 2nd row left to right: Roy Gigious, Clifford Gilbert, Bob Carpenter, Roy Ennenga, Charles Tillet, Jack Heather, Dale Pretch, Greg Wakenight. 3rd row L to Right: Teacher, Ethel Hardesty, Roger Wakenight, Richard Burke, Ronald Smice, Karen Hitchcock, Janice Burke, Paul Pazera, Floretta Kump.

other players. The person hit was then the hunter. In winter or rainy days we played blackboard games. There were very little discipline problems. Older students looked after the younger.

We had five students in eighth grade in 1936. Usually most of the students quit school when they reached sixth, seventh, or eighth grade. Boys went to work. Girls helped at home. Some even married at 16 or 17.

Extra time was spent preparing for eighth grade finals usually after school. We took the test over town at the old high school that was part of Nash School. We all passed.

Ogle County rural school graduation was held at the Oregon Coliseum on May 26, 1936. The address was given by Dr. John Holland from radio station WLS, Chicago. This was the last year they had all rural schools graduating together. Each school had individual graduations.

So ended my school days at Pleasant Hill. It was also the end of the one-room school. In 1937 it was divided into two rooms. Miss Elaine Burd and Mrs. Ella Oakes were the teachers. In 1939 a new Pleasant Hill school was built in East Oregon. It was used as a school until 1960. It is an apartment complex now (Countryside East).

Genevieve Bylinowski and I of the class of '36 finished high school, graduating in 1940. I married in 1941. Genevieve went to Northern Ill. at DeKalb; taught school for 30 years.

The First Reunion Picnic

The one-room Pleasant Hill grade school held its first reunion on Aug. 10, 1986 at Lowden Park. The picnic was organized by Genevieve Bylinowski, Grace (Schier) Canfield and I.

Twenty-six former students attended. It was fun to remember the good times—"gone but not forgotten".



Henry Brechtors, John Berger, Russ Schier, Don Berger, Andrew Bylinowski, Clifford Reed, Tony Bylinowski, Grace (Schier) Canfield, Rose Mary (Black) Pyfer, Ruth (Jones) Lupkes, Genevieve Bylinowski, Berniece (Reed) Nelson, Henrietta (Brechtors) Oltmanns, Sieka (Brechtors) Reimer, Catherine (Keckler) Black, Ruth (Glasgow) Hightower, Uarda (Reimer) Berger, Bernice (Bylinowski) Zanacco, Loucille (Reed) Janssen

OREGON

*Oregon, the beauteous, nested safely
'Mong the hills;
Glorious are you in the golden,
Gorgeous autumn time.
Golden and red is the leaf-robe
That is spread of sunset hue.*

*Majestic Rock, as you flow through
The hills, you are in rhyme,
With the grandeur of the scene.
Battleground in days of old,
Where the red man and white
Met in conflict desperate.*

*Like a lone sentinel stands guard
An Indian built of stone;
Black Hawk, the valiant patriot,
Who fought for his State.
Great the sculptor from our midst
Who conceived this monument;
Places with feet upon the bluffs,
And with head among the clouds.*

*Sphinx-like his attitude; no weakling,
Subdued, with head bent.
Vanquished and beaten from this Eden,
He fought in the right.
Spirit triumphant o'er flesh;
Proudly, Regally he stands:
Deigning complaints, e'er he broods
On Eternity, his sight.*

*From "Both Sides of the Garden Gate" by Augusta Kerch DeLhorbe.
(Courtesy of Mrs. Richard (Edith) Fridley)*

OREGON CITY FLAG

And the City of Oregon flag flies high.

FLAG SYMBOLISM

By Kathryn Gelandor

The blue background is symbolic of the water of Rock River on which the City of Oregon was founded about 150 years ago.

In pioneer days most civilization and settlement followed the rivers and streams because of transportation and water power advantages.

John Phelps, Oregon's founder, had already established himself as Oregon's ferry master before he subdivided claim land into town lots in the summer of 1835. The town site was regularly laid out the next year.

Kett's Ogle County History (1878) tells us that the first log house on the town plat was built by Jonathan Jenkins in July of 1836. Before winter set in several other cabins were built.

The circle on the flag is representative of the confines of the city limits and the sunrise color of the upper half

of the circle indicates that Oregon is a pleasant city in which to live. The same bright color indicates the prosperity and progress of the city during the 150 years of its existence.

The superimposed figure of the Blackhawk statue is an historical symbol that has become closely associated with our town.

CITY OF OREGON

PROGRAM

FLAG CEREMONY

JUNE 8, 1985
2:00 P.M.

COLISEUM LAWN



WELCOME

MAYOR JAMES L. BARNES

INVOCATION

REV. HOLLIS PARTLOWE, *(Oregon Church of God)*

INTRODUCTION OF FLAG COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE

DEBRA FOSTER

KATHRYN GELANDER

HARRY NURMET

FLAG SYMBOLISM

COMMUNITY CHORUS

DIRECTOR - JOHN LINDHORST

FLAG CEREMONY

BOY SCOUTS TROOP 81

CLOSING REMARKS - MAYOR BARNES

Information for this section compiled and organized by Mrs. Harlan (Bonnie) Henrickson. No biographical information provided.

County Seat



ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNTY OF OGLE

Compiled and written by Mrs. Eugene (Janet) Stilson

Ogle County came into being by an order of State Legislature in January, 1836. It included the area now known as Ogle and Lee Counties. It was named after Captain Ogle who fought at Ft. Henry, probably during the War of 1812.

Immediately a rivalry sprang up between the two young communities of Oregon (Florence) and Dixon for the honor of County Seat. The rivalry was so intense for the next three years, that when Oregon received the seat, people from the south of the county petitioned to form Lee.

The first county elections were held December 24, 1836. Those elected as the first commissioners were Virgil Bogue, John Mix, and Cyrus Chamberlin. The first session of commissioners was held soon after the election on January 3, 1837. The election precincts were laid out at this meeting.

Among other transactions, two men, Aldophus Bliss and Corydon Dewey, presented a petition for a road defining a certain route in the south part of the county, east of Dixon, near Paw Paw. This was granted. It was learned a few years later by county law authorities that these two men were part of the "Prairie Banditti," which ranged the state free from the law. The Banditti (or Prairie Bandits or Prairie Pirates) were members of a crime syndicate. These two men operated "Traveler's Home," an inn, through which they passed a great deal of counterfeit money, stole horses, and even murdered travelers. This syndicate was "headquartered" principally in Ogle, Winnebago and Lee Counties, but it affected the frontier all the way to Texas. Finally, in 1845, the ring was broken. Banditti of the Prairie, by Edward Bonney, tells the story of how Bonney investigated this syndicate and eventually broke it up by solving the murder of Colonel Davenport. This book is available in the Dixon Public Library.

Because of the growing lawlessness, the County Board voted to build a courthouse. It was to be erected on Block 78, which had been selected for a town square because it was a hill. The center of the hill was to be leveled 10' in the center, descending gradually to the edges, which were level with the balance of the plat. The building on this site was to be a two-story 40' by 50' building, with stone walls 18" thick. The first story was to be for county offices, and the second story for courtrooms. The jail was

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Bonney, Edward. *Banditti of the Prairie*. Univ. of Okla., rev. ed., 1963.

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Ketts. *History of Ogle County*, 1878, Chicago. Oregon Public Library Archives, Ogle County Plat Book, 1872. Oregon Public Library Archives.

Republican Reporter, 1/4/42; 3/3/49.

Stilson, Jan. "The Prairie Banditti", Part 1 and 2. *Illinois Magazine*, Summer, 1982; Autumn, 1982.

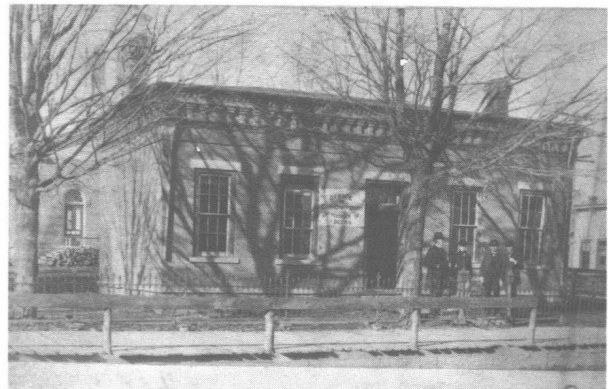
to be built close by. However, before the foundation was finished, a controversy arose that said the stake was in the wrong quarter section, and a surveyor confirmed that a mistake had been made. The foundations were knocked down and moved to Block 91, which is the present square. It is thought that the former site might be "Sand Hill", (7th and Franklin) which is currently the parking lot of Oregon Bible College.

The jail and courthouse did little to strike fear into the hearts of the lawless. Although Ogle County had a number of Sheriffs during this time, they seemed powerless to deter crime or break the syndicate. Whenever someone was arrested, one of his "buddies" arranged to sit on the jury and he would be acquitted.

Things came to a head when Judge Thomas Ford agreed to let a vigilante group, The Regulators, try their hand at flushing out the guilty people. The Regulators put pressure on suspects until they revealed themselves as crooks. Often, they were known in their communities as God-fearing, church going, family men, farmers or merchants. Some were even county officials. As these men were apprehended, they were incarcerated in the new jail. This didn't prove to be very effective either. The cells were located on the second floor and could only be reached through a trap door. Even though the walls were made of stone and 18" thick, like the courthouse, one prisoner was able to chip his way through with a pen knife in an hour's time.

Planning to destroy evidence, the Driscoll gang burned the new courthouse to the ground in March of 1841. However, the records had been removed and taken to the home of the Circuit Clerk, so the trial was able to go on. The county felt the loss of their new building.

Another two-story courthouse was built on the same spot in 1845. It was 18'x32', smaller than the first courthouse, but as time passed, a wing was added to each end of the building. This building would serve the needs of the county for the next 45 years. In 1890, it was dismantled to make way for the present structure.



The first courthouse in Oregon, which was burned by the Prairie Bandits, in March, 1841. They had hoped to destroy the records of the trial of the Prairie Bandits, and to free their friends who were jailed next to the courthouse. The jail did not burn, and the trial records had been taken home by the Circuit Clerk.



The second courthouse, 1845-1890. The Regulators, who executed the Driscoll gang, and brought an end to the lawlessness on the frontier, were tried and acquitted here, for their "lynch law" tactics. This structure was torn down in the 90's, when the present structure was built. The old courthouse was the scene of many stirring trials in the earlier days, before the country was thoroughly settled. Uncle Billy

Helm, an ex-slave, was the janitor of the old courthouse and was well liked by the general public. When the present courthouse was built taxpayers didn't feel they would live long enough to pay for it. However the last bond was retired by County Treasurer, Asa Dimon. The taxpayers did live long enough to see it paid for, and found that it didn't break them either. (Courtesy of Ogle County Republican Reporter)



Razing of the second courthouse in 1890, to make way for the present courthouse. Note the old Lutheran Church to the right. (Courtesy of Mrs. Richard (Edith) Fridley)

In 1846, one year after the construction of the courthouse, a new jail was ordered. This jail would be used until 1874, at which time, it was also torn down.

In 1849, the commissioners voted to divide Ogle County into townships, drawing to a close the county commissioner's form of management. Oregon Township contained all of township 23 north, range 10 east of the 4th Principal Meridian, west of the middle of the Rock River and some east, and including the islands not a part of Nashua Township. Over twenty townships were laid out.

Many fine men and women have served the county as elected or appointed officials over the years. A list of all who have served is at the end of this article.

As the county business grew, the courthouse became inadequate for conducting the many transactions of justice. Proposals were received to construct the present courthouse. A committee toured other facilities in Joliet and Pontiac, and consulted with several architects before settling on a preferred plan.

It was agreed to proceed with the new fireproof structure, for an estimated cost of \$89,000. September 9, 1890, the cornerstone was laid and completion came a

year later. The total cost for this three-story structure was \$106,951.46. This included the purchase of a new safe.

Many citizens complained about the cost since it was financed through an increase in taxes. One County Supervisor was carried to vote, on his sick bed, so he could vote affirmative.

People complained that the cost was so great they wouldn't live long enough to pay for it. However, one source says, "the last bond was retired by County Treasurer, Asa Dimon (1902), and the taxpayers not only lived to see it paid for, they found it didn't break them either."

The building was no sooner finished than people began complaining again (no doubt the same ones) that the third story did not have enough ventilation. In 1949, a writer suggested that elevators to the second and third floors would "do away with the long, tedious climb up the stairs." Elevators have been a part of the structure since the early 50's.

Today, this fine building is listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. Soon after receiving this honor, the board voted to begin renovation and preserve



View of the new courthouse, built in 1892, as seen from the northeast corner of the square. Note the bandshell in the foreground, which once sat behind the grandstand at the fairgrounds. (Courtesy E.G. Landers)

its historic and architectural integrity, yet update its appearance and make it energy efficient. December of 1981, the courthouse offices moved to the Nash Recreation Center as work began on the renovation. During the next several months, each office and courtroom was refurbished. The outside of the building was also renovated. Some windows in the tower were closed up, and others were replaced with thermopane. The general idea was to update the building and still maintain its historic importance. In September of 1983, work was completed and courthouse staff members moved back into their offices. When the touch-up work was completed, the building was open to the public for tours and the dedication ceremony on June 3, 1984.

The Ogle County Courthouse commands attention from visitors to the area. It is an asset to Ogle County and the City of Oregon.

OGLE COUNTY'S SECOND JAIL WAS A "DUNGEON"

After the Prairie Banditti were brought under control, in 1845, the County Commissioners felt the old jail was inadequate. Cells in the first jail were up on the second

floor, and prisoners were taken up through a trap door to "the cage." Although the walls were of stone 18" thick, one prisoner was reported to have chipped his way out in an hour with a pen knife!

In 1846, the commissioners voted to construct a second jail. This would be escape-proof. It called for a first level subterranean cell area for the prisoners. It was located on the southwest corner of the public square at Fifth and Jefferson Streets.

The new building was a two-story, with the first story below the ground and the second story slightly above the ground. Access to the second story was by the stairs on the east side. Prisoners were let down into the windowless, doorless cell area by a rope through a trap door from above. It was escape-proof, and many would say that it was inhumane, by today's standards.

Old ledgers show that the first recorded arrest for grand larceny was in 1868. Two other prisoners joined the first unfortunate man in the "dungeon." One of the men was incarcerated for jumping bail, and the other for a paternity suit, (as it is called today.) It is presumed that they had to sleep on the floor.

According to Edith Fridley, the dungeon area from the



Ogle County's third courthouse (1892 - present). Circa, 1945. (Courtesy John Remour)

second jail was retained when the third jail was built in 1874. When asked where the cells were located, she said, "the dungeon was behind the furnace room in the basement, there were lots of rooms back there, but no one would have any reason to go in there except for Mr. Gesin, who had been the maintenance and furnace man for years."

The public was unaware that the retention area from the second jail was still being used (principally for storage of equipment), until the third jail was dismantled in the late 60's. They were remnants of an era in law control when the comforts and rights of prisoners were not considered paramount.

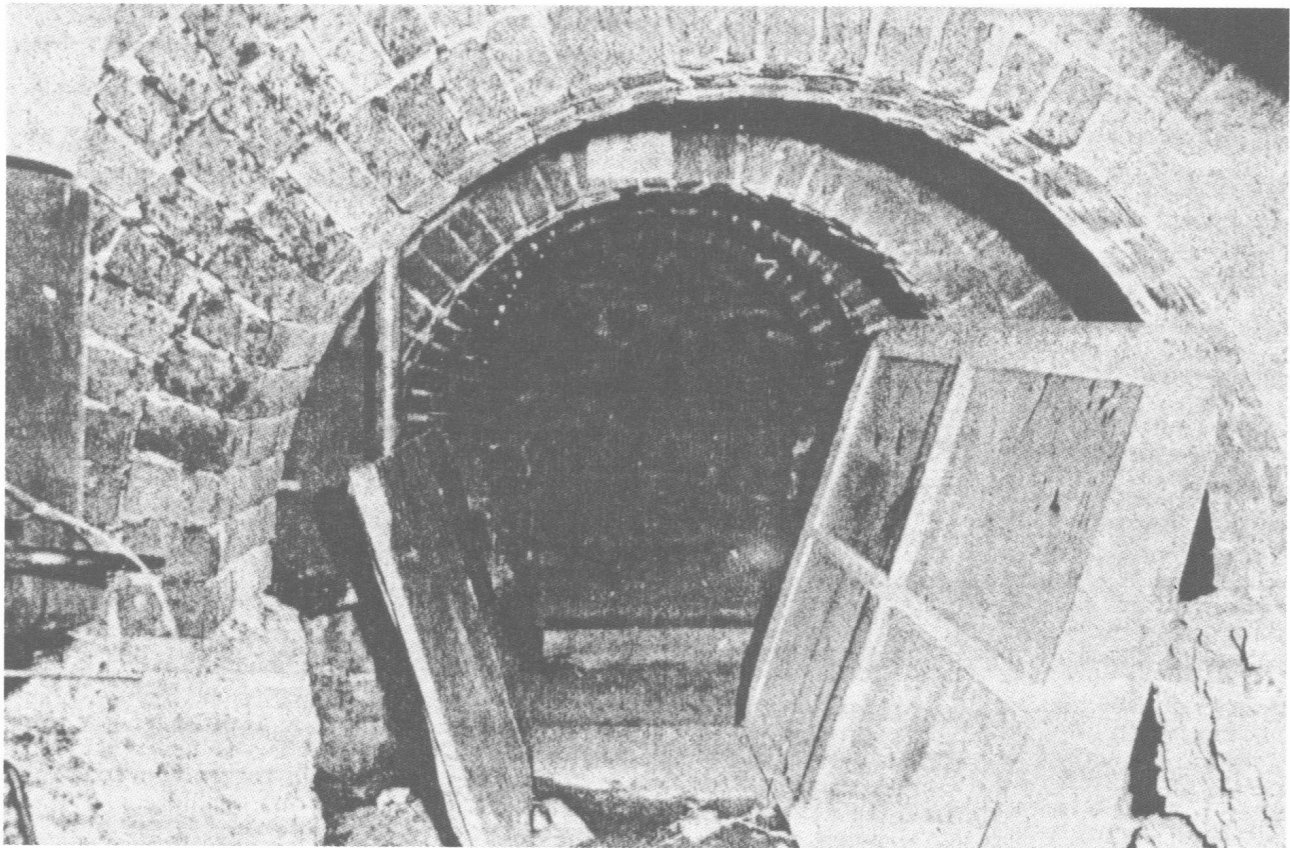
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THE THIRD JAIL HAD STYLE

The new jailhouse built in 1874 was large and luxurious by previous standards. It included a residence on the main floor and the second floor for the Sheriff and his family. The stairway leading to the residence was of hardwood, and spiraled elegantly to the landing. It made a lovely setting for a bride about to toss her bouquet.

A Sheriff's daughter prepares to throw her bouquet from the unique winding staircase in jail-residence. (Courtesy Mrs. Richard (Edith) Fridley)

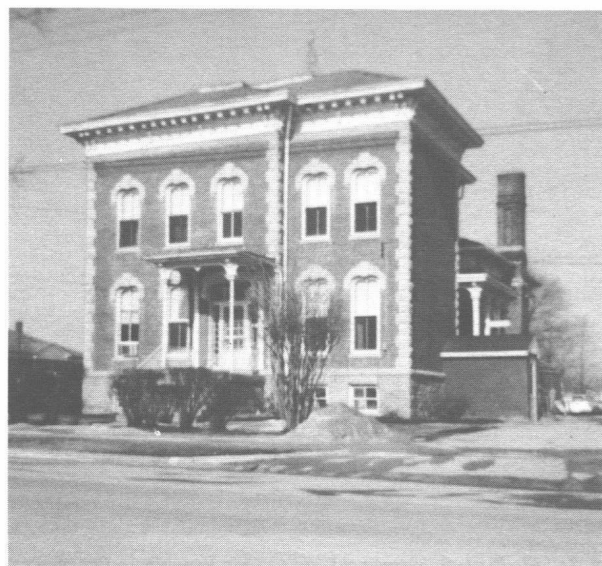


Shown above is the dusty old stone walls of the old jail, the first county building constructed in Oregon. It is located beneath the present jail and was constructed in 1840. The old memory filled cells are now used for storage. The sections that once held county prisoners now hold storm window and time moves on.



Watercolor by Marjorie Lippert

The third jail of Ogle County replaced the less desirable dungeon. In the new structure, the cells were on the main floor to the north side of the building. The men were on the main floor, and the women prisoners were placed in facilities upstairs, according the Sheriff Jerry Brooks, who was a deputy just before the demolition of the jail.



Each cell contained a window, and often, as people walked by on their way to court, the prisoners would call out to them and tease. Although the windows were secured by bars, this did not deter one attempted escape.

Edith Fridley, a local resident, whose father was Jim White, Sheriff, 1938-1942, and 1950-1954, recalled that while she was still living at home, she was working in the flower bed beneath one of the prisoner's windows. She heard a sawing sound and stopped her work to listen. She waited quietly, until the prisoner moved away from the cell, and then hurried to tell her dad. Sheriff White ordered a strip search and found that someone had sharpened a spoon, and was attempting to saw the bars. No damage was done.

The jail offices were on the same above-street level as the cell area. Access to the office was on the east side, through a small porch. Kitchen facilities were in the basement, and often, the jail cook was the wife or daughter of the Sheriff.

When the public learned that the jail was going to be demolished, and replaced with a large, modern structure, the people of the county agreed, but nonetheless, grieved the loss of the historic structure. Just before the demolition was to begin, the county held an auction of historic items from the building, such as light fixtures, locks, the