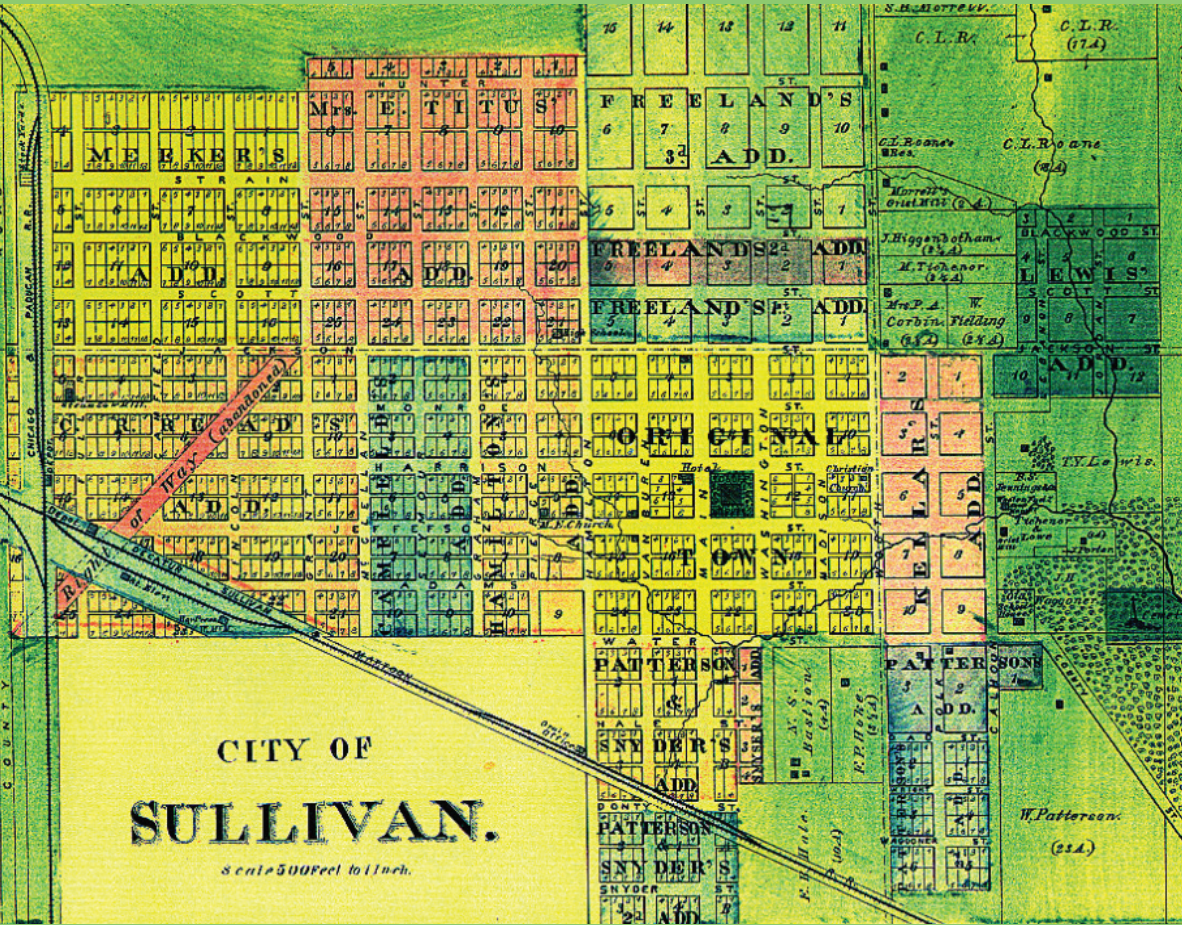


Fragments of the History of Sullivan, Illinois



Map of Sullivan, from 1875 Atlas of Moultrie County

R. Eden Martin

*Fragments of
the History of
Sullivan, Illinois*

*For anyone interested in the history of
a small Illinois town.*

*Fragments of
the History of
Sullivan, Illinois*

R. Eden Martin

Chicago
2018

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Table of Contents

Préface	1
1. The Pre-History of Sullivan, Illinois, 1818 to 1843	5
2. Locating the New County Seat of Moultrie County, 1843	11
3. The Naming of the New County Seat — Sullivan, 1845	15
4. The Building of Sullivan: The First Two Decades, Beginning in 1845	19
5. The Court Houses of Sullivan	35
6. The Senate Election and the Sullivan “Riot,” 1858	43
7. The Civil War Years, 1860-1865	55
8. The 1870s and 1880s	73
9. Sullivan’s Schools	81
10. Sullivan’s Newspapers	111
11. Sullivan’s Unhappy Early History with Banks	133
12. When The Railroads Came to Sullivan	149
13. Sullivan’s Book Sellers and Library	167
14. The Jails of Sullivan	177
15. The Post Offices of Sullivan	181
16. Albert Beveridge	183
17. The Lynching of Grant Atteberry	197
18. The Great Public-vs.-Private Power War — or How Clarence Darrow Saved Sullivan’s Municipal Power Plant	233
19. When Automobiles Came to Sullivan	255
20. When Telephones Came to Sullivan	263
21. The Closing of the Saloons, 1906	271
22. The Killing of Sheriff W. M. Fleming	283
23. Wyman Park	297
24. When The Movies Came to Sullivan	309
25. The Ku Klux Klan in Sullivan, 1922-1925	327
26. African-Americans in Sullivan	337
Appendix A — John R. Eden and the Charleston Riot, March 28, 1864	351
Appendix B — Thoughts on <i>Captured Moments, a Pictorial History</i> of <i>Moultrie County, Illinois</i> , 2018.	367
Index of References	390

Preface

All history is fragmentary, but the fragments of local history are fewer and more faded than others.

The historian of a town might hope to lay out the basic factual story of its origins, growth and change, and to figure out what caused it to grow and change as it did. Who settled it and created the businesses and farms that fueled its growth? How did the leading citizens establish and guide its civic institutions, its cultural and social organizations, and its schools and churches? What pressures — economic, civic and political — shaped the trajectories of their lives and their communities? Why did some leave and others stay? Then, perhaps, we might begin to filter out and focus on the most influential people and the most significant changes, and describe — if only in broadest outline — the key elements of that history.

Fat chance! Most of the history of Sullivan is unrecorded. The most important events were never reduced to writing — the relationships and transactions and friendships and enmities and conversations never captured on paper. Most of the family letters and business records that were written down have not survived. Some official records and court papers have survived — but others were burned or lost, or thrown away. Those few which survive have not been collected and systematically reviewed, at least not by me.

Some folks wrote memoirs, and a few of those have been preserved, even published (in part) — but not many. Unlike documents written in the ordinary course of business, such accounts may suffer from all-too-human

motives to make the memorialist or his family look good or somebody else's less good.

We are fortunate to have the *Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties*, published in 1881. It contains much of interest about the early history of the county and Sullivan and the families who lived here. But the 1881 volume was a commercial publication, prepared to sell to the families whose histories it summarized — and virtually all the information in it was provided by those families. That does not mean the summaries are wrong. It does mean that most of it was drawn from memories and not checked against documents. The stories of families who had moved away by 1880 — or who could not afford to buy a copy of the 1881 volume — or who weren't asked to contribute, or could not write up their own family accounts — went not included.

From the Civil War era to the present time, Sullivan has been served by several local newspapers. These newspapers — unlike today's *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* — specialized in family news and local gossip. Unfortunately, most of the issues of those newspapers have not survived. But some have.

Prior to 2010 or so, that would not have mattered much. Anyone doing historical or family research would have had to visit the newspaper office, get permission to use the master files, and then go painstakingly through the surviving copies, page by page, writing down information found in news stories or obituaries. A few such researchers cheated — cutting stories out of the surviving issues, thus making it impossible for later readers to review what had been cut out. The passage of time, along with researchers, rodents, dampness, and lack of curiosity, were gradually destroying the old newspapers.

Computers and digitization have slowed that deterioration. The surviving Sullivan newspapers — at least up to the middle of the 20th century — have been digitized, which makes research and file searching far easier. Many Decatur and Mattoon newspaper issues have also survived; and some of them had news sections of interest to Moultrie County subscribers.

Like the 1881 *County History*, the newspapers are imperfect historical records. Just because something was reported in a newspaper does not make it true. The reported facts were supplied mostly by friendly family members or neighbors. Reporters and news editors may have lacked the discipline or time to test for inaccuracy. But, as is often said, “the best is enemy to the good,” and we are fortunate to have the old newspapers that did survive.

In the fragmentary episodes that make up this volume, I have relied primarily on the 1881 *County History*, the *Portrait and Biographical Record of Shelby and Moultrie Counties*, published in 1894, I.J. Martin's *Notes on the History of Moultrie County and Sullivan, Illinois*, 1990, local atlases and maps, and several volumes of family history that may be found on my local history web site. The digitized newspaper files for Sullivan, Decatur and Mattoon newspapers have also been very useful. (Where I have used portions of newspaper accounts verbatim, I have used quotation marks. However, to avoid excessive distraction, I have not over-burdened the text with citations to particular issues of newspapers, as they can be found on the internet and searched digitally.)

Paul Stone's booklet on the *Moultrie County Courthouse*, "Preserving the Past for the Future," 2006, contains much interesting information, not only about our courthouses but also the early history of the county. *Century I, Notes on Sullivan, Illinois*, 1973, and *History of Moultrie County Schools*, Vera Slover, 1976, both of which rely on the 1881 *County History*, have been helpful, as have some issues of the *Moultrie County Heritage*.

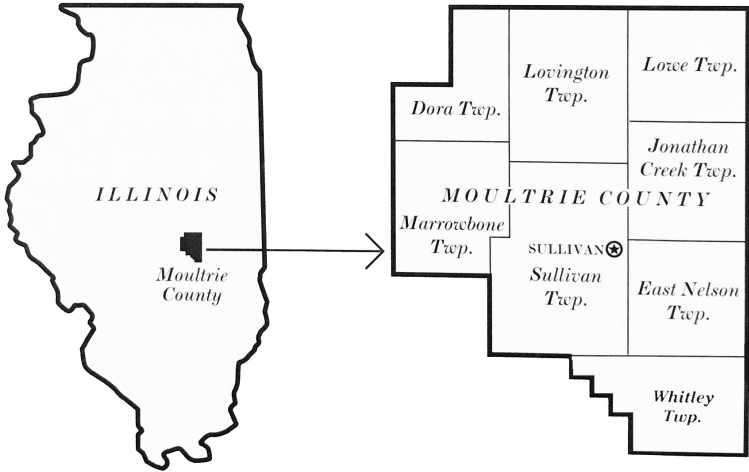
Janet Roney, Joe Pound, and Philip Martin read portions of the text, supplied information, corrected mistakes, and offered helpful editorial suggestions. I am grateful to them for their help, but am sure many mistakes remain — some carried over from my sources, and others injected by me. Inconsistencies in the spelling of names is in part due to the different spellings that occurred in the newspapers.

To think of history as fragmentary is perhaps to give it too much credit. History is a rough draft of a preliminary version of an overview of a handful of loosely-fitted, fractured, faded and radically incomplete mini-jig-saw puzzles.

My guess is that the attics and cabinets of many Sullivan families contain letters, pictures, and documents that would illuminate their own stories. Every year — every month and week — that historical legacy erodes.

Memory is a different kind of attic. Our aging neighbors and relatives could tell their stories if there were someone to preserve them on a digital camera or recorder, or write them down. Time is the enemy of memory as well as paper.

Best to capture, record, and preserve the shards of family history — whether paper or memory — before they altogether disappear.



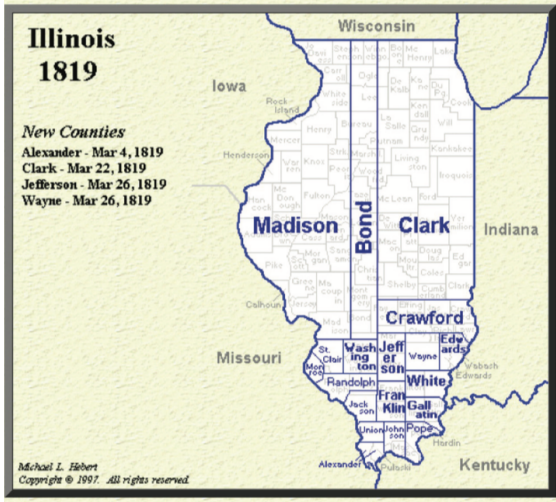
I.

The Pre-History of Sullivan, Illinois 1818 to 1843

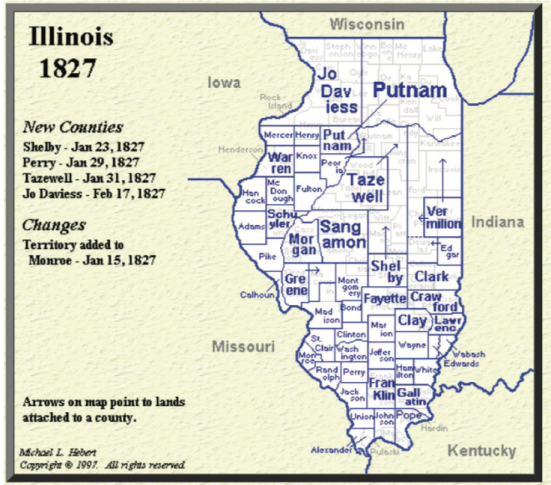
Before there was a Sullivan or even a Moultrie County, there were settlers. Our *Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie County, 1881* (hereafter *1881 County History*) reports that the first settlers in what became Moultrie County were John Whitley and his family, and that they came in the fall of 1826, settling in what later came to be known as Whitley's Point — and then Whitley Township. “Here they built their cabins, and broke the first ground in the county. A rude horse mill was constructed by the elder Whitley, which of course was the first mill of any kind built in the township.”

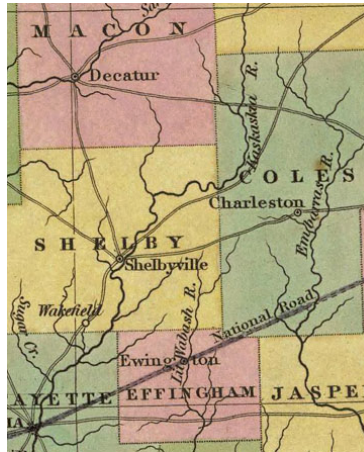
Then came William Price, Hal McDaniel, and, in the fall of 1828, Isaac Waggoner and his family. They were the first permanent settlers, and some of their descendants still live here. One may consider 1826-1828 as the period of the nativity.

Illinois had become a state only a few years before — in 1818. In the first year of statehood, Clark County became a county; it included what would later be Moultrie County.



When the Waggoners came in the fall of 1828, Whitley Point was part of the new Shelby County. This meant that if the Waggoners or their neighbors had legal business that required some county intervention, or if they wanted to record land transactions with the county clerk, they had to go to Shelbyville. An early map of Illinois, the Tanner map of 1836, shows the area which would eventually become Moultrie County — and Sullivan. All that appears where Sullivan is now were the two branches of the Kaskaskia.





Clipping from 1836 Tanner map of Illinois

For 15 years the Waggoners and other nearby settlers had to make such trips to the south. But the area was fast developing, with more settlers and more legal business. Pressures grew for the State Legislature to create a new county. It did so — effective February 16, 1843.

Parts of northern Shelby County and southeastern Macon County were hived off to form the new county. A proposal to include parts of western Coles County met with objection — which helps explain why Moultrie County was smaller than most of its neighbors.

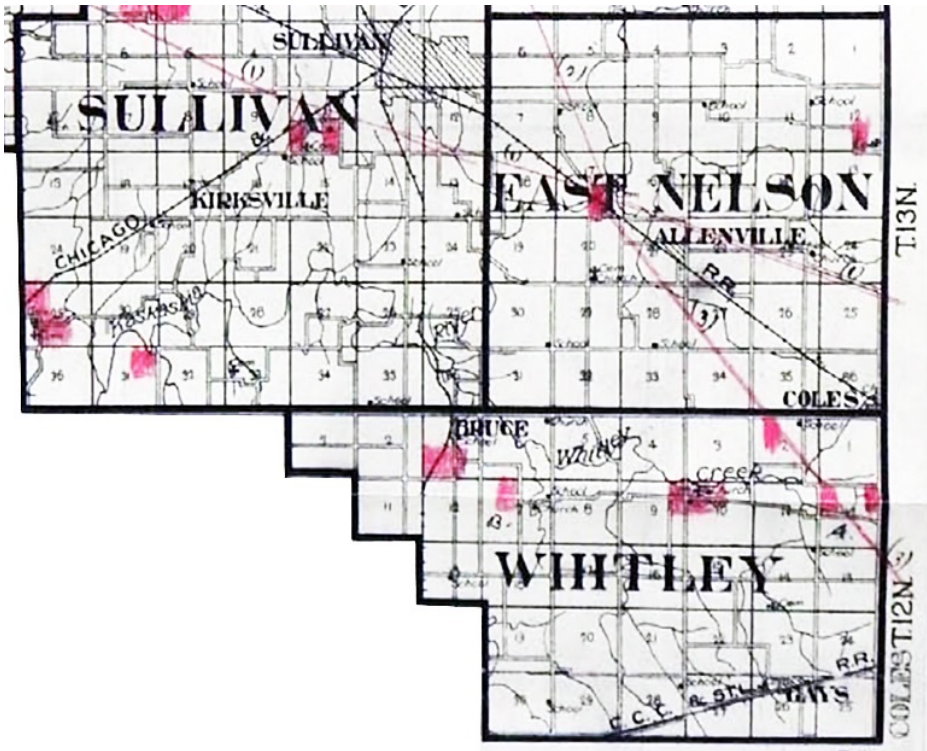


The best — indeed only — record of where the early settlers lived in what became Moultrie County in 1843 may be found in the records of property transactions, which show the years in which tracts of land were entered into the records, and later sold or otherwise transferred. To identify those places and years, one needs some facility with the old land records. Back in the 19th and 20th centuries, when land was transferred a buyer would want to know that the seller was the owner — and that someone else did not have rights to the land that would trump the buyer's rights. That was accomplished by having someone search the property records and prepare an “abstract” of the title chain, going back to the beginning. (I learned to type by typing such abstracts for my father some 65 years ago.) Such an abstract would then provide a basis for a legal opinion to assure the buyer that he/she was getting what he/she bargained for. Today that function is mostly served by title insurance; and it is the title insurer which must search the records.

I.J. Martin, my grandfather, was in the business of preparing abstracts of title; so he became very familiar with the old records. At some point he prepared a hand-colored map of the county marking in red where the first land tracts were entered.

Based on his review of the records, I.J. wrote that the “First permanent settlement in Moultrie County [was] by the Whitleys in 1826 — sect. 12-12-6 (1826)” [Section 12, Township 12, Range 6 east] — which he marked as “A” on the map, a little west of the Coles County line.

The “Second permanent settlement in Moultrie County [was] by the Waggoners, in 7-12- 6 (1828),” which he marked as “B.”



**Settlements “A” (1826) and “B” (1828)
in Whitley Township, lower right**

There were many other early, red-marked tracts on I.J.’s map — including large chunks of Lovington township, smaller chunks in Marrowbone (Bethany), and northwest and central Sullivan township. Jonathan Creek and East Nelson townships also had significant early settlements.

Settlement was facilitated by the low price of land. It was reported by the *North American* in December 1845 that 1800 acres of land were being offered in Moultrie County at \$1 per acre — the same price as in Sangamon, Logan, and DeWitt counties.

It is noteworthy that the area which is now the city of Sullivan has none of these early settlements.

The first effort to build a town anywhere close to what is now Sullivan

occurred in 1840 — while the area was part of Shelby County. In that year, as reported in the *1881 County History*, William Cantrell laid out 160 acres on his farm, in section 11, and named it Glasgow. He obviously hoped that a town would develop there and enhance the value of his land. To prime the real estate pump, Cantrell built a small frame store building and one log-house. But Glasgow failed to develop.

II.

Locating the New County Seat of Moultrie County — 1843

Moultrie County was created by the Illinois legislature out of Macon and Shelby Counties in early 1843.

Towns and cities usually come into existence to serve an economic function, and when that function is no longer needed they wither away. Towns developed as market places — where farmers and artisans could take their grain or pigs or eggs or homespun or liquor — and trade or sell it to people who had grown or made something else. For that reason, the history of the development of Europe and America (and probably other areas of the world I know little about) shows the birth and growth of towns on or near waterways — coastal places around the Mediterranean or next to the Atlantic, or on rivers.

The early settlers in Whitley Township built their houses near Whitley creek and other tributaries. They needed water for themselves and their animals. So a little trading post area grew up where they could sell their surplus and buy the things they needed but couldn't make. The record book of the county store and docket book that appears in *The Whitley Point Record Book*, Chicago, 1996, sheds a little light on those economic activities.

Sullivan was different. It did not grow out of a local need to serve as

a market town. It was created as a government town — the place where folks could go to record property transactions, get help from the sheriff, or file a complaint against a neighbor. The economic functions grew up around that core government function. What did people need or want who came to town to do business in the courthouse? They needed a place to get lunch, buy a drink, consult a lawyer, fix the wagon, and get some supplies. If they had to stay overnight, they needed a place to sleep — initially a “tavern,” and later a hotel. They might also see a doctor while they were in town — or a visiting dentist from Decatur.

The first question was where the new county seat would be located. The state legislature in its wisdom left that to the locals. The statute creating the new county provided that the initial “seat of justice” would be at the residence of James Camfield ... until otherwise ordered by the county commissioners’ court ... but shall not be permanently located by said commissioners’ court until further legislation.” Camfield lived about three miles southwest of Sullivan.

The location of the county seat was decided by (a) election, (b) a donor’s offer, and (c) chance — in that order. The story was told in the *1881 County History*.

In 1844 the people of the county voted to move the county seat to Nelson. This was evidently intended to be temporary. In the fall of 1844 the question of a permanent location was submitted to the people. Three places were proposed: Nelson, Patterson’s Point, and Asa’s Point (which became Sullivan). No place won a majority. Another election was held, offering two choices: Nelson and Asa’s Point. The majority favored the latter.

The name “Asa’s Point” itself has an intriguing and perhaps even fictional origin, which is told in the *1881 County History*, at 181: Asa Spencer Rice (sometimes called “Dollarhide” Rice) and Jacob McCune were out hunting one day when they came to a lovely spot. Rice commented on its beauty, and McCune replied, “This shall be called Asa’s Point.” The name stuck to a point of timber in the east part of Sullivan and also the nearby creek, which still bears that name.

Philo Hale owned 80 acres of land where the city is now, and he proposed to let the town have 40 acres at a low price. The following winter — 1844-45 — the county commissioners put the matter to a vote, which was a tie.

They then left it to the chairman, R.B. Ewing to decide the matter. Parnell Hamilton suggested that they might resolve it by chance: “Put up a stake and be governed by its fall.” “Just then the pen Mr. Ewing was writing with fell to the north, and thus it was decided that the north forty should be the location.” *1881 County History*, at 66. So in the end, the question of which 40 acres would be the core of the new town was decided by chance.

What happened with those 40 acres was described by I.J. Martin in his *Notes on the History of Sullivan* (1990) (hereafter “*I.J.M. Notes*”):

Moultrie County was the owner of the 40-acre tract upon which the town of Sullivan was platted. It was purchased for \$100, and it has been said that the price was donated by the Pattersons and Snyders and others living near Asa’s Point. The plat included twenty five blocks, each 200 feet square. The center block was not given a number, and it was reserved for location of the court house. The others were given numbers from 1 to 24, and each was divided into 8 lots of 50 feet street frontage. The unusually small blocks made an awkward arrangement of building sites, and the large number of streets thus created is also a bad feature of the plan.

III.

The Naming of the New County Seat Sullivan — in 1845

There are two theories as to where the name “Sullivan” came from. Perhaps we cannot be sure which is correct, but we can evaluate the two alternatives and consider whether one is more likely than the other.

The original records of the county commissioners might have resolved the issue, but they, along with other official records, were destroyed when the first courthouse was burned in November 1864. Apparently the City Clerk was also employed as County Clerk, so the City’s records were kept in the county office. The only record of the City’s official life begins in 1861 and “was kept in a little book that in some way escaped the fire.” *Glimpses of Life in Sullivan, Illinois, During the Civil War and Until 1869*, I.J. Martin, at EdenMartin.com web site.

The first theory appears in the 1881 *Combined History*, at pp. 67, 182:

At a meeting of the county commissioners ... held in March 1845, at the residence of Dr. William Kellar, it was agreed that the capital of the county of Moultrie should be called Sullivan, thereby connecting the two names which bear historical relations to each other. Fn: *Fort Moultrie was a fortification* constructed by Col. William Moultrie, (afterwards a major-general) on Sullivan’s island, at the mouth of Charleston Harbor, where a victory was gained, June 28th, 1776, by

the South Carolina troops under Col. Moultrie over a British fleet commanded by Sir Peter Parker. *The city was named from this Island.* (Emphasis supplied.)

The second version is set forth in I.J. Martin's *Notes*. He attributed his information about the naming of Sullivan to John A. Freeland, the first County Clerk of Moultrie County (*I.J.M. Notes*, at 23-24):

The commissioners chose the name of Sullivan in honor of General John Sullivan of Revolutionary War fame. The county had been named in honor of General William Moultrie of South Carolina, who had become famous for his defense of the City of Charleston in the Revolutionary War. Mr. Freeland told me that he suggested to the County Commissioners the name for the county seat. He said that as the county had been named for General Moultrie, he suggested the name of a northern man for the county seat; and so he recommended that it be named for a distinguished Revolutionary soldier, Gen. John Sullivan. I noticed recently in a school circular of some kind that the City was named for an island off the coast of South Carolina. I hope that error will not be repeated. It does not harm General Sullivan, but it does no credit to us.

General John Sullivan was born in 1740 in New Hampshire. He was a member of the Legislature and was elected as a delegate to the first Continental Congress. In June 1775, after the battle of Lexington, he was named as one of the Brigadier Generals of the Continental Army. He was active in the siege of Boston and in the fighting at the Battle of Long Island, where he was taken prisoner. After his exchange, he rejoined Washington's army and was made a Major General. He led the attack on the Hessians in the battle of Trenton, and in August following, he commanded in an attack on the British and Tories at Staten Island. He also led his division in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown.

Later, General Sullivan commanded troops against the Iroquois and their Tory allies in the Mohawk Valley; and his victory destroyed the power of the League of the Six Nations. After the war he was elected Governor of New Hampshire, and then served as a federal judge.

John A. Freeland was the first County Clerk and was — along with John Perryman and J.W. Ross — one of the first City Trustees elected after Sullivan was incorporated in the winter of 1850.

The Sullivan's Island Theory

The Sullivan's Island alternative is based on an assertion made over three decades after the naming occurred. It was not supported. The writer of the *1881 County History* cited no source — no document and no person. It bears the earmarks of a guess.

The asserted basis for the guess was that the *two names were related*: the *1881 County History* recited that “Fort Moultrie was a fortification ... on Sullivan's island ...” Use of the one place name was thus somehow “in keeping with” (p. 67) the other place name.

Sullivan's Island had no independent historical significance — other than the fact that it was the port of entry for a significant percentage of the black slaves brought to the southern colonies. There would have been no reason — either in 1845 or ever — to name the county seat after Sullivan's Island or the fort that was there during the Revolution. The island was originally known (Wikipedia tells us) as “O'Sullivan's Island,” — named for a ship's captain who served as a lookout there in the late 17th century. It appeared on a 1690 map as “Silivant Island.” At the time of the Revolution, it was known as the location of “Fort Sullivan.”

General John Sullivan

On the other hand, there are good reasons to think the new county seat was named after General John Sullivan.

First, it is not an unsupported assertion. It originated with John A. Freeland, one of the early residents of the county and its first County Clerk. Freeland told I.J. Martin that he suggested the name “Sullivan” to the first County Commissioners, who took his suggestion. So this alternative is based on the direct testimony of one of the founding fathers of the town who was involved in the naming decision.

Second, it was supported by a reason that is at least plausible. Freeland said he suggested the town be named after General John Sullivan because the county had been named for Moultrie, a Southerner, and so he “suggested the name of a northern man ... a distinguished ‘Revolutionary soldier.’” Sullivan's military service, by the way, had nothing to do with fighting the British in Charleston Harbor.

Third, a distinguished local lawyer and judge, Circuit Judge William G. Cochran (1844-1932) — a long-time resident of the county and deeply interested in its history — confirmed in 1906 in a speech dedicating the then-new court house that the town had been named after General Sullivan. (*Infra*, at 36.) He did not cite any authority, but my guess is that he got it from Freeland. It clearly was not I.J. Martin's *Notes*, which had not yet been written in 1906, let alone published. Cochran's confirmation is thus independent of I.J.'s recitation of what he was told by John Freeland.

When historians (or even lawyers) evaluate evidence, they assess reliability. Was the document written and maintained in the ordinary course of business? When the evidence is verbal, was the person making the statement in a position to know what he said; and did the speaker have a reason to be biased or untruthful?

In this case, John Freeland was certainly in a position to know what happened. He was a participant. And he had no reason to misrepresent the facts to either Judge Cochran or I.J.

Are both alternative theories equally improbable? Nope. One is based on evidence from someone in a position to know and is plausible; the other appears to be an unsubstantiated guess which seems to this writer highly implausible.

Is it possible that both theories are simultaneously correct? Possible that Freeland offered his suggested name "Sullivan" to honor the New Hampshire General, and the Commissioners took his suggested name — but for an entirely different reason: because they wanted to name the town after the place where Col. Moultrie won his naval victory? Possible? Theoretically — yes. Likely? What reason would the Commissioners have had to name the town after an island or fort? Why would they have adopted their friend Freeland's suggestion — but for entirely different reasons — and not have told him? And not left a record as to their reason?

As with respect to other questions of history (and even politics?), each reader may make up his/her own mind.

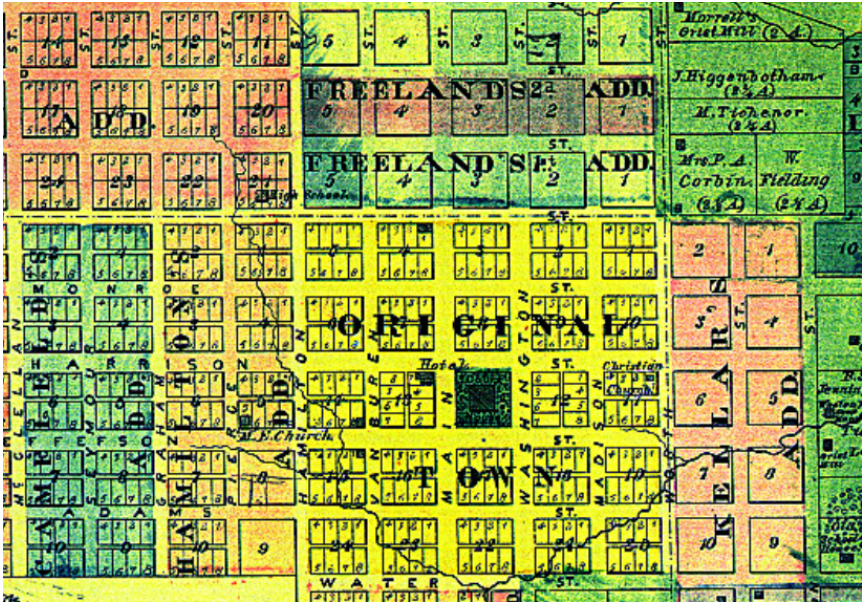
IV.

The Building of Sullivan: The First Two Decades, Beginning in 1845

The town of Sullivan was surveyed on the fifth day of March 1845. The lots were then sold at a public auction — 192 lots (24 blocks, 8 lots per block). These lots made up the original town. I.J. Martin thought the auction was a mistake because there was little demand for the lots and many thus sold for what he thought a “trifling consideration.”

The highest price paid for a lot was \$31, for the lot on the north end of the west side of the square “on which the First National Bank is now located” (when I.J. was writing).

The original town of Sullivan may best be seen on the 1875 *Atlas*. The yellow-colored blocks in the center make up the “Original Town.” The surrounding blocks are later additions to the town.



One can also see on the map the two streams flowing into the Kaskaskia River, coming together two blocks south of the court house at the appropriately-named “Water Street.”

The new town began to take shape quickly — partly by construction, partly by moving buildings in from other places.

The first house was erected by John Perryman — a small one-story frame structure located on the corner of Harrison and Van Buren Streets. The 1881 *County History* says he moved his family into it in May 1845 and thus became the first resident.

John Perryman’s granddaughter, Mrs. George Thomsen, later wrote that in early manhood, her grandfather had been employed in Shelbyville as a clerk:

In 1843 I think he took his family to Nelson which was their home until the site for the county seat should be decided upon. Here they lived among the beautiful prairie flowers, the deadly rattle snakes, and still more deadly malaria. The only house available was a log cabin which to grandmother seemed unfit for a home but she went courageously

to work. She papered the rough looking walls with newspapers and tacked two rag carpets on the puncheon in order that the babies' feet might not go through the cracks. When she had finished, it looked very clean and homelike, but alas! When it rained the roof leaked, the walls were ruined, and grandfather and grandmother were compelled to hold umbrellas over the beds to keep the children dry. ... Three little graves bore mute testimony of the supreme sacrifice made by our forefathers

When the site of Sullivan had been fixed, grandfather got a tent for his family to live in and grandmother cooked the first meal in Sullivan in the tent. As soon as possible, the house was built — the first in Sullivan. Uncle Johnnie Freeland built the second.

John A. Freeland, the second settler, as well as county clerk and recorder, moved a “second hand log cabin” from the failed town of Glasgow onto the southeast corner of the square, on July 11, 1845. Others followed soon after.

Several of the Waggoner family — the first permanent settlers in Moultrie County — moved from Whitley Point to Sullivan. Amos Waggoner, son of Isaac, the father of the first family, served several years as county judge. One of Judge Amos' sons, J.H. Waggoner, served terms as circuit clerk and county treasurer.

The first church in Sullivan was a Methodist church. The 1881 *Combined History* stated (at 150):

In Sullivan also this year [1849] a new frame church was completed and dedicated; it had been commenced in 1847, during the pastorate of Rev. J.H. Hopkins, but from some cause was not completed for two years. The cost of this edifice was almost one thousand dollars and it was constructed by R.B. Wheeler. The first board of trustees consisted of Wm. Purvis, James Elder, R.B.Ewing, James Camfield, and Elijah Bridewell.

But where was that old Methodist church?

For years it has been believed that that old “first church” building was located a block south and east of the square on the corner of Jefferson and Madison streets, where the post office is now (2018). However, Janet Roney

found a copy of the deed from Freeland to the church trustees, dated June 13, 1850. The deed shows that the church site was on lot 4 of Block 16 — a block west of the square on the corner of Jefferson and Van Buren streets. On the Sanborn map of 1886, the old church building was labeled “school,” as it had apparently been used for that purpose after the Methodists built a new church on the present site. The old building had also been used as a place to hold court.

After the Methodist church, the Cumberland Presbyterian church was the next church built, with the Freelands among its membership.

The old Christian church, erected in 1852 or 1853, was the third church building in Sullivan. During its approximately 47 years of existence, it had the largest auditorium in the county, which was used for assemblies other than religious meetings. The church congregation included influential families: the Pattersons, Thomasons, Kellars, Hokes, Smysors, some of the Waggoners, and many others.

James Elder moved his store from Nelson to Sullivan. He built a frame building which he used as a residence and hotel on the west side of the square at the north end — the later site of the Eden House — and also built a two-story frame structure for his mercantile business on the corner north across the street. *John R. Eden Compendium*, at 34. He later served as County Judge. In 1868 Judge Elder established the first bank in Sullivan — the Elder Bank — which he operated until he died in 1870. Though they were in different political parties, Eden later wrote about Judge Elder that “he was a man of strict integrity and of large business capacity, in whom the people of the county had great confidence. ... In politics he was a Whig and later a Republican.” And he was a friend of Abraham Lincoln.

With the relocation of buildings and businesses from Glasgow and Nelson, the prospects of those older places faded — crowded out by the new county seat. Other early businesses and businessmen are listed in the *1881 County History*, at 182.

John R. Eden, moved to Sullivan in the summer of 1853 and set up shop as a lawyer. Years later he wrote a memoir describing what the town was like then. On the south side of the square were mercantile businesses and professional offices. On the east side were a hardware store, general store, and mercantile business, as well as a doctor’s office. The north side of the square was a mess — with saloons from the east to west end of the block. Keedy &

Brown ran one, at the east end. At the west end, where the Titus opera house later stood, was also a tavern. “At that time, the village had no policeman, and some of the rough element, that usually gets out as soon as civilization becomes established, still remained in the county. This part of the population when in town made the saloon their headquarters. They at times indulged in fist fights and other disorderly conduct, as a result of which the north side of the square then, and for a long time subsequent, was called ‘Sod corn row.’” *John R. Eden, Compendium*, at 33.

The mercantile businesses were not specialized — no separate clothing stores, or hardware, or boots and shoes, or grocery stores, or even drug stores. “Each of the merchants in town undertook to supply his customers with everything now on hand in our special commodity stores.” *Id.*, at 34-35.

Businessmen were not only horizontally unspecialized, but were also vertically integrated. Doctors furnished their own medicine — including a “root” doctor on Whitley Creek. The blacksmiths made their own horse shoes and nails, as well as other implements. *Id.*, at 35. Whiskey salesmen apparently distilled their own liquor.

Sod Corn Row

The first business in town (as distinguished from a business building) was a saloon, kept by one Joel Earp. The 1881 *County History* says his saloon was in the building on the corner opposite the north-east corner of the court house square. Earp later left Sullivan for California, but returned over three decades later to assert a claim to some \$35,000 worth of business property and as much more in residential property which was located within the original town. His claim was that he had deeds to these properties which were destroyed in 1864, when the first court house burned down. One of the Decatur papers carried a story October 23, 1889, reporting that “Several of the older residents remember Earp as an old resident of Sullivan who kept a groggery on part of the grounds he now claims, which was then known as “Sod Corn Row” but which is now built up in fine business blocks.” Earp’s claims reportedly made many property owners “very uneasy.” Uneasy or not, nothing seems to have come of those claims.

(Apparently our town’s co-founding father, Joel Earp, was not closely related to the more famous Western lawman, Wyatt, or his brothers, Virgil and Morgan. Their father was Nicholas Porter Earp, 1813-1907, who came from

North Carolina and Kentucky and lived for a time in Monmouth, Illinois, where Wyatt was born in 1848.)

The whiskey being sold at these north-side establishments was not the fine, aged amber liquid I see in a bottle on the upper shelf of my cabinet, flown in from the Isle of Skye. In the 1840s and 50s Sullivan as yet had no railroads. Airline service was infrequent. There were no rivers or canals available to paddle in the barrels. Wagon transportation was slow, unreliable and expensive.

Whiskey was a popular remedy for ague, chills and fever, and snake bite, and it was often bought by the gallon jug and sometimes by the keg or barrel. There was no tax, and the stuff was cheap in large quantities. *I.J.M. Notes*, at 45.

The record of the Waggoner store at Whitley Point, from February 1845 to June 1846, coincides with the start-up of Sullivan. One may assume that Amos Waggoner was getting his supplies from the same places as the Sullivan tavern-keepers. To quote from one of my favorite sources, *The Whitley Point Record Book*, Chicago, 1996, at 62:

The religious convictions of the [Whitley Point] community did not deter the use of either tobacco or whiskey, both of which were among the high-volume sales items. Thus, John Martin, a staunch member of the Baptist congregation led by his 'Uncle Billy,' purchased ... several gallons of whiskey over a period of several months (50 cents per gallon). [That staunch Baptist John Martin was the author's great-great-grandfather.] ... Indeed whiskey was recorded as having been sold to different customers by the gallon, the quart, the pint, and the jug (apparently the one gallon variety) ...

Corn whiskey was both an item of general consumption and a product of the local economy for barter or to generate cash. Many farmers owned their own small distilleries — "stills" — with which they converted corn mash into the clear, potent liquid. A bushel of corn was good for about two gallons. 'Much was consumed at home. Corn whiskey was the popular western drink; home consumption ran high, and in many cabins all members of the family drank it at every meal. More versatile than other products, it was used in Whitley Point, as in other frontier communities, for medicinal purposes as well as social ones. ... Moreover, more compact than corn itself, whiskey could be easily stored and later transported to city markets.

There can be little doubt that some of the output of those small Whitley Point stills — not to mention those of Lovington, Bethany, and Windsor — found its way to the Sullivan taverns to slake the thirsts of the denizens of sod corn row.

A “tavern” was a place where one could stay, eat, and have a drink. A “store” such as the Waggoner store in Whitley Point was a place where one might buy a gallon or a jug. Liquor could be bought by the glass at a saloon or “grocery.” *Whitley Point Record Book*, at 56.

The etymological origins of the term “sod corn row” are unclear. One theory is that it referred to whiskey made from inferior corn grown in sod. “Sod” is an insult, perhaps a contraction of “sodomite,” a word familiar to central Illinois churchgoers in the 19th Century. But the term could be a contraction of “sodden” — as in saturated with something. “Corn” surely refers to the whiskey. And “row” refers to the row of saloons. So far as I can tell, Sullivan was the only town in the country that had an area bearing such a label.

Some temperance groups were content to advocate individual moral abstinence. Other more aggressive organizations wanted a state legal prohibition. In 1851 a partial abolition law was passed prohibiting the selling of liquor in quantities less than one quart; it was unenforceable and was repealed in 1853. *Centennial History, The Era of the Civil War*, Arthur C. Cole, at 207.

In 1855 a movement began in Illinois to pass a state law patterned after the Maine liquor law that would totally prohibit the sale of liquor. The temperance advocates pushed through a measure for total prohibition; however, it provided for a popular referendum in June 1855. During the three-month campaign before the referendum, preachers were prominent in the debate. The Methodists generally favored prohibition while most of the Baptists opposed it. In Sullivan a debate was held in the Christian Church with Col. John W. Morgan, then pastor of the Methodist church, advocating the proposal and Rezin Martin, a Baptist preacher, against it.

In the referendum, the prohibition proposal was defeated. *Id.*, Cole, at 210. However, a law was enacted in 1855 forbidding the sale of liquor in quantities less than one pint without a license. The law left it to local communities to decide whether to license saloons. Sullivan issued plenty of licenses, thus generating operating funds to help cover city expenses.

Issues of the first Sullivan newspaper, the *Express*, survive from the 1857 to 1860, and contain many editorial expressions of support for personal temperance and community control of the taverns.

In early 1858 the *Sullivan Express* ran an article stating: “Of all the woe and want and wretchedness which awaken our compassion, of all scenes of misery which call so loudly for sympathy, is none that so harrows up the feeling as the ‘drunkard’s home!’” *Sullivan Express*, February 4, 1858.

A week later a drunken brawl occurred in sod corn row:

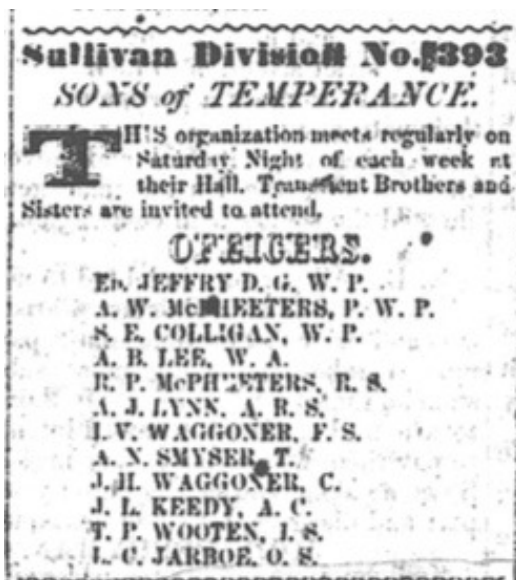
Last Saturday evening the inhabitants of our town were thrown into a high state of excitement by the conduct of a group of rowdies who came from Sand Creek for the express purpose of raising ____ with some of the people of Sullivan. The names of those persons as we have been informed are Odum, Little, and Tipton. ...

These ruffians were armed to the teeth with Bowie Knives and other deadly weapons which they designed using on any person with whom they could pick up a quarrel. In the afternoon groups of persons were assembled together in and about the grocery on sod corn row. The most profane swearing that could be uttered seemed to be the vocabulary of these graceless scamps, several hostile demonstrations were made by these ruffians through the day; but nothing serious occurred until about seven o’clock. During the evening they endeavored to impose on every person they possibly could at the grocery in the most insulting manner.

A scene almost indescribable followed in the bar room. Coats were thrown off and bowie knives gleamed their frightful blaze as they were brandished backwards and forwards by these law breaking scoundrels. ... So savage and bent on the work of death was one of them that he followed Mr. S. W. Elder with an uplifted chair into the adjoining apartment from thence to the dining room where Mr. Elder was fortunate enough to elude his pursuit. ... After peace was somewhat restored, a writ was got out for the arrest of the rascals, but they took the hint and escaped save one, who we were informed was [summoned] under the penalty of \$1.00 to answer at the Circuit court for disorderly conduct and rioting.

Such incidents produced a backlash..

In February 1858 the “Sons of Temperance” announced their regular meetings on Saturday night of each week. Distinguished Sullivan citizens were identified as officers:



Sullivan Division No. 393
SONS of TEMPERANCE.

THIS organization meets regularly on Saturday Night of each week at their Hall. Transient Brothers and Sisters are invited to attend.

OFFICERS.

Ed. JEFFRY D. G. W. P.
A. W. McMEETERS, P. W. P.
S. E. COLLIGAN, W. P.
A. B. LEE, W. A.
R. P. McPHYSTERS, R. S.
A. J. LYNN, A. R. S.
I. V. WAGGONER, F. S.
A. N. SMYSER, T.
J. H. WAGGONER, C.
J. L. KEEDY, A. C.
T. P. WOOTEN, I. S.
L. C. JARBOE, O. S.

The following month, March 1858, a separate but overlapping group of Sullivan citizens met at the Christian church to form a “friends of temperance” society. Those present included E. Bridwell, A.B. Lee, H.Y. Kellar, A. Buckner, John R. Eden and P.B. Knight. A temperance pledge was circulated and signed by “every person present except four.”

The editor of the *Express*, Ned Waggoner, explained that he did not believe complete abstinence was necessary but denounced drunkenness, “especially that kind practiced by some young men ... who under cover of the darkness of night, congregate together in some dark hole or corner, there to carry on the work of self-destruction, bringing disgrace, infamy and disease upon themselves, misery and wretchedness upon their parents.”

That same month pursuant to a decision of the Town Trustees, an election was held “to ascertain the feelings of the citizens of this place, on the License question, to sell liquors.” The resulting vote was 64 for License, and

52 against License. (Apparently “for License” meant the voter was for saloons, albeit subject to restriction and regulation.)

So — Sullivan had been platted in 1845, houses and commercial buildings had been built, and drinks were being sold. But Sullivan still had no corporate existence. During that period, the people depended for law enforcement on the justice of the peace, the sheriff and other officers of the county who were appointed by the County Commissioners.

The growth of the place was reflected in the change of status from village — to town — and then to city.

The *1881 County History* reports that: “Sullivan was first incorporated under the general law *as a village*, in the winter of 1850. The records were burned with the courthouse, and we were unable to collect all of the desired information.” *1881 County History*, at 183.

In February 1858, notice was published in the *Express* to the voters of Sullivan that an election would be held “for the purpose of electing a board of Town Trustees *to Incorporate the Town of Sullivan*.” Interested voters assembled at the Court House in early March to vote for or against incorporating. The vote was fifty “for” and one “against.” The editor of the *Express* noted, “From what we have since learned, one might say the votes cast were unanimous in favor of incorporation for the man that voted ‘against incorporation’ says he put in that 1 ballot ‘jest phor phun.’” As a “town,” Sullivan was governed by a board of trustees: John A. Freeland, John Perryman, and J.W. Ross.

Curiously, it appears that the voters favoring the 1858 change to “town” status did so because they thought the new governance structure would make it easier to restrict or regulate the issuance of licenses to sell liquor. On March 4, 1858, the *Express* published a letter from “many citizens” (unnamed) as follows:

As there has been considerable excitement in our community recently about the granting of licenses for the retailing of liquor in our town, *which has resulted in the incorporation of our village, and the election of Trustees therefor*, permit us to suggest, through the columns of the “Express,” that said Trustees, before granting licenses for the sale of liquor, call an election of all the legal voters within the limits of the incorporation, to

decide the matter; and let the tickets read, “For License” and “Against License,” and if there should be a majority “For License,” then let them be issued; but should there be a majority “Against License,” then let them be withheld. We think that this course would probably satisfy all parties and the Trustees would have the assurance that they were carrying out the wishes of the majority of their constituents. (Emphasis supplied.)

The pro-license crowd prevailed. Late that same month, the *Express* printed a new town ordinance passed by the trustees of the town, that, effective April 1, 1858:

1. No person shall sell liquor in less quantity than one gallon unless they take out license from the board, the price to be fixed by the board between \$50 and \$300 per year;
2. Any person “keeping” any intoxicating drinks, not having obtained a license, shall keep a record of sales, to whom and for what purpose;
3. Any person obtaining license to sell liquor in less quantities shall keep an orderly house and shall not sell any drink that intoxicates to any person who is drunk or to any person under 16 unless by order of the parent or guardian.
4. Any person found drunk or guilty of disorderly conduct shall be arrested by the town constable and fined between \$3 and \$5 for each offense.

So liquor would continue to be sold — both in quantity and by the glass — but the town of Sullivan would make money out of the business, both in selling licenses and levying fines.

Note that the ordinance assumed the existence of a “town constable.” A.B. Lee was reportedly the first constable.

Other markers of structured civilization soon appeared:

The first school house in Sullivan “was a small frame structure, and was situated on the lot west of where the Christian church [a Baptist church in 2018] now stands. Years afterwards, it was moved to the open lots just across the street . . .” *1881 County History*, at 96.

The first court house was built soon after the county seat was determined upon, but the construction was not finished until the spring of 1848. Before that, court was held in the school house. When the new court house went into service in 1848, a jail apartment was built into a corner of the base-

ment floor. It was a two-part structure — a “jail room proper” and what was ominously called the “dungeon.” *1881 County History*, at 72. (That first court house building would be destroyed by fire on November 25, 1864.)

The first hotel was built in 1847 by Beverly Taylor, on the west end of the north side of the square, where the Titus Opera House would eventually be located.

With the county seat open for business, lawyers hung out their shingles. One of the first was Richard J. Oglesby, in 1845. Oglesby (1824-1899) later fought in the Mexican War, then rose to the rank of major general during the Civil War, and after the war was elected Governor of Illinois (1865-1869, 1873, 1885-1889) and U.S. Senator from Illinois (1873-1879). One of Oglesby’s first cases was on behalf of one William Cazier, who was in debt to a distinguished member of the community, A.L. Kellar. Cazier sought to avoid his creditors by secretly leaving the county with personal property without paying his bills. Keller prevented him from leaving. The matter was tried, and Oglesby won. *1881 County History*, at 69. Oglesby soon moved his law practice to Decatur.

Another early Sullivan lawyer was Samuel W. Moulton, who arrived in 1847 and remained two years before moving to Shelbyville where he had a distinguished career as a lawyer, judge and Congressman.

As already noted, John R. Eden came to open a law practice in the summer of 1853. His biographical squib in the county history says that when he arrived in 1853, “There was only one other lawyer besides himself in Moultrie County.” Sullivan was one of those small towns where there was not enough business to keep one lawyer busy, but there was enough for two. Because the judges traveled the circuit holding court in one county after another, they were followed by the lawyers — which resulted in many leading lawyers from central Illinois appearing in court in Sullivan. One of those was Abraham Lincoln.

The early physicians included Drs. William Kellar, L.S. Spore, William Duffield, J.Y. Hitt, and B.B. Everett. In the summer of 1855 Sullivan experienced a wide-spread attack of cholera, and it was reported that there was “but one family in the place who have not got the cholera, and that there will not be persons enough (unless the doctors do it) to bury the dead, as there are a number expected to die, about all who are able to leave having become alarmed at the ravages committed by this outrage in their midst have fled from the town.” *Decatur Review*, July 26, 1855.

The Decatur newspaper perhaps overstated a little. I.J. Martin wrote, “There were about a half-dozen deaths here attributed to the [cholera] plague. The leading physician, Dr. William A. Kellar, was stricken and died. He was a minister also and pastor of the Christian Church in Sullivan. He and John R. Eden had an office together. Mr. Eden wrote that one afternoon Kellar complained of feeling ill and went home. He died the next day.” *I.J.M. Notes*, at 31.

The post office was set up in 1845, with John Perryman serving as the first postmaster. The mails were received once every two weeks, brought in by horseback from Shelbyville. The telegraph came to Chicago in 1848 and was used by the railroads in the 1850s. Most railroad stations served as telegraph offices. But the first railroad did not come to Sullivan until 1872 (the Decatur, Sullivan, and Mattoon Railroad). In 1861 only one railroad passed through Moultrie County, and that was for only a short distance and one stop, Summit — in the southeastern part of the county in Whitley Township.

The cemetery — first used in 1847 as the private burying-ground of the family of James Elder — was given by Elder and others for a public cemetery.

The first issue of Sullivan’s first newspaper — the *Sullivan Express*, edited by James D. Moudy — appeared in September 1857. Several doctors and lawyers ran ads in the early issues holding themselves out to serve the public.

Buildings in the town were initially constructed with timber frames and wooden beams and planks — a big improvement on the log cabins of Whitley Point two decades earlier. When James Taylor first saw Sullivan in 1856, there was only one brick house. The first brick commercial building was not built until the fall of 1860.

The predominance of houses and buildings made of wood, along with the use of wood fires for heating and dependence on volunteer fire fighters, led to the destruction of many buildings by fires. “More than one half of the business area around the court house has been swept by fire one or more times.” *I.J.M. Notes*, at 45.

In February 1856 a citizen of the town, signing himself “Absalom,” wrote to the *Illinois State Chronicle* a letter describing and promoting Sullivan:

We have at present seven dry goods stores, three of which are as

large retail establishments as can be found in Central Illinois. We have one of the greatest farming and grazing countries in the world . . . Real estate is steadily increasing in price; at present improved farms bring from \$15 to \$20 per acre, and prairie land from \$5 to \$10. The morals of our town are the very best, and we have two fine flourishing academies, which I have lately been informed, have near two hundred and fifty scholars in daily attendance, under the care of able and efficient teachers.

In the absence of cars or even buggies, people got around town by walking (“shank’s mare”) or riding a horse. According to Carleton Harris, there were no sidewalks in the mid-1850s. *MC Heritage*, August 1980, at 64. Also, there were no paved streets. James Taylor said that in 1856 when he first visited Sullivan, there was one stone walk of only 50 feet in the town, and around the court house “there was a shabby board walk and a board fence to keep the cows out.” There were no sidewalks in front of the business buildings around the square. In dry weather, this was tolerable, but rain and snow brought great inconvenience.

The town fathers began to face up to the problem in the late 1850s. On December 12, 1857, a Chicago visitor wrote to the *Express* saying that he was impressed by the size of the town and the appearance of the citizens, but added:

I was somewhat astonished to see men and women have to go paddling along thro’ the mud, around the square, from the fact that there are no side-walks.

On the north side, or what is called the ‘sod-corn-row,’ there is not a vestige of a walk-way. I suppose on that side of town there is no particular need of walks, for they that visit the bacchanalian halls there, would go, mud or no mud. But from the fact of there being no sidewalks there, I think should act as a stimulus, and cause those living on other streets of the town, to build sidewalks, in order to show a difference between grog, and no grog.

Perhaps in response to this prodding from a northern outsider, the citizens called a meeting at the courthouse for Saturday, January 30, 1858, at 7 p.m., “to take into consideration the propriety of drying up the mud” — i.e., making sidewalks and crossings:

All you who love roads that's good,
Come, we'll help you cross the mud,
For if the mud you would not wade,
You'll pay for sidewalks that are made.

A local anti-mud partisan responded:

It is a fact well known to all our citizens that unless we get a firmer foundation to walk on during such a winter as this is, that we will have to stick corn-cobs on our feet in order to preserve life, or in other words, to keep from 'running into the ground.' — Our women and children will not — under present circumstances — dare to venture on the streets without being in imminent danger. However, owing to the present fashions of ladies' dresses, some may feel safe — but not so many — their cases are hopeless. ...

I think we had better pitch in and try and do something to change the condition of our street — ... so just go to work, all hands let those that are able try their physical powers, and those that are not able physically, let them try the virtue of slackened purse-strings; then the work will go on, and be completed immediately. (*Sullivan Express*, January 28, 1858.)

Democracy worked its will. The citizens met; the problem was identified — “to devise ways and means to construct sidewalks in the town of Sullivan”; and a committee was appointed “to solicit subscriptions for completion of” the work. It is noteworthy that the work was thus paid for by donations rather than taxpayer funds.

In March the newspaper expressed its satisfaction: “By casting our eyes out at the window we see that the sidewalk enterprise is succeeding better than was expected. The work is going on at a rapid rate, and will, we have no doubt, soon be completed. There is nothing like an enterprising spirit.”

A related problem — providing hitching posts for horses — and was not addressed until the mid-1870s.

The first road paved in Sullivan — before the advent of automobiles — was West Harrison Street, from the Eden House west to the rail depots. It was paved in the fall of 1895. The dirt was loaded in wagons and dumped in the court house yard.

V.

Sullivan's Court Houses

We think of the “court house” as the large public building in the town square of the county seat where judges and juries dispense justice. But in the 19th century there were many layers of justice and many places where justice was administered.

Not surprisingly, given where so many of our state's citizens came from, Illinois' early court system was modeled upon the system in place in Kentucky. Our highest state court was the Supreme Court, composed of one chief justice and three associates. Its jurisdiction was mostly to hear appeals. Below the high court, we had Circuit Courts.

The state was initially divided into five such circuits, in each of which a single judge presided. Two terms were held each year in every county. This court had original jurisdiction in all criminal cases and in civil cases where the amount in controversy was greater than \$20. It also heard appeals from lower courts. Initially the Supreme Court justices also served as circuit justices, “riding circuit,” but this was changed in 1824-25 by providing for separate circuit judges.

Then there were the county courts. The County Commissioner's Court was comprised of three commissioners elected locally with jurisdiction

relating to county matters. The first county judge in Moultrie County was James Elder, Sullivan's leading merchant and banker.

There were also local probate judges who oversaw courts of record, probated wills, and had jurisdiction over administrators, executors and orphans, as well as Justices of the Peace ("J.P.'s"), who were elected by the people of the county.

Sullivan thus had places where circuit judges held court, but also where the County Commissioner's Court and the county judges met, and where the probate judges and J.P.'s did their business.

The first circuit court in the county was held in May 1843. The *1881 County History* says that court was first held in the residence of James Camfield. It probably says that because the act of the Illinois legislature in 1843 creating Moultrie County had provided, in Section 3: "The seat of justice of said county of Moultrie shall be at the residence of James Camfield, of said county, until otherwise ordered by the county commissioners' court of said county" However, there is some reason to believe that this widely-repeated story about where court was first held is wrong.

On the occasion of the dedication of the new court house in 1906, Judge Cochran, who was deeply interested in local history, gave a dedication address in which he stated:

The county seat of Moultrie county was located in the spring of 1845 on 40 acres of land deeded to the county by Philo Hale and was named after General Sullivan.

The first circuit court ever held in the county was held at the home of James Elder or a Mr. Vadakin, at old Nelson in the fall of 1843. ... In 1845 the court was held at the home of James Camfield near Sullivan. (Emphasis supplied.)

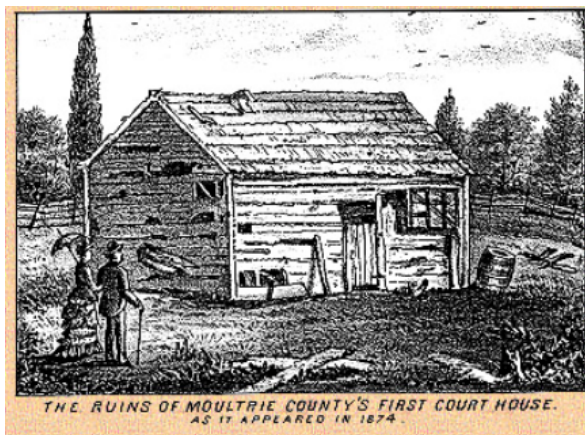
Thus, Judge Cochran's version had it that the court met first at a private residence at old Nelson, and did not meet at Camfield's home until two years later, 1845.

After first meeting in that old Nelson private residence, the circuit court then met at the first Moultrie "court house" — meaning the first struc-

ture built to serve as a court. Joe Thomason built that first old Nelson court house: “To make a wood floor, we scattered sawdust on the ground. The sides of the building were made of clapboards. We got our ornamentation in the roof, taking chances on the weather — and it played fair with us. We made that roof of green boughs taken from small timber around the place. It was the prettiest roof ever built in the county. There was a fragrance about it and it kept out the sun. As it didn’t rain during the session of that first court, the roof was in every way a success; in fact it was one of my inspirations.” *Sullivan Progress*, January 19, 1913. (For this quote and reference, thanks to Janet Roney.)

Abraham Lincoln reportedly attended court in the old Nelson court house. Years later an old Nelson resident named Corby, when splitting a log near the site of the first court house, found in the log “a dozen large nails, which had been covered up by 20 years’ growth. It is said that the nails were originally driven by the late Abraham Lincoln, who nailed up a mark to shoot at when he was a member of the bar that held forth before Judge Treat at Nelson.” Lincoln also reportedly represented clients at the home of Henderson Philips in nearby Whitley Township when Philips served as Justice of the Peace.

The log structure in which Judge Treat held court in old Nelson is pictured in the *1881 County History*, at 194:



As the building of Sullivan began in 1845, sessions of the circuit court met in James Camfield’s home. We can be pretty sure where Camfield’s house was. At the time of the 1906 ceremony for the then-new court house, it was remembered that Camfield’s residence had been “on the farm now owned by

Wm. Sherburn,” southwest of Sullivan. The 1913 *Atlas* of Sullivan identifies that farm as in Section 10, Township 13, about a quarter mile north of the Camfield cemetery.

Judge Samuel H. Treat was the first Circuit Judge to hold court in Moultrie County. He was succeeded as Circuit Judge by Judge David Davis — a close friend of Abraham Lincoln, later Lincoln’s campaign manager, and still later a Senator and Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Willard King, *Lincoln’s Manager: David Davis*, Harvard, 1960.

The first probate court was held in the private residence of David Patterson, the first probate judge. His home was about two miles south of Sullivan.

When the new county seat was platted, a block in the center of the new town was reserved for the court house. Construction began in the spring of 1847 and was completed in the spring of 1848.

That leaves the question — where did the Circuit Court meet between the time it met in Camfield’s residence in 1845 and the time the new court house was completed in 1848? The answer appears to be that the court met during that period in the first schoolhouse erected in Sullivan, in the spring of 1846. The school was built by private subscription on lot 2, block 11, just west of the lot where the First Christian Church was later built. It was a small frame building, 17 x 20 feet. Years later that small building was moved to an open lot across the street and used for a stable. By the time the *1881 County History* was written, that old building had been torn down. (*Id.*, at 96.)

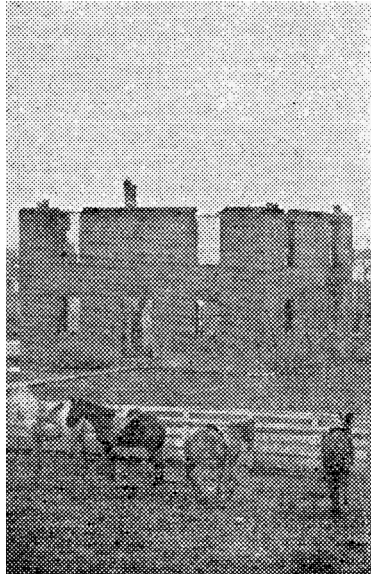
To summarize: before court was ever held in the first Sullivan court house in 1847, circuit judges held court in:

1. a private home in old Nelson — Elder’s or Vadakin’s;
2. the log court house built in old Nelson by Joe Thomason;
3. Camfield’s residence in Section 10, T 13, southwest of Sullivan;
and
4. the first schoolhouse in Sullivan, adjacent to the old Christian Church structure.

5. The first Sullivan Court house was completed in the summer of 1847. The 1881 *County History* described it as “a brick structure, thirty-eight feet square, and two stories high. A hall passed through the centre on the

ground floor, with two offices on either side. A jail apartment was cut off in the north-east corner of the basement floor. The second story was occupied wholly as a court room.” *Id.*, at 70.

Then on November 25, 1864, that “first” court house building was destroyed by fire and nearly all the records of the county were lost. Below is a picture of the burnt-out shell after the fire.



First Court House.

The county seat could not long be without a court house. A contract to build a new one was made in the spring of 1865.

6. During the interim two-year period — between the burning of the “first” court house and the completion of construction of a new building — the circuit court met in the old Methodist Church building, the first church built in Sullivan, completed in 1849. Eventually the Methodist congregation outgrew that old church and decided to build a new one. The old building was left standing and served a variety of functions — including holding court — over the next several decades until it burned in 1905. An article in the *Moultre County News* in 1905 told the story: “After the old court house was burned, this original church building was frequently used for court purposes, many important trials being conducted there, among them one murder trial in which John R. Eden and Anthony Thornton were defendant’s attorneys. Since then it had

served various purposes, school room, skating rink, bowling alley and poultry commission house.” That original Methodist Church building was located in block 16 (lot 4, northwest quadrant), on Jefferson street south and a block west of the court house.

7. Construction of the “second” court house in Sullivan was completed in the summer of 1866. Lawyers, judges and other court officials, and parties did their business there for four decades. The pictures show it to have been a handsome structure: two stories tall, 50 feet square, and 30 feet from the foundation to the eaves, with a dome of 68 feet.



The Second Sullivan Court House

This “second” court house served its purposes well, but by the late 1890s it had become apparent that a new structure was needed. The old court house was both too small and insecure. Judge Cochran in September 1899 made a formal report to the board of supervisors setting forth the condition of the structure and the need for a new one.

8. At the time of the election of November 1902 the board submitted a proposition to the voters to approve construction of a new court house. The proposition did not limit the expenditure for the court house to any maximum sum, and it was reportedly for this reason that a majority of voters turned it down.

The board revisited the matter in early 1904. After a petition from a “respectable number” of citizens was submitted, the board called a special

election to build the new structure, the cost not to exceed \$75,000, an amount which apparently did not include all the inside work needed. On February 16, 1904, the voters approved by a handsome margin — 1,981 to 1,165.

Work commenced that summer under the direction of the board of supervisors, chaired by W. R. Patterson. The new tower clock — manufactured by the Howard Clock company of Boston — cost \$1,280 and was installed by Emery Creech of Sullivan on July 30. The clock weighed 1,000 pounds, as did the clock bell. “For the first time in the history of Sullivan the inhabitants could hear the hours of the day pealed off by the bell.”

By September 1906 the construction work had been completed, the ground was being graded, and the walks were about to be laid. The building, including frescoes, furnishings, heating and lighting, cost \$85,000. The corner stone was laid October 14, 1904. The Board of Supervisors sold off the old courthouse furniture on November 24 but decided to keep the old courthouse bell as a relic.

The program committee of the Board invited Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana to come and dedicate the new courthouse, but he declined — perhaps because of the short notice.

The new court house was dedicated November 12, 1906. The day was crisp and cool, but not so chilly as to deter a crowd — “one of the largest ever assembled in Sullivan.” Regular trains brought passengers from Arthur, Lovington, Mattoon, Allenville, Bruce, Windsor and Kirksville, while a special train brought in others from Bethany and Dalton City. See Paul Stone, *Moultrie County Courthouse Centennial Celebration*, 2006.

All business houses around the square were closed as were the schools. The ceremony included a prayer by Dr.T.J. Wheat, singing, a proclamation by Sheriff Wright, an appropriate motion by J.B. Titus, addresses by E.J. Miller, W.K. Whitfield, and Judge W.G. Cochran, and a parade of school children and citizens, with more prayer, a meeting at the soldiers’ monument, still more prayer, and a musical program.

The soldiers’ monument was also dedicated. It stood on the southeast corner of the courthouse yard, with two granite bases surmounted by a white Italian marble figure of a soldier in uniform. The monument was paid for by contributions from anonymous citizens and friends of Fred Sona, a local marble dealer. Some observers noted that while monuments of Union soldiers were tra-

ditionally placed to face southward, this statue faced the east. The uniformed soldier was holding a gun in 1906. At some point the monument was vandalized and the gun broken off. It was never repaired.

The interior of the courthouse was elegantly furnished, with frescoes in the court room, a ceiling of deep cream, and patterns of flowers and leaf design. Behind the judge's desk was an oil painting representing Justice blind-folded. Ten large oil paintings were placed in different parts of the courthouse.



The Court House from the North Side School, 1912

VI.

The United States Senate Election and the Sullivan “Riot” of September 20, 1858

During the 1858 campaign for the U.S. Senate, the two candidates, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, engaged in debates around the state. They spoke on the same day — Monday, September 20, 1858 — in Sullivan, though not together and therefore not in debate format. Douglas’ speech came first, and his presentation was briefly disrupted by Lincoln supporters. Some newspaper accounts called that disruption a “riot.”

The remarks of the two candidates during their statewide debates were widely published in newspapers throughout the state. Lincoln kept a scrapbook during the campaign and in early 1859 he sent the newspaper print versions to a publisher. A book setting forth the text of the debates appeared on March 20, 1860. *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858 in Illinois*. Columbus, 1860. The story of that publication may be found in R.E. Martin, “Publication of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858,” *Caxtonian*, September 2008. The text of all the debates and related information may be found in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, III, Lincoln Series, 1, edited by Edwin E. Sparks, Springfield, 1908. A history of the campaign, including a brief description of what happened at Sullivan, may be found in Allen C. Guelzo’s *Lincoln and Douglas, The Debates That Defined America*, 2008, at 214.

Perhaps because the separate speeches made by the candidates in Sullivan did not constitute a “debate,” the texts of what they said were not saved — or at least not reported in the newspapers at the time. They also did not appear either in the 1860 volume or the later collection by Sparks. However, many newspapers in Illinois carried accounts of the Sullivan speeches and of the disruption of Senator Douglas’ presentation at the courthouse square.

The only newspaper in Sullivan at that time was *The Sullivan Express*, published by J.H. and E.E. Waggoner. It was a Democratic-leaning, weekly paper, appearing on Fridays. No issue for September 24 — the next Friday following the two speeches of September 20 — has survived. I had thought perhaps it was removed from the newspaper’s files by a collector of Lincoln material. But it now appears to me that there was no issue that particular Friday. The issue that came out on Friday September 17, 1858, was headed; Volume II, No. 1 — signifying the beginning of the newspaper’s second year of publication. The next issue in the files, dated Friday, October 1, 1858, is headed: Volume II, No. 2.,” which suggests that there was no issue on Friday, September 24. This would explain why the October 1 issue carried a rather full account of the events of September 20 — more than a week earlier.

As the October 1 issue of the *Express* reported, a large group of Douglas partisans had formed to travel out two and one-half miles east of Sullivan to welcome Senator Douglas and accompany him into town. The Douglas procession was headed by the Shelbyville Brass Band, followed by 32 young ladies on horseback, each bearing a flag on which was inscribed the name “Douglas.” The entire procession was “considerably” over a mile long.

The Douglas caravan passed by the residence of Judge James Elder half a mile east of town. Standing on Elder’s porch was Abraham Lincoln, watching the parade.

A stand had been built on the east side of the square from which Douglas was to speak. “Judge Douglas” was first escorted to the “Eagle House” northwest of the court house square for refreshments. (In 1858 the hotel where Douglas met his reception committee was known as the “Eagle House” and was operated by Joseph Thomason. Beginning in 1864 it was operated by John R. Eden’s brother, Joseph E. Eden, and became known as the “Eden House,” the name I.J. Martin knew it by when he wrote his account of the events years later.)

At 1 p.m. Judge Douglas was conducted to the stand, welcomed, and

introduced by John R. Eden. Douglas' speech was "near two hours" long. "A short time after two o'clock," Douglas was interrupted by a pro-Lincoln band which had assembled at the Eagle House. The band and other Lincoln supporters proceeded around the square, passing the west and south sides, and turning on the east side through the Douglas crowd. Douglas urged his audience to remain calm, but there was a slight "melee" in which the "driver for the Lincoln band was knocked from his seat, and some others were knocked down," but "nothing very serious occurred." Douglas then reportedly concluded his speech.

The *Express* regretted that "we are unable to give it to our readers, not having taken notes at the time." However, the pro-Douglas *Express* was able to provide three paragraphs summarizing that part of Douglas' speech in which he had criticized Lincoln's debate tactics during the Charleston debate a few days earlier. The *Express* did not summarize or reprint any part of Lincoln's speech, nor, so far as I have been able to determine, did any other newspaper.

I have wondered, given the *Express'* statement that it had not "taken notes at the time," where the editors got those three paragraphs summarizing what Douglas said. Was it just good editorial memory? I think they may have taken those paragraphs from a report which appeared in the *Daily Illinois State Register*, in Springfield, on September 23. My brother, Philip Martin, called that newspaper report to my attention; he had quoted a paragraph from it in an essay about the 1858 campaign published several years ago: *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates: Remembering An Old Campaign*, Sullivan, 2008, at 13. Another Sullivan lawyer and historian, Paul Stone, had earlier called it to Philip's attention.

The *State Register's* account of Douglas' two-hour speech is far more comprehensive than the brief "extract" in the *Express* and deserves to be preserved in full. The *State Register's* reporter was apparently present during the Douglas speech. The reporter's name does not appear in the article, but it was signed with the initials, "B.F."

According to "B.F.," Senator Douglas spoke as follows:

Mr. Douglas proceeded to a careful review of the revolutionary tendencies of the doctrines, the enunciation of which have rendered Lincoln a worthy member of the abolition party, and the present belief in which has fitted him to become the first, last and only choice of the Lovejoy Farnsworth abolition, black-republican party. The order of his proceeding in this behalf, is now patent to the world.

“Up in Charleston on Saturday, Lincoln played a good Yankee trick upon me — at least it was a good Yankee trick for a man born in Kentucky, and raised in Indiana, to get off.

“We had a meeting over there for joint discussion. Now it is, I believe the universal rule of debate that the man who speaks first shall bring forward all the points that he is going to discuss, that his opponent may reply to them. Hence, I have always brought forward all the matters that I was going to discuss, and I expected him to pursue a similar course, but when he got into Coles county he found that it was a difficult place for him to speak in. I sympathized with him, for I knew that he was dodging between hawk and buzzard, for I had notified him that I intended to bring him down into Egypt and then when I got him to Coles county among the old line Whigs, he did not know what to say. He could not say a word about politics. (Cries of ‘that’s so, and hit him again.’)

“Our speeches were going to be published and if he said anything against the abolitionists, it would go up to Chicago and be published and make mischief up there and if he said anything for abolitionism it would kill him down here. The question then was, how could he conduct the joint discussion and not say anything.

“Well, how do you think he got along? He said that Lyman Trumbull had made a speech against Judge Douglas, and had proven certain charges against Judge Douglas, and he was then going to show that Trumbull’s charges were all true. (Cries of ‘oh my!’ and ‘hit him hard’ and ‘give it to him.’)

“Well he began and read nearly the whole of Trumbull’s speech. (A voice, ‘I heard him.’) Then he said he would hand over the balance of the speech to the reporter, and have it printed, and then he said he was going to take one of my speeches and have it printed, and then he backed off again, and then he looked at his watch.

“Well, said he, my time is almost out and I will quit,’ and then he quit. (Voices, ‘hurrah for Douglas’) and he never uttered one word about the politics of the day nor did he define his principles on any one question. He did not touch upon anything that is at issue between us. Indeed, he tried to occupy the whole of his time and

say nothing, in order that the old Whigs of Coles should not find out that he had turned abolitionist. (Applause.)

“Now he thought that was very smart. I thought on the contrary that it was a very silly thing, because I think the people at Charleston were men of sense, and if they be so they will be disgusted with such trickery. (Loud applause.)”

[Douglas] then paid his respects to the speech of Mr. Trumbull, summing up in a few words his proof of the falsity of the charges therein contained.

He then made another point for Lincoln to weep over, as relating to the action of that gentleman in connection with the Mexican war. He said that Lincoln had been the means in his closing speech of riveting a charge on himself by accusing him (speaker) of announcing a charge which he had never made. He continued:

“I took occasion to say that I had no charges to make against Mr. Lincoln; that I should not hunt up the records of congress to prove how he voted on this question or on that question, that I would not go back to see how he voted upon the questions of banks, or upon the Mexican war or any of those issues, but I would have you to form your own judgment upon his actions as recorded in the history of our country. He said my allusion to the Mexican war implied a charge that he had voted against the supplies. Now mark that I had not said a word about supplies! Then he went on to say that he never voted against the supplies. I never alluded to his vote on the Mexican war in a public speech in my life but he said that the mere allusion, that I would not ensure how he voted on the Mexican war meant a charge, and he was not going to stand it, and then he went on to say that I had slandered him by implying that he voted against the supplies.

“As he has brought it up and made that charge on me, I will say something about it, and I will make it so distinct that he will not misunderstand me.

“I now say Abraham Lincoln was the opponent of the Mexican war. I now say that during the war and after it was declared, and

while the battles were being fought in Mexico, Lincoln took the side of the common enemy against his own country. He called Col. Ficklin forward on Saturday, as a witness about supplies, and drew him right up on the stand and said, 'come now, just tell them it is a lie.' 'Well,' said Ficklin, 'I will tell them all I know about it. All I recollect is that you voted for Ashmun's resolutions declaring the war unconstitutional and unjust.'

"Lincoln replied, 'That is true, I did. Cries of 'that's so.' Thus he acknowledged that he voted for a resolution declaring the Mexican war unconstitutional and unjust. (A voice — 'That's enough' when did he do that?') He did it after the war had begun, after the battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey and Buena Vista had been fought. He did it when our army was in Mexico, ten thousand then combating an enemy 180,000 strong — He did it at the time when the American army was in great peril of being destroyed. The enemy took that and other votes and Corwin's speech and published it in pamphlet form in Mexico, and distributed it all over the army to show that there was a Mexican party in America, hence if the army could stand out a little longer, if the guerrillas would keep murdering our soldiers, or poisoning them a little longer, the Mexican party in America would get the control and decide all questions in favor of Mexico. (A voice, 'My God! That is worse than his abolitionism.') I say that his vote was sent to Mexico and circulated there at the head of the Mexican army as an evidence of the influence of the Mexicans in the American congress. (A voice — 'I was there and saw it.') You may appeal to every soldier that was there for the truth of what I say, and I add that vote — This record made by Lincoln and others and sent to Mexico to be circulated there, did more harm than the withholding of thousands of loads of supplies. (Voices, 'true.')

"The fact was this: Lincoln did not vote against many supplies, for they had been voted before and sent out before Lincoln got to congress. According to my recollection, we declared war on the 18th May, 1846, on the day we voted ten million dollars in money, and 50,000 men. Then we, toward the end of that session, the summer of '46, voted forty or fifty millions more and when we in December '48 ... send more men, then we voted during that same session something like \$50,000,000 more, then when Lincoln got in, and when Mexico was full of men and provisions and supplies, all he

could do was to make a speech and give votes that would encourage the enemy, and now he comes forward and says he did not vote against the supplies. — His mind was racked about supplies, and he saw how he could frame an answer that would make the people believe he voted for supplies, and his head fell when Ficklin answered his question. I never intended to refer to that question in the campaign. I have never referred to it before except when arguing the question of negro equality. I referred for example of my position to the condition of the people of Mexico, Central America and South America.”

It was apparently at this point in Douglas’ speech that the Lincoln parade approached the square and the disruption occurred. Douglas urged patience, and the Lincoln “band wagon” moved on. The reporter wrote that “Lincoln in his buggy took the back track, went and laid by until three o’clock, so as not to appear to have encouraged such a dastardly outrage”

When Douglas resumed his speech, he spoke first about the background of the timing of the two speeches and Lincoln’s agreement to postpone his speech to avoid the conflict. Douglas called on the crowd to acknowledge that he (Douglas) had announced the arrangement — including the postponement of Lincoln’s speech — as he had agreed to do. Douglas then continued:

“I do not know whether he was in the procession, but a gentleman at my side says that he was in the procession up to the time when a fight seemed likely to ensue when he turned round and went in the other direction. I do not of my own knowledge know whether he was in the procession or not, but the fact that that procession organized and drove up here to break up this meeting in violation of the written agreement which I hold in my hand, signed and written by Mr. Lincoln, no honest man will deny. — Hence, I say that this disturbance is in violation of Mr. Lincoln’s word to me at Charleston on Saturday. It is in violation of his written agreement here today, which writing I have in my hand. It was a deliberate attempt on the part of his friends to break up a democratic meeting. It was started at the very time that I was making a point upon Mr. Lincoln, from which all of his friends shrunk in despair, and it was begun suddenly, in order to break off the chain of my argument. It was evidently a preconcerted plan and therefore I say that I am warranted under this state of facts in charging that Mr. Lincoln, as well as his friends, have been a party this day to break up this meeting in order to prevent

me from exposing his alliance with the abolitionists, and repelling the false charges which he made against me at Charleston, and to which I had no opportunity to repel at that place.” (Cries of ‘hit him again,’ &c.)

The judge then continued his remarks to the full conclusion of his speech, and was succeeded on the stand by Mr. Thornton of Shelbyville, who as an old line Whig refused to be abolitionized.

* * *

Two of my great-grandfathers were at the courthouse square that day attending the Douglas speech. They were John R. Eden, who introduced Douglas, and John Neely Martin (father of I.J. Martin), a Whitley Point farmer who was in the crowd. Years later, I.J. Martin memorialized his recollections of what he had been told about the Lincoln-Douglas speeches. The following account is quoted from I.J.’s notes (I.J.M. *Notes*, at 35):

John Ginn, a farmer living a few miles east of Sullivan, attended the Charleston meeting, and on Sunday brought Senator Douglas in his carriage from Charleston to his home, where the Senator remained until Monday morning. Judge James Elder met Mr. Lincoln at Mattoon and conveyed him to his home on East Jackson Street.

Felix Ashworth, then a boy in his early teens living on the North Okaw in Coles County, related an incident connected with the Lincoln-Douglas visits to Sullivan. Felix belonged to a family which was Democratic before the War. He was riding along the dusty roadway when he was overtaken and passed by John Ginn’s carriage. He and his horse were covered by a cloud of dust, and for mischief he decided to retaliate. He passed the carriage and for a while trotted along just ahead of the carriage. His steed was of the heavy footed plow horse variety, and his steps raised plenty of dust. After a while the driver called to him that Senator Douglas was in the carriage, and asked him to follow them. The boy at once complied, for as he said, he “thought Senator Douglas was next in dignity to the Ruler of the Universe.”

On Monday morning, Senator Douglas came to the Eden House [Eagle House] in Sullivan, and held a reception for his friends and supporters in the forenoon. While he was at the Eden House, Douglas was handed a note written and signed by Mr. Lincoln proposing that he would begin his speech

at 3 o'clock in Freeland Grove if Douglas would so inform his audience at the beginning of his address in the Court House yard at 1 o'clock. In this way, the two meetings would not conflict. Also, Lincoln was a shrewd campaigner, and here as usual he sought the advantage of holding his meeting following that of Douglas. Douglas accepted these terms, and it appears that both Lincoln and Douglas adhered to the agreement.

Douglas was to speak on the east side of the square, a stand having been erected among the trees near the street line, which allowed the crowd to occupy wagons and buggies in the street as well as the seats around the stand. Seats for a thousand or more people were laid under the shade on the north, west, and south sides of the stand. By the time the meeting began, the street was nearly lined with buggies and spring wagons, leaving only a narrow passage on the east side of the street. Hundreds of men stood around the stand and among the vehicles. It was a very large crowd, numbering perhaps 2,000.

John R. Eden was chairman of the meeting and introduced Senator Douglas with a short complimentary speech. Douglas, after making the announcement of the Lincoln meeting for 3 o'clock, began his address about 20 minutes past 1 o'clock. Those were the days of much oratory and long speeches, two hours being required for a great speech. However, Douglas was nearing the end of his speech, and would have finished before 3 o'clock if he had not been disturbed.

The Lincoln supporters had hired a Terre Haute band and brought it over for the Sullivan meeting. About 1:30 p.m., the band began playing on a vacant lot at the intersection of Jackson and Hamilton Streets, near where the Powers School building formerly stood. The purpose, of course, was to keep the Lincoln partisans away from the Douglas meeting.

About an hour later, a parade was formed on West Harrison Street, and it started to move eastward. When Main Street was reached, instead of turning north to the Grove, a turn to the south was made. Headed by the Terre Haute band and led by a young Marshal, George Lynn [or Lynch?], the procession moved along the west side of the square to Jefferson Street, and then to the east along the south side of the square, the band playing all the while.

Douglas, who was nearing the end of his speech, stopped speaking, remarking that he was used to that sort of courtesy in Northern Illinois but had not expected it here.

The parade, which was not really a very big affair – perhaps two or three hundred people – was made up largely of men from the Marrowbone and

Todd's Point settlements. No one from Sullivan was in the procession.

Judge Anthony Thornton was a prominent lawyer of Shelbyville, and he had been invited to address the meeting after Douglas' speech. Thornton and Lincoln had been associated as leaders of the Illinois Whigs. Both of them supported General Scott against Franklin Pierce in 1852, and both regretted the movement to abandon the Whig party and organize the new Republican Party. But when the new party was organized, Lincoln joined it and Thornton became a Democrat. On the day of the Sullivan meeting, the local Republicans were more bitter against Thornton than against Douglas. He had many old Whig friends, and they feared his influence over them. Their strategy was to get as many as possible of the Douglas hearers to leave the meeting and hear Lincoln at the Grove and thus reduce the size of Thornton's audience. John R. Eden later said he doubted if the Republicans intended any discourtesy to Senator Douglas.

The Douglas crowd expected that the parade would move on eastward to Madison Street, where it could turn and march north directly into the Grove where Lincoln's meeting was to be held. But instead, a turn was made north on Washington Street, and the procession started along or through the crowd that was waiting for Douglas to resume his speech. This provoked an angry outcry. A young lawyer, Alosey B. Lee, who was then a Democrat, shouted an Old Hickory oath, "By the Eternal, you can't do that," and jumped over the fence, followed by perhaps twenty men.

Douglas urged the Democrats to allow the procession to pass peaceably. Also, Judge Thornton left the speakers' stand and asked Lee and others to allow them to pass. While Thornton was making his plea, a Marrowbone farmer – Azel Younger, whom I knew as an old gentleman many years after – seeing Thornton shouted, "What are you doing in that crowd, you traitor." At that, Thornton started to climb the fence too, but his friends kept him back.

It did not take long for Lee and the others to turn the band wagon at the head of the procession back to Jefferson Street, where the march continued to Madison Street, and then on to the Grove. The Republicans offered no resistance, and there was no riot or any personal encounter. In the excitement, some foolish man or boy threw a brick that hit one of the band boys, who was slightly injured.

At the Grove, a stand had been erected under the elms at the entrance of Wyman Park. There Lincoln made a speech said to have been two hours long.

It was later charged that Lincoln was in the procession that disrupted the

Douglas meeting, but that was not true, and none of those best informed thought so. Lincoln at that time was trying to compete with Douglas in personal appeal, and he had gone quietly with Judge Elder to the meeting in the Grove. It is clear that Lincoln did not know of the interruption of the Douglas meeting; and, if course, neither he nor any of the leading Republicans had anything to do with it.

A.B. Lee, who led in the move to turn the parade away from the Douglas assembly, was a great admirer of Douglas as long as he lived. He took the advice of Douglas and supported the Union cause, commanding three different companies, one of these being in the famous 41st regiment of Illinois Volunteers. Still later a Republican politician, he never regretted his action. He said no one was to blame except the young parade marshal. He also said that the marshal, George Lynn [Lynch?], admitted that it was a mistake to try to march north on Washington Street instead of going on to Madison. George Lynn also led a company in the War, and some of us yet remember his erect figure and armless sleeve in the years after the War.

The affair was regretted by all sensible people, and no effort was made to exploit the event to the help or injury of either side.

Efforts were later made to make this small disturbance at Sullivan match the so-called riot at Charleston a few years later. A St. Louis newspaper published a partisan report from a Douglas supporter, and the Quincy *Whig* had one on the other side even more unfair. The St. Louis reporter had been assigned to the Douglas campaign, and he witnessed the melee, such as it was. The man who made the report to the Quincy *Whig* had been a Moultrie County sheriff. He may have been in town that day, but he was said not to have been near the place. He was sure that the Democrats who turned the procession were "border ruffians," using a phrase applied to Missourians and other Southerners who tried to settle in Kansas.

There was no riot and no fight. Neither Captain Lynn, nor Captain Lee and those who supported him, should be slandered as "border ruffians" by newspaper accounts that were biased and partial, or by anonymous "historical" letters.

VII.

The Civil War Years *1860-1865*

The “War for the Union,” as it was referred to in the 1881 *County History*, had a profound impact on all sections of the country, including central Illinois and Moultrie County, the most obvious being that many dozens of young men volunteered for and served in the Union army. Some of them were killed and others wounded.

Men Who Served

The 1881 *County History*, prepared at a time when the war was fresh in the minds of the readers, set forth lists of the men from Sullivan and the surrounding areas who served in the Northern army. *Id.*, at 105, 117, 118, and 120. The military draft was not initiated in the North until 1863, and because of strong volunteer enlistments, it appears that no men were actually drafted from Moultrie County.

Company H of the 18th Infantry was captained by Alsey B. Lee, the young Democrat supporter of Senator Douglas who had intervened to prevent Republicans from breaking up his speech at the 1858 campaign appearance in Sullivan. The 21st Infantry regiment likewise contained many familiar Sullivan names — including adjutant Charles B. Steele, and captains John A. Freeland

and George Lynn. Steele was a young lawyer who had served as village clerk before he resigned and volunteered for military service. While he was in the service, his wife and two young sons made their home with the family of Major Addison McPheeters, whose two sons, Rankin and Addison W., also went to the war. Steele later practiced law in Mattoon and served as State Senator; and his son, William A. Steele, became president of the Merchants' and Farmers' bank in Sullivan.

The 41st infantry division included many Moultrie men, including Captain Alsey B. Lee (before he served in the 18th infantry). The 126th Infantry also contained many Moultrie men — including Perry B. Gilliam, Adley N. Gregory, Wm. G. Cochran, Benj. Hagerman, L.G. Hagerman, Ananias Reedy, and Levi Younger. Alfred Smyser and Rankin McPheeters were captains in Company C of that regiment. Many of the horsemen in the Fifth Cavalry regiment were also from the county. Lists of the men may be found in the 1881 *County History*.

Most Sullivan and Moultrie families were affected in some way. Mine was no exception. Five of the uncles of I.J. Martin served in the Union army, and another, who lived in Texas, was drafted into the Southern army. *Fragments of Martin Family History*, at 157.

Yet the War aggravated political stresses between neighborhoods and families — between those whose families had come from north and south of the Ohio, and between members of the new Republican Party and supporters of the Lincoln Administration, on the one hand, and Democrats on the other.

Moultrie County Democrats Supported the War Effort

Central Illinois — including Moultrie County — was divided political territory. The Seventh Congressional District included Moultrie and 10 other neighboring counties. In 1860 those counties gave a Republican majority of about 1,600 votes. In 1862 they elected John R. Eden, the Democratic candidate for Congress, with a margin of 1,400 votes to spare.

Epithets and venomous insults were hurled by both sides, a political practice that had its beginnings long before the War. Democrats labeled Republicans “abolitionists” or far cruder terms, while Republicans called Democrats “copperheads.” Insulting labels often have the twin disadvantages of being undefined and (to the extent they suggest anything) inaccurate.

Republicans supported the Lincoln Administration's war policy, but not all were abolitionists. Most probably concurred in the view at the beginning of the War that the Federal government had no power to end slavery in the South, though they believed it had such power in the District of Columbia and in the admission of territories as states. (President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, was based on the "war power," and did not apply to areas not in rebellion.) At the beginning of the War, most political partisans on both sides no doubt believed enactment of an anti-slavery amendment to the U.S. Constitution would be politically impossible — which is why the 13th Amendment was not passed until 1865, and then only barely.

Democrats — at least most of them — supported preserving the Union and suppressing the Confederacy by military force. They voted to appropriate money for supplies and otherwise to sustain the military effort. But they criticized the Administration's management of the war and its alleged infringements of civil liberties — the suspension of habeas corpus and the prosecution of civilians in military courts.

Most Democrats in Sullivan and the surrounding area were supporters of Senator Douglas in the 1860 election. After the War began, Douglas went to the White House to offer President Lincoln his support for the war effort — even suggesting that Lincoln expand his call for military volunteers.

Like Senator Douglas, Congressman Eden — the only resident of Sullivan ever elected to Congress — supported the war effort. He supported the resolutions of the Democratic Party in Springfield in the fall of 1862, which included a resolution that, "All citizens should aid in the legal suppression of the rebellion." The convention thanked the "brave men who had fought in the Union Army." It also "condemned both Southern extremists who had started the war and the Northern extremists whose methods will leave to the nation but little hope for the restoration of the Union." *John R. Eden Compendium*, Chicago, at 421.

During his first Congressional term, Eden spoke on February 27, 1864, against Lincoln's reconstruction proposals, but asserted that, "The General Government ... is in duty bound to suppress insurrection," and pointed out that calls for troops and taxes had been submitted to "without a murmur because these contributions to the public Treasury were to be consecrated to the sacred purpose of saving the Union." (*Id.*, at 256-57.) Eden's theme was not that the Confederacy should not be put down; it was rather a complaint that

it had not been put down already. In closing, he added:

The policy of the Democracy embraces conciliation and compromise, along with *whatever force may be necessary to the due execution of the laws*, and a firm, unflinching devotion to constitutional liberty, and a determination as immovable as the everlasting hills to maintain it. (Emphasis supplied.)

Judge Anthony Thornton of Shelbyville — another Democratic leader — was elected to Congress in 1864, replacing John R. Eden. Thornton was also known as a “war-Democrat” — one who supported the government’s effort to put down the rebellion with military force. Although he was a critic of the Lincoln Administration, Thornton — like Eden — urged obedience to the laws. He later served on the Supreme Court of Illinois.

A few Democrats went farther than Eden and Thornton — in speech, if not action — in criticizing the Administration and advocating steps that would or might sap the military effort. One of the most prominent was Clement Vallandigham, an Ohio Congressman who was convicted in 1863 at an Army court martial for opposing the war and was exiled to the Confederacy.

Local Disruptions — Treason or Booze?

People look back at the war-era events of almost a century and a half ago and ask two questions: what happened and why? On one side, some see “Copperhead” Democrats plotting local rebellion against the federal government, and blame secret organizations with names like the “Knights of the Golden Circle.” On the other, some see rowdy Northern soldiers on leave, prowling the countryside at night, abusing loyal Democrats, demanding oaths of adherence to the policies of the Lincoln administration, and searching for weapons or evidence of disloyalty.

Republicans newspapers reported stories of local Democrats arming themselves with rifles, gunpowder and bullets, or practicing marching in the woods. But no one has pointed to hard evidence that any Moultrie County Democrats ever used force to interfere with the war effort or the draft or that secret organizations such as the “Knights” or “Sons of Liberty” were promoting such activities in or around Sullivan.

As-yet unpublished family letters or memoirs may yet emerge to shed

brighter light on what happened and why. In the meantime, anyone seeking to make reasonable guesses about the tensions and conflicts in and around Sullivan must do his best with the limited evidence that is available, including evidence as to what was going on in neighboring places such as Mattoon or Charleston.

The most destructive nearby event of that era was the so-called Charleston “riot” on March 28, 1864. Congressman Eden was scheduled to speak in Charleston on that date but his speech was canceled when Union soldiers clashed with some local Coles County drunks and toughs, resulting in several deaths and injuries. As Peter Barry concluded in his book, *Charleston, Illinois Riot, March 28, 1864* (2007), the riot was a “violent, localized fight that was ignited by personal animosities and driven more by alcohol, emotions, and grudges than by political passions and patriotism.” Barry, at 70.*

Nothing comparable to the Charleston riot occurred in Sullivan or Moultrie County. What seems surprising to me now, at this distance, is not that there were political tensions or disturbances in Sullivan during the war years, but that such incidents were not more violent or inflammatory.

There were small anti-draft riots elsewhere in Illinois — one reported in Lake County, and one in Fulton County — but none in Moultrie County. One drunken farmer, a man named Hancock, apparently eligible for the draft, killed a Sullivan bartender — a shooting later found by a jury to be an accident.

There were local incidents involving Union soldiers on furlough or leave. One such incident occurred in nearby Mattoon in late January 1864, when furloughed Union soldiers in Mattoon — for “sport” — compelled local Democrats to take oaths of allegiance. The first victim was J.W. Dora, who was “captured and required ... to go with them to Col. Tree’s recruiting office ... and swear allegiance to ‘Lincoln’s hated despotism.’” Similar treatment was accorded local Judge Constable, a man named Thompson of Windsor, and “many others of lesser note ... including some non-residents.” *Mattoon Gazette*, February 3, 1864. The Mattoon editor casually brushed it off: “We were not distressed at these personal indignities,” adding, “The whole affair was, of course, lawless and unauthorized, and we do not endorse it, yet as it was accompanied by no violence, we shall not go into mourning over it.”

* Though the story of the riot in Charleston on March 28, 1864, is not part of the history of Sullivan, I have included as an appendix to this book a paper about John R. Eden and the Copperheads that I delivered in Charleston several years ago on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Charleston riot.

I.J. Martin (born 1859) was a little boy during those years. His family lived on a farm in Whitley Township, not far from the boundary line with Coles County. He recalled years later that during the War soldiers stationed at Mattoon “occasionally made night raids into the country, and sometimes entered the homes of Democrats, seizing guns or searching for evidence of disloyalty. We were never disturbed, but I remember one night someone tapped on a window and then said the soldiers were out on another raid. . . . Neither of them belonged to any club or political organization, and neither did any wild talking, so that none of the spies would have had anything to report to the Mattoon camp.” *Fragments of Martin Family History*, at 157.

I. J. wrote elsewhere that the so-called Copperhead “membership was not large in Moultrie County,” and that one suspected Copperhead effort to stir up local support “failed to find any sympathy for a plan of armed resistance . . .” Martin, *Recollections of the Civil War*.

Local Newspaper Reports

The best source of information about any treasonous or unlawful organized disturbances during war years would probably have been the issues of the weekly *Sullivan Express*. Unfortunately, the issues of that paper do not survive after 1860, though its columns were occasionally quoted in other neighboring newspapers, such as the *Mattoon Express*.

Just as political candidates of both parties expressed themselves with vehemence in campaign speeches, so the local newspapers — usually identified with one party or the other — sprinkled their news reporting with campaign-style political rhetoric and insults. The *Sullivan Express* was a vehicle of the local Democratic organization, so its news articles and columns no doubt had a pronounced partisan slant, intended to make local Democrats look good and their opponents look bad.. By the same token the *Mattoon Gazette* leaned strongly pro-Republican, and its reports were slanted to make the Democrats look bad. The two papers appear to have regularly jabbed at each other. If we discount the rhetoric, the facts below the rhetoric may give a view — albeit distorted — of what was actually happening at ground level.

Only a few newspaper reports relate directly to Sullivan or Moultrie people.

In late August 1861, two citizens of Moultrie County were beaten —

“given a drubbing” — by some zealous pro-administration citizens of Mattoon. In March 1863 there were other reports of “Copperhead” loudmouths being beaten by soldiers in Mattoon.

On January 8, 1863, Dr. A.L. Kellar, a Sullivan physician and Christian Church minister, gave a vigorous anti-Administration speech to a gathering of Democrats in Sullivan. He accused the Administration of violating the constitution and the principles set forth in Lincoln’s Inaugural Address. He particularly attacked the emancipation proclamation and certain military restraints imposed under the “war power” as unconstitutional. He attacked the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Kellar’s speech was printed and distributed as a handbill. The *Mattoon Gazette* called Dr. Kellar a “Copperhead brawler, a noisy faultfinder . . .”

In March 1863, two citizens of Moultrie — William Waggoner and Joseph Tremble, both of Whitley Point — were reportedly threatened if they did not agree to join the Knights of the Golden Circle (KGC), a pro-Southern group that some people think stirred up local sedition in Moultrie County.

In the spring of 1863 there were reports in the *Mattoon Gazette* that Moultrie men were acquiring supplies of powder and lead, supposedly to oppose the arrest of deserters and enforcement of the conscription act. Talk was also reported to the effect that squads of men were drilling in the woods.

A major event occurred in July 1863 when a large demonstration by anti-Administration Democrats was staged in nearby Mattoon. The parade marshal was D.J. VanDeren, a prominent Mattoon Democrat. Earlier that month a squad of Kansas volunteers passing through Mattoon had got drunk, gone to VanDeren’s residence and searched it, declaring that VanDeren was a “damned copperhead” and they were “going to hang him.” They did not find him.

When the Mattoon parade began, parade marshal VanDeren announced that it was “the duty of all to see that the procession should march peaceably through the town and avoid any collision with the citizens.” Men from Sullivan and surrounding Moultrie County participated, led by Dr. A. L. Kellar. (Dr. Kellar’s brother, William Kellar, was also a Sullivan doctor.) There were reportedly 600 men marching in the parade, as many as half from Sullivan, as well as horsemen and men in wagons. A few of the louder marchers announced that they had “come to clean out the damned abolitionists of Mattoon, and they were going to do it.” The marchers were told by marshal VanDeren to straighten up, and they “finally fell in reluctantly.”

After the parade, the crowd assembled at VanDeren's farm for speeches. One of the speakers was John R. Eden. The *Mattoon Express*, always critical of Eden and the Democrats, reported, "It contained little more than the same stale bombast which he generally uses in his puny efforts to root all love of country and law out of the feelings of his hearers." One suspects that Eden's "bombast" was pretty tame as well as "stale."

During the parade and speeches, reported the Mattoon paper, "No disturbance occurred at the ground, and it was only on the passage of the armed gang through [Mattoon] on their return that any violent demonstrations were made." And what did the violence consist of? A few boys reportedly threw clods and stones; one man cocked his rifle and threatened to shoot old Ebenezer Noyes, but that was prevented. The Mattoon paper felt compelled to note, "in justice to the leaders," that "they here exerted themselves to prevent any outbreak."

Afterward there was some criticism of the Moultrie men for coming to the parade bearing firearms. The *Sullivan Express* ran interference for them, explaining that they had done so in self defense: they had carried arms because a number of "desperate" Mattoon men had declared that "if any man should cheer for Vallandigham in the streets of Mattoon, they would shoot him down." The Mattoon *Gazette* brushed away that explanation: the man who made the threat was "simply a little crazy in his zeal" and it was "a falsehood trumped up as a pretext for the gathering of the armed mob"

The details of the "threat" to the parade marchers, the extent to which it was "trumped up," and the degree to which the Moultrie men felt the need to protect themselves by carrying firearms in the parade, are lost in the mists of time. What seems remarkable a century and a half later is that in the middle of a brutal war — with hard feelings on both sides, and the newspapers pouring fuel on the sparks — the marchers behaved themselves, preserved order as instructed by their leaders, and left the stone-throwing to a few boys.

In late August 1863 the Democrats held a meeting in Moultrie County at which Judge Anthony Thornton of Shelbyville spoke. As already pointed out, Judge Thornton was regarded as a "war-Democrat." In various speeches he "sustained the government in its efforts to break down the rebellion and preserve the Union." 1881 *Combined History*, at 161. In his speech in August 1863, Thornton criticized the Administration but "at the same time advised obedience to the laws" (which seems to have surprised the *Mattoon Gazette*).

In Mattoon in late January 1864 a loud-mouth drunk named Ed Stevens was killed in a Mattoon tavern by an equally drunken soldier, Charles Shoalmax, while on leave. Other furloughed soldiers captured Dr. J.W. Dora, Judge Constable and Major Thompson of Windsor, and compelled them to take oaths of loyalty. The *Mattoon Gazette* blamed local Democrats: “Had they never spouted treason and maligned the Government and its brave army, they never would have found themselves in danger from an exasperated soldiery.” *Gazette*, February 3, 1864.

Do these snippets of hearsay and gossip that appeared in the *Mattoon Gazette* amount to evidence of treasonous or unlawful acts by Democrats in Sullivan or Moultrie County? Were groups of local Democrats enrolled as members of the Knights of the Golden Circle or the Sons of Liberty plotting to overthrow their government or interfere with the prosecution of the War?

Books written after the War about the Knights do not mention any members or activities either in Sullivan or Moultrie County. *Treason History of the Order of Sons of Liberty*, Felix G. Stidger, 1903; *Report of the Judge Advocate General on the Order of American Knights, or The Sons of Liberty*, Joseph Holt, 1864.

One of the most thorough modern works on the Copperheads was Frank L. Klement’s *The Copperheads in the Middle West*, University of Chicago Press, 1960. Although the 1864 Holt Report had not included any evidence of improper conduct in Sullivan or Moultrie County, Klement noted that it had blamed the Charleston riot on secret society members. *Id.*, at 203. Klement concluded that the Holt report was “an effective piece of campaign propaganda,” but that: “It was a figment of Republican imagination. Lincoln’s supporters had succeeded in stigmatizing the opposition party, and at the same time they made a contribution to American mythology.” Klement, at 204-205.

Minutes of the Sullivan Board of Trustees

In addition to the few surviving newspaper references, one other source sheds a little light on the local unruliness of the Civil War era. A little manuscript book containing a record of the minutes of the board of trustees of Sullivan survives. It begins with a meeting of the trustees, March 29, 1861 — the same month as the beginning of the Lincoln Administration. These minutes show that Sullivan continued during the war years to be a lively place, with periodic disturbances fueled by alcohol. (Minutes, website, edenmartin.com.) Ordinances enacted by the trustees provide evidence of such disturbances:

- the imposition in 1861 on the Town Constable of a duty “to quell all disturbances, and to take into immediate custody” all offenders;
- the decision in August 1863 to appoint a special police force of 14 men — Steve Colligan, Samuel Earp, Dan Patterson, Oliver Atchison, John Martin, Wilford Hoke, Frank Huffman, John Hoke, James Wood, Bert Gerkin, A.L. Patterson, Israel Pifer, Mose Underwood, and Bob Farmer — to help the Constable preserve order within the village;
- the enactment in 1865 of an ordinance outlawing willful disturbance of inhabitants “by hallowing, singing obscene songs or shouting, or by making loud and unusual noises or by traducing, challenging to fight, quarreling with or threatening to impair the person, or property of another”; and the further provision that those convicted of such offenses might upon conviction be committed “to the calaboose” — which the board authorized be built — until the fines are paid;
- the appointment in 1866 — after the War — of eleven named individuals as special policemen to assist the Constable “in putting down riots and suppressing disturbances.”

The number of licenses granted to taverns may help explain the rambunctiousness of the local males. It also suggests the tension which must have existed in the minds of the town trustees: on the one hand, they certainly knew that drinking often led to mischief and riot, but on the other, they depended on the license fees generated by the licenses — money needed to pay for the civic improvements that are recorded in the minutes.

Despite the War, the departure of sons and neighbors to the army, the disturbances of local politics, and the booze-related incidents, ordinary life went on in Sullivan. The village fathers were still, at this early stage in the town’s history, occupied with making basic improvements. In 1861 they spent money to place the “public wells” in “good order.” Later that year and in subsequent years, they authorized expenditures for work on bridges, sidewalks, street crossings and streets.

Not only did they spend money on such projects, but they also directed the residents to work on or pay for such projects themselves. Thus, there are several recorded acts of directing residents to make or repair sidewalks at their own expense, and of ordering able-bodied male citizens to work four days on the streets of the town during a particular calendar year.

Also, we find the trustees directing in 1863 that “all persons owning dogs shall prohibit the same from running at large ... for the space of fifteen days.” Any violators were subject to having their dogs killed. One may surmise from the limited period of the leash requirement that it was related to a temporary sanitation or health concern — perhaps fear of rabies.

* * *

My view is that most of the Moultrie County Democrats during the period of the Civil War were loyal patriots. Before the War they wanted to preserve the Union and opposed any brand of “extremism” — either Northern abolitionists or Southern secessionists — that they believed threatened the Union. During the War most of them supported the Administration’s efforts to put down the rebellion by force.

Moultrie County met its targets for military enlistments through volunteers, without having to resort to the draft. According to the Provost Marshal General’s office in Springfield, in the fall of 1864 Moultrie County was one of 21 counties in Illinois that had filled its quotas in every sub-district, with the aggregate excess in Moultrie numbering 83. Moultrie was consequently exempted from the draft. *The Draft in Illinois, Chicago Tribune*, September 23, 1864.

Where the local Democrats erred — along with the national Democrats — was in believing or hoping that the War could be settled through negotiation, leaving “the Union as it was, and the Constitution as it is,” with decisions about slavery and other local matters left to the state governments. The War had nationalized the country; the Constitution was about to be amended; and the states — at least the Southern states — could not be trusted to abolish slavery and otherwise manage their own affairs.

The Chicago Tribune’s View, July 29, 1864

The *Chicago Tribune*, a strongly pro-Republican newspaper, joined in charging Sullivan Democrats with “rebellious” intentions, with “fealty to the Southern Confederacy”. A writer for the *Tribune* has left us a humorous, political hatchet job — but also a comic description of domestic life in Sullivan toward the end of the War that deserves to be preserved (July 29, 1864):

From Moultrie County

The Village of Sullivan — Sleepy Hollow outdone — Copperheadism in Moultrie — sketches of the Leaders — Their Plans and Prospects — The Crops.

[From our Own Correspondent.]

Sullivan, Moultrie Co., Ill., July 26, 1864.

Sullivan, the town in which for the moment I am sojourning, is the county seat of Moultrie county. It is a poorly built straggling village of from fifteen hundred to two thousand inhabitants, and by all odds the dullest and most uninviting place I have yet encountered in my wanderings.

I know of but one way to account for the general lack of thrift and enterprise everywhere painfully apparent, and that is, that most of the inhabitants and business men are natives of what is called the South. There is the same tumble-down appearance to most of the stores and dwellings that I have often observed in just as pretentious villages in Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi.

A couple of women standing upon the porch of a dilapidated dwelling, washing, each with a pipe in her mouth and clad in homespun, was the first evidence of animated humanity that greeted my eyes as I entered the village, and their "how d'ye, stranger?" as I reined my horse to the side of the road by their house, showed unmistakably to my mind their nativity.

I heard before I reached the street, that is called by some sort of poetic license, the main or business street, the ring of a blacksmith's anvil and further along I saw a German harness maker working away for dear life. With these exceptions a silence like that of the grave rested over the entire village. Not even the whiskey shops, of which there are at least a dozen, furnished an exception to the general quiet that everywhere prevailed. It seemed as if the entire community was engaged in a sleep to which that of Rip Van Winkle scarcely deserved to be considered a parallel.

I drove my horse to the "tavern" kept by Jo. Eden, brother of the Confederate Congressman, and by dint of loud talking managed to awaken the somnolent waiter and hostess. After dinner I looked about the town. The proprietor of one store was stretched full length upon the counter; the owner

of another was playing checkers with his clerk; the justice of the peace was listlessly conning his docket and calculating his fees; the attorney was taking his after-dinner nap; the Court House was deserted and the door of the County Jail creaked lazily upon its rusty hinges. Were some future Irving to describe some other Sleepy Hollow, he would select as his model the little village of Sullivan, the shire town of Moultrie County.

I have said that the inhabitants of Sullivan are mainly Southerners. They are also mainly Copperheads; not the hybrid, who, professing fealty to the Union in one breath, and uttering treasonable words in the other, flourisheth in the latitude of Chicago, but outspoken and rebellious Copperheads, who cheer for Jeff. Davis as regularly as they take their coffee; who would sooner hang an Abolitionist than say their prayers of a Sunday morning; who openly sport the butternut badge of fealty to the Southern Confederacy; who drill regularly twice a week in a secluded grove in Moultrie, and who are actively and earnestly engaged in preparing for the coming outbreak. These are the Copperheads who flourish in Moultrie, and whose headquarters are at this somnolent village of Sullivan. These are Copperheads with a vengeance. They are something tangible. They are objects to be aimed at, and while we pity them for their infatuation, and regret that it is our duty to crush them as we would the viper, we cannot help feeling a certain kind of respect for them, very much akin to that we experience in contemplating the exploits of a successful robber. Our opinion of them is infinitely above that we entertain for the *sneak* Copperheads.

The Copperheads of Moultrie joined their brethren of Coles and Edgar in the march upon Mattoon during the celebrated Coles county riot. There were three hundred of them, and there are more now. Each man is armed with a breach-loading Smith & Wesson rifle, besides revolvers and knives. These rifles have been recently procured. At the time of the riots before alluded to, their only weapons were double and single barreled shot guns, and the ordinary hunters rifle. Quite recently six hundred improved rifles of the above make have been purchased, and each man belonging to the organization is required to own one. If he cannot get it otherwise, he sells his last cow.

They do not hesitate to tell what their intentions are, and say that before the November elections this whole section of Illinois will rise in rebellion. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, and would it not be well to station a few soldiers at Sullivan? They hate the blue coats, but they fear them. The presence of a hundred veterans in this village would tend to ensure the safety of the few Union men whose lives would be forfeited in case of a rising.

The Copperheads are ignorant, as a general thing, and blindly obey their leaders. There are not over half a dozen of these controlling spirits, but what they lack in numbers they make up in energy and enthusiasm. The leading man among them all is, without doubt, John R. Eden, the late Copperhead member of Congress from this district, the 7th I believe. John is a self-made man, a lawyer admitted to the bar after a few months' study, a man of the people, shrewd, quick-witted, not without a certain kind of rude eloquence, and possessing the rare faculty of carrying along with him an audience and causing them to arrive at his own conclusions, no matter how startling and paradoxical. Eden is not at heart a bad man. He is kind and accommodating, and a good neighbor. Opposition to the Government is his hobby, and he is fast riding to the devil. He is a native of Indiana, and removed to Sullivan from Shelbyville, where he once edited a Democratic paper.

Next in importance among the leaders is a physician named A.L. Kellar, a native of Kentucky. He is considered a dangerous man among the Copperheads because of his unscrupulousness. He is violent, vindictive, and is said to be foremost in urging to deeds of violence. He was formerly Colonel of a Copperhead regiment numbering from four to six hundred, but because he deprecated the march and the threatened attack upon Mattoon, his men compelled him to resign, and elected Sam Hook in his place.

Another influential leader is Joseph E. Eden, brother of John, the Congressman. He partakes in his general character of some of the peculiarities of his brother, but lacks his ability. He fills two important offices at present. He is Judge of the County Court, and "keeps tavern." If he does not perform the duties of the former better than those of the latter, he is no great shakes.

Then there are Arnold Thomason, Clerk of the Circuit Court, John Meeker, Deputy Clerk of the Circuit Court, and brother in law of Eden the Congressman, J.H. Snyder, the Sheriff, all of the first families of Kentucky and Tennessee, and John Perryman, the editor of the Copperhead *Express*, a native of North Carolina, and a humbug of the first water, all of whom aspire to the position of leaders. They really have claims to be so considered.

The Pattersons and the Hooks are relied upon to do the dirty work, to insult Union men, and make them generally uncomfortable.

I have made extended inquiry of the few Union men here, and I am forced to the conviction that the Copperheads are meditating rebellion. Should

our armies meet with reverse and disaster either before Richmond or before Atlanta; should the enemy cross the Ohio and attempt his experiment of raiding in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio; should resort be had to a draft to fill the quota of the State under the last call of the President; should all or any of these events occur I firmly believe the standard of rebellion will be raised in this as well as the adjoining counties.

In March last the Copperheads to the number of 300 met in this village to make cartridges in a room over Banks' store, from powder furnished, it is said, by Jo. E. Eden, who to his professions already mentioned, adds still another — a general store-keeper. These cartridges are on hand and will most certainly be used, in any one of the contingencies I have named.

The Crops.

The crops now being harvested are good — much better than in the early part of the season we were led to expect. Wheat and oats turn out excellently, but in this region, corn will be a failure. There are many fields that, if the rain comes speedily, will yield perhaps half a crop, but many more are past recuperation, and will not be worth the harvesting.

BOD.

Captured Moments, 2018

A recent *Pictorial History of Moultrie County, Illinois, Captured Moments*, 2018, asserts that although some sections of Moultrie County supported the Union cause, “Sullivan and residents along Asa Creek were pro-South.” *Id.*, at 41.

Chapter 4 of *Captured Moments* is devoted to explaining what “pro-South” means. It means that during the war hundreds of Sullivan Democrats, called “Copperheads” by their Republican opponents, were members of a subversive group called “Knights of the Golden Circle” (“K.G.C.”). These subversives committed “seditious” acts and “promoted insurrection” in order to help the Confederacy win the war. The authors say that “Knights of the Golden Circle” was a “nickname” for Copperheads.

According to the authors, these Democrats weren't just political opponents of the Republican Administration. These Moultrie Democrats or K.G.C. members were part of a “paramilitary” organization that drilled and

trained secretly in the woods, preparing to fight in support of the Confederacy.

The authors say the “Knights” had a “heavy membership” in Moultrie County and were “extremely active.” They had obtained 600 new rifles. Some 800 men had recently gathered to pack cartridges with powder to use in these guns. Their “seditious” activities included burning homes and barns of Union sympathizers, attempting to kill a draft agent, attacking a Methodist preacher, and encouraging resistance to the draft.

One of the supposed bases for this conclusion was the column in the *Tribune*, July 29, 1864, reproduced above. But that column was a work of humor — not investigative reporting.

Rip Van Winkle? Cheering for Jeff Davis ... and sooner hang Abolitionists than pray on Sunday? The Trib columnist had just come to town. Who knows what he'd heard at the tavern, but he surely had not been out in the country observing Knights drilling twice a week in their secluded grove.

The reader who takes seriously the 300 “rebellious Copperheads” intending to “rise in rebellion” before the November elections should take equally seriously the bits about cheering for Jeff Davis, and “fealty” to the Confederacy, and hanging Abolitionists, and about being required to buy a rifle or “sell his last cow.” Oh yes, ... and about John R. Eden being a “Confederate Congressman ...”

The claim that literally hundreds of Democrats in Moultrie County were K.G.C. members — arming, drilling, burning and plotting to help the Confederates overthrow the Union — was and is, in my judgment, without any basis in evidence or reality.

The evidence (other than the Trib column) cited by the authors, when analyzed, turns out to be evanescent. No public evidence suggests that any Moultrie Democrat were supporters of Confederate President Jefferson Davis; and there is zero evidence that any Moultrie Democrats were K.G.C. supporters of the Confederacy. I know of no evidence that groups of local Sullivan or Moultrie Democrats ever planned or intended rebellion or treason or resistance to the war effort. If any of them did have such plans or intentions, they were contrary to the public positions and speeches taken by local Democratic leaders such as Eden and Thornton.

For any reader interested in the evidence relied on by the authors of *Captured Moments*, a more detailed analysis is set forth in Appendix B of this text.

* * *

The usual abrasions of politics were greatly aggravated by the Civil War. But in time most folks got over it. I.J. Martin later remembered: “Bitter taunts were sometimes thrown about; but among friends they passed as jests. I remember an incident — long after the War — a meeting between Uncle Joe Thomason and Dr. Nathan Cheever of Lovington. They were very old men at the time. Uncle Joe said, ‘Nathan, I don’t like you. You are a Black Republican.’ Cheever extended his hand and said, ‘How are you, you old Rebel.’” I.J. M. *Notes*, at 34.

VIII.

The Decades of the 1870s and 1880s

In 1870 the town of Sullivan had only 742 residents. (Sullivan Township had 2,658.) *1875 Atlas of Sullivan*. The *1875 Atlas* provided a “partial list” of patrons for the Atlas — including a list of residents of Sullivan and their businesses, and residents of the other townships making up Moultrie County. It also provided a very helpful list of “Sullivan References” — names of officers, professionals, merchants, and companies. I believe this is the earliest directory, albeit partial, of the enterprises that made up the Sullivan business community.

In 1872 Sullivan was incorporated as a city — with a Mayor and City Council. The last president of the former town Board of Trustees assumed the duties of Mayor of the new city and served until the first city election, in April 1873. At that election, Victor Thompson was chosen the first Mayor of Sullivan. Thompson was the leading merchant in Sullivan at that time, and occupied rooms in the Titus opera building where he sold men’s clothing and dry goods. I.J. M. *Notes*, at 47.

The Titus Opera House, at the west end of the north side of the square, had been built by J.B. Titus in 1871 at a cost of some \$30,000. The *1875 Atlas* listed Elizabeth Titus as the owner of the house, “which will seat 800; 13 sets scenery, head, foot, and border lights.” It had “a parquet and gal-

lery, nicely frescoed ceiling, a full set of scenery [and] side boxes.” *1881 County History*, at 183. Audiences were entertained by dramatic plays and comedies, highbrow musical performances and band concerts, minstrel shows, magicians, lectures, boxing matches, lectures, sermons, and political rallies.

The *1881 County History* reports that “first banking business” was done by James Elder, who had moved to Sullivan from Nelson at the time of its founding. He was a leading merchant and the first elected County Judge in Moultrie County. By the 1870s he ran his business in a frame, two-story building near the west end of the south side of the square. Walt Eden, *Memoirs*, at 13. I.J. Martin wrote that he was “regarded as the leading citizen of the county.” Judge Elder lived in a 600-acre farm, later part of the city, and became the owner of nearly 2,000 acres of choice land. The only bank in Sullivan at the time the 1881 history was published was the Merchants’ and Farmers’ Bank, conducted by William Elder, son of the Judge. *1881 County History*, at 183.

The first train of railroad cars — over the Decatur, Sullivan, and Mattoon Railroad — pulled into Sullivan on Tuesday morning, August 8, 1871. There was great celebration in Sullivan, and the contractor received a bonus of \$30,000 “offered by that town to the first company running a train into that village.” It took a while longer to complete the line to Decatur. By 1875 Sullivan had two rail lines: the northwest-by-southeast Decatur, Sullivan, and Mattoon, and also the north-south Chicago and Paducah Railroad, added in 1873. These efficient connections to the outside world for both passengers and freight inaugurated a revolution in efficient, low-cost transportation and commerce. But the county and several townships had gone heavily into debt to induce the railroads to come to Sullivan. Walt Eden *Memoirs*, at 30.

The 1875 Atlas also showed that Sullivan had spread outwards from the old central “town” by virtue of several new subdivisions. The 24 blocks of the “original town” had also been improved.

One of the first brick business buildings had been put up at the west end of the south side of the square, and was owned by John Perryman. In it was the Kilner Drug store. Mrs. Elizabeth Titus, the widow of George Titus, later made her home in that building; she was the mother of Joseph B. Titus, the lawyer and banker. Mrs. Titus was the first person in Sullivan who had a piano. In 1876 the Perryman building was remodeled as a hotel.

Another brick building, in the center of the west side of the square,

was where Joseph Edgar Eden (brother of John R.) maintained his merchant's business. He also owned and managed a hotel at the north end of the block, called the "Eden House." Walt Eden, *Memoirs*, at 8, 10-11. The hotel was later known as the Savoy, and after that the National Inn. Other brick buildings had been put up on the north and east sides of the square replacing the old and more dangerous wooden structures.

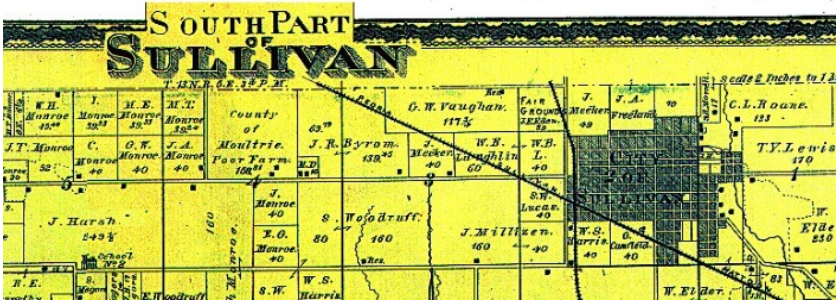
Water was an essential commodity, of course. Families had pumps in or outside their homes, which they operated manually. A town pump was located at the northwest corner of the square, and nearby were watering troughs where the farmers could water their horses. It was not until the following decade that a 90-foot well was dug and a pump provided to be run by a wind engine; the pump sent the water up into a huge wooden tank on a tower, approximately where today's post office stands. The tank then supplied water to and around the square and added fire protection for the business part of the city. I.J.M. *Notes*, at 51. The city in 1880 contributed \$300 to Sullivan's hook and ladder company to purchase a new service truck to deliver water to put out fires.

Ice was "harvested" at Pifer's Park southeast of town and brought to Sullivan by Dan Pifer, the ice man. "He didn't deliver ice, but you could go to his ice barn and dig into the sawdust till you found what you wanted, pay for it, and take it away." Walt Eden, *Memoirs*, at 15.

Sullivan did not lack for schools. Two had operated during the 1860's — one public and one private — and a new "North Side" public school was built in 1874. (These are the subject of another, separate chapter.)

Following the burning of the first court house in 1864 (along with the "dungeon" in the basement), Sullivan was forced for several years to send her criminals to Shelby County for safe-keeping. An increase in crime made this uneconomical and impractical; and a new jail was built in 1876.

The county "poor farm" — a place for paupers to live and work — was in business during the 1870s. It was two miles west of town and consisted of 200 acres — 160 acres of prairie and 40 of timber — purchased in 1864 at a cost of \$5,800. 1881 *County History*, at 72. William Crouch was the first "poor-master." There were five "inmates" there when the place was opened, but only four when the *County History* was written. Mahlon Douglas, a farmer and "Keeper" of the County Poor farm, was listed in the directory of references in the 1875 *Atlas of Sullivan*.



Poor Farm — west of Sullivan (just under the first “L”).
1875 Sullivan Atlas.



1881 Combined History

Twenty-five years later the “almshouse” was described as “an inmates’ building, a two-story brick house, and also a superintendent’s home. The men and women had separate dining rooms. The doors between the two sides are always locked.”

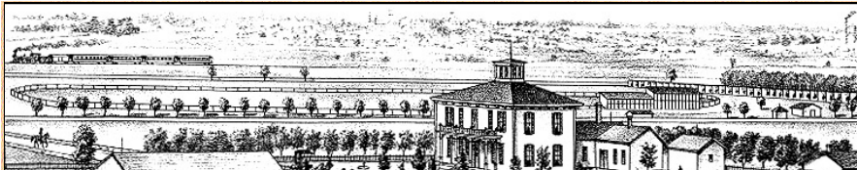
Even before the first railroad came to Sullivan in 1871, circuses arrived in town by overland wagons. Walt Eden, born in 1862, remembered:

Once in a while a circus would come to town, and I generally worked my way into that too [as well as the Opera House shows]. I have carried a lot of water to the elephants. Circuses in those days did not travel by train, but went overland. On the morning the circus was due, I would hot-foot it early out in the country on the road it was coming on, sometimes three or four miles, and meet it and follow it in. Walt Eden, *Memoirs*, at 29-30.

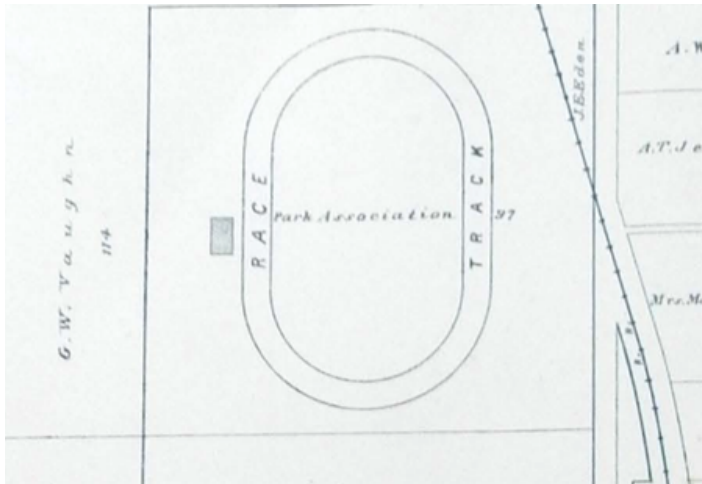
The coming of the railroads made such visits by the “circus and menagerie” companies more frequent. One circus — the Van Amburgh & Co. Great Golden Menagerie, consolidated with Frost’s Roman Circus and Colosseum, with their advertised troupe of nearly 100 lady and gentlemen performers, including 12 equestriennes — gave two exhibitions in Sullivan, July 5, 1880. One churlish critic thought them “the most penurious and grasping set of showmen ... resorting to every possible means of bleeding their patrons ... with such a matter-of-course manner that the innocent victim could only passively respond to the cheeky call for extra charges and submit to the inevitable.”

Circuses visited Decatur and Mattoon even more frequently, and Sullivan residents could catch regular or even special trains to go see the shows. It took an hour and 10 minutes to travel by train from Sullivan to Mattoon, and about 2 hours 30 minutes to Decatur. One might see P.T. Barnum’s “New and Only Greatest Show on Earth,” transported in three special excursion trains, with clowns and circus riders, huge elephants in harness, “monster lions,” “stupendous serpents,” and a parade of “jeweled and bannered army, moving in majestic splendor.” One could take the train to Decatur and see — on the same trip — a special lecture in the Decatur tabernacle, a program of the “original Georgia Minstrels” at the opera house, along with the “Buffalo Bill Combination,” and then the Batcheller & Doris circus and menagerie, followed by a stop at the Macon county fair. On other days there were horse races and foot races.

When the circus was not in town, Sullivan residents might go out to the Sullivan fair grounds. The first county fair was reportedly held in 1857 southeast of town. A new fair ground was built just northwest of town after the railroads arrived in 1872. The new fair grounds appeared in the background of a picture of the Vaughan farm, next to the railroad tracks, in the *1881 County History*, and also in the *1896 Atlas*, adjacent to the Vaughan farm.



Race track behind Vaughan farm, with railroad train in background.



Fairgrounds race track, from 1896 Atlas

The first annual meeting of the Moultrie County “running and trotting association” was held in August 1872. Through the decade of the 70s, racing men brought their horses from “all parts of the State,” though purses were said not to be very large. “The hurdle running races were very exciting. A large number of nags were entered, and very fast times made in both mile and half mile dashes.” Trotting races were also conducted. One year the program called for 13 races, with \$1,800 to be divided among the winners. Women riders ran special races. Special excursion rates were offered by the railroad to attract viewers from Decatur and Mattoon. During the latter part of the period, races were conducted over three days.

Walt Eden remembered going out to the fairgrounds in the mid 1870s, when he was in his early teens:

Every morning as soon as I got my breakfast found me in one of the buses that ran to the grounds. No racing would take place till about

noon, but during the morning I would walk my legs off among the exhibits of pumpkins, corn, jellies, jams, quilts, chickens, hogs, cattle, sheep and horses. Everything was so colorful. Fair week brought all sort of crooks, gamblers and all sort of indecent things to town. I never became interested in them, other than as an observer: the roulette wheel with the usual barrel on which was piled up silver dollars to make it look as though the barrel was running over with money; the smaller games where one could throw rings on a cane; the Flying Dutchman, the predecessor of the Merry-go-round. The big talk of the gamblers, the talk of the men who had entered horses in the races, all was new to me, for everything was wide open during fair week. Edén, *Memoirs*, 37-38.

During the decade of the 1870s, civilization enriched the lives of Sullivan's citizens in other respects. The Titus opera house programs, begun in 1871, continued through the decade; and J.T. Elliott was selling music, pianos, and organs — as well as sewing machines.

According to *The Sullivan Progress*, boys under 16 were not allowed to be on the streets after eight o'clock at night.

Drunkenness was still a problem in this post-war era. Walt Edén wrote: "When I was a little boy and even after I had grown up, Sullivan was a pretty wild town. In the early days, the north side of the square was almost all saloons. We had 'sod corn row' there. I remember it well ... Lakey Bend was a community southwest of town, and Jonathan Creek was northeast of town. The young men from those neighborhoods always had a grudge against each other, and on Saturdays would meet at Sullivan. When they got drunk enough, which always happened when they came to town, there would always be several fights on the public square." Edén, *Memoirs*, 10; see also *I.J.M. Notes*, at 25.

In May 1874 the presiding judge in Moultrie County committed three intoxicated jurymen to jail for contempt of court. The lesson evidently did not take. Two months later the judge fined 11 jurors \$25 each for drinking in the jury room.

Vice took other forms as well. In 1878 a federal judge fined Joseph F. Sedgwick and John F. Sanders, of Sullivan, \$100 each "for circulating obscene literature and offering for sale devices to prevent conception." As prevention was illegal, so were abortion and infanticide. It was reported on October 26,

1870, that “Mary Hughes of Moultrie County, has been sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment for murdering her infant.”

It was not until October 1885 during the administration of Mayor William Hollins Shinn that Sullivan first turned on its then-new street lamps. They were street corner gasoline lamps on posts along each street leading from the court house, and were paid for by saloon license fees. Every evening a policeman would make the rounds to light the lamps; and the next morning similar trips were made to extinguish the lights. This system of street lamps lasted six years, at which time electric lamps replaced the gasoline lamps. I.J.M. *Notes*, 50-51.

Plank walks were installed in front of businesses around the square, but they did not last well and had to be repaired or replaced. Sullivan spent roughly \$1,000 in the summer of 1899 repairing its old walks, and more repairs were needed. *The Sullivan Progress* recommended that the town “devise plans for putting in permanent walks of stone or brick. It will not pay to expend from one to two thousand dollars each year on repairs.”

IX.

Sullivan's Schools

The first schools in Illinois were private schools. When the United States Congress admitted Illinois to statehood, it provided that section 16 of every township or other comparable land would be granted to the state for use as the state legislature might direct “for the use of the inhabitants of such township for the use of schools.” In 1819 the state legislature enacted a law providing for the appointment by county commissioners of three trustees in each township to lay out these sections into lots and to lease them to provide revenue for school purposes.

In 1825 the Illinois legislature took the next step: it required the establishment of a common school or schools in each county, “which shall be open to every class of white citizens between the ages of five and twenty-one years.” The trustees were authorized to manage the schools. In 1841 the legislature revised this law by providing that the people of each township might decide how many schools they wanted, and to elect trustees to supervise the schools. It also required teachers to pass examinations in order to receive a certificate authorizing them to teach. In 1845 the legislature designated the secretary of state as state superintendent of public schools, and allowed voters in school districts to levy a special tax in support of the schools. And in 1854 it made the office of state superintendent separate and independent. In 1858 the legislature

provided for state and local tax support to the schools. Ninian Wirt Edwards was appointed the first state superintendent.*

S.W. Moulton, who had practiced law in Sullivan for two years in the late 1840s before moving to Shelbyville, was chairman of the state legislative committee that recommended the bill making the state superintendent a separate office. He also drafted and introduced the 1858 law — sometimes called the “free-school bill” — establishing the system of free schools throughout the state.

In 1857 John R. Eden of Sullivan was appointed to the State Board of Education, the body created to establish a normal school for the training of teachers. The board decided that the site of the new school should be Bloomington, which resulted in the creation of the Illinois Normal School — now Illinois State University.

The first schools in Moultrie County were country schools — created before Sullivan was platted or established as a village. Superintendent Stearns’ chapter in the 1881 *Combined History* reports that the “first school” taught in what is now Moultrie County “was conducted by Mrs. Mary Hostetler in the year 1832 on a farm in Lovington township.” (p. 96.) In I.J. Martin’s copy of the 1881 *History*, at p. 96, I.J. wrote a marginal note: “There was an earlier school at Whitley Point.” I.J. had reason to know about that school: he grew up at Whitley Point and both of his parents had gone to school there. He wrote, “Daniel Ellington and William Hayden established a store, post office *and school* at Whitley’s Point, near the John Whitley home.”

Gilbert and Martha Waggoner were among those early Waggoners. Their son, A.J. Waggoner, wrote a memoir of his early recollections of growing up in Whitley Point. His family lived in a “little log cabin.” When he was about 11, “the subject of schools was brought up and the early settlers began to see the need of schools to educate they children; so it was decided by father and mother that we should move from *that cabin and it should be used for a school house*. . . . The old log school house was finally abandoned and the school was changed to the old Lynn Creek church, the first Baptist church in this country, which was located on Uncle Billy Martin’s place.” [The Baptist preacher, William Harvey Martin.] *M.C. Heritage*, February 1983, at 9.

*Ninian W. Edwards was the son of Ninian Edwards, the only governor of Illinois Territory before statehood, and then third governor of Illinois, from 1826 to 1830, as well as one of the two first Senators from Illinois. Ninian W. was married to Elizabeth Todd, the sister of Mary Todd Lincoln.

The 1881 *Combined History* confirmed that the Whitley Point school had priority — stating that, “The first school taught here was in a small log-cabin, erected for the purpose by the settlers The school was taught by Samuel Anderson in the fall of 1828” (at 210).

Another source states: “The first school was located just across the road west of where John Voegel lives today. It was log and was not used after about 1862 when the Brick school was completed.” Whitley Whittlings, *Moultrie County Heritage*, May 1988, at 32.

In light of these fragmentary references — particularly given the passage of more than 150 years — it seems likely that there were more than one early schools at Whitley Point, that the first such school was probably taught in someone’s home soon after the first settlement, and that by the early 1850s a school was being taught in the Waggoners’ log cabin. After that the old Lynn Creek Baptist Church structure was used.

Another early school mentioned by Superintendent Stearns was taught by James S. Freeland “in what is now known as the Nazworthy district” in 1843. This refers to the area near where the brothers Richard and Thomas Nazworthy, natives of Tennessee, settled in 1831. The district was in Sullivan township, just west of the present city of Sullivan. Slover, *History of Moultrie County Schools*, at 8. John R. Eden wrote, “Rev. James Freeland was a well-educated Presbyterian preacher and an ardent teacher. The first sermon I heard preached after locating in Illinois was preached by Mr. Freeland in a school house on Sand Creek.” *Eden Compendium*, at 34. Sand Creek flowed from Whitley Township in Moultrie County west through Windsor in Shelby County.

Another early school was reportedly taught by Judge Thomason “in the south- western part of Sullivan township, as early as 1844. Arnold Thomason later served as Circuit Clerk and Recorder, and as County Judge.” 1881 *Combined History*, at 96; I.J.M. *Notes*, at 27.

The First Schoolhouse in Sullivan, 1846 — Immediately West of the old Christian Church.

Sullivan was platted in 1845 and the first lots sold shortly thereafter. The first schoolhouse was reportedly erected in Sullivan in the spring of 1846.

[The] cost of \$85 [was] made up by private subscription. It was a

small frame building, 17 x 20 feet in size. John W. Wheat, an attorney who came from Christian county, taught the first school in the summer of 1846. Schools were conducted in this house until the erection of the brick academy by James S. Freeland, in 1851.

Wheat was one of the first lawyers to practice law in Moultrie County. 1881 *Combined History*, at 71, 183.

Other early teachers in the township were Judge Thomason, A.B. Lee, and his brother W.R. Lee, Oliver C. Denslow, Thomas Haney, H.Y. Kellar, James Steele, and Frank Porter.

Pupils were sent to school with whatever books the family happened to own. Some read in the New Testament. Webster's spelling book was used, as were geographies in the Olney and Woodbridge series, the Kirkham and Smith grammars, and the Pike and Smiley arithmetic books.

The first schoolhouse was reportedly also used for church services by the Christian Church until the members built their own building adjacent to it. Slover, at 98.

Superintendent Stearns described the fate of that old school building: "The first schoolhouse built in Sullivan township was a small frame structure, and was situated on the lot west of where the Christian church now stands. Years later it was moved to the open lots just across the street, west of the present residence of Andy Shortess, and used for a stable. Today [probably 1880] I passed by there to see if any of the old relic was still standing; but alas, it had gone with the things that were." 1881 *Combined History*, at 97.

The Christian church in 1880 stood at the corner of Harrison and Madison where the First Baptist Church is now located. The church building was erected in 1853 and torn down in 1899. The lot west of where the first church stood in 1880 is apparently now incorporated in the western extension of the current building. Court was also held in that old first school house for two years before the first courthouse was completed in 1848.

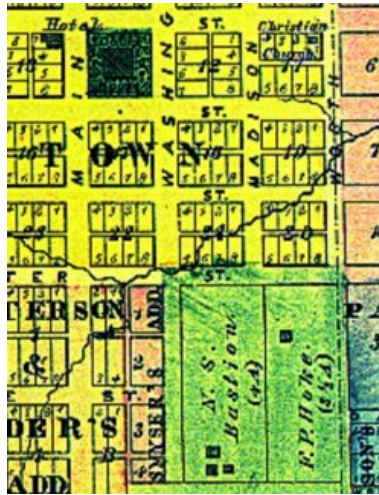
The Moultrie County or "Freeland" Academy, 1851

The next school to be built in Sullivan was the Academy, a brick structure built by James S. Freeland in the southeastern part of town in 1851.

The 1881 *County History* reported that “Mr. Freeland had organized a class for an academic course, and held his first session in one of the rooms of the old court-house.” The academy “flourished until the death of Mr. Freeland, which occurred in 1856, when it ceased to exist.” 1881 *County History*, at 183.

James Freeland was the same Presbyterian preacher who had earlier taught at the “Nazworthy” district on Sand Creek in 1843. His new Academy was incorporated as a separate educational institution in March 1855.

The Freeland Academy building was located three blocks south and one block east of the court house, at the corner of Water and Washington streets. By 1875 the building had been transferred to the school operated by N.S. Bastion.



Freeland, later Bastion, Academy

In his summary account of the county’s schools in the 1881 *Combined History*, Superintendent Stearns described Freeland’s school as a “very successful academic school” — the “one private school institution built in the county ... built on the hill in the southeastern part of the city of Sullivan.”

My mother, Ruth Pifer Martin, had a catalogue for the Freeland Academy for the year ending July 26, 1855. It was the basis for an article published by Jane Krows in the *Moultrie County Heritage*, VIII, 2, May 1990, at 33. The full name of the school on this “Fourth Annual Catalogue” was the “Sullivan Male and Female Academy.” The fact that it was the “fourth” confirmed that the

school had begun in the fall of 1851. James S. Freeland was the Principal, John Brooks, an “assistant instructor” in the “Male Department,” and Elizabeth Hill the “Instructress” in the “Female Department.” Trustees were R.R. Ewing, James Elder, John A. Freeland, William Kellar, John Perryman, Ambrose Meeker, John Reese and Addison McPheeters. James S. Freeland was the father of John A. Freeland.

The catalogue began with this note of thanks: “The liberal patronage which it has received encourages the Trustees and its friends to think that their arduous labors will be properly appreciated.” The school year was divided into two sessions of five months each, October to February, and March to late July.

The Freeland school offered three levels of study:

- a. Orthography, reading, writing and arithmetic (commenced), for \$5.00.
- b. Arithmetic continued, English grammar, geography, history, algebra (commenced), for \$7.50.
- c. Algebra continued, surveying, geometry, with Latin, Greek and French languages, for \$10.00.

“Twenty-five cents will be charged each scholar during the fall term for fire-wood.”

“The morals, as well as the mental culture of students sent here from abroad, will be cared for, and no pains will be spared on the part of the instructors to divert their minds from the amusements that often lead the youthful footstep astray. The school will be opened each morning with prayer, and a chapter from the Holy Scriptures will be read.”

“Boarding can be had in good families, in and near the place, at \$1.50 to \$2.00 per week.”

The names of the female and male scholars were listed along with their home towns. There were 121 males and 91 females. Most were from Moultrie or Shelby counties, but a handful were from other places: Taylorville, Pittsfield, Elmpoint, Decatur, Edwardsville, Mattoon.

One of the students who attended the Academy was Jonathan Meeker, later a Judge in Sullivan. In giving a testimonial on the occasion of Meeker’s

death many years later, John R. Eden addressed the court, saying: "I knew Judge Meeker longer and was more intimately acquainted with him than the other members of the Bar here, on account of our ages and on account of our family relations. [John R. Eden had married Judge Meeker's sister, Phoebe Roxanna Meeker, daughter of the blacksmith, Ambrose Meeker.] At the time he was quite a youth and I think was a student in the school kept by the Rev. James Freeland. He had already learned the blacksmith's trade in the shop of his father." *Eden Compendium*, at 342-43.

One of the teachers at the Freeland school who took an interest in young Jonathan Meeker was Sarah Hibbard. She got to know both Jonathan and his sister Roxy. Roxy liked her and invited her to come to her home for dinner where she became a friend of the entire family. A year or so after the death of his first wife, Hannah, Ambrose Meeker, the blacksmith, married Sarah Hibbard. (A year and a half after that second marriage, Sarah Meeker died in childbirth. She and her still-born son are buried beside Hannah Meeker in Greenhill Cemetery.)

The Academy carried on for a few years after Freeland's death in 1856. An advertisement appeared in the *Sullivan Express* in the fall of 1857 for the "Moultrie County Academy," announcing that the "annual session of this Institution will commence on Monday, the 5th of October, 1857." The ad continued:

The prospects of the School were never brighter than at present. Good teachers have been procured, and every arrangement made to render the pupils comfortable and advance them in the various departments of literature. Scholars from a distance will be furnished with good boarding convenient to the Academy.

R.W. Henry, Pres.

B.T. Dennis Cokely, Principal

The Academy suffered some turnover — both in name and personnel. On January 28, 1858, the following ad appeared in the *Express*:

The next session of this institution will commence the first Monday in February next and expire the last Thursday in June.

There will be a public examination of the pupils at the Academy on Thursday and Friday the 4th and 5th days of February next and an

exhibition in the evening at the Presbyterian Church. The public are invited.

W. Smith, Principal.

The public examination of the students reportedly went well. The *Express* on February 12, 1858, reported that the *Sullivan Academy*,

held its semi-annual examination on the 4th and 5th days of the present month, and had public exhibition on each evening of the examination. ... The reporter was well pleased at the recitations in the various branches, and would say that the performance of the school room did credit to both teaching and scholar and the praise of the patrons of the school is due to Mr. Smith and his competent Assistant, Mr. Branson, for the very creditable manner in which they have 'taught the young idea how to shoot.'

The reporter was especially taken by the performance of "a little boy, who, we learn, is a son of Mr. N. Farlow of our town. ... If the little fellow had poured a little more of the Poet's fire into his style, his performance would have been inimitable, considering his age."

Shortly after that public examination, the Administrator of James Freeland's estate sold the academy building, "together with a site of three and a half acres of land," to Prof. W. Smith, Principal of the Academy. The price was \$1900.

The Academy continued under new leadership, as confirmed by a news account of an "examination of the students of the Moultrie County Academy" in mid-March. According to the report, the exam reflected "great credit both on pupils and teachers." Teachers singled out for comment were "Denis Coakley" (different spelling than above) and Miss B. Moudy, sister of the departing editor of the *Sullivan Express*. The report again made clear that some of the students were in the primary grades — "little boys", one "of about nine summers."

Though the Academy was "private" — it was privately owned and charged tuition— the people in the community took an interest in it. An editorial in the *Express*, April 23, 1858, urged that the school be protected by a fence:

Do the citizens of this place and vicinity think the building will last longer or be more distinctive by letting it remain out on the “commons,” unprotected from the stock!

If there is no good reason why this Academy should not be protected by a fence, we will certainly pitch into somebody or somebody else until this thing is accomplished, for we think a school house should be made agreeable and attractive to the pupils. When the school home and playground are made to be like cheerful homes to the pupils, it makes their studies much more pleasant; and little children get a taste for learning by being pleased with its accomplishments.

Newspaper reports indicate that some outside groups met in the Academy building — for example, the Sullivan Literary Association. This association was a local debating society in which leading citizens took both sides of public issues for the edification of other town residents. For example, in November 1857 members debated the critically important national issue, “Should it be the policy of the Government of the United States to annex more Territory by conquest or otherwise.” Messrs. J. Meeker, A.L. Kellar, H.Y. Kellar, and A.N. Smyser took the affirmative side; while J.D. Moudy (the Publisher of the *Express*), T.P. Woodson, N.W. Ranson, and A.B. Lee took the negative.

A month later, the Association met at the Academy to consider the Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision. At another meeting they heard a debate on the subject: “Do the signs of the times indicate the downfall of our present Government?”

The Brick Public School Near the Cemetery, 1854

For a few years Sullivan was served by two schools — one private and the other public. The public school was a two-story brick structure erected in 1854 not far from the Academy, in the southeastern part of town near the Greenhill cemetery. It was established “through the individual efforts of the members of the Christian church.” Slover, at 101.

The 1881 *County History* provided a little more of the story (at 146):

As early as 1853 [the Christian church members] engaged in the work of building an academy in the town of Sullivan. A wing of the building was erected in 1854, with the intention of finishing a

good-sized building in the future. The canvass for funds was made by Dr. J.L. Etheridge, who met with good success. When the wing was completed a school was commenced, but the death of Dr. Wm. Kellar and other circumstances interfering with the progress of the work, it was abandoned and the building sold.

Dr. Kellar was one of the people who died during the cholera epidemic of 1855.

Elsewhere, the *County History* continued (at 183):

A two-story brick [building] was erected in the eastern part of town near the cemetery, through the individual efforts of the members of the Christian church. It was subsequently *bought by the district and used for some years, or until the building of the new school house*, when it was sold and the proceeds placed in the public school treasury. (Emphasis supplied.)



The “two-story brick structure” appeared on the 1875 *Atlas* a few blocks north and east of the Academy, just west of the J.H. Waggoner property, on the corner of Water and Calhoun streets. There it was marked “Old School House.” (Just north of the “son” in Patterson.)

We know a little more about this school through the memoirs of Walter Eden, who attended school there for the primary grades. Walt lived at that time in the family home in Sullivan, a half block south of the courthouse square. He wrote:

Turning back to my childhood days, my first experience in school was at an old brick schoolhouse near what was the public cemetery, the ground on which it stood being now a part of the cemetery. I didn't like going to school. I often think the old school house had something to do with it. It was an old ramshackle two-story building. A man named Donnelson was at the head of it. I remember well that, after I had been to school the first day, I didn't want to go back any more, and my mother followed me all the way brandishing a switch taken from an apple tree.

When I was in the primer class, our teacher had a dozen of us stand in a row before the blackboard on which she had written simple words like "dog" and "cat." She would point at a word and we would announce what it was. She pointed at a word none of us knew so no one answered. She said, "Quick!" and, in a chorus, the whole class said "Quick!"

By the early 1870s, the old "ramshackle" building had become insufficient to accommodate the pupils of the district, and some portion of them attended "a department in the academy provided for by the district." Slover, at 101.

By the time the 1896 Atlas of the county was prepared, the brick school was gone. And by 1913 the "old school lot ... just west of the cemetery" had become "a small park."

The Bastion Seminary, 1868



After James Freeland died in 1856, his Academy continued for a few years under the management of others, including Cokely and Smith. In 1858 the *Express* announced the administrator's sale of real estate belonging to the estate of James S. Freeland to the Principal, Prof. W. Smith, who continued to operate it for a time. A decade later the building passed to N.S. Bastion, who used it for a new school.

The Bastion Seminary building appears in the background of a picture of the south-east corner of the court house square, probably taken sometime in the 1870s.

We have three descriptions of the Bastion Seminary written by people who attended school there. One was written by S.M. Smyser, who wrote in a letter to the *Sullivan Progress*, letter dated May 2, 1934:

I was present as a student in the opening session of this school in September, 1868 ... Sometime in the summer of 1868, Mr. N.S. Bastion obtained possession of a two story brick building situated at the south outskirts of Sullivan that had been erected by a man named Freeland. Mr. Bastion proceeded to raise funds wherewith to equip the building as a school by traveling around over the country and delivering addresses stating the purpose for which he wished to establish the school, and endeavoring to sell scholarships as a means of raising funds to carry on the work. He succeeded to a limited extent and in September of that year opened the school.

The school curriculum was very simple, consisting of the elementary studies now taught principally in the grammar schools and to some extent in the high schools, such as the 3 R's, grammar, geography and penmanship. Later algebra, Latin, and bookkeeping were taught. However, I was the only one studying algebra. The faculty consisted of Mr. Bastion, his wife, Mrs. C.J. Bastion, and Miss Ruth Leatherman, who had charge of the small children. ...

Mr. Bastion was a man of remarkable education. At one time in his life he had been a missionary to India, being sent there under the auspices of the Methodist Church. He spoke Hindustanee, read Greek and Hebrew, and spoke German and Latin. Slover, at 100.

Walt Eden's sister, Rose Eden (born November 2, 1858) (the writer's grandmother), also attended the school. When she was 10 or 11 years old, prob-

ably during the 1869-70 school term, Rose wrote a school paper describing the Bastion Seminary:

Sullivan Seminary

It is pleasantly situated on the south side of town on a rolling piece of ground. It is surrounded by beautiful prairies except on the north there is a grove. In the summer the birds sing beautiful. And when my teachers will let me, I love to go out under the tall trees and study my lesson.

The Seminary is a large brick building. It is very conveniently arranged — has two large rooms, one large room upstairs and recitation room and hall. There are also a large room and recitation and reception room downstairs. It has windows enough to make it very light. It looks cheerful and pleasant in all the rooms. It has stoves in all the rooms except the recitation room. It has a nice little fireplace. It is also carpeted and has a lounge and stand table which makes it very comfortable. The rooms are all well-furnished. The school rooms have the best of seats and desks. There is a shelf on which we can lay our books and keep them very nice and clean with a little care. The desks have also ink wells which are very nice; it keeps us from spilling the ink. It is well furnished with maps, charts and wall slates.

Best of all it is well supplied with teachers. We have first class teachers. They do all they can to have us learn.

Hopefully, this enthusiastic essay earned young Miss Rose a good grade from one of her “first class teachers.”

Finally, Rose’s younger brother Walt Eden left his own description of the Bastion Seminary, which he attended in 1869-1870 when he was 7 or 8 years old (*Memoirs*, at 19-20):

That seminary had considerable reputation in adjoining counties and if N.S. Bastion, its proprietor, had been a man of any business ability, Sullivan would have become a college town, and the Bastion school would probably now be one of the principal colleges of the middle west.

Mr. Bastion was, at the time of which I speak, an old man. He was a preacher of the Christian denomination and generally preached all the sermons every Sunday in that church at Sullivan. His wife was a wonderful woman in her day. She assisted in the teaching. She was a very large woman and could talk like a man. One of her hobbies was elocution.

Mr. Bastion was a well-educated man and ... he showed the etymology of words by going back to the dead languages. He had in his school as a member of his faculty a young man named William Danes. Danes would walk around with an apple sprout about a yard and a half long, and every time he passed by me he would give me a whack across my back, without any reason whatever. W.F. Snyder sat behind me and one day he pulled out a little pistol with the lock gone and told Danes he would shoot him. ...

Lewis Hoke, the son of Fountain P. Hoke, a blacksmith and maker of plows, was given the most severe correction by Mrs. Bastion one day that I ever saw in school. She charged him with telling a lie. She got a basin with water in it and some soap and one of her used tooth brushes, and proceeded to throw him down on the floor, sat on him, and washed out his mouth with soap and water, claiming she had washed that lie out of his mouth.

Mr. Bastion, shortly before he died, while away from home, got into some sort of bunco game and lost a lot of money. This discredited him with the people at home and after that he was ostracized. A local druggist bought a fine Newfoundland dog and named him Bunco. ...

In the Bastion school, the boys sat on one side of the room and the girls on the other. Charley Corbin was generally late in the morning, and Mrs. Bastion punished him by making him sit among the girls. That may be the reason he was late so much.

We were taught to sing the multiplication table, and I learned it so thoroughly that I find it useful to me yet. Another thing we were taught to sing was the different states with the state capitals and the rivers or other objects on which they were situated. ...

The first time I heard sung the song "Coming Through the Rye" was there. It was sung by Melissa Earp, the daughter of one of the local

saloon keepers. It made an impression on my child mind that has stayed with me all these years, probably because I thought she was about the nicest little girl in town. I guess I was impressed with the thought of kissing a pretty girl in the rye patch.

Mr. Bastion looked for opportunities to improve his property. In 1871 he helped organize a petition to the town trustees to pay for a sidewalk from South Washington Street to the west side of the seminary property, and also a bridge across the “branch” on South Washington Street. The town fathers approved the sidewalk but not the bridge.

(The “branch” or stream requires a little explanation. In the 1870s and earlier, a stream flowed east-west along the appropriately-named Water Street, two blocks south of the Court House. Mr. Bastion and others wanted a “good, substantial bridge” built across the stream where it crossed Washington Street. The stream appears on the 1886 Sanborn map of Sullivan. (See also the 1875 Atlas, *supra*.) One witness described it as an “open sewer.” The channel was later filled in. Ed Hall, in *Moultrie County Heritage*, August 1984, at 66.)



As Superintendent Stearns wrote in the 1881 *County History*, the Bastion Academy “had a successful season of about five years [1868 to “about” 1873], when its old walls again relapsed into silence.”

The 1870s — The North Side School, 1874

The early 1870s were a period of further development of Sullivan, its culture, and its public education.

In the summer of 1872 the first “normal institute” was held in Sullivan under the direction of Superintendent Stearns. He had been raised as a farmer, had served as a sailor for two years, during which time he traveled widely throughout the Pacific, then attended Hillsdale College in Michigan and spent a year at the law school in Ann Arbor. He had come to Sullivan in 1866, taught school, and then was elected superintendent in 1869.

The first institute was conducted in the “ramshackle” old brick schoolhouse near the cemetery, and “continued for six weeks, with an attendance of 32 members.” The objective of the institute was to offer training to teachers and perhaps teacher candidates, and also to examine the teachers in subjects such as arithmetic, geography and grammar to provide a basis for issuance of certificates permitting them to teach. The superintendents were sometimes assisted by prominent educators from the area.

Examples of the examination questions may be found in the 1881 *Combined History* and in Vera Slover’s history, as well as in the local newspapers. In the 1870s few if any of the teachers had college degrees. It would be interesting to give today’s generation of teachers the same exams and compare the results.

The early 1870s saw the construction and opening of a fine new public school — known later (when it had to be distinguished from another) as the “North Side School.” This new school was located on the northwest corner of Jackson and Hamilton streets. Construction was commenced in 1873 and completed by the fall of 1874. It was enormous for the time: “It is three stories besides the basement, and is one hundred and sixty feet from foundation to belfry. It contains six rooms, furnished with the latest and best school furniture, and will accommodate 350 pupils. Its facilities for ventilation are excellent and it is heated by hot air furnished by a furnace situated in the basement.” 1881 *Consolidated History*.

In the new school building, the lower grades were conducted in the lower floors and the high school in the upper floor. The first graduation occurred in 1878; there were five graduates — including twins Sarah and Mary

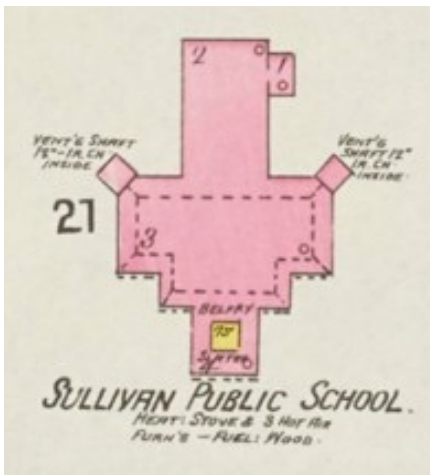
Powers, who served Sullivan for decades as teachers and after whom the Powers School was later named in their honor.

Walt Eden was a fifth-grader during the 1874-75 school year, soon after the new building was completed. He later wrote that his teacher was “a very old maid, whom I heartily detested.” “When she talked to us ... she puckered up her mouth as if she had eaten a persimmon before frost came, and closed her eyes and kept them closed during all the time she talked. ... She never mistreated me, except that she kept me always on a front seat where she could watch what I did.” Walt also mentioned a number of “wonderful teachers” — Polk Rose, the Principal, Charlotte Webster, and the Powers sisters, Mary and Sarah: “They were twins and neither ever married. They must have served the Sullivan school district for almost 50 years.” Eden *Memoirs*, at 36-37.

By 1881 most children in the county were enrolled in a public school. Data reported by the state at the end of that year indicated that of the persons in the county between ages 6 and 21, 3,877 were enrolled in school. There were 85 public schools in the county, employing 148 teachers. Virtually no one between the ages of 12 and 21 was reported unable to read and write.

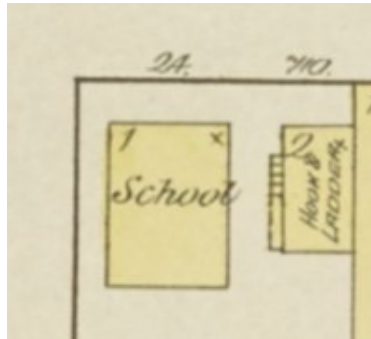
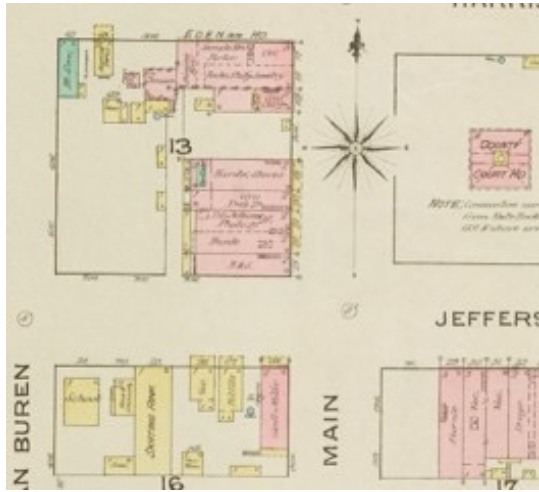
However, not all students made it as far as a high school diploma. The 1881 Sullivan high school graduating class was only 11, and included Sullivan’s most famous alumnus — the future Senator from Indiana, Albert J. Beverage. Not surprisingly, Albert was class valedictorian.

Two views of the North Side school with its prominent belfry appear nearby, as does a building “plan.”



Mystery School — 1886 (or earlier).

Now we come to a mystery school. It appears on the Sanborn map for Sullivan in 1886. The relevant segment of the map shows it to be where Jefferson intersects with Van Buren street, a block west of the court house, on the corner.



Sanborn Map, 1886

This “School” was not mentioned in the *1881 County History* or in Vera Slover’s *History of Moultrie County Schools* (which relies heavily on the *1881 County History*). It is not marked on the map of Sullivan that appears in the 1875 atlas of the county (though few buildings are there marked). It is not mentioned in any of the few surviving newspapers from that era. It did not appear on the Sanborn map for 1898.

I think it is the old Methodist Church building — the first church built in Sullivan. The *1881 County History* reported that in 1849 in Sullivan “a new frame church was completed and dedicated; it had been commenced in 1847 . . . It is now [1881] occupied by Pifer’s carriage shop” and “now used by D.L. Pifer for a wagon shop.” *1881 Combined History*, at 150, 183.

David L. Pifer (1828-1900) was a brother of Uriah Israel Pifer (1844-1898) and thus an uncle of later Mayor Finley Pifer.

That old church building burned in 1905. A Sullivan newspaper described its history this way: “After the old court house was burned, this original church building was frequently used for court purposes, many important trials being conducted there Since then it had served various purposes, *school room*, skating rink, bowling alley and poultry commission house.” *Moultrie County News*, December 15, 1905. See also *Decatur Review*, December 15, 1905.

It thus seems likely that the old church building was used as a court room during the two-year period between the burning of the first court house (November 1864) and construction of the second (1866) — and then later used as a school before the new South Side school was put into service.



The South Side School, 1895-96 — Later the Lowe School.

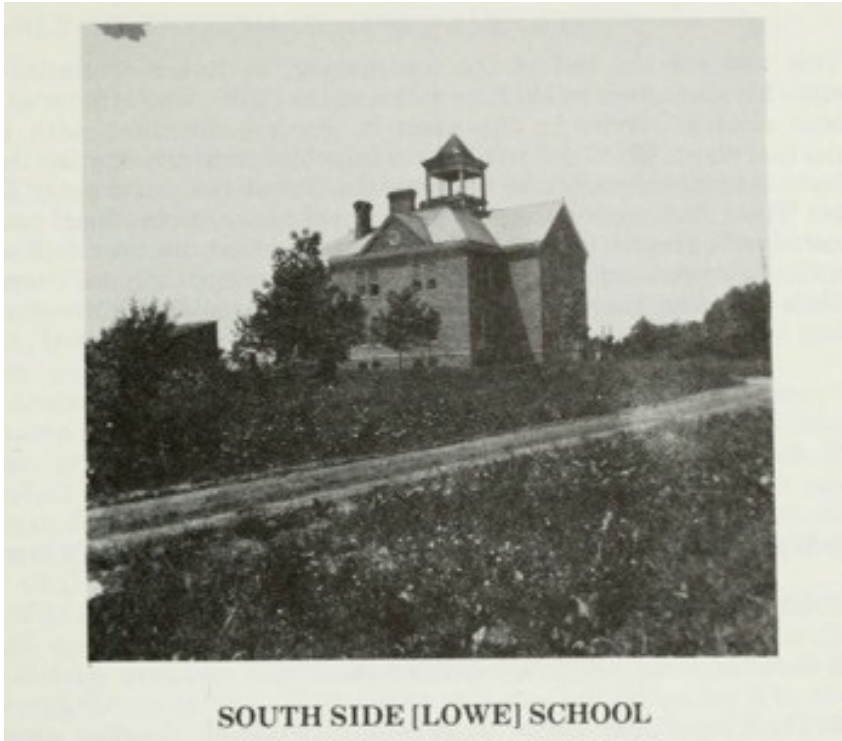
By the early 1890s, even with the old church for overflow space, the North Side school had become inadequate to the needs of Sullivan, so a new high school was built on the south side of town during the years 1894-95. Though not quite completed, it was occupied and used in late January 1895. The high

school occupied the upper rooms; the first and second grades and one of the fifth grade classes occupied the lower rooms.

The first published yearbook of a Sullivan High School graduating class, in 1913, recorded experiences of students in this South Side school building. The school board at that time included: J.R. Pogue, President, J.A. Sabin, Clerk, and T.G. Hughes, Z.B. Whitfield, S.M. Palmer, C.A. Corbin, and J.M. David. The 1913 Yearbook described the different departments of the high school: Science, Mathematics, Language (including Latin and German), Social Science, and English.

My father, Robert Walter Martin, was in that 1913 graduating class, as was Anna McCarthy, later a well-known teacher in the grade school. Commencement was held not in the high school building but in the Armory, May 29, 1913.

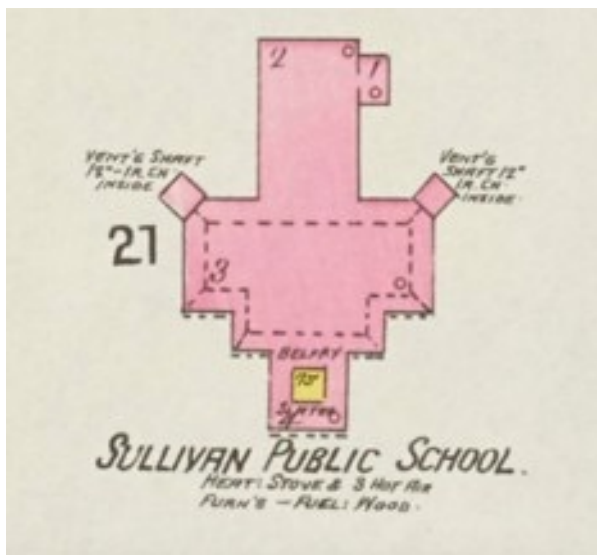
During the 1914 commencement exercises of the high school, graduates for the first time appeared in cap and gown.



The Sullivan high school during this era attracted students from a number of surrounding towns — including Windsor, Arthur, Kirksville, Bruce, Coles, Allenville, Gays, and Bethany.



Auditorium — South Side High School



Plan of South Side School — Sanborn Map.

The South Side High School had what one local newspaper thought was an “excellent corps of teachers” and an impressive curriculum. The teachers and their courses were: Thomas H. Finley, principal; Olive E. Martin, English; Nellie F. Bartels, English and German; Charlotte Baker, Latin; Maude Johnson, mathematics; Lillian D. Wyatt, biology; Gertrude Hill, history; Eva A. Perrin, domestic arts; M.D. Abney, science, and R.V. Lindsay, manual arts. Abney, the science teacher, was also the football coach. Most of the teachers were women.

The South Side School was renamed the Lowe School in 1927 and converted to a middle school (see below). It was closed in 1984 and the real estate and contents sold in 1986.

High School, 1917.

Two decades after the South Side High School was placed into service, it was replaced by a “new” high school, which was completed in the fall of 1917 when it opened for classes.

Voters in Sullivan Township in a contested election voted in mid-February 1916 to acquire a site for the proposed new high school building. It was a large vote “and a warm fight” was made. Opponents had distributed literature to turn farmers against the school based on projected taxes to pay for the building. The site selected was a property owned by Joseph B. Titus, “across the street, west of Wyman park . . . containing about eleven and one-half acres. The tract was offered at \$400 an acre.”

A construction contract was approved by the board of education in June 1916. The projected costs exceeded \$70,000. The school board planned for a building that would “accommodate all who will be attending the next ten or 15 years.”

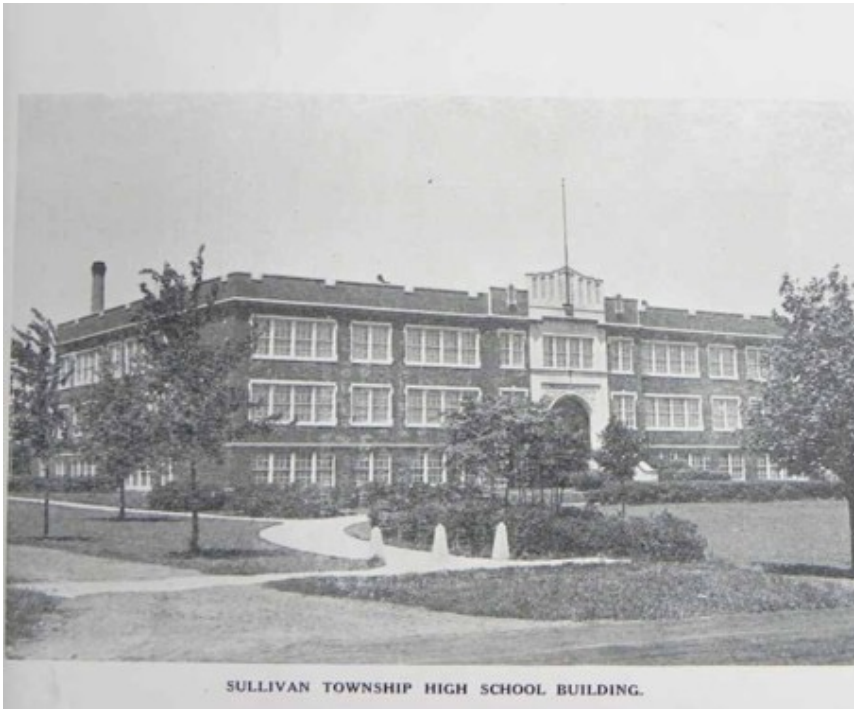
The project was delayed by a labor strike in December and threatened by litigation in February 1917, when Judge Sentel denied an injunction, ruling in favor of the school board. An appeal of the denial to the Supreme Court of Illinois was filed too late.

The exterior work was completed over the spring and summer of 1917 and the new building was opened September 1. The superintendent of the work stated to a reporter in early August that a “large amount of work is

to be done on the inside yet but he is using a large force of workmen to get the work done on time. The work in the assembly room and in the gymnasium is practically finished.”

The following spring, 1918, 23 seniors comprised the first class to graduate from the new high school. The baccalaureate service was held at the Jefferson Theater, and commencement was conducted in the new high school assembly room, Friday, June 7.

Following the opening of the new high school, the lower grades were taught in the old North Side School building on Jackson Street, and the middle grades were taught in the South Side School, which was renamed the “Lowe School” in 1927.



The 1917 high school building continued to serve juniors and seniors until the current high school was built in 1958.

The Grade School Building, 1925-26 — Named the “Powers School” in 1927.

The need for a new school building to replace the old North Side building began to be discussed at least as early as January 1925 after the State Fire Marshall ordered repairs to the North Side building that would cost about \$3,000. This raised the question whether to make the repairs or replace the old building with a new one. Analysis indicated that, “Repairing the old building would cost thousands and as the building is old and out of date, the repairs would be but a temporary solution of the school housing problem for Sullivan.”

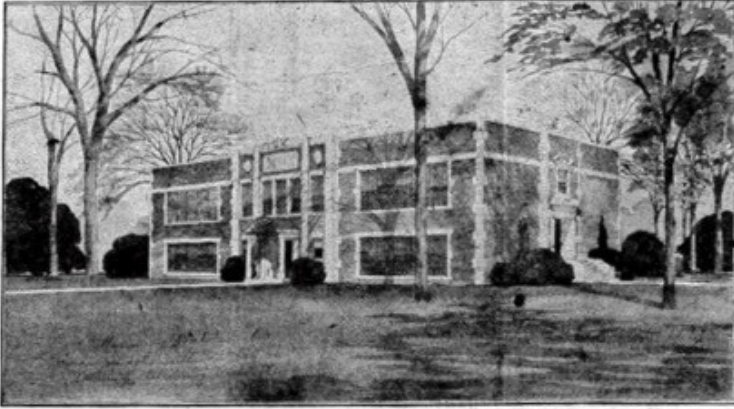
In late January 1925 the school board met with an architect who found that the North Side school “is a hopeless proposition so far as remodeling is concerned.” By mid- February it had become clear to the school board that a new building was necessary. The Fire Marshall permitted continued use of the old building only on condition that action would be “taken at once looking to the erection of a new building.”

The school board reportedly was “practically certain . . . that the new building will be of eight rooms and will be on the site of the recent North Side building. This will permit of moving two grades from the South Side to the new building.” The report continued: “The board realizes that it will be but a few years before the old part of the South Side building will no longer be adapted for school room purposes. It can then be remodeled into a gymnasium and there will still be enough school room available.”

On February 23, the board hired an architect for the new school building “which is to be erected here this Summer . . . on the site now occupied by the North Side Building.” The board would raise about \$45,000 by issuing bonds. Petitions were drafted calling for a special election to vote for the bonds.

The architect’s drawing of the new school appeared in the *Sullivan Progress*, March 20, 1925. The citizens of Sullivan voted in referendum on March 30, 1925, by a margin of more than 12 to 1, to authorize construction and issue \$48,000 of bonds to pay for the new building.

Sullivan's Proposed New School Building



The above artist's drawing shows what the proposed new \$48,000 school for Sullivan will look like. The drawing was made by Arthur L. Pillsbury of Bloomington, the architect. It provides for a structure with four big rooms downstairs and six rooms upstairs, with necessary closets, lockers, furnace room, coal bin, etc.

The petitions asking that an election be called to authorize the erecting of a building were this week submitted to the Board of Education. 345 signatures appeared on the petitions. The Board at a meeting Wednesday night decided to hold the election on Monday, March 30th.

Proposed contracts were submitted in May and reviewed by the board in June. It was clear by this time that the new school could not be completed by fall. The main contract set forth an agreed completion date of October 25. In June the work on wrecking the old towering brick building began and proceeded rapidly. Some contracts were still being set as late as July. Construction of the new building proceeded rapidly in August. A corner stone was laid on the southeast corner inscribing the names of the members of the Board of Education: J.L. McLaughlin, Jessie E. Edwards, J.N. Martin (the author's uncle), Ada M. Chapin, E.O. Dunscomb, Matt Dedman, W.R. Robinson and R.O. Ives, Supt. The stone said "Erected 1925" though the building was not completed and ready for occupancy until early 1926, months after the October 25 target date for completion.

It had been clear for months that room would have to be found temporarily for the grade school pupils who would eventually attend the new school. The board decided in late August that first, second and third graders would be

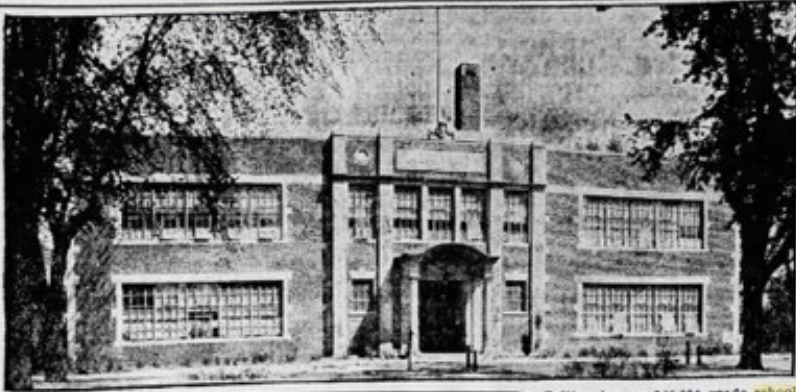
accommodated in the South Side building. The fourth graders would be taught at the new high school. The superintendent told the parents: “We believe that all patrons know our crowded condition and realize that some of the teachers will be working under unfavorable conditions,” and asked the patience of both parents and teachers. In early September the board made an additional adjustment — holding half-day only sessions for the first and second graders until the new building would be completed: “This plan will be begun at once. Each group of children will do the same work day by day so at the end of present conditions the classes may be re-united” Sarah and Mary Powers were the first and second grade teachers.

After the October 25 target date had passed, the board announced that the new building would be ready for occupancy after the children returned to school from the Christmas vacation. In mid-December the board reported that the building was “rapidly nearing completion” and began to plan appropriate dedication services. In fact the new building opened the Monday after the new year, January 4, 1926. The weekly school news column carried in the *Progress* for January 8, 1926, announced: “During the holidays the new building was furnished and the pupils and teachers of the first four grades are now housed in this building ... After they are all well established in their new home, we plan to have a visiting day for all who wish to inspect the new building.”

From beginning to end — decision to opening day — the planning and work had been done in less than a year.

In May 1927, based on a proposal of the parent-teacher association, the school board decided to name the new grade school after Mary and Sarah Powers, the twin sisters who had taught in the primary grades of Sullivan for more than 40 years. The older building on the south side was named the “O.B. Lowe School” in honor of the teacher and principal “who contributed more than any other toward the development of Sullivan’s school system.”

Name *School* for Veteran Twin Teachers



Sullivan's Twin Teachers

Sullivan's new \$68,000 grade school building named "The Powers School" in honor of twin Powers sisters who have taught in primary grades for more than forty years.

Sullivan's Twin Teachers



Miss Mary (left) and Miss Sarah Powers have kept abreast of best primary teaching methods, repeatedly winning praise from state department

Ramsey Boy, 7,

Struck By Car

I remember my first day of attendance in kindergarten at the Powers School in September 1945 — over 70 years ago. I had to take a blanket for nap time. I also remember the walk home along tree-lined Jackson Street, the

buck-eyes in the fall from a tree a block or two east of the school, and playing ball in the school yard and vacant lot just to the north of the school building.

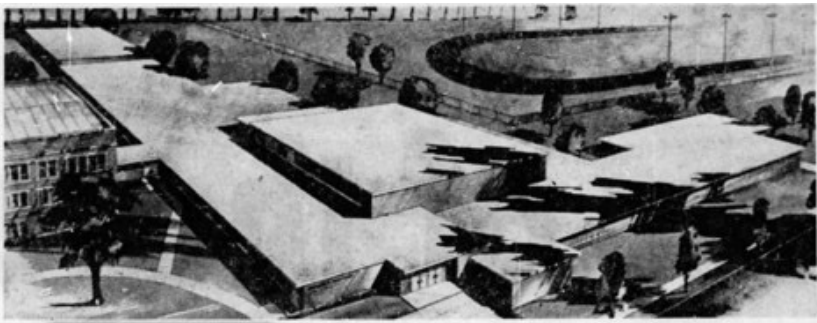
Sullivan High School, 1958

Growing school populations and space needs led to the building of a new high school in 1957-58.

Discussions about the need for a new building began before the fall of 1955. In August of that year, acting on a planning council recommendation, the school board met with architects to consider options for renovating or expanding the existing high school. Plans were prepared, and a proposal to finance a new high school with \$995,000 in bonds was put to the voters. It was defeated in November 1955.

A year later the board tried again. “Minute men” representing supporters and an “advisory council” met with various civic groups and clubs to drum up support for an affirmative vote in a special bond issue election October 10, 1956. The plan called for a new high school adjoining the old building, and for the old building to be remodeled and used for a junior high, grades 5 through 8. Advocates emphasized the need to replace “portable” school rooms then in use at both the Powers and Lowe schools. This time the voters approved the proposed bond issuance by a 2 to 1 margin.

Drawings were released in March 1957, a general contractor was selected in May, and work began in July. The completion date was in August 1958. By November 1957 the work was on schedule “with about 10 more days of outside work to be done before the building will be enclosed.”



Architect's 1957 drawing of the new high school.

The work was completed in July 1958 and move-in occurred August 15 — before the commencement of the new year. The new building had 19 regular class rooms, two shops, a gym and cafeteria. In the meantime remodeling of the old building was under way; it would serve three classes of 5th grade as well as grades 6, 7, and 8. Strangely, dedication of the new high school was delayed until March 21, 1960.

My high school class was the last to graduate from the old school, in May 1958. Perhaps some graduate of the “new” (1958) high school will someday carry forward the history of Sullivan’s schools — including the new grade school adjacent to the high school — into the next millennium.

X.

Sullivan's Newspapers

The names of Sullivan's 19th Century newspapers and their hereditary connections are snarled in confusion. To untangle the snarl, one starts with the *1881 County History*, which provided a good deal of information about the early newspapers. We also have the *Notes on the History of Sullivan Newspapers*, written by I.J. Martin, himself an editor at different times of two of Sullivan's newspapers. And we have the texts of some issues of these old newspapers, which of course provide their names and identify their proprietors or editors.

A. The Sullivan Express — 1857-58

J.D. Moudy

The first Sullivan newspaper was *The Sullivan Express*. The third issue — Volume I, number 3 of that weekly paper, dated September 24, 1857 — survives in microfilm and digital form. The implication is that the first issue was published two weeks earlier — September 10, 1857. The publisher and editor was J.D. Moudy. Its masthead identified the paper as “an independent journal devoted to the best interest of Moultrie County.” The paper sold for \$1.50 — a one-year subscription — and sold advertising space by the 10-line insertion or by half and full columns.

The *Express* office was probably on the second floor of the Perryman brick building on the south side of the square, at the west end. Walt Eden's *Memoir* makes it clear that this is where the brick "Perryman building" was located; and a notice appeared in the *Express* on December 10, 1857, by two Sullivan lawyers, Eden & Meeker, stating that they "have moved their Law office to the second story of Perryman's brick [building], in the room east of the Printing office."

Moudy was still running things when the first issue of 1858 appeared on January 7. A financial panic and depression had swept through the country in late 1857, and it devastated farmers and business in central Illinois. On February 12, 1858, Moudy ran this notice:

All of our subscribers who have not paid for the *Express* can have till the issuing of the 26th No., on up to March 4th to pay for the paper at the advance rates, which is \$1.50. After that time we will be under the necessity of charging them \$2.00. This we do owing to the tightness of the times, but all who do not pay by that time, will, must assuredly, have to pay \$2.00. We mean what we say this time.

Joseph H. Waggoner and Benjamin B. Haydon

The next issue, Friday, February 19, 1858, appeared with a notice of new management. The new publishers were Joseph H. Waggoner and Benjamin B. Haydon. The second page contained a "Valedictory" from Mr. Moudy:

With this number my connection editorially and pecuniarily with the *Sullivan Express* ceases. It is not without feelings of deep regret that I vacate the editorial chair, as many of the happiest moments of my life have been inseparably connected with it. I am yet young, scarcely twenty summers with their clouds and sunshine have passed over my head.

Moudy then introduced his successors to his readers:

Messrs. Waggoner & Haydon are well qualified to discharge the duties of the office. ... Mr. Waggoner has been in my employ for the past four months, and I am confident that he can with as much ability as any young man of my acquaintance discharge the duties devolving upon him as an editor.

Joseph Waggoner was a grandson of old Isaac, the founding father of that family, and a son of squire Amos, the long-time county judge. Ben Haydon was also a member of one of the early families in the Whitley Point community southeast of Sullivan. They added their own introductory column, in which they indicated their purpose to continue the *Express* as an independent family newspaper. They also changed the publication day from Thursday to Friday.

The Waggoner Brothers

Within two months there was a further change. On April 23, 1858, it was announced that Haydon was out — replaced as one of the two publishers by one of Joseph Waggoner's brothers — Edward (Ned) Waggoner. Joseph H. Waggoner remained as the other publisher. Both were also listed as “editors.” Ben Haydon did not leave town; he later appears in newspaper notices as a deputy sheriff.

Then on October 8, 1858, the paper appeared with only Ned Waggoner listed as editor and proprietor. Joseph Waggoner published a note stating that Ned Waggoner had bought his entire interest in the paper and would be responsible for any of its liabilities. He added: My retiring will make but little difference relative to the real worth of the paper, unless, perhaps, to make it of more interest and value.” He said he was leaving the paper in “Ned’s (E.E.) hands” and that the paper would “be found advocating the principles of the Democratic party, which, in my opinion, is the only national party that lives in this Union, at the present time. During the present campaign, it will advocate the return of Judge Douglas to the United States Senate”

However, the paper did not stay in Ned's hands long — or out of J.H.'s. Just four months later, on February 11, 1859, the paper appeared with the names: “J.H. & I.V. Waggoner, Editor and Publisher.” I.V. Waggoner was another of the Waggoner brothers. The accompanying notice from Ned stated that he had sold out his entire interest “to J.H. & I.V. Waggoner.” He added:

The reason I did so was, you wouldn't pay your little bills, and I am too poor to publish a newspaper without receiving some remuneration. You will please pay to my successors fifteen hundred dollars — the amount of your indebtedness to this office — and oblige,
Your Ob't Serv't, Ned Waggoner.”

That joint arrangement didn't last long either. I.V. Waggoner died on

March 18, 1859, and the type and fixtures of the paper were sold at public sale on May 27, 1859. J.H. was apparently the successful bidder because he was immediately identified as the sole owner and editor. Also, the name of John R. Eden began to appear on the masthead as "Political Editor."

Joseph Waggoner continued as the sole proprietor of the *Sullivan Express* until July 12, 1860, when two brothers were listed as proprietors: J.H. & F.M. Waggoner. The paper struggled on with both brothers sharing the work load until early November, at which point the paper expired. Apparently the last issue appeared on November 11, 1860, by which time Abraham Lincoln had been elected President.

The *1881 County History* reported that the brothers J.H. and F.M. Waggoner had "continued the publication until November 1, 1860, when they announced through its columns that they would close the office for a short time, in order to give their undivided attention to the collection of money due the office."

One gets some sense of how painfully difficult the economic times must have been in Moultrie County during 1859 and 1860 from the long lists that appeared in the June 14, 1860, issue of the *Express* of lands and town lots on which taxes remain unpaid for the year 1859, as well as lands forfeited to the State for taxes.

Joseph H. Waggoner and his brothers were grandsons of Isaac and Elsey Waggoner, the earliest permanent settlers of the Whitley Point area of Moultrie County in 1828. One of the sons of Isaac and Elsey was Amos Waggoner, the father of Joseph H. and his brothers. *The Whitley Point Record Book*, R.E. Martin, Chicago, 1996, at 8. The *1881 County History* provided this biographical sketch of Joseph Waggoner:

For sixteen years circuit clerk of Moultrie county, Joseph Waggoner was born in the present Whitley township, then a part of Shelby county, September 1st, 1832. His ancestors were of German origin, and resided in North Carolina. His father, Amos Waggoner, and his mother, Narcissa Jay, were born, raised, and married in Rutherford county, North Carolina. They came to Illinois and settled on Whitley creek in 1828. Mr. Waggoner was raised in that part of the county.

In 1850, when he was eighteen, his father moved with the family to

Sullivan, and died in 1854. Amos Waggoner was a man of of natural ability though like most of the early pioneers he was self educated. He served two or three terms as justice of the peace, and at the time of his death was associate judge.

When about twenty-two Joseph Waggoner took charge of a school and taught three terms. In the spring of 1858, in partnership with his brothers, he purchased the *Sullivan Express*, which had been established the preceding fall, and was the first newspaper published in Moultrie county. He was connected with this paper till 1860.

After the *Express* shut down — “for a short time” — in late 1860, Joseph Waggoner went on to have a respected career in public service in Moultrie County (*1881 County History*):

In 1861 he was elected assessor and treasurer of the county, and served two years. In 1864 he was elected circuit clerk, and was reelected for three terms, thus filling the office for sixteen years in succession — a longer period than any other county officer has held position in Moultrie county. Since the expiration of his last term as circuit clerk his time has been devoted to the abstract business. He was married on the twelfth of February, 1858, to Laura E. Henry, daughter of Elder B. W. Henry, one of the early ministers of the Christian church. Mrs. Waggoner was born in Shelby county. He has seven children by this marriage. He has always been a democrat. For more than twenty years he has been a member of the Christian church at Sullivan.

Alfred Smyser

According to the *1881 County History*, the office of the *Express* remained closed after 1860 and “the type foundry at Cincinnati took possession of the office and sold it to Alfred N. Smyser. He continued the publication until the summer of 1862, when he enlisted in the United States service and entered the army.”

Alfred Smyser, like the Waggoners, was a prominent early citizen of Sullivan. He had grown up in the Whitley Point area and continued to farm there until he moved to Sullivan in September 1857. In 1861 he was elected county clerk. He was instrumental in helping to build the Decatur, Sullivan, and Mattoon Railroad. His biography in the *1881 County History* does not men-

tion any ownership interest in the newspaper business, but his son William later became one of the proprietors of the *Sullivan Progress*.

The Perryman Brothers

The 1881 *County History* continued: “The office then [1862] passed into hands of the Perryman brothers, James D., George and Tobey Perryman. They continued the *Express* at irregular intervals, (and for a time it ceased entirely) until 1866, when Richard Couch brought a small office from Shelbyville to Sullivan, and it and the *Express* were consolidated.”

The Perryman brothers were sons of John and Ann Perryman. John had built the first house in Sullivan in the early days, May 1845, and James D. was the first child born in the new village.

An article in the pro-Lincoln-Administration *Mattoon Gazette*, August 19, 1863, refers to the “*Sullivan Express*” as follows:

A third-rate blockhead named Perryman has resuscitated the *Sullivan Express*, which comes to us this week, a filthily printed five-column sheet, principally filled with matter calculated — if uttered by men of any influence — to injure the Government. It devotes one column to vilification of the *Gazette* The ass of the *Express* is behind the times. We advise him to consult with Ficklin, Van Deren & Co., before he issues another number of his pretty sheet, when he will not, perhaps, bray so inopportunistly.

Editor Perryman wrote in his Sullivan paper that men had appeared armed on the streets of Mattoon because they had been threatened by Republicans. The *Mattoon Gazette* responded:

We have the very best of authority for stating that the above is a falsehood, well known to the real and ostensible editors of the *Express*. One of our citizens did state that if these men came to town armed and shouted for Jeff. Davis, Vallandigham, &c., ‘he would fight them if no one else would.’ He was simply a little crazy in his zeal for the Union cause ... a falsehood trumped up as a pretext for the gathering of the armed mob, as he distinctly admits that the original intention was to have a drill or ‘parade’ and it was only when he was convinced that it would lead to difficulty that he insisted upon ‘turning it into a public meeting.’

This reported exchange between the editors of the Mattoon and Sullivan papers illustrates the depth of feeling that then prevailed between supporters of the Administration and some of their Democratic opponents.

B. The Sullivan Democrat — 1866-1869

The first *Sullivan Democrat* began when the *Express*, edited by James Perryman, was consolidated with an operation brought by Richard Couch from Shelbyville to Sullivan. The 1881 *County History* recites that “On the 20th of the same month” — in 1866 presumably — “Couch and Perryman commenced the publication of *The Sullivan Democrat*.” It was described as a seven column paper, folio form.

The *County History* states that the new paper — which was naturally “Democratic” in its politics — continued to exist until January 1869, when Thomas M. Bushfield took possession by virtue of a chattel mortgage he held on the presses.

The connection between the *Express* and the *Sullivan Democrat* — from Perryman, to Couch, to Bushfield — was one of continuing use of the same plant rather than overlapping or continuity of ownership.

Issues of *The Sullivan Democrat* from the 1860s apparently do not survive.

C. The Progress — 1869-1873; 1873-1880; 1880-1885; 1885-1917

Thomas Bushfield — 1869

After Thomas M. Bushfield took over operation of the *Democrat* in early 1869, he changed its name to *The Sullivan Progress*. The 1881 *County History* recites that Bushfield was the proprietor, and W.H. Smyser was editor and foreman. Then at the end of that year — on December 6, 1869 — Bushfield sold the paper to Phillip L. Shutt.

Bushfield was a prominent local citizen: he was County Treasurer from 1871-73, became president of the board of village trustees when Sullivan was incorporated in late 1872, and then Mayor of the new city, serving until 1873.

P.L. Shutt — 1869-1873

I.J. Martin agrees that Phillip Shutt bought the plant in 1869 but reports that it was Shutt rather than Bushfield who changed the name of the paper to *The Sullivan Progress*.

In any event, there is no disagreement that Shutt continued to operate the *Progress* until November 27, 1873, when he sold it to W.H. Smyser and W.J. Mize.

W.H. Smyser and W.J. Mize — 1873-1885

In describing Sullivan during the 1870s, Walt Eden wrote (at 32): “W.J. Mize and Henry Smyser were editors of the ‘*Sullivan Progress*.’ The paper was edited from the third floor of the Opera House. Mr. Mize was secretary of the Democratic County Central Committee for many years.” The Titus Opera House in the early 1870s was a new three-story building on the north side of the square at the west end.

A Mattoon newspaper took notice of the *Progress* when it came to their attention the second week of August 1875, “all home-made. It is one of the most carefully edited of our exchanges, and aims to be a local newspaper in the fullest sense of the term.” “Home-made” probably meant — written by locals as contrasted with reprinting articles from other newspapers.

Smyser and Mize were still operating the *Progress* when the *1881 County History* ended its account of county journalism, but not before describing their production as “a model of typographical neatness. The artistic and elegant designs and forms of advertisements as set up in the *Progress* are the admiration of the fraternity wherever the paper is known.” It added that Smyser and Mize had made the newspaper “a financial success.”

I.J. Martin, later a part-owner and editor of the *Progress*, wrote of Smyser and Mize that they “were the two greatest newspaper men — barring none, present company not excepted — that Sullivan has ever known. They agreed to pay \$2,000 for the paper in annual installments of \$500, with interest. They put a dollar each in the money drawer and from that time on their cash balance was on the right side.” I.J.M. *Notes*, at 83.

In the 1875 *Atlas*, Smyser & Mize were identified as “Editors, *Sullivan*

Progress, Office, Third Floor, Opera House.”

An advance in technology occurred when in 1877 the editors of the *Progress* purchased a telegraph line — from their offices in town to the depot — and moved the operator’s office into “their sanctum.”

In 1885 Smyser and Mize sold the paper to new owners. As Mize told a *Decatur Herald* reporter, I sold out because I had a good opportunity and because I have tired of newspaper work. It was very confining and was beginning to wear upon me. I could not see that in this city of many newspapers, the prospects for the next year were particularly bright I was tired of the incessant work of a newspaper and needed rest.”

I.J. Martin, W.W. Eden — then Charles Shuman and A.W. Vaughan — 1885-1912.

I.J. Martin wrote in his historical *Notes*: “In 1885 I.J. Martin bought a one-third interest in the *Progress*, and afterwards W.W. Eden bought the remaining interest of Smyser and Mize, which he later sold to Charles Shuman and A.W. Vaughan. Mr. Vaughan later retired, and Martin and Shuman were the publishers until a joint stock company under the name The Progress Printing Company was formed in 1891.”

The new owners moved the printing office to a new location, probably in 1885 or early 1886. An advertisement in the then-competing newspaper, *Moultrie County News*, offered space in a “new two-story brick business house, situated on the northeast corner of the public square ... the lower room of which is used as a grocery store and the upper rooms by the Progress office.” The office of “Progress, Hand Printer” can be seen on the Sanborn map of Sullivan, 1886, in the building kitty-corner to the northeast of the court house.

William Wallace (“W.W.”) Eden, a son of Joseph E. Eden (proprietor of the Eden House and a brother of John R.) was County Clerk from 1877-1882. Charles Shuman succeeded W.W. Eden and served as County Clerk from 1882-1890. In 1883 Shuman appointed I.J. Martin to serve as his Deputy. I.J. left the clerk’s office in 1885 to edit and manage the *Progress*. W.W. Eden was briefly a co-owner, but sold his interest to Shuman — at which point Martin and Shuman became partners. E.V. Henkel was one of the editors of the *Progress* during the late 1880s.

According to I.J.'s *Notes*, he edited the paper until 1899 — then there was a two-year hiatus — then he resumed management in 1901 and continued in that role until 1912. The letterhead of the Progress Printing Company in 1906 listed Charles Shuman, President, and I.J. Martin, Secretary.

In April 1907 I.J. Martin with the help of Editor W.T. McClure and I.J.'s eldest son, John Eden Martin, who was working as a “foreman” in the plant, attempted to shift from a weekly to a daily publication basis — naming the new paper the “*Daily Progress*.” The new daily made its first appearance April 16, 1907. It did not last long; and operations soon went back to a weekly schedule.

I.J. Martin, while managing the *Progress*, was the Democratic Candidate for Congress in 1910. He lost.

In May 1912 I.J. sold his interest in the company to Charles Shuman, his son Irving Shuman, and L.B. Scroggin.

Charles and Irving Shuman; L.B. Scroggin - 1912-1915.

O.B. Lowe and Van D. Roughton - 1915.

John Gaddis and R.R. Barger — 1915-1916.

According to the *Sullivan City Directory*, the *Progress* office in mid-1913 was at 1422 Harrison Street. The Sanborn map for Sullivan places the office on the second floor of the office building north across the street from the Eden Hotel.

The Shumans were the owners for about three years — 1912-1915. During the first part of the Shuman regime, Roy L. Spright served as editor and manager. Then O.B. Lowe was for a time editor and publisher. I.J. wrote that “his energetic and courageous management and the prestige he gave the paper are well remembered. John W. Gaddis was the last manager under the Shuman regime.” I.J.M. *Notes*, at 84.

Though I.J. sold his interest in the *Progress* in 1912, the Martin family was not entirely disentangled from the paper. I.J.'s oldest son, John Eden Martin, worked there from 1908 until phasing out in 1912-1913. In late 1912 he reportedly quit work at the *Progress* in order to go to work for his uncle, J.K. Martin, where he could study law. John Eden must have continued to help out at the *Progress* because when he went off to serve in the national guard in 1913, it was reported that I.J. stepped in to replace him temporarily in the edito-

rial function.. I.J.'s second son, Joel Neely Martin also worked at the *Progress* after graduating from high school in 1909, and I.J. Martin's third son, Robert, continued to work as "foreman of the mechanical department" of the printing company until January 1916, when he moved to Chicago to study law at Kent Law School.

For a brief interval in 1915 controlling interest in the *Progress* was owned by O.B. Lowe and Van D. Roughton. They sold their interest to John W. Gaddis in September 1915. "The past owners haven't found it a paying investment and the new owner takes charge with the intention of adapting business methods to all work." *Progress*, September 23, 1915.

In early 1916 John W. Gaddis was listed as both Editor and Manager. Gaddis published several chapters of his "History of Moultrie County" (reproduced largely from the 1881 *Combined History*) in the *Progress* during 1916.

In late July 1916 R.R. Barger, previously a newspaperman in Mattoon, purchased a half interest in the *Progress*. Thereafter in 1916 Barger & Gaddis were listed together as the "publishers."

D. The Moultrie County Union Banner — 1863-1867

For the history of the *Union Banner*, we must rely on the 1881 *County History*. It was the first Republican-oriented newspaper in Moultrie County. The paper was begun in 1863 by W.M. Stanley, who organized a stock company of many influential Republicans in the county. They purchased the necessary equipment in Chicago and persuaded W.A. Ballard to take charge as editor and manager. He ran the paper "for nearly one year, when he was deposed" and the founder, Wm.M. Stanley, appointed his successor, who ran the paper until 1867.

The Okaw Republican — 1867-1870.

On April 3, 1867, the *Union Banner* was sold to Captain A.P. Greene and J.F. Hughes, who changed its name to "*The Okaw Republican*." Hughes, a young lawyer, withdrew after a year and moved to Mattoon where he was later elected a judge. Greene ran the paper under its new name until it was sold in February 1870.

Unfortunately, so far as I can tell none of the issues of that paper — under either of its names — has survived.

We find a faint trace of the *Okaw Republican* in a friendly reference found in a Decatur paper of April 1869 wherein it was written that “Major Green (sic) of the *Sullivan Republican* (sic)” was pronounced “the handsomest editor in Illinois. We have heretofore supposed that the handsomest editor in the state or nation resided in Decatur.”

Another less complimentary reference may be found in the *Decatur Weekly Republican*, November 24, 1870, which reported on a recent state senate election in which the correctly-named candidate, Michael Donahue, received no votes in Moultrie, but an incorrectly-named non-person supposedly named “Patrick Donahue” had received 656 votes, which were thrown out, giving the opposition candidate the victory. This mistake was blamed on an error in printing the ballots in Moultrie County — “an unpardonable blunder, for which Mr. Greene, the publisher of the *Okaw Republican*, should be held morally responsible.”

In partial mitigation, perhaps, the Decatur paper added that the blunder was the result of Democratic sabotage: “We have been informed that the printer Mr. Greene employed in his office was a Democrat, and was induced by his party friends to print the tickets in the bogus form which has caused all this trouble.”

E. The Sullivan Plaindealer - 1872-1875

According to the 1881 *County History* this paper existed only from December 18, 1872, until May 5, 1874. It was run by B.B. and C.W. Everett, editors and proprietors, and was Republican in its politics. The office and equipment were then moved to Paris, Illinois.

I.J. Martin wrote of it only that “Dr. B.B. Everett and his son published a paper called the Plaindealer but it ceased publication some time in the seventies.”

To my knowledge, no other trace of it has survived.

F. The Moultrie County Chronicle - 1874

According to the 1881 *County History*, a paper with this name was operated by Cicero V. Walls, from October 9, 1874 for 11 weeks. It too was Republican in its orientation. Mr. Walls then gave up the effort and shipped his equipment to Arcola.

G. The Sullivan Journal - 1875-1884

Again we have the 1881 *County History* to thank for preserving the faint memory of another Republican-oriented paper, run by one W.A Chapman from December 1875 until May 1876 at which time Chapman sold it to Messrs. A.S. Lindsay and J.W. Rohr. It then passed through a series of new owners — W.G. Cambridge — then T.L. McGrath and J.C. Stanley — then W.M. Stanley and Son — then Fred T. Magruder and James R. Sedgwick.

I.J. Martin tells us the *Journal* suspended operations in 1884. If so, it had a life of almost a decade. But apparently no issues of the *Sullivan Journal* survive. It was, however, briefly mentioned in an issue of the *Mattoon Gazette* in July 1876.

Moultrie County during the two decades after the Civil War was not a great market for Republican newspapers.

H. The Sullivan News, renamed Moultrie County News (MCN) — 1884-1961

For the period following the publication in 1881 of the *County History*, we must rely mostly on I.J. Martin's *Notes*. He wrote that about the time the *Journal* suspended operations in 1884, "C.W. Green and Wade Hollingsworth started the publication of the *Sullivan News*, but they sold out the next year [1885] to J.H. Dunscomb." Dunscomb was listed in the 1875 *Sullivan Atlas* as the Treasurer of Moultrie County.

Then in 1886 Dunscomb changed the name to the *Moultrie County News* and the political orientation from Independent to Republican. "He was an aggressive publisher and had built up a good business before he sold the paper to William G. Covey in 1888." Covey had not previously been in the newspaper business.

The earliest issue to survive is one from December 1886, when Dunscomb was still running the paper. It consisted of 12 pages and contained an ad describing itself as "a weekly published for the perusal of intelligent and cultured citizens of Moultrie and surrounding counties." It reported a circulation of 1,000, and bore the name J.H. Dunscomb, "Editor and Proprietor."

This end-of-1886 holiday issue put a sharper edge on the paper's history:

One year ago, *The News* greeted its many friends in holiday attire. We again make our appearance with a new head and a slight change in name having exchanged the word ‘Sullivan’ for ‘Moultrie County.’ Not that we were tired of the name but we wish it understood that our paper is published in the interest of the whole county. . . . The year has passed, and it has been a pleasant year with us, your support has been liberal, your words of kindness and good cheer have encouraged us to persevere. We have added new presses and new type and settled down in the belief that two papers in Moultrie County can and will be supported if they are worthy of the same.

We commenced in June 1885 with a subscription list of 400 — today we send out 1,606 papers.

In December 1887 Dunscomb sold the *News* to William G. Covey, who before his entry into the newspaper business had been a farmer in Loxa, Coles County.

From 1888 on “Mr. Covey held the record in Sullivan for the longest continuous service as editor. He was succeeded by S.T. Walker who in turn was succeeded by Mr. Arlo Chapin.” I.J.M. *Notes*, at 83.

The first issue from the Covey era to survive appeared December 13, 1888. Its masthead describes it as “the only REPUBLICAN JOURNAL in Moultrie County,” and identifies W.G. Covey as “Editor and Proprietor.” However, it appears that the Dunscombs may not have disengaged completely from the paper in 1887. An article on December 20, 1888, stated that “George Dunscomb has severed his connection with the NEWS office and is spending this week in visiting and bidding good bye to his many friends preparatory to taking his departure for California next week.”

Within a couple of years, Covey was reportedly making a success out of his new venture. A Decatur paper in March 1890 noted that “Republicanism in old Moultrie is taking on new life. The *News*, the Republican organ, is making money for its owner, W.G. Covey, and its influence is being felt in that locality.”

Covey ran the paper for 26 years, until early March 1914 when he sold it to Sam T. Walker, who until that time had been publisher of the *Atwood Herald*. Covey moved on to run a daily paper in Charles City, Iowa.

Walker did not keep the MCN long. In early August 1916, he sold it to G.B. Chapin and his son Arlow of Champaign. Chapin had formerly been the owner of the Champaign *Daily News*. Son Arlow was appointed editor of the Sullivan paper. Eventually he became both publisher and editor.

Chapin sold the MCN to Glenn Cooper, January 1, 1941. Later that year when Cooper was hit with an attack of appendicitis, another paper noted that the former owner, Arlo Chapin, assisted with publication during his illness. Cooper edited the paper through the war years and at the same time served as County Judge.

At some point in the fall 1945, Earl Walker entered the picture. The issue of MCN for August 10, 1945, lists Glen R. Cooper, Editor, with no reference to a publisher. But on December 14, 1945, the masthead listed: Earl Walker, Publisher, and Glen R. Cooper, Editor. Editor Cooper endorsed himself for County Judge along with the rest of the Republican ticket in the early spring of 1947.

Then in May 1947, “Earl Walker, owner of the Moultrie County News” announced the sale of the paper to Lester and Louise Lippincott, formerly of Springfield, in May 1947. Both were listed as Publishers with Lester listed as Editor and Louise as office manager.

Bad luck soon struck, as a fire on January 23, 1948, burned the MCN plant and an adjoining pool hall to the ground. The Lippincotts quickly rebuilt the plant and continued publication. They sold MCN to Bob and Marion Best in October 1961.

Then in 1979 the Bests bought the *Sullivan Progress* from Byron Brandenburger, thus permitting the combination of the two papers into the News-Progress.

I. The Saturday Herald - 1891-1919

The Sullivan Herald

The *Decatur Herald* announced on June 14, 1891: “Sullivan is to have a daily paper — *The Herald* — the first issue of which will appear to-morrow afternoon. W.T. McClure will be the editor and publisher and Chas. Nazworthy will

be city editor.” The *Daily Republican* in Decatur described McClure as someone “who formerly stuck type on the different papers of this city.”

In his *Notes*, I.J. wrote: The paper “first became an important influence in community affairs in 1894 when the late John P. Lilly became the editor. While he was the editor, there were at times influences and pressure exerted to obtain support for things he did not approve, and the writer [I.J.] knows how firmly he stood out against every offer of inducement.”

John P. Lilly had been Sullivan’s first bookseller. His shop, known as the City Book Store, was located at the east end of the block on the north side of the square. Lilly was listed in the 1881 *County History* under “books and stationery” — “Lilly & Co., A. Miley.” He combined the book business with his news stand.

The first issue which survives is for Saturday, June 17, 1899 — identified as Vol. VIII, No. 24, which is consistent with the announcement that the first appearance was in 1891. The *Herald’s* offices were in an upstairs room on the east side of the square. John P. Lilly was identified as the Editor. The paper noted that its content was prepared by its own “corps of correspondents” — “hustling reporters from different towns in Moultrie County.”

After John Lilly’s death in 1904, his wife, America D. Lilly, continued to edit the *Herald*. I.J. wrote that she “always kept the paper on the right side of every question, and that “in the matter of sincere promotion of public welfare, its record is clean and consistent.” I.J.M. *Notes*, at 85. Mrs. Lilly managed the paper until 1919 when she sold it to John Eden Martin, the oldest son of I.J. Martin.

J. The Sullivan Democrat — 1899-1916

As I.J. Martin pointed out in his *Notes*, there were two different newspapers by the name “Democrat” published in Sullivan — one in the 1860s (which was renamed the “Progress”) and this second one, edited by Judge Isaac Hudson from 1899 to 1916. W.K. Whitfield sold his interest in the paper to Hudson in August 1907. It was announced by a neighboring paper as follows:

The *Sullivan Democrat* is the head borne by a new paper based in Moultrie’s capital. It makes four which Sullivan can now boast, but it makes a good start and should win a quarter of the patronage on merits. It appears as a four-column, sixteen-page affair and its make-up is novel and interesting.

Pictures of one issue survive, for August 13, 1914. It identified Kate E. Hudson as publisher and Isaac Hudson as editor. "Printed and published on the south side of the public square, 1305 1/2 Jefferson Street." It chose a good motto: "Published not for Praise nor Glory, Not Fun, But for Funds."

K. The Independent — 1916-1919

In May 1916 it was reported that the two older sons of I.J. Martin — John Eden and Joel Neely — were "making arrangements to start another weekly paper" in Sullivan. They intended to put out their first issue about June 1 and to call it the "Moultrie County Independent." "Both the Martin brothers are good newspaper men and should make a success of their new paper. Their plans now are to use the rooms recently vacated by the *Sullivan Democrat*."

In February 1917 a Decatur paper announced the marriage of John Eden Martin, who "is in the newspaper business with his brother, J. Neely Martin. They own the Moultrie County Independent."

The *Independent* was published under the firm name of "Martin Brothers" until June 1, 1919, when it was sold to Ed C. Brandenburger," who had moved to Sullivan from Belleville.

* * *

The Period of Consolidations

As of mid-1916 the Sullivan "market" for newspapers was overcrowded and chaotic. There were five newspapers:

1. The *Progress*, the main Democratic newspaper, once managed by I.J. Martin (with the help of his sons), from which the Shumans had recently exited; it was owned in 1916 by Messrs. Gaddis and Barger;
2. The *Moultrie County News*, the Republican newspaper, which had just been sold to the Chapins;
3. The *Sullivan Democrat*, the second Democratic newspaper, published by the Hudsons; and
4. The *Herald*, run by America Lilly, the widow of John P. Lilly.

5. To make matters worse, in May 1916 the “Martin Brothers” — John Eden and Joel Neely — announced that they were setting up *The Independent*.

The principal sources of newspaper revenue were (a) subscriptions from readers; (b) commercial advertising; and (c) official publication of notices. In addition, a newspaper could receive (d) payment for private printing jobs, unrelated to the newspaper. It must have seemed clear to these folks in mid-1916 that Sullivan could not support five newspapers. Clearly, some consolidation was necessary. The first stage took this form:

A. In the fall of 1917, Joel Neely Martin and his brother Robert W. purchased the subscription list of the *Progress*. Why they did not purchase stock in the corporation is not clear, but it may have been a way of limiting their liability for any debts that may have been owned by the corporation. Issues of the *Progress* from 1917 do not survive. Issues from 1918 show on the masthead: “Published By Martin Bros.” Robert W., my father, worked at the *Progress* until May 1918 when he went into the army. From that point on, through 1919, Neely ran the paper himself.

Then in June 1919 Joel Neely and brother Robert contracted to sell their interest in the *Progress* for \$7,500 to Ed C. Brandenburger, who had previously been in the newspaper business in Belleville. (At the time of that contract, Robert was still in France, not yet having been discharged from the army.) After he moved to Sullivan Brandenburger became a leader in community affairs and active in the county Democratic Party.

Brandenburger took possession of the newspaper August 1. Neely then went off to work for a newspaper in North Dakota. And Robert — my father — who was just back from France, was out of a job.

B. The *Independent* — owned by John Eden and brother Joel Neely — was also sold to Brandenburger.

C. On August 5, 1919, Mrs. Lilly sold *The Herald* to the elder Martin brother — John Eden Martin — who had been in the army in France until mid-1919. “The change in ownership of the paper came as a surprise to most people as only a few knew that Mr. Martin and Mrs. Lilly were on a deal until after the sale had been closed.”

The name on the masthead was changed from “Saturday Herald” to “The Sullivan Herald.” The paper was printed on the south side of the square, at 1305 1/2 Jefferson St.

It is likely that I.J. Martin provided all or part of the money for the purchase. “Eden,” as he was known, did not seem to engage in the management of the paper. He ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 1920. I.J. was listed in the 1920’s as the publisher.

These deals left Sullivan with three papers:

1. *The Progress* — run by Ed Brandenburger;
2. *The Moultrie County News* — run by the Chapins; and
3. *The Sullivan Herald* — run by I.J. (along with his abstract company).

After acquiring the *Progress* in June 1919, Mr. Brandenburger may have been surprised two months later to learn that I.J. Martin, a long-time newspaperman and former editor of his new paper, was back in harness at the *Herald*. But he was irritated when he learned that Neely — one of the owners from whom he had purchased the *Progress* — was working for his father I.J. at the *Herald*.

When Brandenburger in May 1919 had entered into the contract with Neely and his brother Robert — the “Martin Brothers” — to buy the *Progress*, both Neely and Robert had agreed “that neither of them would enter or engage in the newspaper or printing business in Sullivan, Illinois, during the time that Brandenburger should continue in business at said place.” Such clauses are generally known as “non-compete” clauses and may be enforced if reasonable in scope.

It appears that in the spring of 1920 Neely Martin began working in some capacity for the *Herald*.

Brandenburger then brought suit against Neely to enforce the non-compete provision of his purchase agreement. (The complaint made no suggestion that brother Robert was working for the *Herald* or the print shop.) The Circuit Court granted an injunction prohibiting Neely “from entering or engaging in the

newspaper or printing business . . .” However, the court declined to enjoin Neely from “working as a servant or employee” in the newspaper or printing business” or from working “as agent, representative, solicitor, manager, foreman, reporter, editor, buyer of supplies or printer . . .”

Brandenburger appealed on the ground that the injunction should have precluded Neely from working for his father at the *Herald*. The Appellate Court affirmed the injunction as issued and — more important for Neely — declined to extend it. So Neely could continue to work for his father at the *Herald*.

The second stage of newspaper consolidation in Sullivan then took place. In December 1926 it was announced that the *Herald* was being sold to the publishers of the *Sullivan Progress* and *The Moultrie County News*. The last issue of the *Herald* appeared December 24.

Brandenburger, in the issue of the *Progress* for December 24, 1926, made clear the non-compete terms of the new agreement and reminded his readers of some of the recent history:

Under the terms of the contract, I.J. Martin, publisher, and his three sons, J. Eden Martin, J. Neely Martin and Robert W. Martin, who have all at some time or other been engaged in the newspaper and job printing business in this city, contract and agree that none of them will be in any way connected with that line of business in Sullivan during the time that Ed C. Brandenburger is owner of The *Sullivan Progress* and Arlo Chapin is owner of the *Moultrie County News*. . . . The present owner of *The Progress* bought that business from J.N. Martin and R.W. Martin on June 1st 1919.

He added a note that might today make an antitrust lawyer’s antennae twitch:

Sullivan has had too many newspapers. Now, for perhaps the first time in fifty years, it has but two.

Shortly after the sale of the *Herald*, Neely went to work for the *Decatur Herald*.

The last issue of the *Herald* contained a statement which I think my Grandfather I.J. Martin would have wanted me to reproduce here:

It is customary, and we are glad that it is, for newspaper publishers to express their appreciation to their readers and patrons upon retirement from business through sale or consolidation.

The publisher of *The Herald* and immediate members of his family have been connected with the newspaper business in Sullivan the greater part of the time for more than forty years. The seven years of publication of *The Herald* have been for the most part a pleasing and fairly profitable experience. During the time, *The Herald* has seen a remarkable growth in patronage from the people of the community and, we believe, increased prestige through its policy of independent thought and expression of views. In city, township and county affairs, the editorial policy of *The Herald* has been entirely independent of every consideration except what it believed to be the best interest of the community it served.

Furthermore, the merger of the three papers into two establishments is made at the end of the most successful and prosperous year in the history of *The Herald*. The annual business of *The Herald* for the past two or three years has nearly doubled. The total business in the year 1925 was \$5670.43, which was the high mark in its career of thirty years. Yet that total was increased by nearly twenty percent this year. Our total business in 1926 exceeds \$6500, besides the earnings for this week which are yet to be added.

This is not published for the purpose of boasting, although we confess the figures are gratifying, but we give them to show that *The Herald* is put into the merger only for the purpose of enabling the publishing business to better serve the interests of the community. It is our belief that two papers will be more efficient than three, and if the politicians could surrender their jealous suspicions, it would be better to have only one.

* * *

The post-1920s history of the Sullivan newspapers is less complicated and thus may be more briefly summarized.

The *Moultrie County News* was purchased by Lester Lippincott from Earl

Walker in May 1947. Less than a year later the newspaper plant was destroyed by fire, but was soon rebuilt. The enterprise was sold by the Lippincotts to Robert and Marion Best in 1961.

The *Sullivan Progress* was sold by Byron Brandenburger to the Bests in 1979. They along with other smaller county newspapers were combined into a single paper — the *NewsProgress* — in 1981.

XI.

Sullivan's Unhappy History with Two of Its Early Banks

James Elder, it may be recalled, was one of the founding fathers of Sullivan and a highly respected businessman and civic leader. He settled first in Nelson about 1835 and established a store there. Then in 1845 at the time Sullivan was founded, he moved his store from Nelson to the new village. He maintained both a hotel and a store, and was the first elected County Judge in Moultrie County.

Judge Elder served in the state legislature for several years and was a good friend of Abraham Lincoln, who stayed at his home on East Jackson (later the site of the Singiser rest home) before his speech during the 1858 Senate race.

The oldest part of Greenhill Cemetery in Sullivan was originally the private burying ground of Judge Elder's family. His daughter Rebecca (Mrs. Louis J. Berry) was reportedly the first person buried there, in March 1847.

Judge Elder also established Sullivan's first bank — known as the Elder Bank — in 1868. I.J. Martin in his *Notes* on the history of Sullivan described Judge Elder's business "as merchant and private banker." According to the 1881 *County History*, after Judge Elder's death in early 1870 his son, William Elder,

“became interested in the banking business at Sullivan, which his father had commenced the preceding year.” *Id.*, at 192; see also *Portrait and Biographical Record of Shelby and Moultrie Counties*, Chicago 1891, at 338. William also served as Executor of his father’s estate.

It was not long before son William Elder decided to get out of the banking business. On February 8, 1872, he entered into an agreement with “Thomas B. Trower & Son, of Charleston, Coles County,” whereby Elder “sold all his business, interest, influence, and patronage in the banking business, and also his bank safe, together with all the fixtures pertaining to the business of banking, in the town of Sullivan” to the Trowers. As part of the deal, Elder agreed “not to engage in the banking business in said town of Sullivan.”

For this banking business and safe, the Trowers agreed to pay William \$1,250. *Thomas B. Trower et al. v. William Elder*, Reports of Cases at Law and in Chancery, Vol. 77, 1875, at 453. The agreement was signed by the two Trowers — Thomas, the father, and Xavier B. Trower, Thomas’ son. The Trowers then conducted their banking business under the name “Moultrie County Bank.”

However, William Elder had retained the right to lend money and buy notes “as any other individual.” Elder apparently relied on his retained right as permitting him to continue to engage in business very much like banking. The Trowers sued to stop him, but were unsuccessful — winning only nominal damages.

This left Sullivan in the mid-1870s with two banks: (1) the Moultrie County Bank, operated by T.B. Trower & Son — the “son” being Xavier B. Trower — “Deposits received. Interest paid on time deposits,” and (2) the Manufacturers’ & Farmers’ bank, referred to as M&F Bank, operated by William Elder and cashier John Duncan.

Within less than five years, the first of these banks — the one run by Xavier B. Trower — was a dead duck.

The Moultrie County Bank — The 1879 Trower Defalcation.

In addition to being owner of the Moultrie County Bank, Xavier B. Trower was the second elected Mayor of Sullivan. He succeeded the first mayor, Victor Thompson, in 1877 and was re-elected in April 1879. I.J. Martin described the immediate aftermath of the 1879 Mayoral election:

The Trower ticket for Mayor and Aldermen was ahead in a close contest. But while his supporters were celebrating the victory with bonfires and other evidences of enthusiasm, Trower and his lawyer were in the bank preparing an assignment for the benefit of his creditors. At 12 o'clock midnight, a special train — an engine with one coach — stopped at the main street crossing, south of town, and Trower and his wife went aboard. He carried some hand baggage, which doubtless contained among other valuables enough money for immediate needs. (I.J.M. *Notes*, at 48.)

Xavier B. Tower appeared to be a respectable and successful man, described as “a man in the prime of life, red-haired and spare made ..” His father Thomas was a prosperous farmer in Coles County. Appearances, however, were deceiving. It was later disclosed in litigation that X.B. had “prior to 1877 engaged in running a private bank in Charleston, Illinois, where he failed in business that year.” *Horn v. Sayer*, 184 Ill App. 326, at 328.

The first indication of trouble in Sullivan was a brief note in the *Decatur Weekly Republican*, February 13, 1879, that, “The mayor of Sullivan, X.B. Trower, has resigned.” No explanation was given. (Sullivan newspapers from this period do not survive.) Yet, mysteriously, Trower continued to be a candidate for “re-election” as Mayor. The election was to be held in mid-April.

The cashier of Trower's Moultrie County Bank was William “Billy” Peckham. On April 9 Billy resigned his cashier's position and left the bank. This caused some local talk, but the resignation was attributed by some to the fact that Trower was pro-license — in favor of licensing saloons — while Peckham supported prohibition.

Then on April 12 the Treasurer of Moultrie county withdrew most of the cash in his account — \$5,000 — leaving only a few hundred on deposit.

On Tuesday, April 15, Trower was re-elected by a margin of only 35 votes with the support of the pro-license crowd and “notwithstanding booming temperance meetings” held in Sullivan “night after night, previous to the election day.”

At 5 o'clock that Tuesday afternoon, Trower paid the Decatur, Mattoon and Sullivan train conductor \$20 to return to Sullivan with a special train — unscheduled locomotive and car — to take him to an important appointment.

The conductor obtained the company's permission and made the arrangements; so between 10 and 11 p.m. that evening, a special DS&M train "backed down from Mattoon to Sullivan." When Trower met the conductor at the station, he said: "I was afraid you were going to leave me. What did you make such a terrible racket for." The train men then went to Trower's house and helped carry two trunks to the special car. Mrs. Trower had reportedly been weeping." The train pulled out, taking Trower and his wife and "a large amount of money."

I.J. Martin wrote that before leaving, Trower "and his lawyer" had been preparing an assignment of assets for the benefit of creditors. I.J. neglected to mention that the lawyer was John R. Eden, I.J.'s father-in-law. With the help of his lawyer, Trower assigned his property to J.S. Welch for the benefit of depositors and creditors; but "a few minutes before the assignment was completed, an attachment was served on most of the property." It was said that the former cashier, Billy Peckham, had alerted some depositors to the danger.

The attachment may have prevented transfer of title to Trower's property, but it did not prevent the special train from conveying Trower and wife to Mattoon where they caught a 3 a.m. train for St. Louis.

The flight was discovered the following morning, Wednesday. A Mattoon newspaper reported that that morning, "The citizens of Sullivan were surprised to find that the Moultrie County Bank had closed. ... The excitement in town all day was unprecedented, and it seemed to grow greater as country depositors came in to inquire after their deposits. Odd as it may seem nearly all of the merchants at Sullivan deposited at the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank, and consequently very few suffered." Efforts to overtake and capture Trower were made: "A trusty man has been sent after Trower, and it is confidently expected that he will be apprehended and brought back to Sullivan sooner or later."

The initial report was to the effect that depositors were left about \$50,000 short. Dr. Welch "is in for about \$5,500; Albert Wyman for about \$1,100 and perhaps more. ... A great many other citizens had deposits all the way from ten dollars up to seven and eight hundred dollars." News articles had it that Trower had lost heavily speculating in Chicago. However, depositors' expectations were optimistic based on the report that the Trower family had real and personal property to the extent of at least \$150,000.

As time passed, the optimism strengthened. In early May it was

reported that assets appeared to exceed liabilities, and therefore there “was no earthly reason why Mr. Trower should flee the town at midnight in so dramatic a manner. . . . He might have remained in Sullivan and weathered the storm.” A month later, it was reported that Trower had made his way to California. In August Trower sent a messenger to Sullivan to ascertain whether it was safe for him to return. Any response is hidden in time, but within the month Xavier was sighted in Effingham, Mattoon, and Charleston. He was “said to be suffering from an enlargement of the liver caused by excessive use of alcoholic liquors.” To add insult to injury, Trower’s mother, a resident of Charleston, brought suit (unsuccessfully) against her son in Moultrie County for \$18,000.

Early the following year, 1880, the Trowers returned from California — settling for a while in Louisville, where in early February 1880 Mrs. Trower died, reportedly “of grief” caused by a broken heart, “for she had always been used to a house of luxury and ease, was educated and accomplished, and all who knew her esteemed her friendship.” In July 1880 it was reported that Trower had inherited a share in an estate worth \$100,000 and that bank creditors would be fully protected.

Trower remarried — a lady named Clara — and lived on until December 7, 1896, when he died in Paris, Illinois.

Whether all the depositors in the Moultrie County Bank were made completely whole is not known — at least not by this writer. But by the time the county history appeared in 1881, the bank itself had disappeared.

The Merchants’ and Farmers’ Bank — The 1921 Steele Episode and its Aftermath.

While Trower was taking the Moultrie County Bank over the cliff, William Elder — son of the city co-founder — was continuing to manage the healthy Merchants’ and Farmers’ (M&F) bank.

Judge Elder had died in 1870 and as Executor of his father’s estate, William had been required to post a substantial bond. Two eminent Sullivan citizens, W.P. Corbin and Judge Jonathan Meeker, agreed to be sureties on his bond.

In 1884 William Elder sold his banking assets to William A. Steele, who had been in the banking business in Mattoon since 1874. William, born 1855, was the son of Charles B. Steele of Mattoon, who had served as State

Senator from 1872-76. William Steele had served with distinction in the Union army during the Civil War. He moved to Sullivan in March 1885 and began to act as cashier of the bank. William Elder remained involved; an advertisement in the *Sullivan Progress*, October 22, 1885, listed the Merchants & Farmers State bank, “William Elder and William A. Steele (late cashier Mattoon National bank).”

In August 1886, the citizens of Sullivan were shocked to learn that Elder had transferred all of his real and personal property to the two sureties to protect them against loss on their guarantees of his bond. Judge Elder’s estate obligations to his heirs and other liabilities, amounting to about \$40,000, were considerably more than the assets in the estate. “The failure has brought financial ruin to many people and considerable feeling is aroused against Elder.” A St. Louis newspaper reported: “The failure of Wm. Elder at Sullivan is the greatest financial sensation Moultrie Conty has had for years. . . . He had long been reputed to be the wealthiest man in Sullivan, and until recently had been a banker. His failure is a heavy blow to many.” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, August 12, 1886. However, it was asserted — apparently correctly — that the problems of the Elder estate would not affect the stability of the bank.

In 1891 the M&F Bank — previously a private banking institution — was reorganized as a state bank with capital of \$30,000. William Steele was the bank’s President. His brother James served as cashier. About 1897 Z.B. “Zack” Whitfield began work at the bank as a bookkeeper.

By 1891 the Steeles had a competitor. In that year Charles Shuman and others had organized the State Bank of Sullivan, of which Shuman was soon elected president. In 1895 Shuman was the President, and the directors were Shuman, L.B. Scroggin, A.T. Jenkins, G.W. Monroe, L.M. Spittler, Z.B. Whitfield, and Abe Patterson. In that year the bank was reorganized under federal law as the First National Bank of Sullivan. In 1905 it was doing business on the northwest corner of the square. The principal stockholders of the First National were Charles Shuman and other Shuman family members, along with O.R. Hill, and S.T. Bolin.

By 1913 another new bank had joined the competition: The Citizens Bank & Trust Company, E. A. Silver, President, operating at 1003 Main Street. However, two years later the First National and Citizens Bank & Trust merged.

* * *

By 1921 William A. Steele had served as President of the M&F Bank for over 30 years, and become a leading citizen of Sullivan. He became a director and officer of the Decatur, Sullivan and Mattoon railroad. He was active in civic affairs, serving as President of the Chamber of Commerce. He helped lead the effort to construct a hard road from the east side of Sullivan to the Masonic home. He was for a time Chairman of the Republican Party in Moultrie County. In 1914 he donated land to the city for Greenhill cemetery, and he gave the city a new city well.

Steele bought and lived in a fine home known then as “Lilac Lane” — one of the handsomest homes in Sullivan, on East Harrison street four blocks from the square, and once lived in by his banking predecessor, William Elder.



William A. Steele residence

In 1913 the M&F Bank moved from its offices on the west side of the square into new quarters on the northwest corner opposite the court house.



The citizens of Sullivan were thus shocked on the morning of Friday, March 18, 1921, to read in the *Sullivan Progress* that Z.B. “Zack” Whitfield, cashier of the M&F Bank, had suffered a nervous breakdown the afternoon before. “He appeared for duty at the bank at the usual hour Thursday morning but left about 10 o’clock.” Whitfield’s business partner, Ray Jenkins, became alarmed and suggested that a search be made. Bank President Steele said, “Let’s not do anything until after dark.”

In the evening Whitfield was found “in the coal bin in the basement of the bank building.” While searchers conferred, Whitfield then “left the basement and crawled through an East side basement window into a pit adjoining the basement. . . . Intimate friends of Mr. Whitfield begged him to come out of the pit. He seemed demented, however, and paid no attention to their appeals.”

Finally a rope was lowered into the pit and Whitfield was pulled up and carried to the Jenkins & Whitfield garage, “where nearly a dozen men were required to hold the frantic man. His violence finally subsided and he was taken to his home on East Jackson Street.”

The M&F bank was then closed pending an examination and report from the state bank examiners. Cash on hand was physically moved across the street to the First National Bank. The *Mattoon Journal Gazette* reported that President Steele had discovered a “discrepancy” of \$262,000 the day before, Thursday the 17th. Moultrie County people were saying: “President W.A. Steele will pull us all out. He will carry us through.”

Initial suspicion centered on Whitfield, the cashier. He had worked at the bank almost 30 years and had replaced the prior cashier, James A. Steele, brother of the President, in 1919. Zack Whitfield “disappeared while the books were being checked over. Whitfield was a respected and influential person in Sullivan — a business leader, a liberal supporter of the Methodist church, a partner in the garage operation of Jenkins & Whitfield, and an owner of two farms. He lived with his wife and three sons in a fine home at the edge of the city.” After being found in the coal bin, Zach had been taken in charge “after a sharp fight in which considerable force was used. During the entire time since, Whitfield has had little to say. He complains of pains in the back of his head” Street talk about the cashier included the words “malingering insanity” and “pretense of illness.”

W.A. Steele was by far the largest stockholder in the bank, with 265 shares. Cashier Whitfield owned 10, as did A.T. Jenkins, Whitfield’s father-in-law. Steele, Whitfield and Jenkins were on the Board of Directors, as were the attorney, F.M. Harbaugh, H.W. Wright, Kirk Dawdy, and W.G. Cochran. The bank’s books as of January 1921 showed assets of \$600,000 — a decline from the previous fall — and a “surplus” of only \$30,000.

At a meeting of the board of directors in the days following the closing, President Steele offered to deed his property to make up any loss which depositors might incur. The board declined to accept his offer, urging him to await the audit of the books. Such was the confidence in President Steele that initial discussions centered on reorganizing the bank with Steele continuing as President.

Meanwhile, the state auditors quickly completed their examination and found a shortage of \$262,000. Under the law, stockholders were liable to

make up part of the deficiencies —i.e., liable to contribute an amount equal to their original capital contribution. Steele, by far the major stockholder, would be the hardest hit. Steele pledged publicly to commit all his assets to protect depositors against loss. He also pledged “to trace down the exact cause of the shortage in the funds and to place the blame where it belongs.”

It was said that only two men were in a position to know what happened to the missing \$262,000. Which was responsible? Possibly both?

Newspaper speculation now began to swing away from the notion that Zack Whitfield was guilty. Zack’s brother, W.K. Whitfield, a Decatur resident and judge, surely realized the importance of public opinion. The Judge told a Decatur newspaper that Zack had not taken one cent. The Decatur paper dutifully reported “the accumulation of evidence that supports belief in Mr. Whitfield’s innocence.” This evidence included his unimpeachable habits and character, his lack of extravagance, his successful business career, the fact that he had ample business interests and income other than his cashier’s position at the bank, as well as his profitable real estate deals.

Zack Whitfield “stoutly” denied any wrongdoing. As for his reported anxiety at the time the discrepancy was discovered, that was due to self-medication for a severe headache.

Perhaps more to the point, Zack did not keep the books of the bank. That was done by two subordinate bookkeepers. He had only recently replaced the prior cashier, James A. Steele, but the amount of the defalcation suggested that it must have gone on over a long period.

Just as public suspicion began to turn away from Cashier Whitfield, it began to turn in the direction of President Steele. It was he who had charge of “bills receivable,” holding the notes of debtors, and it was there that shortages had previously been uncovered. Moreover, payments by debtors on their notes had not always been credited on bank records.

Meanwhile, what would happen to the bank? Depositors were becoming impatient. The alternatives were: reorganization or merger with the healthy First National Bank of Sullivan.

The directors of the First National naturally would insist on protection for their stockholders and depositors. Negotiation of the details proved difficult.

The Whitfields were against any reorganization that left Steele in charge. Directors F.M. Harbaugh and W.G. Cochran agreed to serve as trustees to facilitate the reorganization or consolidation; but neither would agree to serve as President of a reorganized M&F Bank. Steele and Whitfield turned over all their stock and property worth about \$100,000 to facilitate whatever arrangement could be agreed on.

Whatever thought was being given by local authorities to criminal prosecution remained unexpressed publicly while efforts to stabilize the bank continued.

Eventually, with the guidance of the state auditor's office, a plan of reorganization was developed, calling for raising new capital through a stock issuance as well as contribution of \$80,000 from the former stockholders to settle their liability. Any remaining deficit would be covered by the property of Steele and Whitfield being held by the trustees.

Before the details of reorganization were finally worked out, embezzlement charges were made against both Steele and Whitfield by the state's attorney, Merle Wehmhoff, on Sunday, April 2. Both were arrested by Sheriff Lansden and released on bond. Additional security was sought; it was reported that, "Following his arrest Sunday, Mr. Steele called at the homes of a number of his friends whom he had expected to become sureties upon his bond, but they were not at home." As for Whitfield, he had remained ill in his home since the day before the bank closing, and had lost both weight and strength.

Lawsuits were immediately filed by the M&F bank and others against both Steele and Whitfield, as well as the Jenkins and Whitfield garage firm. Debate continued over the relative merits of reorganization vs. consolidation. Finally, reorganization was settled on, and the sale of new shares went forward. All the old directors and officers resigned.

On April 11 Steele was formally charged with embezzlement in connection with the shortage of \$262,000 and was bound over to await action of the grand jury. Whitfield was bound over separately and later. The grand jury met in late May and returned true bills against both men.

In the meantime, the M&F Bank reopened its doors May 28, 1921. There was no run on the bank, no tumult; only a small amount of depositor funds was withdrawn.

This left only the matter of the criminal trials of Steele and Whitfield. The two defendants asked for separate trials — apparently to make it easier for each to blame the other.

Steele was tried first — on one of the charges: embezzlement of \$262,000. The trial began Monday, November 21, 1921, before Circuit Judge Franklin W. Boggs. The jurors were: Lloyd Ascherman, J.J. Ryan, Melvin Zinkler, Orville Roby, Vernon Edmonson, Othor Wren, George Wacaser, Lawrence Gamill, Arthur Short, A.T. Getz, Clarence Collins, and Tony Burgholzer. Former Cashier Whitfield — not on trial at this time — was there as a spectator. Lawyers representing the state were the State's Attorney Wehmhoff, J.L. McLaughlin, and W.T. Redmond. Defense counsel were: E.J. Miller, C.R. Patterson, J.E. Jennings, and E.D. Elder, all of Sullivan.

During the last week, the court room was packed each day. "Sullivan women became regular 'trial fans' and many managed in some way to occupy front seats throughout the entire session. 'Let housework wait' was often heard as the women wended their way court-ward."

The trial was interrupted often by objections and arguments. "Many times [Judge Boggs] was obliged to call attorneys for arguments when they should be making statements, asking questions in a form that was not desirable." Counsel for Steele contended that it was ex-Cashier Whitfield who was guilty. Dozens of character witnesses were presented to testify favorable about Steele.

The trial was recessed for Thanksgiving day; the jury, which was being held incommunicado, was fed turkey and other holiday viands.

Closing arguments for the State were made by J.L. McLaughlin and W.E. Redmond, while the defense case was made by E.D. Elder and E.J. Miller.

On Saturday evening, December 3, at about 6:20 p.m., following the two-week trial, after deliberating about three hours the jury found the defendant Steele not guilty. Two ballots were taken: the first vote was 8 for acquittal and 4 for conviction; the second was unanimous for acquittal. Few were in the court room because observers had thought a longer time would be required. Steele "was overwhelmed for the moment. He dropped his head, then looked up and laughed a little but soon recovered himself sufficiently to make his way to the jury box and with tears in his eyes thank the jurors for their acquittal of him."

In the days following the acquittal, public opinion was that although it had been proved Steele took money from the bank's funds, defense counsel had persuaded the jury that he did not do so with criminal intent.

Now the focus of attention shifted to ex-Cashier Whitfield, who would be tried separately. He decided not to roll the dice, pleading guilty to a single count of embezzlement of \$9,000. Whitfield was sentenced on February 24, 1922, to serve one to 10 years in the Chester penitentiary.

Steele was not off the hook yet. He had been cleared on one count, but there remained fifteen other counts — the principal claim being that he had received deposits when the bank was insolvent. Procedural issues and legal fencing consumed several months, but the second case against Steele went to trial in late May 1922. State's Attorney Wehmhoff and J.L. McLaughlin represented the State; while E.D. Elder, John E. Jennings, and E.J. Miller represented Steele. Steele's lawyers again tried to blame Whitfield, but Judge Boggs ruled the defense could not present witnesses to support that claim. Steele's lawyers also relied on the argument that Steele had too much invested in the bank to fail to manage properly. Steele himself testified, asserting that he did not know the bank's accounts were wrong when he accepted deposits.

For this trial, the jury consisted of: Edward Cruise, Henry Hunter, Ed Goetz, Dick Ashbrook, Charles Winchester, Guy Neal, John Mentzer, C.N. Hopper, Fred Cotner, John Addington, Morris Cooper, and Ernest Bragg.

On June 14, 1922, the case went to the jury, which took only 40 minutes to conclude that Steele was guilty. Steele "took the verdict calmly, rocking back and forth in the chair." "Many looks of satisfaction and pleasure at the outcome were apparent" Judge Boggs denied Steele a new trial and sentenced him to one to three years in the penitentiary at Chester.

Steele remained in prison for almost two years — until April 25, 1924. The prosecutors could have tried him on remaining indictments, but chose not to do so. At the time of his release, Steele was in poor health.

Whitfield also remained in prison, but at Menard rather than Chester, until November 1924, when he was released on parole.

Meanwhile, the M&F bank in Sullivan remained in business, headed by its new president, J.R. “Johnny” Webb. Webb told a reporter in 1925 that “it has taken the better part of four years to win back the confidence of depositors ... and regain the position ... the bank had before its closing in 1921.” President Webb said that the bank in 1925 was “in a better condition than before the closing.”

To help regain the public’s trust, Webb said the bank had changed the color of its checks from blue to another shade — perhaps revealing more about Webb than the public.

It seems to have worked, for a while. But along came the stock market crash in 1929 and the economic depression that followed.

On Saturday, December 26, 1931, the M&F Bank did not open for business. This followed a decision by the Board the preceding Thursday evening to call in the State Auditor. Johnny Webb issued a statement: “Due to the fact that prevailing unfavorable financial conditions have made it difficult to collect moneys due to the bank from borrowers, and due to the fact that the cash reserve of the bank was beginning to run low, the directors determined the best interests of the depositors required that the bank be closed.”

“Ever since the reorganization of the bank in 1921, it has labored under difficulties. There was left in it at the time of the reorganization certain lines of undesirable paper of borrowers, which the new organization was unable to liquidate.” There was no reported suspicion of crookedness.

In 1933 Johnny Webb got into a fight with Mert Carpenter, custodian of Greenhill Cemetery, and a warrant was issued charging him with attempted murder. Seems he threw Carpenter down a flight of stairs from a second story office. The trouble was believed to have started in a quarrel “concerning the closing of the bank, which shut its doors in 1931 with some \$400,000 in accounts tied up. ... Webb’s bank since its closing has paid its depositors approximately 15 percent in dividends.”

I remember Johnny Webb in 1950 or so, when I was 10 years old. He was an eccentric old man, always alone, dressed in a black suit, wandering around the court house and the square. Groups of boys would surround him and tease him. We understood that he carried large amounts of money in bills in his pocket, and made loans at high interest rates.

I was told by someone who knew him: “Uncle Johnny was more than a little crazy. He carried all his money around in his pockets, didn’t trust banks, never married and was a solitary hoarder who lived in a house in Sullivan with old newspapers stacked to the ceiling. He lived like a pauper, slept on a cot, hid money throughout the house in odd places and kept a dead canary in a jar.”

After Johnny died, relatives found thousands of dollars tucked away ... along with the dead canary.

XII.

The Railroads Come to Sullivan

Three maps illustrate Sullivan's isolation before the arrival of the railroads: (a) Mitchell's map of Illinois in 1837 showing internal improvements, (b) an internal improvements map showing roads in 1854, and (c) Cook's map of 1855, the first "railroad map" of Illinois.



1854 — Moultrie a county, but no railroads near Sullivan.



1855 — Illinois’ first railroad map. Decatur the nearest rail stop.

Early discussions in Illinois about the need for “internal improvements” in transportation focused on improving the navigability of rivers and building of canals. In the late 1820s and early 1830s, these discussions broadened out to include the possibility of the new technology — railroads. Abraham Lincoln, in campaigning for the legislature in 1832, suggested a railroad extending to Springfield, though he concluded it would cost too much. Pease, *The Frontier State*, at 205.

In 1834 a proposal was aired to build a railroad via Danville, Decatur, and Springfield. Different communities began to vie with each other. In the fall of 1835 the project of a central railroad began to take form. The legislature chartered several railroad companies in 1836 but haphazardly. And chartering a company was a far cry from building a railroad.

In 1836-37 more concrete plans were developed for “internal improvements” — including a canal, improvement of rivers, and construction of a railroad on the state’s credit. The bill was passed. But within five years the budding system was wrecked. *Id.*, at 216-235.

Sullivan did not come into existence until 1845. It was not long, however, before the citizens of the new county seat began to talk about the advantages a railroad would bring to the farmers and merchants of the place. On Monday, May 28, 1849, a meeting was held for citizens of Moultrie county at the Sullivan court house to discuss “the railroad questions now being agitated more or less over the state,” and particularly to hear Anthony Thornton and S.W. Moulton explain why Moultrie should be supporting the state’s general interests over selfish “local interests” promoting railroads through places other than Sullivan and Shelbyville.

The first surviving evidence of deliberations on a concrete proposal to build a railroad through Sullivan appears in the columns of Sullivan’s first newspaper, the *Sullivan Express*.

The Failed Tolono and Pana Railroad

On October 8, 1857, the *Sullivan Express* reported that “the commissioners of Moultrie county, for the Tolono and Pana R.R. called a meeting . . . for the purpose of ascertaining the feeling manifested, by the citizens of the county in the construction of the road now in contemplation to be built between Tolono and Pana.” Dr. A.L. Kellar opened the meeting and “briefly discussed the advantages resulting from a railroad to the people of this county, and strenuously urged that immediate action be taken in its construction.” The chief engineer of the proposed railroad discussed the possible route and cost estimates.

John R. Eden (not yet Congressman) then gave a speech discussing “the great inconvenience and draw-back to the prosperity of the county, owing to the want of a railroad. That nothing could have a greater tendency to enhance the value of land and further the interests, both of the mechanic and farmer, more than a railroad in our midst. He showed very clearly that emigration only flows to those localities where railroads are in operation, or where they have a prospect of being built, and contrasted the price of lands in counties where they do and do not run, showing that the prices range from five to ten dollars higher in the former . . .”

John Perryman pledged to support the road financially, “provided that two hundred thousand dollars stock be subscribed, and that no person will be called on for a greater amount of his subscription at a time than five per cent.” Subscribers would give promissory notes payable “if the Road is completed within two years.”

The Tolono and Pana railroad was chartered by the Illinois legislature on February 11, 1857. The law provided that several named men — including John R. Eden, John A. Freeland, James Elder, O.B. Fickle, A.L. Kellar, J. Condit Smith, J.B. Calhoun and others — “are hereby constituted a body corporate ... for the purpose of surveying, locating, constructing, completing and operating a railroad from Tolono ... and thence upon the most eligible route, by way of Sullivan, in the county of Moultrie to the town of Pana”

On November 9, 1857, the *Express* celebrated: “Cheering News!! Immense Success!! The Tolono & Pana Railroad has been located making Sullivan a point. The amount of Stock subscribed is sufficient to pay for the grading of the road. The work will be commenced and some six or eight miles will be graded this Fall.” Mr. Eden reminded subscribers “to express their sentiments in regard to the assessment to be made upon the stockholders by the Directors.” The board then called 5% on the subscription of stock, payable to John Perryman. “Subscribers are respectfully requested to come forward and pay up promptly so as not to retard this very important enterprise.”

But not much happened. \$200,000 was a lot of money, and there was no assurance such a new railroad would turn a profit. The *1881 County History* reported that “only a survey of the line and a little grading was done when the project failed.” *1881 County History*, at 32.

Another idea discussed at a public meeting was the possibility of voting a tax for the building of the railroad.

When nothing happened, frustration grew. On March 26, 1858, the *Express* reported: “If Tolono and Pana will do nothing, we can find willing hands and hearts in Decatur and Mattoon.”

The Proposed Farmers’ Railroad

In April 1858 discussions turned to a possible “Farmers’ Railroad” from Sullivan to “one of the adjacent Rail Road points.” Citizens were asked to come to a meeting to consider such a proposal because “they are all aware of the disadvantages under which we labor in this county, on account of not having better railroad facilities, and they also know that our county, surrounded by railroads as it is, is being ‘chiseled’ out of its riches. They also know that we have tried to obtain two through railroads through our county town — Sullivan — and have

failed on both. It is now proposed to take into consideration the expediency of building a 'feeder' to the St. Louis, Alton & Terre-Haute R.R. from Sullivan to Windsor, a distance of over eleven miles."

A meeting to consider the "Farmers' Railroad" was held, and a committee was appointed "to visit Mattoon and ascertain the feeling of the citizens of that place ..."

By 1861 railroads had been built — but not through Sullivan: the Alton and St. Louis, to the south, through Windsor; the Illinois Central, to the west connecting Decatur and Pana; another line of the Illinois Central to the east, through Mattoon; and the Great Western line connecting Decatur and Tolono on the north.



1861 railroad map — Moultrie County touched at southeast corner.

The Decatur, Sullivan and Mattoon Railroad (later the Peoria, Decatur and Evansville Railroad) — East-West line.

The first railroad actually built through Sullivan — and the only one ever to have the name "Sullivan" in it — was the Decatur, Sullivan and Mattoon Railroad. The DS&M was chartered in 1861. The war then intervened, and the railroad was not begun until 1871.

Leading citizens of Sullivan supported the new northwest-to-southeast railroad and Moultrie County committed public funds. An act of the state General Assembly, March 28, 1869, authorized the Moultrie County Board of Supervisors to subscribe to the stock of the DS&M up to \$80,000 and to issue bonds therefor when the road should be opened between Decatur and Sullivan. In June 1869 a citizens group crowded into the court house to discuss and support taking \$200,000 stock in the DS&M road, and “every man voted in the affirmative. All seemed delighted that a railroad project was now presented to them that was found to be a success, for the reasons that it was to run through a wonderfully productive country that needed it, and can well support it, and that it furnishes such a direct and short line north and south to the Ohio river.”

At virtually the same time, on June 23, 1869, a meeting of the incorporators of a competing line — the Bloomington and Ohio River Railroad Company — held meetings in Sullivan and other nearby communities to solicit subscriptions for capital stock in that railroad.

The DS&M won out. The incorporators met in Sullivan July 21 and organized the company, electing T.O. Smith President, John A. Freeland, Secretary, and James Elder, Treasurer. Charter incorporators included John Meeker, James T. Taylor, and John A. Freeland of Moultrie County. After the organization meeting, a separate meeting of citizens was held, speeches were made, and enthusiasm “manifested.” “The most prominent citizens of Moultrie County are taking hold of the enterprise and say that the road must be built.” Stock was to be purchased by the county and the towns through which the road would pass.

Work on the DS&M line commenced by mid-summer 1869. The people of Moultrie county were soon reportedly awakened in the mornings by the sounds of railroad construction.

In December 1869 the board ordered the \$80,000 subscription. The company then contracted in April 1870 to accept the bonds, which were delivered to the company. A large delegation of “the most prominent citizens” met with the Directors of the DS&M in Sullivan on May 3, 1870, to discuss the status of the project. Alfred Smyser, a prominent citizen and county clerk, was elected President of the company and served in that role during the construction period. In May the directors “ratified the contract for building the road from Mattoon to the Macon county line.”

The Macon County supporters of the DS&M, in trying to build support for it in Decatur, explained that the line would connect “south of Mt. Vernon with Nashville, Tenn., and thence with the Cotton States by several roads already built, which must open to us a most important trade, and must be an important thoroughfare both for commerce and travel.”

Macon County was asked to subscribe \$75,000 in county bonds to the project, but there was still a question in the spring of 1870 whether Macon County would provide that support; accordingly, the directors “decided that if [Macon] county refuses to vote an appropriation ... to make a deflection from the proposed line, running to the south of [Decatur].” Political hardball.

An alternative north-south railroad connection was also under discussion: a line called the Bloomington Road, which might either move north-south through Decatur or, alternatively, through Sullivan. “The line from Bloomington to Sullivan is already surveyed and its construction at an early date depends upon whether the people of Macon county vote the necessary aid to the Decatur line ... If they refuse, that event secures to Bloomington the trade of both Piatt and Moultrie counties.”

As the DS&M project went forward, the Bloomington Road proposal seems to have faded. Construction of the DS&M was reportedly underway in the spring of 1871. On August 1 of that year it was reported that a few days earlier the DS&M had been completed from Mattoon to Nelson “when and where a high time was had. Some of the party reflected on the restored glory of ‘Old Nelson,’ and recalled when in pioneer days the Circuit Court of Shelby county was held temporarily there.”

A week later, on August 10, 1871, it was reported that, “The first train of cars was run into Sullivan Tuesday morning, over the Decatur, Sullivan & Mattoon Railroad. This being the first road to run a train of cars into Sullivan the contractors ... will receive the bonus of \$30,000 offered by that town to the first company running a train into that village. We understand that there will be a grand jollification in Sullivan sometime next week in honor of this event.” *Decatur Review*, August 10, 1871.

By November 1872 the track-layers had reached Mt. Zion and the grading of the whole line was substantially completed. The road was open — sort of — by 1873.

(Confusingly, it was also reported in November 1872 that *another* railroad — the “Toledo, Thornton, & St. Louis Railroad” — was being built, and that “ground was broken” for that road in Sullivan in early November. Donty Patterson & Co. were the contractors and were reportedly doing the grading work. At some point, work on the T.T. & St. L. Railway wa abandoned.)

In the meantime, the builders of the DS&M had hit a bad bump. The DS&M was supposed to go all the way from Mattoon to Decatur. But they couldn’t complete the road the last few miles into Decatur. In May 1877 a Decatur newspaper reported that, “The Mattoon, Sullivan & Decatur railroad is now owned by S.D. Frost, Ingersoll & Co. It doesn’t yet run its trains through to Decatur. It was thought some weeks ago that trains would soon run through, but the Central road placed its rent too high to pay the Sullivan road to run over the bit of road from the junction to Decatur. The Central road asked \$325 a month for the use of its road the short distance of two or three miles.”

By that time another road — the Paris & Decatur Railroad — was serving Decatur; and it built a three-mile branch down to Dalton City to connect with the DS&M and leased that short line to a third entity — the Chicago & Illinois Southern Railroad, which permitted DS&M to operate over it. Creditors then sued everybody in sight — the Paris & Decatur, the Chicago & Illinois Southern, and the poor little DS&M. Fortunately, a compromise was worked out, and the DS&M was then sold to a new organization operating under the name of the Decatur, Mattoon and Southern railroad. The name “Sullivan” thus disappeared from the railroad, but the trains were running.

In late 1877 an ad run in the newspapers showed that the DM&S was running through trains — without change of cars — between Decatur and Mattoon with 11 intermediate stops, the entire trip requiring four hours. From Sullivan to Decatur took a little over two hours. Sixteen men were operating the trains, not counting station agents. In addition to charging for freight and passenger service, the railroad was paid \$1700 per year for carrying the U.S. mails.

and which we will sell very cheap.
Sept. 27-44-wif Linn & Sonsons.

New Advertisements.

NEW LINE!

Decatur, Mattoon & Southern
RAILROAD.

Through Trains
BETWEEN
Decatur & Mattoon
Without Change of Cars.

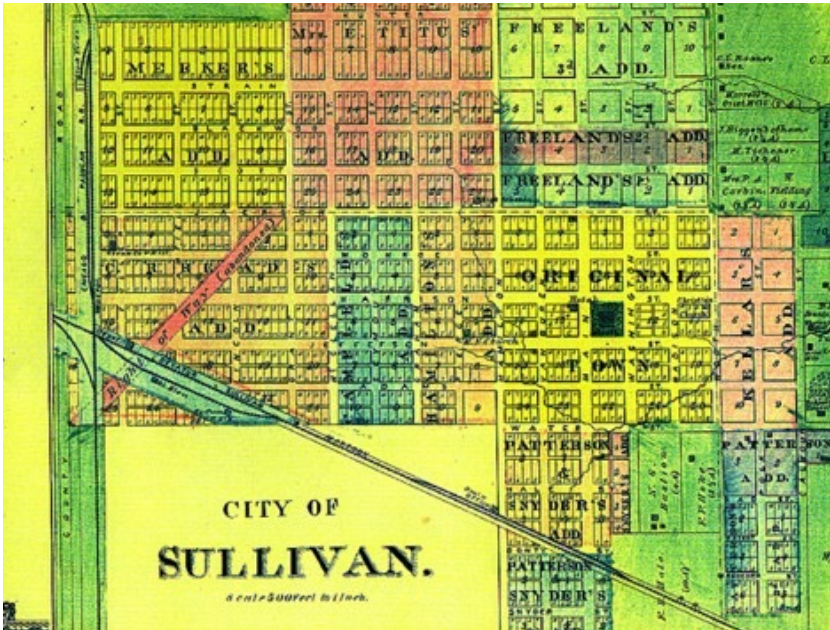
TIME TABLE
In Effect Sunday, September 26th, 1877.

NORTH.		STATIONS.	SOUTH.	
Pass. & Frgt.			Pass. & Frgt.	
8:00 P. M.	1st	Mattoon, Ill.	8:10 P. M.	
10:15 "		Junction,	10:25 "	
12:30 "		Lyons,	12:45 A. M.	
2:45 "		Taylor,	3:00 "	
5:00 "		Neelon,	5:15 "	
7:15 "		Mattoon,	7:30 "	
9:30 "		Harvard,	9:45 "	
11:45 "		Harvard,	12:00 "	
1:00 "		Harvard City,	1:15 "	
3:15 "		W. City,	3:30 "	
5:30 "		W. Junction,	5:45 "	
7:45 P. M.	AP. Transfer, Ill.	8:00 A. M.		

For Tickets or Freight Business,
(Make Application)
AT DECATUR, to Agent Ills. Central R. R.
AT MATTOON, to Agent Ind. & M., to H. H. H.
Gen'l. Mgr. K. E. SULLIVAN, Manager.

On December 8, 1879, the DM&S was consolidated with the Pekin, Lincoln and Decatur to form the Peoria, Decatur and Evansville Railroad. At that time additional capital stock was issued for purposes of extending and improving the railroad. It would be tedious to trace and report the various corporate reorganizations and consolidations that have occurred since 1881. Suffice it to report that the old DS&M line still exists: it became part of the Illinois Central and is now (2018) operated as part of the Canadian National system.

The Decatur, Sullivan, and Mattoon railroad appeared on the 1875 Atlas running diagonally through the south part of the city. The newer Chicago & Paducah appeared on the west edge of the map, running north-south.



The Chicago and Paducah Railroad (later the Chicago Division of the Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific) — North-South line.

The Chicago and Paducah Railroad — CPRR — was built in 1873-74, shortly after the DS&M. It was built — confusingly — by the Bloomington and Ohio Railroad Company, chartered in 1867. Moultrie County “donated” \$200,000 in bonds, issued May 27, 1872, bearing 10 percent interest, to attract and support construction.

This line traces its history back to the Northern Cross Railroad, of which the Great Western was an extension. The Great Western appears on the railroad map of 1861 above — extending roughly east-west through Decatur and Bement, north of Sullivan. It then became part of the Wabash system.

The Chicago and Paducah was consolidated into that system, becoming a north-south branch of the Wabash — referred to in 1881 as “the Chicago Division of the Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific.” It came down through Lovington township, passing through Sullivan and Windsor. Via this line Sullivan residents could travel to Chicago or St. Louis, and from there to any other major place in the country.

Our *1881 Combined History* describes the Wabash line in glowing terms: “More than to any other, this immediate section of the state owes the subsequent rapid development of its agricultural and other resources. Its line passes through some of the finest portions of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. It soon became the popular highway of travel and traffic between the East and the West.”



Though the *1881 County History* was enthusiastic in support of the CPRR, it disclosed that “there is believed to have been some irregularity in the manner in which the latter donations were made,” as a result of which the county “proposes to contest the legality of said bonds.”

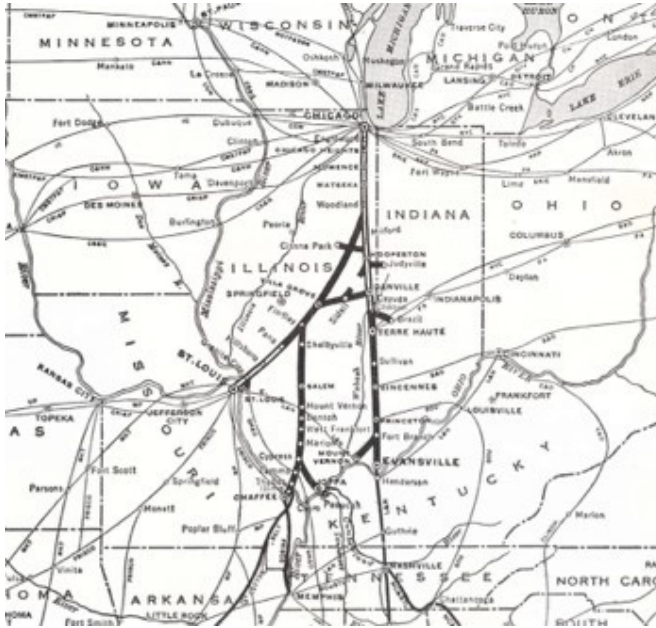
The Wabash railroad later passed into the hands of the Norfolk & Western, one of the major U. S. railroads and later part of Norfolk Southern. Like other major lines, N&W objected to having to maintain costly track and roadbed and to operate trains when the returns from freight and passenger traffic did not warrant such investment and operating costs. Service was halted over the Bement-Sullivan line in February 1974. In 1976 N&W applied to the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to abandon the line. The railroad claimed that it would cost \$1.5 million to re-establish service over that line. Permission was granted and the line was torn up.

The Chicago & Eastern Illinois — North-South line.

The Chicago & Eastern Illinois — known as the C&EI — was the last of the three railroads to come to Sullivan. The C&EI railroad dated back to 1849 when a Chicago-to- Evansville line was opened. Much of its traffic was coal moving from central Illinois and central western Indiana to Chicago. Various companies were consolidated into a new company in 1877 known as the “Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad.” In 1887 it acquired a line being built to Tuscola; and three years later arrangements were made to extend the line from Tuscola via Sullivan to Shelbyville. That line was completed and placed in service in 1891. One reporter bragged, “This new line, now being built through Moultrie County, is in point of grade, rails and ballast the best within the county and the line will be of this standard clear through.”

On September 23, 1891, it was reported that the C&EI was getting up an excursion from Sullivan to Chicago for October 6 — its first through train from Sullivan to Chicago. The round trip rate was \$3.00.

The C&EI network appears below. It later became part of the Missouri Pacific, and still later part of the Union Pacific System



Map of the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad

* * *

The good news was that by the end of the 1870s, Sullivan had railroad service. The bad news was that Moultrie County had paid a lot of money to the railroads to induce them to build through Sullivan, and it had borrowed the money to make those payments. The bonds then came due.

The county was not wild about making good on its bonds, but it was particularly unenthusiastic in the case of the DS&M because of doubt about the ability of a railroad to operate all the way into and out of Decatur. So it tried to wriggle out of payment on the DS&M bonds on the grounds that the state constitution of 1870, which had come along after the bonds were subscribed, had prohibited counties from subscribing to the capital stock of any railroad or using their credit in aid of such a company. The attempt was unsuccessful. *County of Moultrie v. Rockingham Ten-Cent Savings Bank*, 92 U.S. 631, 1875. A compromise was worked out, and the DS&M was then sold to a new entity operating as the Decatur, Mattoon and Southern railroad. The name “Sullivan” thus disappeared from the railroad, but at least the trains were running.

Now Moultrie County had to make good on other railroad bonds as well. The burden was heavy and litigation continued for years.

The *1881 County History* recites (at 32) that the Board of Supervisors of Moultrie County subscribed \$80,000 of public money in bonds, which were issued in December 1872 bearing interest at 8 percent, to mature January 1, 1883. By 1881 all but \$6,000 of the bonds had reportedly been paid. In addition to the bonds, \$75,000 was donated. That \$80,000 was apparently just the bonds issued in connection with the DS&M, which were due in 1876. Lawsuits continued to be filed against Moultrie County for years to collect on these debts.

An additional \$80,000 in bonds issued to support the Chicago and Illinois Southern Railroad came due January 1, 1883. About the same time, the Farmers’ Loan and Trust company of New York, as trustee for the bondholders of the Bloomington and Ohio River Railway Company (later the Chicago and Paducah Railroad, later the Wabash), sued Moultrie County for \$200,000 in bonds pledged to support that railroad. And in 1890 Moultrie County voters approved \$8000 to persuade the C&EI to build through Sullivan.

The town fathers were proud of their successes in attracting the railroads, but were vexed at having to pay off the resulting debts. As one newspaper put it in 1881, “Moultrie County, Illinois, of which Sullivan is the county seat, is not in a good condition financially. For years the county seat had no railroad, and the people went wild and voted subsidies to railroad companies at a hazardous rate. The majority of those bonds are due now and next summer. Some of the bondholders have already instituted litigation.” Without a compromise, “the taxpayers will be overburdened, and repudiation will injure the credit of the county.” By 1883, in addition to payments made voluntarily by the county, judgments aggregating \$90,000 had been obtained in United States courts against Moultrie County on railroad bonds.

In 1889 the *Sullivan Progress* compiled a history of the various elements of railroad indebtedness that the county had incurred to attract the railroads. The grand total for the county was nearly one million dollars, but the individual townships taxed themselves so liberally as to make a much larger aggregate than this.” *Decatur Daily Review*, September 23, 1899.

* * *

Decades later, after the interstate highway system was built, the railroads could not earn an adequate return on much of their freight business and were bleeding money on their passenger business. As a result they sought and received permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission to tear up some lines and discontinue passenger service over others. In the railroad business, we called these “train-off cases.”

I remember those later years of inter-city passenger service with nostalgia. When I was a child, Father would sometimes drive us out to the west end of town to see and hear the passenger trains come in. I remember seeing the C&EI’s Meadowlark come into the Sullivan station in the mid-to-late 1940s. Later I rode that train back and forth to Urbana. Oddly, I still remember one particular trip, perhaps my last one — coming home from school one evening, reading by the overhead lamp a book of Robert Heinlein’s, *The Green Hills of Earth*.

The Meadowlark went out of service in January 1962, the year I graduated from the U-I.



The C&EI's Meadowlark.

XIII.

Books and the Public Library in Sullivan

During the 1870s the residents of Sullivan who wanted to entertain themselves with a pint of home-brewed special had no trouble finding a grocery to serve it. Or if they wanted higher-quality entertainment, they could find their way to the race track northwest of town. Or even (after 1871) attend a program at the Titus Opera House.

But what if they wanted to read a good book?

Books could of course be ordered and delivered by mail from New York or Chicago, or purchased at a book store during the occasional trip to Decatur. The Decatur “wholesale and retail book store” — Jerome & Burroughs — had been selling books since the mid 1850s.

The First Book Stores in Sullivan

Sullivan was not so fortunate. It was possible to buy “school books” from a general merchant, such as A.N. Smyser. But the first indication of a book store in Sullivan where one might buy general books is an 1881 listing of “books

and stationery” available from “Lilly & Co., A. Miley.”

Aaron Miley had first taught school and then in 1867 become the local postmaster. He was married to Albert Beveridge’s sister Columbia, known as “Lum.” Miley’s short bio in the *1881 County History* does not say anything about his having been in the book business.

However, in the *1875 County Atlas* he is listed as “Postmaster. Dealer in Newspapers, Periodicals, Magazines, Books, Stationery, Ink, Pens, Penholders, etc.”

John P. Lilly combined the book business with running a news stand. George Sentel later remembered that the first money he ever earned was from selling newspapers for John P. Lilly. He remembered that Lilly was also a “boot-black.” It was one-stop shopping for a shoe-shine, a newspaper, and a book — and perhaps also for stamps. Lilly would later be one of the owners and editor of the *Sullivan Herald*.

The book store operated by John P. Lilly and then his father was known as the City Book Store. In 1875 it was located at the east end of the block of business buildings on the north side of the square, in what was known as Dr. Lewis’ building. (1875 Atlas.) By 1886, according to an ad, it was in the Eden House building. The 1886 Sanborn map shows an unnamed book shop on the west side of the square, next to the Eden Hotel.

At some point the City Book Store changed hands. In December 1888 we find a holiday ad for the City Book Store with the name F.W. Henley. Henley offered Bibles, juvenile books, gift books, booklets, song books and “all kinds of books” — as well as toys, fancy goods, clocks, jewelry, pipes, violins, accordions (for \$1 upward) and violins (\$1.50 upward). A set of the complete works of Dickens in 8 volumes could be had for \$4.50. The City Book Store operated by Henley was — like its Lilly predecessor — on the “west side of square” next to the Eden Hotel. Then in 1890 Henley sold his book store to Charles Booze and Harry Gardner of Gays. Booze ran the business.

A decade later a different book store was operating on the west side of square but at the *south* end of the block, according to the 1898 Sanborn map. An article in the *Decatur Herald* of August 4, 1912, tells us a little more:

The E.E. Barber book store will be moved Monday from its pres-

ent location into the room in the I.O.O.F. building which will be vacated by the grocer, W.A. Waggoner. Saturday. The Barber book store has been in its present location for a number of years when E.E. Barber, now of Decatur, moved his stock of goods from the west side of the square. When Mr. Barber moved to Decatur, his son Harry continued in business.

Disassembling this paragraph, we learn that:

1. the Barber book shop had been in business for many years before 1912;
2. that it had first been on the west side of the square — and
3. after that location, the Barber store had moved to its “present” (1912) location — where it had been “a number of years”; that “present” location was on the south side of the square in roughly the center of the block;
4. and then — 1912 — it was moving again, five doors west, to the I.O.O.F (“Odd Fellows”) building, on Jefferson Street on the south side of the square at the west end, where it was run by E.E.’s son, Harry Barber. It is shown in the July 1914 Sanborn map, which indicates the proprietors sold “jewelry, books and sporting goods.” A 15 jewel Elgin in a gold case could be bought for \$9.50.

Another seller of books in the first decade of the new century was Guy Ulrich. His shop was the first door east of the post office, and he advertised “books, stationery, tablets, pencils, water colors, ledgers,” as well as magazines, a line of fine cigars and “everything found in a first class book store.” In the “directory” of the 1913 Sullivan Atlas, Guy W. Ulrich was listed as “bookseller and undertaker” in Sullivan. He had earlier been in the movie business. (*Infra*, at 312.)

In 1919 James R. Pifer, who had just returned from service in World War I, and Ray Spaugh purchased the City Book store from E. E. Barber and son Harry. Pifer and Spaugh “took over the jewelry line along with the books and other stock which was included in the store.” They continued to use the name “City Book Store,” which was the way it was listed in the 1922 city business directory on Jefferson Street. (Mr. Wm. C. Snodgrass was also there, in that same location, to fix watches.)

John P. Lilly, Sullivan's first book seller, died tragically in 1904. He had been in bad health and died of some combination of alcohol and an overdose of morphine. His widow, who continued to operate their newspaper, the *Saturday Herald*, obtained a judgment against several Sullivan saloon keepers for selling him the alcohol. Mrs. Lilly managed the newspaper for 15 years after his death. I.J. Martin, once a newspaperman himself, wrote of her (*Notes*, at 85):

Mrs. Lilly as his successor always kept the paper on the right side of every question. ... In the matter of sincere promotion of public welfare, its record is clean and consistent.



E.E. Barber, Jeweler & Bookseller.

The Sullivan Public Library

I.J. Martin, who was on the library board for about 50 years, summarized the early history of the library in his *Notes*, at 74:

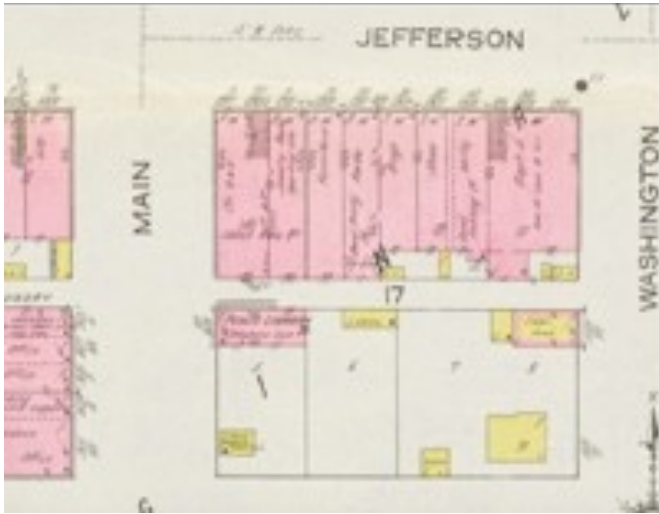
A free public library had been established in 1898 while George Brosam was Mayor. For ten years it had been conducted as a circulation library, and most of the funds each year were used in the purchase of books. A reading room was opened in 1908, and in 1918 the library was moved into the room now occupied. The room was built by W.A. Steele especially for the library, and after another ten years it was purchased by the city.

The circulating library to which I.J. referred had operated from the office of the County Superintendent of Schools. That arrangement was superseded when the public library was established in 1898 with its own board of trustees and officers. For ten years the books were kept in the rear part of Barber's book store, with Mr. Barber serving as librarian.

The big step forward occurred in 1908 when the Sullivan public library moved into its first separate home. The library board at that time included:

President — I.J. Martin
Secretary — F.E. Ashworth
Treasurer — Mrs. F. M. Harbaugh
Finance committee — J.E. Jennings, Julia Brown, and F.E. Ashworth
Rules — Mrs. S.W. Johnson, Mrs. Elia Steadman, Verne Millizen
Books — A.G. Cochran, Mrs. F.M. Harbaugh, F.E. Ashworth

The board decided that the library needed a new home separate from the book store. The question was — where. After deliberating two months, the board decided at a special meeting in September 1908 to rent the lower floor of the Shuman & Co. building on South Main street, which would give them more room for books and also space for a reading room. McPheeters, Shuman & Scroggin agreed to put in a hot water system of heating, which was connected to the heating plant in the I.O.O.F building just to the north. Mr. Shuman also had the building wired for electric lights. The library appears in that location on the 1914 Sanborn map of Sullivan, next door to the "telephone exchange." The rent was \$220 per year.



Detail 1914 map — Public Library

The board estimated that it had between \$3,000 and \$4,000 of books at the time of the move, which took place in November 1908. Lucy Jennings was hired as the first librarian. The *Sullivan Herald* offered its editorial endorsement:

Young men and women confined to their one room in a boarding house will here find a hearty welcome, and although it is not a place for intercourse or babbling yet for [those] living alone it certainly will be

a pleasure to meet with kindred souls, and all together associate with these authors, who though dead, are living in priceless volumes.

The library remained in the Shuman building seven years. During this period the library was reportedly well patronized. Many of the leading and popular magazines of the day were to be found on the tables. A library report at the end of 1914 showed an increased demand for history and magazine reading. The *Decatur Herald* observed, perhaps a little snidely, “We are not surprised. We imagine that the people of Sullivan have more leisure than those of Decatur.”

In the fall of 1915 the library moved again — this time to a new building one block east of the courthouse on East Harrison owned by W.A. Steele, the civic leader and President of the M&F Bank. The library shared the new building with Dr. J.F. Lawson’s office. At the end of 1918 the library reported that “never in the history of the institution was it more popular with the people it served.” During 1918 4,148 books had been borrowed, more than in any earlier year. “There are 3,776 volumes in the library now, with 110 new books already classified and ready for shelving.”

In 1922 the librarian posted a list of the 100 books which leading literary men and women in the country regarded as “best fitted for reading by people between the ages of 20 and 40 years, including fiction as well as books of a more solid nature.” Regrettably it was not reported what books were recommended for readers over the age of 40 years. The library complimented itself on the fact that “every book upon the list may be found in the Sullivan library.” The librarian also reported the name of the patron who had read the largest number of these recommended books: the winner was Miss Ruth Birch.

In 1929 the library board, with the approval of the city council, bought the library building from Steele’s estate for \$2,000. Two months later the board decided to remodel their new home “and also install a heating plant” — raising the question whether the building before that time had been heated.

Not surprisingly the Depression imposed constraints on the library like those elsewhere. Limited budgets meant fewer purchased books. In 1933 the library board began a drive asking patrons to contribute books and calling special attention to the need for more juvenile literature.

During the Depression and War years, the library operated on a small budget and depended on the rental of books to meet operating costs. Then in

1945 the residents of Sullivan voted for a library tax levied on property owners, which generated enough funding to make it possible for books to be loaned out free of charge.

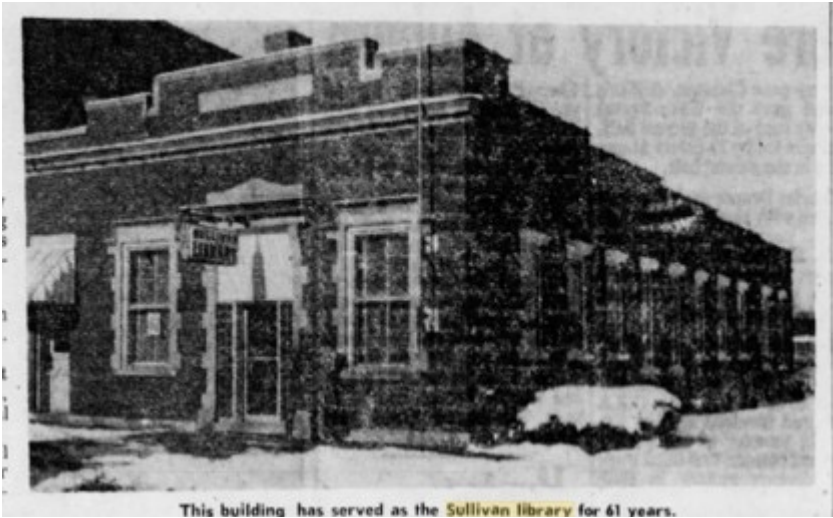
The passage of time also led to new membership on the library board. In December 1946 the board, “in a recent reorganization meeting” elected Mrs. Guy Little, President. Other members were Kate Shaw, Dr. George Roney, Joe McLaughlin, I.J. Martin, Jessie Tichenor, R.F. White, C.W. Atkins, and J.J. Gauger. The following year a new reading room was opened for children, with additional shelves for children’s books.

(I remember when that children’s reading room was added. I also remember the librarian, Miss Ella Baker. It would get hot and stuffy in the library in the summer. At some point after air conditioning came into use, I asked Miss Baker why the library did not have air conditioning. She replied that if God had intended us to be cool in the summer, He would not have made it hot in the summer. I remember then asking her why the library had a heating system, but don’t remember her reply.)

In mid-1958, Mrs. Robert Martin, the author’s mother, was elected President of the board. Other members were Dr. D.M. Butler, Cletus Reed, Mrs. Guy Little Sr., Mrs. R.F. White, Mrs. Marie Lowe, Mrs. Paul Krows, Loren Jenne, and Mrs. Dean McLaughlin. The library at that time had grown to 11,000 volumes, with 600 new books having been added that year; and 22,000 books had been checked out during the year.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, the volume of books and amount of library use increased to such an extent that the board decided a new home was required. Leona Munch served as librarian during much of this period. In October 1975 the board, led by its President Virgil Bingman, purchased for \$75,000 the former site of the Gauger Lumber Company southwest of the square, at the corner of Main and Water streets, and developed plans for a 9,200 square foot building that could hold 25,000 volumes. The new library home was to be funded by a gift from the estate of George Titus of approximately \$800,000.

The new library — named in honor of Elizabeth Titus — was dedicated August 11, 1978. At that time the library contained about 15,000 volumes. Sullivan residents — many of them members of the Ambucs, Lions and Kiwanis clubs — helped with the physical relocation.



This building has served as the Sullivan library for 61 years.



The children's reading room was added to the library during remodeling in 1947.

The old Library in 1977.



The present libra ry with capacity for 14,000 books will be replaced by one which can handle 25,000.

XIV.

The Jails of Sullivan

The first jail in Sullivan was part of the first courthouse, construction of which was commenced in the spring of 1847. Moultrie County had become a county in 1843, and the location of the county seat had been determined in 1845.

The jail was in the northeast corner of the basement floor of the first court house. There were two parts: the jail room proper, and the “dungeon.” The county history says that the jail was inadequate and that it was used only in two or three cases. One suspected law breaker reportedly bored his way out with a small gimlet. Another prisoner dug through the brick wall and escaped. As a result, prisoners awaiting trial were often held in the jails of nearby counties, such as the one in Shelbyville.

The first courthouse burned in 1864, which of course destroyed that first jail. Between 1864 and 1876 Sullivan had no jail; so prisoners awaiting trial continued to be held at Shelbyville and other county seats.

In 1875 the county fathers resolved to build a new jail. A committee was appointed by the board of supervisors — William Weakley, George Hetherington, and E.J. Dunscomb — to examine the various jails in adjoining towns with a view to selecting the kind Moultrie should build. The Committee visited

the Monticello jail in October “but was not favorably impressed with it.”

Finally a decision was made, and the second Moultrie county jail was built in 1876. It was a brick structure two stories high. “A St. Louis firm put in cells of boiler iron, one-quarter of an inch thick, warranted to hold all rogues who survive the dangers of their almost airtight cells. The Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ought to look after such jails.”

James T. Taylor supervised the work of construction. (He was the father of Hattie Taylor Pifer, the author’s grandmother.) The 1886 Sanborn map of Sullivan shows the location — in block 6, a couple of blocks northwest of the court house. The lower floor was used as a home for the sheriff. The second story was “divided into two halls, besides the prisoners’ room. The first hall was cut off by iron grating from the second, which was next to the prison proper. There were eight iron-clad cells — four on each side of the hall — in which prisoners were held.

The 1876 structure continued to serve the county until it was replaced by a new building in early 1916 at the same location. The 1916 jail cost \$22,000 and was said to be “one of the most modernly equipped structures of its kind” in central Illinois. The front part of the building was the residence, with the rear part the jail itself. A heavy steel door separated the residence from the jail, which consisted of padded cells and walls, separate women’s cells, and an exercising corridor. The cell room with steel cells occupied the entire east end of the building.

The jail appears, slightly expanded, in the same location in the Sanborn maps of June 1898 and 1922.

There was another jail as well — the city jail. In 1898 it was located southeast of the courthouse at the intersection of East Jefferson and South Worth streets. It was a tiny structure, labeled “calaboose” in the 1898 Sanborn map at the southeast corner of block 11 — the same block in which the old Christian Church was located. On that same block — but on the west side of it — were the city’s elevated water tank and “hose house” — presumably the fire department at that time.

In the Sanborn map of 1922, on that same block 11, the tiny “calaboose” had disappeared, and a new jail had been built on the west side of the block — i.e., still block 11 but on the southwest rather than southeast corner.

There we find both a “city hall” and next door to the north, the jail.

Today (2018) the county jail is in a large building built in 2008 located northwest of Sullivan on the east side of route 32, north of the site of the old Sullivan drive-in theater.

The city jail and police department were moved from the old location in block 11 to the building that now houses the Heritage Center — the old Firestone building. Then for a time the city jail was housed in the new Sullivan fire station on Hamilton Street. Today the police department is at the corner of Water and Van Buren streets.

XV.

The Post Offices of Sullivan

The early post offices in Sullivan were located wherever the post masters had their places of business. Sometime — probably in the early 1880s after the *1881 Combined History* was published — the post office moved into its own separate location.

The first post office was located in the Perryman building and store at the west end of the south side of the square. John Perryman was one of the first residents of the new village, created in 1845, and was appointed the first post master. The county history recites that the mails were received once every two weeks from Shelbyville, carried by Peter Fleming on horseback.

Following Perryman other prominent Sullivan residents held the position: W.C. Lloyd, J.E. Eden, James Elder, W.W. Stanley, and A. Miley, who occupied the post when the 1881 history was published.

Walt Eden, son of John R. Eden, lived as a child in a house across the street west of the Perryman building. “How well I remember this brick building. It seemed to be very old when I first remember it as a little child. I think it belonged to John Perryman, one of the early pioneers. As I remember, he ran a store in it. It was also occupied by the Kilner Drug Store.” Walt was a

nephew of Joseph Edgar Eden, who kept a store on the west side of the square.

James Elder, one in the succession of postmasters, no doubt also kept his post office operation in his own building, on the northwest corner opposite the courthouse. This is likely the same location that was later occupied by the M&F Bank building, which descended from the first bank in town — the Elder Bank.

Aaron Miley was postmaster when the 1875 Atlas and the slightly later 1881 history were written. Miley had come to Illinois in 1865 and settled in Sullivan. He taught school for two winters before taking charge of the post office, first in 1867 as deputy and then in January 1868 as postmaster. Miley married a sister of Albert J Beveridge. He was associated with John P. Lilly in the City Book Store, which was located in Dr. Lewis' building at the east end of the block on the north side of the square.

Sometime — probably in the 1881-1885 period — the post office was moved out of the City Book Store and into its own quarters opposite the southeast corner of the square, where it appears in the 1886 Sanborn map at the southeast corner of Jefferson and Washington streets. When I.J. Martin and Rose Eden were exchanging letters during their engagement year, 1885-86, they were doing so by leaving them at the new post office “located a few store fronts east of the southeast corner of the square. Letters handled by the post office were not delivered to residences or offices, but were left in boxes at the post office to be picked up by the addressees. Alternatively, letter writers could pay local boys to provide messenger service for home or office delivery.” *Ivory and Rose, A Year's Courtship*, Chicago, 1997, at xix.

The post office was still near that same southeast corner of the square in 1893 and 1898. But by 1922 it had a new home — on the south side of Jefferson Street a block west of the square. That's the location I remember when I was a little boy about 1950, feeding a postal savings account and buying plate blocks and mint commemoratives to add to my stamp book.

XVI.

Albert Beveridge



Senator Albert J. Beveridge

The most successful public figure ever to grow up in Sullivan and graduate from its schools was Albert J. Beveridge. He served two terms in the United States Senate and became a leading national figure in the Republican Party and in the American “progressive” movement in the early 20th century. After his career in politics came to an end, he wrote highly-regarded biographies of two of the great men in American history: Chief Justice John Marshall and Abraham Lincoln.

Beveridge achieved this success only by overcoming youthful poverty and years of unremitting physical labor comparable to the experiences of young Abe Lincoln. Yet Lincoln was and remains a subject of public veneration while Beveridge is barely remembered in his original home town. Then again — Albert didn't write some of the greatest prose in the English language, didn't win a war or save the union, and didn't die a martyr.

Also, he didn't have Lincoln's sense of humor. And he never won a popular election. Perhaps the two are related.

Albert Jeremiah Beveridge was born October 6, 1862, near Sugar Tree Ridge in Highland County, Ohio. His father, Thomas Henry Beveridge, was in the Ohio Volunteers at the time, fighting Confederates. Thomas' first wife had died, leaving him eight children, and in early January 1862 he married a 37-year old widow, Frances Doyle. Albert was the only child of that second marriage.

Albert J. Beveridge, American Nationalist, Chicago, 1971, by John Braeman is a good source of information about Beveridge's career, but the book contains little about Beveridge's early years. Albert started work on an autobiography, beginning with chapters on his early life, but he abandoned the project and these early chapters were never published. Braeman, at 328. With the help of a kind Reference Librarian at the Library of Congress, I was able to get copies of these drafts. Beveridge collection, Box 324.

During the Civil War years Tom Beveridge ran into financial troubles which forced him to sell off a large chunk of his farm and open a general store; but that too was unsuccessful. In 1866 Tom went bankrupt, and his remaining land and personal belongings were sold to pay debts.

In 1866, when young Albert was four years old, the family moved to Moultrie County, settling on a farm near Chippys Station, two miles northeast of Sullivan. It wasn't long before his father gave up farming and moved to Sullivan where he worked as a butcher. The family home was on 37 S. Polk, east of the center of town, not far from the cemetery. Albert's biographer summarized his father's efforts to make a living (at 7):

Although he managed to buy a home, he continued to struggle in the morass of debt. In 1874 he went into business in partnership with his new son-in-law, Aaron Miley, the local postmaster and republican leader. But the business failed to prosper, back taxes mounted,

and the partners had to sell out for a fraction of their investment. Thereafter Thomas eked out a living by farming and doing odd jobs around town. After his death in October 1895 his home had to be sold at auction to pay his debts and back taxes.

Albert's biographer wrote that father was "stern and forbidding ... soured by his tribulations. Between father and son there was scant warmth of feeling." The fact that the other children in the family were older and the product of the earlier marriage made things even more difficult for young Albert, who was reportedly resented by his step-siblings as their stepmother's pet. *Id.*, at 7.

Yet Albert's unpublished autobiography at the Library of Congress suggests that Albert admired and respected his father. He was proud of his father's military service in the Union Army and of his mother for managing the farms as best she could while he was gone. One of his step-brothers was also in the army; and Albert recounted with admiration his attempt to rescue one of his wounded and dying comrades.

Although Albert's father had become bankrupt, Albert pointed out it was not through mismanagement of his own affairs but as a result of endorsing the notes of his friends. He regarded it as "dishonorable" to "refuse a friend in need." Elsewhere, Albert wrote: "My father would no more permit a neighbor or friend to come to him for his name on a note without giving it than he would permit a hungry man to come to our door and send him away without food." One doesn't get the impression that Thomas was any more "soured by tribulations" than anyone else would have been who was poor and had to work hard for a living. Nor does one find any basis for the "scant warmth of feeling" characterization — though perhaps the biographer had other relevant evidence.

Although Albert admired his father for his sense of honor, he thought he had carried it to a "fanatical" extreme:

My father could have gotten out of debt very quickly by compromising with the holders of the notes on which he was held as security, but he would not do it. Later on, he could have unloaded the whole burden by pleading the Statute of Limitations, but again he would not do it.

No, said he. My name went on those notes. It is a legal debt, and I will pay it in full with the wartime interest. For did I not agree to do it? I did.

So this fanatical ideal of a grotesque and abnormal honor kept the backs of all of us under the whip.

Walt Eden remembered Albert's father in his own memoir (at 39):

One of the first things I remember about the Beveridge family is at a fourth of July celebration in Sullivan when I was a very small child. Mr. Beveridge, Sr. had entered in the parade two fat steers, decorated with blue ribbands, and on the head of each he had placed a meat ax and a meat saw. Obviously he was making some publicity for his butcher shop.

* * *

Thomas H. Beveridge ... was most energetic. He was fond of hard work but a poor manager. He never stuck to one thing. He had no property except his home in Sullivan. It was always cluttered up with farm machinery, log wagons and other things which he accumulated. His home was not in an indecent part of the town. His neighbors were all poor but respectable people; but for some reason the locality was known as "Dog Town." Probably Mr. Beveridge's carelessness in keeping up his place contributed to the appellation.

The old man rented land near town, and Albert J. as a boy assisted in the plowing, planting, cultivating and harvesting the crops of corn, wheat, oats and hay which he raised. The old man patented a hay press and went among the farmers baling their hay and straw. Albert J. assisted in all these things.

At that period there was around Sullivan much timber, and saw mills at Sullivan sawed a lot of walnut logs. Mr. Beveridge was a logger, and I have often seen Albert driving walnut logs into town from the timber. I say these things not with the intention of belittling his early life, as it seems to me it makes him a bigger and better man to be able to make of himself a man of importance with such small beginnings.

So Albert — or Allie, as his contemporaries called him — went to work at an early age. "I cannot remember when I was not at work. At first it was

on a farm. When I was 12 years old I was a plow-boy, doing a man's full day's work. After a while we moved to a little country town [Sullivan] and farmed all around it. ...When they were holding Court ... I was allowed to sell the daily papers that came in from a big city and to keep the profits. I bought my first 'pants' in this way"

Albert began attending school at the Two-Mile School a couple of miles north-east of Sullivan, not far from his father's first farm. It was an old-time, one-room wooden schoolhouse with one teacher for all the grades. After the family moved into town, Allie attended the graded "free school" — first the old brick public school near the Greenhill cemetery, and then the new North Side school (where the Powers School later stood), which went into service in the fall of 1874 when Albert was almost 12.

Walt Eden was the same age as Albert Beveridge. He remembered going to the new North Side school at the age of 12, just after the school was built. He was in the fifth grade, and his teacher was Miss Anderson. He remembered also "a number of wonderful teachers" — the Principal, Polk Rose, who became a leading lawyer, and Charlotte Webster, "a wonderful woman for her day. She gave the students up-to-date ideas, and was instrumental in giving the Sullivan public school a wide reputation for efficiency. Her husband was the local milk man."

Allie also remembered "Lotta Webster" fondly, as "a remarkable teacher ... who encouraged him in his dreams and protected him from the jibes of his schoolmates, who resented what they regarded as his insufferable egotism." Braeman, at 8.

After working on the farms and selling newspapers, Allie labored for two years on a railroad as a section hand. Then he spent a year as a logger and teamster. At the age of 16 he was given charge of a lumber camp, which is where he later said he learned the "art of profanity." "The Senatorial Career of Albert J. Beveridge," John A. Coffin, *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 24, issue 3, 1928, based on personal interviews:

During all these logging days I kept up my reading, of course, not as a task but as a pleasure. It was the best form of fun that I could find. It was at this period that I came upon Emerson. In the deep woods among the roughest of men, I sat by the blazing fires of his genius — a camp-fire of the mind and spirit which was all my own.

Allie took his high school classes in the upper floor of the same North Side school building. In his unpublished autobiography, he remembered a time when — to overcome his horror of high places — he “mounted to the belfry of our high school building, and climbing over the railing, walked around the narrow ledge outside of it.” While in high school he worked as an assistant to the postmaster, his brother-in-law — Erastus Bussell (“E.B” or “Bus”) Eden, who had married his sister, Elizabeth Beveridge. Allie also drove an express wagon and delivered express mail to the people of Sullivan. Eden *Memoirs*, at 42.

Braemen, Albert’s biographer, reports that some of his classmates resented Allie’s “egotism.” Walt Eden described one incident:

Some of his classmates in high school did him a dirty trick. In my opinion it did not reflect on him near as much as it did on the perpetrators. One of their number was Charles J. Swisher, the son of a neighboring blacksmith. They had him weld an iron band about the size of a man’s head and presented it to him [Albert] to wear and prevent his head from swelling up.

It was said that one of his teachers, Mrs. Webster, tried to “humble him a little” by recognizing other members of the class for their work. Once Albert complained “because Anna Everett and Gertrude Meeker were given a higher grade in civics. They tried to make him see that other pupils were capable of class honors, but his interest centered in himself” I.J Martin, quoted in *Moultrie County News*.

Apart from his high opinion of himself, Albert’s formal style of speaking may have irritated some of his neighbors. Walt Eden told this story:

He delivered a package at our house one day and for some reason did not collect the express charges. He came back the next day and rendered a statement of the charge, and said: “Had I not been compelled to make my remittance, I would not have been so urgent in my call.”

A combination of factors led Albert to develop his talent for public speaking:

First, he was blessed with a strong work ethic, a clear mind and outstanding memory, all of which contributed to his development as a fine speaker.

Second, that natural talent was nourished by hearing the Fourth of July and Memorial Day speeches that typified holiday celebrations in central Illinois.

Third, he was impressed by the Methodist church services. Allie wrote in his draft autobiography about those services: “The ‘mourner’s bench’ was a very genuine thing in those days. The churches of every denomination were always having revivals — at least they had revivals every winter. At these revivals the Methodists would shout in an ecstasy of religious exultation or groan in the depths of a real repentance. ... Every winter there would be joint debates in the schoolhouses between some two farmers of prominence who were conspicuous Bible readers about this, that and the other passages of the Scriptures.”

Fourth, he attended political as well as religious debates. “The political meetings were very lurid. No speaker was popular who did not abuse the other side. ‘Fellow Democrats: I do not say fellow citizens because there might be some black Republican here who thinks he is a citizen and I don’t want to speak to anybody but honest men. This black Republican administration is made up of scoundrels. Old Grant is a thief. John A. Logan is a horse thief. ... Of course, however, all of these people were really very good citizens and at heart wanted the very best things for their country.”

Albert wrote later that it was the political speeches and those of lawyers in court that give him his first lessons in public speaking. He remembered in particular one Republican gathering at the “grove” in 1876 — no doubt Freeland Grove — where the speaker was Colonel Thomas Johnson:

My father and one of my brothers sat with some thirty other militant Republicans on the stand; but I wanted to see the speaker, and so I sat with my mother on the front plank directly before the stand. The farmer who was the owner of the grove [probably John Freeland, a leading local Republican and state official] acted as the chairman. ... [Then the roar from the crowd:] Three cheers for Hayes and Wheeler.”

During that campaign season, the Republicans permitted Albert to “make a few speeches in little school houses in remote parts of our county. ... I felt it necessary to redeem my plain and simple statements with what I understood to be real oratory; so I ruined what would otherwise have been good speeches by tearing passions to very threads and waving the flag till the

heavens flamed with stars and stripes on which great buckets of heroes' blood was splashed It did not go badly”

Fifth, Albert gained experience in speaking at temperance meetings in Sullivan. The 1870s saw the development of the “Murphy Movement” — revival-like gatherings to encourage abstinence from alcohol and abolition of saloons. Both Albert’s father and Albert himself became popular speakers at these local meetings. Albert later told a reporter about one of those meetings, where he “was the principal speaker. He had committed to memory most of his remarks, and his address of an hour and a half is still remembered in the town.” *Commonwealth*, September 20, 1900.

Almost certainly it was Allie’s skills at public speaking that most inclined him toward a career in law. Certainly that interest took root while he was still in Sullivan. While in high school, Albert spent many hours in the courtroom listening to the arguments. He particularly remembered Judge Burleigh Scofield, a noted criminal lawyer. Albert spent many hours in the law offices of I.J. Mouser on the east side of the square talking law and politics. He also borrowed law books from John R. Eden.

Allie did not suffer from lack of ambition: Walt Eden “often heard Beveridge the boy say, ‘I am going to be a lawyer or a sawyer.’ Also, as a boy he had the ambition to be President of the United States. This ambition I heard him repeat several times.”

Despite his work load in the fields and logging camps around Sullivan, Albert was an outstanding high school student. Although school taught no Greek and “scant Latin,” he completed the rest of the standard program: English grammar and composition, algebra and plane geometry, American history, English literature, and a smattering of the natural sciences. Braeman, at 8.

Albert graduated as valedictorian of his class (consisting of 11 members — only 3 of whom were men) in the spring of 1881. Walt Eden called Albert’s valedictory speech “as fine an address as I ever heard.” Walt added: “A short time after his graduation, he loaned me a number of his books for me to read. Among others was *The Last Days of Pompeii*, by Bulwer-Lytton. In that I discovered a lot of passages underscored, and recognized many of these passages as part of his valedictory address.” Eden *Memoirs*, at 41.

After high school Allie wanted to go to college, but had no money. So he wrote to several college presidents seeking help. He remembered years later

that the letters went something like this:

Dear Sir: I am 17 years old, and I want to go to college. I have been through our high school, but I have had no Latin and Greek. I have no money either. I mean by that that I have no money at all; but I feel that I must go to college. Can you tell me how I can get through college in this condition, and how much will it cost?

Yours truly,

Only one answer came back. This was from the president of a little but very good sectarian institution. . . . He sent me a catalogue giving the curricula, also another one which contained the names of the alumni of that college. . . . So I made up my mind to go to that college.

The response was from the President of the small Indiana college later known as DePauw.

That left the question of money. Walt Eden reported that “Ed Anderson, a local lumber dealer, became interested in Albert, and it was generally understood that he helped him pay his expenses through college.” *Id.*, at 42. The help came in the form of a loan of \$50, which along with his small savings was enough to enroll. Albert did not pay it off until after his graduation four years later.

After his first year in college, Albert returned to Sullivan for the summer to do farm work. He later told a reporter that “In one week I cut 210 acres of wheat with an old fashioned self- binder. I have plowed every field near the town of Sullivan but the fairgrounds.”

Beveridge did well at DePauw and won oratorical contests — memorizing his speeches, practicing in front of a mirror, and rehearsing his gestures. In his senior year he won “the Interstate Oratorical Contest” and came back to DePauw a hero. Braeman, at 10.

Albert graduated from DePauw in June 1885. After spending a year in Kansas doing land deals, he returned to Indiana to study for the bar, and soon went to work for an Indianapolis law firm — doing research, drafting documents, and preparing for the bar exam. He married his college sweetheart in November 1887 and was admitted to the bar a month later. His career as a lawyer and politician was launched.

Law and oratory were springboards into a career in Indiana Republican politics where Albert quickly earned a reputation as a compelling speaker. At the age of 37 he was elected by the Indiana state legislature to the United States Senate in 1899 and re-elected in 1905.

Albert supported Theodore Roosevelt's progressive policies and his candidacy for President on the Progressive (Bull Moose) ticket in 1912, thereby alienating many of his Republican friends. Despite his progressivism, he was also an avowed imperialist, advocating annexation of the Philippines.

He ran for governor of Indiana in 1912 and lost. The U.S. Constitution was amended in 1913 to provide for direct popular election of Senators. Beveridge then ran for the Senate in 1914 and lost. He made one more race for the Senate in 1922 but lost that as well.

Following his career in the Senate, rather than return to a career in the law Beveridge wrote two fine books. His first, the four-volume *The Life of John Marshall*, 1919, won him a Pulitzer Prize for Biography and sold many thousands of copies.

(On October 28, 1963, over half a century ago, I found myself in a used book store in downtown Boston taking a break from my graduate school classes, one of which was a seminar in American constitutional law. I found a copy of Beveridge's Marshall biography and splurged to buy it — \$16.95. I read it that fall, and still have those four volumes — one of my favorite judicial biographies.)

Beveridge did not have time to complete his second book, a biography of Abraham Lincoln, though two volumes covering the period of Lincoln's life before the Civil War appeared after his death in 1928. His accumulated research materials were then passed on to Carl Sandburg.

Beveridge also wrote several less weighty works, including one called *The Russian Advance*, New York, 1903. In preparing this work he committed an unforgivable sin. He traveled to Russia to do research, and while there he met with Tolstoy at the great man's home at Yasnaya Polyana. With him was a lecturer and film maker, Burton Holmes. While Tolstoy and Beverage talked, Holmes filmed the two of them with his 60-mm camera. Afterwards, Beveridge had the film destroyed for fear that evidence of his meeting with the supposedly radical Russian might hurt his chances of running for the Presidency.

Albert's father died in October 1895 from injuries he received when he was thrown from a horse-cart. His obituary described him as "a man of absolutely independent views in politics and religion and never lacked the courage to express his sentiments." (MCN, October 25, 1895.) (The line about "never lacked the courage ..." reminds me of what was once said about I.J.'s mother, Rachel, my great-grandmother: "When Aunt Rachel thought that anything needed to be said to anyone, she did not hunt around for someone to say it; she just said it herself.")

Albert's mother, Frances, lived on in Sullivan with her step-daughter Elizabeth (Mrs. E.B.) Eden, at 1503 Harrison Street (1913 Sullivan City Directory), as did another half-sister, Columbia Miley. Albert's step-brother John lived in nearby Mattoon. His mother died at the age of 93 in 1918 in the home of her step-daughter Elizabeth.

Albert came to visit his mother and other family members occasionally. One of those visits occurred in mid May 1916. A Sullivan newspaper reported his visit on the first page: "Mr. Beveridge comes to Sullivan and walks about the streets without even being recognized by more than a dozen persons, while should this same Albert J. Beveridge pass along the streets of any big city in the United States he would soon be surrounded by newspaper correspondents and his presence in the city alone would be the occasion for a big front page story." The reporter noted: "He became one of the best known statesmen in the nation and was several times strongly talked of for president. As an author he is one of the best known of political writers. ... He comes to Sullivan occasionally to visit his aged mother, who resides with Mr. and Mrs. E.B. Eden. He says he has quit politics forever."

Albert passed away at the age of 64, April 27, 1927. Admiring obituaries appeared in newspapers throughout the country. President Coolidge sent his widow a telegram saying that "in scholarship, in literature and in politics, he was a great American figure."

In the midst of the laudatory press coverage, an article appeared in the *Decatur Herald* with the headline: "**Home Town**" Did Not Like Beveridge and his Ways; "**High Hatting**" Resented. The article went on to "report" that Beveridge had given the appearance of "being upon a higher plane of intellectual development and importance than the people of the 'old home town.'" Albert had not "referred with pride to the home of his youth," and "displayed little or no interest in the other people living there." When he visited his home

town, he even drank in private “without the good cheer of friends.”

The article quoted Albert’s brother-in-law, E.B. “Bus” Eden:

“When Allie comes to our house, he puts his feet on the best table and flicks his cigar ashes all over the rugs, while if I smoke in the house I put the ashes on my hat brim to be carried off the premises before I dump them,” Mr. Eden complained. . . . “Why once when Allie was home he asked me about something in which he was interested. I couldn’t tell him then, but I said I would write him a letter about it. ‘All right,’ Beverage said, ‘but make it brief.’”

I.J. Martin knew Beveridge and was a cousin of “Bus” Eden. He wrote a letter to a Sullivan newspaper to correct the “wrong impression” he thought had been left by the Decatur article (*Sullivan Progress*, May 6, 1927):

The people of Sullivan know little about him except what they have read and heard. He left Sullivan 44 years ago . . . It is somewhat ridiculous to say he was disliked by a people who did not know him .

His life here was strenuous with work and study and he had little time or opportunity for intimate friendships. A talk with the few schoolmates who remain here indicates that while there may have been some jealousies, there was no real enmity among them. . . .

E.B. Eden would not want his witticism taken seriously. He would have made the same or similar remarks about his best friend without the least tinges of bitterness. His business was to make people laugh. . . .

Perhaps, because Sullivan and its people were a part of his early hard environment, he did not cherish tender feelings for his ‘old Home Town’ which had done so little for him. But it was indifference and neglect rather than ‘dislike.’ . . . The people who knew of his great ability and his splendid public service are glad that his boyhood was spent here and that he graduated from the Sullivan High School.

I.J. Martin quoted one of Albert’s classmates, Anna Everett, who said, “No one disliked Allie, though we all thought him to be a little too self-centered.” I.J. thought the mutual coolness could be explained by the fact that

Albert and his contemporaries “were not interested in the same things.”

Beveridge’s manuscript draft autobiography at the Library of Congress reveals that despite the hard work, Albert seemed to regard his growing-up years in Sullivan with satisfaction. His draft chapters expressed no criticisms of his classmates or contemporaries.

The draft autobiography leaves this reader with the sense that Beveridge’s chief assets were his work ethic, his principled view of life and politics, his memory and his oratorical skills. Unlike Lincoln, he does not impress with analytical strength; and he lacked the personal warmth and sense of humor that might have endeared him to voters.

Albert had at least one admirer among his classmates. Walt Eden in his *Memoirs* wrote that one high school classmate had remembered Albert (at 43):

Gertrude Meeker, my cousin, was a classmate of Mr. Beveridge in the Sullivan High School. She died a few years ago, an old maid. In her keepsakes was found a big bunch of letters, tied up carefully in ribbons, written by Albert to her from Indiana, when he was a student at DePauw and afterwards while he was still a single man after graduation. No one opened that bunch of letters, and they were burned unread.

XVII.

The Lynching of Grant Atteberry

On November 23, 1891, in Shelby County, south of Sullivan, Ulysses Grant Atteberry and his brother Ed were charged with killing their father David Atteberry by blowing off part of his head with a shotgun. But that isn't why five years later a lynch mob of Sullivan residents hanged Grant Atteberry on a tree in the Court House yard.

The Players

In 1891 David J. Atteberry was a 62 year-old farmer living in Shelby County. His wife Cynthia Jane had died one year earlier leaving him with nine grown children.

The second son — Ulysses Grant Atteberry, whom the family called “Grant” — was 32 in 1891. Grant was married to the former Annice Louisa Stoltz. They had three children: Myrtle, Emma Jane, and Clark Mackin.

The next oldest son was Edward — 29. Ed Atteberry had married Roxanna Moore in 1883. Roxy, as she was known, was the daughter of James Moore and Julina Eden Moore. She had grown up in the Whitley Point community of Moultrie County. Roxy was named after her aunt Roxanna, the wife

of John R. Eden, the Sullivan lawyer and former Congressman. (Roxy's older brother was named John R. Moore, after her uncle.)

There were three other Atteberry brothers — David H., Robert, and Joseph — and four sisters.

Roxy was 32 in 1891, having married Edward eight years before. Roxy and Ed Atteberry had four children: Joseph A. (b. 1884), Charles E. (b. 1886), Elzie Cress (b. 1888), and Earl F. (b. Aug. 26, 1891).

No one knows for sure now exactly what happened on November 23, 1891 — over 126 years ago. Indeed, no one knew then except the players themselves. The account that follows is based largely on contemporaneous newspaper reports, which reflect what many people believed had happened. Newspaper accounts cannot be cross-examined. But two things are indisputable: David, the father, was brutally murdered; and one of his sons, Grant, was lynched five years later — apparently the only lynching that ever occurred in Moultrie County. (Some newspaper accounts spell the last name “Atterberry,” but census and other records spell the name “Atteberry.”)

The Murder

David Atteberry was a prosperous farmer with a 300-acre farm in Penn township, Shelby County, not far from Moweaqua. After David's wife Cynthia died, he was considering marrying Nancy Isabel Denton — Mrs. James Denton — a young widow (45 in 1891) living in nearby Moultrie County. One newspaper reported, “It is said” they were engaged to be married, and the wedding was to take place within a week.

Marriage to the widow would have given the new Mrs. Atteberry dower rights in her new husband's farm land if he died before she did, thus diminishing the rights of David's children.

For this and perhaps other reasons, at least four of David's children — including sons Grant and Edward, and two daughters who lived at home — opposed the marriage. One of the sons lived on a part of his father's farm and feared that his father would rent it out. The newspapers, relying on local hearsay, reported that David and his sons had quarreled bitterly over the proposed marriage, and that David had threatened to disinherit his children if they persisted in their opposition.

On the day of the killing, Monday, November 23, 1891, David had been in Mowequa on business. He started home in a road-cart about 2 o'clock. He may have stopped along the way to make a call on the Widow Denton. When he was about a mile from his farm he was met by his two sons. Grant was riding in a wagon where he had concealed a shotgun. Brother Ed was on horse-back. The father and sons exchanged angry words. Then Grant allegedly pulled out the shotgun and fired at his father, hitting him in the head. The impact of the shotgun blast blew David off the back of the cart. Neighbor George B. McClelland heard the gun shot but paid no particular attention until he noticed a road cart dashing up the road without a driver. He started toward the vicinity of the shot and found the murdered man in the mud "his brains oozing out of a ghastly wound at the top of his head." The victim's horse ran away but was caught half a mile down the road.

Grant's home was 2-1/2 miles south of the David Atteberry home place, and Ed's home was also nearby. Shortly after the report from the shotgun was heard, a neighbor — Beverly Armstrong — saw the two brothers drive past his house toward Ed's home.

The next day, November 24, a coroner's inquest was held, and a verdict was returned finding Grant and Ed both guilty of killing their father with malice aforethought. Testimony at the inquest indicated that Grant's wagon had distinctive "narrow-tired" tracks which led from the murder scene up the road toward Ed's house. Grant's shotgun was found at his home the day after the killing. One report stated that a barrel of the gun — apparently a double-barrel shotgun — had been fired at Grant's house for the purpose of trying it out: "The gun was found concealed and carefully wrapped up in a blanket as if to prevent it being found. Only one barrel was empty. The shot corresponded in size to shot purchased by Grant at Assumption about the time of the murder. It is also said to correspond in size to the shot which the physicians picked from the brain of old man Atteberry."

An older brother, David Henson Atteberry (called "Hint"), was a resident of Decatur. The day after the murder of his father, Hint went to Mowequa to learn what he could about the affair.

On November 25 David Sr. was buried in the Long Grove cemetery. Rev. A.C. Armentrout conducted the services.

The Law

On the day of the burial, Grant and Ed were arrested at Moweaqua and charged with the murder of their father. At 11 a.m. that day Constable Bentley and a deputy sheriff left Moweaqua with Grant and Ed in custody on the train for Shelbyville where both were jailed without bail. A “great crowd” met them at the train station. The two brothers were to remain in jail at Shelbyville to stand trial for the murder of their father.

The killing and the legal proceedings that followed were reported in newspapers throughout the country — the distant papers relying on the local reports of the Shelbyville and Decatur newspapers.

Initial news reports indicated that the brothers sent a messenger to Sullivan lawyer John R. Eden asking him to visit them in the Shelbyville jail, and that they would be defended by Eden and H.J. Hamlin of Shelbyville. Eden was an uncle of Roxy, the wife of Ed Atteberry, the younger of the two defendants.

Presumably John R. Eden, an experienced trial lawyer, advised Ed about his potential defenses, including the insanity defense — and no doubt advised Ed how to conduct himself. Or possibly what Ed did or saw during the murder of his father made any such coaching unnecessary. In any event, something caused Ed to appear mentally unhinged.

A report from Shelbyville stated that Ed had become “a harmless lunatic, his reason having been dethroned during the last few days. He talks constantly, giving the history of his life, recalling the happy times of his childhood days and recounting the interesting episodes of his courtship and marriage. He is perfectly harmless and seems as happy and cheerful as a child.” An older brother, David, reportedly told people that his brother Ed had “been converted, experienced religion since his incarceration in the county jail.”

A later account reported that “Ed Atteberry has been acting queerly since his imprisonment, and has caused more or less trouble. He turned preacher in the jail and in a wild way prayed and preached like mad — and he has kept it up continually. The jury adjudged Ed insane Saturday and that evening he was taken to the asylum at Kankakee.”

The Kankakee asylum was a modern facility, having opened in Sep-

tember 1879, and provided treatment, safety and some entertainment for its roughly 400 inmates.

The brothers had different and conflicting interests: for example, what would Ed say about who had pulled the trigger of the shotgun? So they would have required separate counsel. Probably John R. Eden was advising only Ed, his niece's husband. In any event, having persuaded the county authorities not to prosecute the "insane" brother, John R. had done everything he could. Whatever the reason, he made no further appearance in the case.

Ed's preaching and lunatic behavior may have been an act. On the other hand, the local prosecutors would not lightly have acquiesced to his insanity defense, allowing him to escape prosecution for murder. Also, decades after the event Ed was still in and out of mental institutions.

H.J. Hamlin, one of Grant Atteberry's lawyers, filed a motion to quash the indictment. The motion was argued at length but denied by the judge. Then, as one of the newspapers put it, "upon one pretext or another" the case was continued until October 1893, almost two years after the murder. During that time Grant was held in jail. The prosecution was conducted by State's Attorney Wallace with ex-Supreme Court Judge Anthony Thornton assisting.

Neighbors of the murdered father had retained their own lawyer — Judge Horace S. Clark of Mattoon — to assist in the prosecution. (The position of Judge was part-time, and judges were permitted to practice law on the side.) When the trial began, Judge Clark "took a chair at the table with" the other prosecuting attorneys, Wallace and Thornton. At that point the defense objected, and "after a stubborn contest" Judge Clark was excluded because he "came into the case after the jury had been selected."

Grant, the sole defendant on trial, was represented by H.J. Hamlin, W.C. Kelly, and E.A. Richardson.

Great difficulty was reportedly experienced in selecting a jury. The report did not indicate whether that was because prospective jury members knew either the victim or the defendants, or because prospective members were afraid of the Atteberry family. Finally, a jury of 12 was selected.

A.M. House was the first witness and his testimony occupied an entire day.

George McClellan testified that he saw the brothers before the killing in a distinctive narrow-tread wagon, that he had heard the shot, and found the corpse. “It had rained during the day, and the traces of the road cart and the narrow-tread were within 20 inches of each other, and freshly made. The track of the narrow-tread wagon was followed in a round-about way to Ed Atteberry’s residence.”

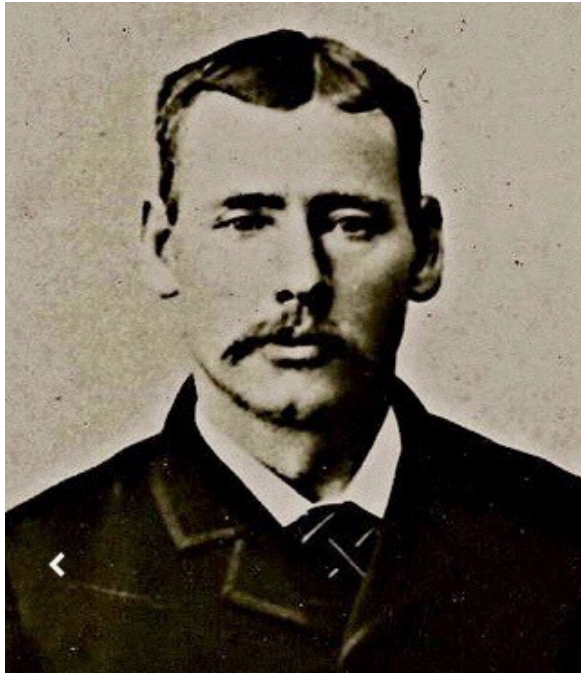
The trial lasted a week, during which the prosecution introduced many witnesses — one report said that “more than 100 witnesses are there to testify” — and submitted maps of the road and location where the victim’s body had been found. One of the witnesses at the trial was Grant’s sister-in-law, Roxy. What she said in her testimony was not reported.

On October 26 the trial was concluded. Judge Thornton “commenced the argument” for the State. After the lawyers made their closing arguments, the case “was given to the jury at a late hour.” Three ballots were necessary to reach a verdict. The first ballot was a tie — 6 to 6. The second stood 10 to 2; and the third and last was unanimous for acquittal. The next morning about 9:10 the jury returned the verdict of not guilty.

The not-guilty verdict was a great surprise to observers in the court room, including Grant’s own lawyers.

Soon after the not-guilty verdict was returned, Grant moved 25 miles north to Sullivan with his family. As one newspaper put it,

Grant Atteberry and family shook the dust of Shelbyville from their pedal extremities yesterday, going to Sullivan. If ever man charged with crime played in big luck, Grant Atteberry was one of them. His escape from conviction was a surprise to all, including the attorneys who defended him, and was due to two causes — first, the defense put up by his attorneys, and second, bad management on the part of the prosecution. At least that is the way the people talk it.



Ulysses Grant Atteberry

After Grant's close shave in Shelbyville, it is not surprising that he chose to relocate. We do not know why he chose Sullivan. His sister-in-law and her family — Roxy, wife of brother Ed (who was in the insane asylum in Kankakee) — also moved to Sullivan.

Five years later, in January 1896, Roxy and her four children — ranging in age from 4 to 10 — were living in their home on East Jackson Street. One newspaper specifically stated that her home was on "East Jackson Street," but did not provide a street number.

Roxy and her children lived in a small frame house at what is now 108 E. Jackson Street — the same location where my family lived a half-century later. Sometime around 1910, Finley E. Pifer bought the property at 108 E. Jackson Street and moved the little frame house on it to the back — or north part — of the lot, facing onto Scott Street; and he then built a two-story brick house on the Jackson St. part of the lot. Finley and Hattie Pifer were living in that new brick house in 1914 when they adopted Ruth White (later Ruth Martin). When I was growing up in the 1940s and 1950s, my grandmother —

Hattie Pifer — lived in the little frame house that had been moved — the house Roxy Atteberry had lived in with her children in 1896.

The Rape — January 24, 1896

Late in the night of Thursday, January 23, 1896, or possibly early Friday morning the 24th, Roxy reportedly got up and went to her kitchen for a drink of water. The kitchen was across a little porch from the main part of the house. As she opened the door to the kitchen, Roxy was seized by two intruders who bound her hands with rope, gagged her with cotton, and threw a handkerchief over her face. The assailants then reportedly “assaulted” her.

Back in 1896 the newspapers were more delicate than they are today. Roxy was raped by at least one of the intruders. The assailants remained in Roxy’s house for about an hour. When they left, one of them cursed her and said he had now had his revenge.

According to one newspaper summary, “The poor woman was helpless, but managed to roll back into the sitting room and aroused her sleeping children by kicking against the door. The oldest boy came out and stumbled over the prostrate form of his mother. He asked her if she was sick, and she could only answer by a moan. Without making a light he ran for a next- door neighbor, C.D. “Doug” Cochran who when he came thought the woman had the toothache with which she is frequently subject by seeing the handkerchief and some cotton.”

When Cochran “attempted to lift her up, he found her hands were bound and then took in the situation. As soon as she could speak, she told of the assault, and the alarm was immediately given.” A physician was called. The newspaper account said, “Aside from the nervous shock and injury to her hands and back by being tied, she is not hurt.” That is, of course, except for having been raped.

Cochran looked for “the way the visitors had come and gone,” and “found the door on the west side of the house standing partly open.” Then other neighbors came in and they followed tracks along the west side of the house to a “plank walk on the north and west sides,” which was as far as they could make out the trail.

The Hue and Cry

An alarm was immediately given, and telegrams were sent “all over the country.” One telegram was sent to Paris for two bloodhounds. “The tracks made by the men were covered and guarded, and the city, through Mayor A.K. Campbell, offered a reward of \$200 for the arrest of the men.” The Sheriff in 1896 was Thomas A. Lansden — the first of three Lansdens to hold that position. “Uncle Tom” Lansden, then 56, had first been elected sheriff in 1884. The law did not permit “Uncle Tom” to succeed himself, so he went out of office in 1888, but returned in 1892 and served until 1896.

During that second term, Thomas’ son, Charles Lansden, served as Tom’s deputy from 1892 to 1896. After his father’s second term as sheriff ended, Charles was appointed city marshal of Sullivan and served in that role for six years. In 1912 he was named Sheriff, and was re-elected in 1918 and 1926, Charles’ son, Halac Lansden, would also later serve as Sheriff.

According to the newspaper accounts, “Postmaster Eden” took a handcar on the railroad from Sullivan to Mattoon to catch a Big Four train for Paris to get the bloodhounds. One newspaper identified “Postmaster Eden” as an uncle of Roxy Atteberry — which would have made him the brother of John R. Eden. When “Postmaster Eden” arrived in Paris, he learned that the dogs were “too young to follow such an old scent.” The marshal advised Eden to get a pair of yellow dogs belonging to Bowers and Harris of Noblesville, Indiana. Eden met them at the Sherman House in Indianapolis to get the dogs, and they all then returned to Sullivan on the 5:21 a.m. train Saturday morning. They were met at the train by a number of townspeople.

Roxy’s uncle was Joseph Edgar Eden, brother of John R.. Uncle J.E. had in fact been postmaster at one time. But in 1896 he was 76 years old. I doubt that he was the man operating the handcar to Mattoon. That was more likely his son, Roxy’s cousin — E.B.”Bus” Eden — who was 41 at the time and who was postmaster in the early 1880s. (Bus was Albert Beveridge’s brother-in-law.)

During the day Friday, while Bus Eden and others were off getting the dogs, the people of Sullivan kept an eye on Grant Atteberry. For his part, “Grant stood around and announced that the dogs could do nothing with a trail as old as that one.”

After the arrival on the Saturday morning train of the yellow blood-hounds— named “Prince” and “Willing” — they were taken to Roxy’s house on Jackson Street where they “smelled the tracks, rope and handkerchief, and started out on the trail yelping, followed by a thousand men,” according to the newspaper account. The dogs’ owners, Bowers and Harris, held the dogs at the end of a rope throughout the trailing. Bowers and Harris supposedly “knew nothing about who the suspected party was or where any other people lived in this town. They asked only that the people keep at least a block away and give the dogs the best chance as the trail was then thirty hours old.” Bowers and Harris were accompanied by Postmaster Eden, Sheriff Lansden, and Policeman Dawdy. They knew who the suspected party was.

The dogs took up the trail “west out of the west door, the side Mr. Cochran had found open, and went north along the west side of the house where the neighbors had found faint tracks. They followed the plank walk around the east side of the house getting over a low fence on the south side of the house. Thence they went to the first corner, thence two blocks north, three blocks west, one block north, four blocks west, one block south, then diagonally half way across a vacant lot.”

At this point, the lead dog Prince “showed by his excitement and ardor that the trail was strong and distinct. Half way in this lot he showed that the trail broke in two. He followed a trail straight across the lot and went direct to the gate in front of Grant Atteberry’s house. He stopped at this gate and placed his jaws on it, thereby announcing that there was the house where one of the wanted men lived.”

“Then the crowd which by this time had grown to several hundred, felt that their suspicions of the day before had grown to conviction.”

“After finishing the trail the first time, everybody went to breakfast, after which the dogs were again sent over the trail, following it exactly in every detail as they had done on the first attempt. This satisfied everybody in Sullivan that Grant Atteberry was one of the guilty men.”

By the time the hounds had identified Grant Atteberry’s residence as their destination, a crowd had congregated. According to one account, Grant “defied the crowd and threatened to shoot any man or dog who came into the yard. He started out with a bucket to milk his cow; was followed by the crowd; and was then arrested at the barn, making no show of resistance.” One account

said that when he was arrested he had one revolver on him. Another said that two were taken from him when he was arrested.

The news accounts leave it unclear how much of the direction from Roxy's to Grant's house was due to the dogs and how much due to their controllers. The hounds had not arrived at the scene until the scent was 36 hours old. One paper gave at least some credit to the handlers: "The yellow hounds *were started in the direction* of his [Grant's] home being kept to the road by ropes and *being compelled to stop* in front of his house by the aforesaid ropes." (Emphasis supplied.)

Another report gave more credit to the hounds: "They took the scent from the rope and bandage which was used and had no trouble in tracking the fiend. They went directly to Grant Atteberry's house, and, as some had suspected him, this made them more certain."

After some initial hesitation, Roxy identified Grant as one of the attackers. "Some of the citizens thought Mrs. Atteberry knew whether or not he was the guilty one, but was afraid to say so. When she was informed that he never would hurt her and was shown what protection she would have, she admitted that he was one of the parties, but she did not know the other. She recognized him [Grant] by his voice."

The evening after his arrest, Saturday the 25th, Grant reportedly spent the evening in jail playing cards. "He was ready to talk and said he hoped God would not let him draw another breath if he was guilty. He said there had never been any bad feeling between him and Mrs. Roxy Atteberry. He cited several instances in which she had asked him to do little favors for her, one as late as Monday last."

The Motive

Meanwhile, the citizens of Sullivan were whispering about what Grant's motive in attacking Roxy might have been. One newspaper account suggested it was due to a grudge held by Grant's wife, Annice:

It will be remembered that Grant Atteberry was charged nearly five years ago with the murder of his father near Moweaqua. While in jail Ed Atteberry, the lady's husband, lost his mind and is now in the asylum at Kankakee. During this time a child was born irregularly to

Mrs. Grant Atteberry and the other lady [Roxy] refused to associate with her. This caused the grudge, and the man when he left the house Thursday night, said in no delicate language that she should now find herself in the same condition.

In other words, it appeared to at least some Sullivan citizens that:

1. While Grant was in jail for murdering his father, his wife had a child — “irregularly” — i.e., not fathered by Grant;
2. Roxy refused to associate with her sister-in-law because of the “irregularity;” and
3. Grant was outraged and raped Roxy in revenge — telling her as he was leaving that now she would be “irregularly” pregnant too — i.e., “in the same condition.”

Grant had been identified as one of the rapists, but there had been two attackers. One newspaper account stated: “The other man suspected is said to be a brother of Grant Atteberry.” It wasn’t Ed — obviously — since he was Roxy’s husband, and in the insane asylum. So which brother?

The candidates were: David (29), Robert (19) and Joseph (18).

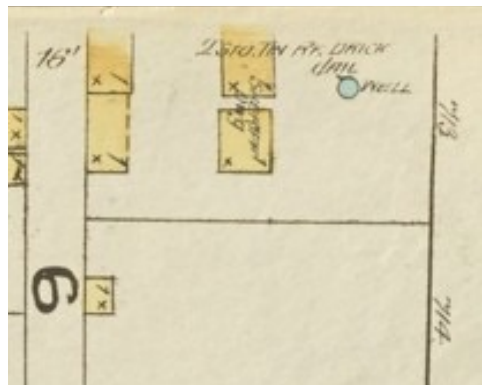
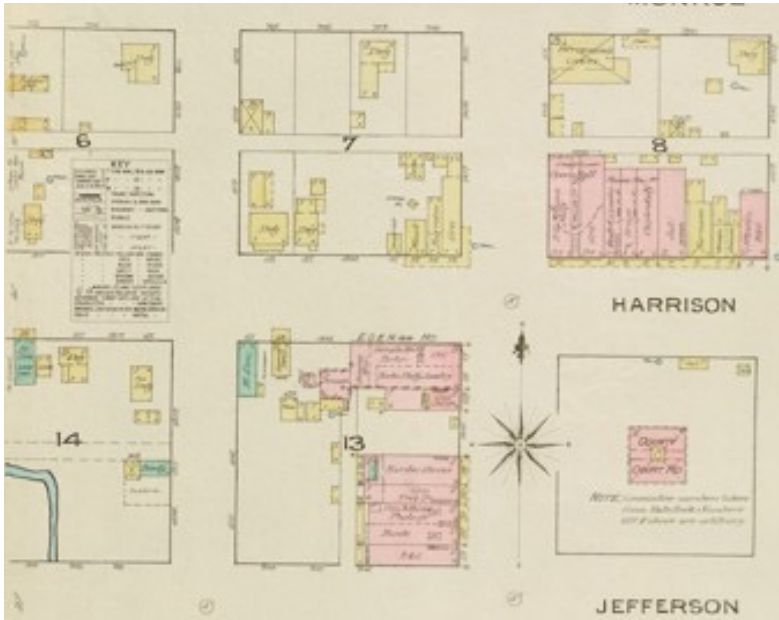
“Judge Lynch”

From the moment of the arrest of Grant Atteberry, there began to be “strong talk of lynching.” The natural outrage arising from the nature of the assault, coupled with the general awareness that Grant had killed his father and got away with it, was perhaps increased because, as one newspaper put it, “The lady is highly respected, being a niece of the Hon. John R. Eden, and indignation runs high.” “There never was such an excitement in the city and business is practically suspended.”

By Saturday night, January 25, the talk had hardened into something more. Sheriff Lansden and his deputies expected trouble and had made some preparations to protect their prisoner. As one newspaper put it, “Everybody was expecting that Judge Lynch would get up a necktie party.” Crowds of people stood on the street corners and assembled near the jail.

The Sullivan jail in 1896 was the second jail — the successor to one

that had been in the basement of the old court house. This “new” jail had been built in the summer of 1876. It was located two blocks west and one block north of the court house, in section 6, as appears on the 1886 Sanborn map of the city. (See nearby maps.) The jail was a brick structure with two stories. The lower story was used as a home by the sheriff. The second story was divided into two halls, the first separated from the second by an iron grating. There were eight iron-clad cells — four on each side of the hall.



Rotated close-up of section 6 — “Brick Jail” (upper right)



Sullivan Jail, from 1881 County History

On January 25 Sheriff Lansden deputized several men to guard the jail. One newspaper reported:

At a late hour 150 men in a body started for the jail and entered. One man had a rope in his hands, but there was no leader. Deputy Lansden, brother of the Sheriff, was standing at the jail stairway near Atteberry's cell. As the mob came in, for a bluff he called out sharply: "What are you doing here? Get out or I'll fire into the crowd!" Instantly there was a panic in the mob. As one man, they made a scramble to get out of the jail, and as they fled they broke down the stairway railing. In fact, according to the newspaper account, the deputy did not have a gun.

Members of the mob were reportedly ridiculed by the crowd for their failure.

On Monday, January 27, a group of “very prominent citizens” visited Roxy and said that Grant “would be hanged if she would say positively that it was Grant Atteberry,” but “she refused to do so, declaring that she was not positive.” It was reported that some people in Sullivan “believed she is kept silent by fear of the Atteberry family.” The report added, “She is still prostrated, and it is believed her mind is affected.”

Another report stated: “She seems to be very fearful that some of Grant Atteberry’s friends will destroy her small house and take her life. It is the opinion of a good many that fear of what the Atteberrys will do keeps her from telling all that she might.”

Another, perhaps later, report on January 27, stated: “Mrs. Roxy Atteberry, the outraged woman, admitted today for the first time to her uncle, John R. Eden, that Grant was the man. The fact that she did not make this admission Saturday was the only thing which kept the mob from lynching him Saturday night.”

The report continued: “In addition to this there was a new and important discovery made. A former hired man by the name of Dunlap, who worked for Atteberry had identified the rope which was used in tying the woman’s hands as belonging to Grant and used on his place by the hired man. These discoveries have done much to strengthen the bitter feeling of the people.”

Late Monday, January 27, hundreds of residents of Sullivan were on the streets, expecting a lynching. However only six lynchers appeared, and Sheriff Lansden went outside the jail and told the crowd there would be no hanging that night. The crowd waited around some time, then dispersed.

After this second attempt, on Tuesday morning the 28th the prisoner “was taken away, unnoticed by the crowd and placed in the jail at Lincoln” in Logan County. Another report said that “Atteberry was taken out of the jail secretly, walked to Bethany [8 miles northwest of Sullivan] and there put on a train and taken to Lincoln, where he was kept in confinement.” The sheriff did not tell anyone where he had been lodged. The reports were unanimous that if he had not been removed from Sullivan, he would have been lynched.

The Search for the Second Assailant

In the meantime, the search was on for the second assailant — possibly a brother of the principal attacker. The bloodhounds had also followed a scent to the Sullivan railway station where it was lost. “Sullivan people thought a brother of Grant Atterberry — “Hint” — was likely “the second man in the outrage, and the conclusion was that he had taken the 2:40 a.m. train Thursday morning for Decatur and gone to the home of some of his relatives south of Decatur.”

On Saturday morning, January 25th, Sheriff Lansden was on his way to Moweaqua with a warrant for the arrest of David H. Atteberry, a brother of Grant Atteberry and “one of the suspects in the Sullivan outrage.” The local Shelby County Sheriff received a telegram requesting him to arrest and hold Hint Atteberry. A cash reward of \$100 was offered for his arrest and conviction.

Sunday the 26th, late in the evening, the local officers learned that Hint was at Macon, 12 miles south of Decatur. A carriage was procured and the officers made the trip to Macon. They found their man with the aid of his cousin, Tom Atteberry, and had no difficulty in making the arrest. Hint was found in a house chatting with a neighbor. He was brought to Decatur late that night and placed in the county jail. Sheriff Nicholson of Decatur wired Sheriff Lansden at Sullivan to let him know Hint was in custody. The reply came back: “Hold him until further orders.”

While in the Decatur jail, brother Hint spoke with a local reporter and offered up an alibi, telling the reporter he (Hint) had been in Macon taking care of his aged aunt when the assault took place in Sullivan. He identified witnesses who saw him at that time in Macon. He was quoted: “I could not have had any part in the assault on Mrs. Atteberry because I was not at Sullivan on the night of January 23 and had not been there since November.” He added that he did not think Grant had anything to do with it because he and his wife were on good terms with their sister-in-law Roxy.

Hint also told the reporter that there was nothing to the story of Grant’s illegitimate child. “Don’t know anything about the baby story, except that while Grant was in jail for two years, his wife gave birth to a child. Never heard anybody charge that it was an illegitimate child.”

Then a strange thing happened: The Decatur sheriff received a telegram from Sheriff Lansden in Sullivan, saying: “Release Atteberry. He is not

wanted.” That was all. Hint was released, got his dinner by courtesy of the Macon County sheriff, and went away

So who was the second assailant? What information could Sheriff Lansden have been given that persuaded him it was not Hint? If he had learned that it was someone else, why was that someone else not arrested and prosecuted? Or had Roxy told the Sheriff that she was not willing — perhaps was even afraid — to testify against Hint?

An Attempted Kidnapping — A Warning Not to Testify?

Tension was increased further when it was learned that a sister of Grant Atteberry on February 6 had “taken” one of Roxy Atteberry’s children. One newspaper reported that “the youngest child of Mrs. Roxy Atteberry had been taken by the sister of Grant Atteberry. What could have been the woman’s purpose in taking the child is not certainly known, but when she reached the square, without waiting for further harm to befall this unfortunate family, the constable demanded the child. It was surrendered without difficulty and taken back to its mother.”

Another report said it was the “wife of Grant Atteberry” who tried to kidnap the younger son of Roxy, and that she defended herself by asserting “that she simply asked the child to go with her up town to get some candy.”

Roxy and her Sullivan neighbors may have been warranted in believing that the taking of Roxy’s child was a not-so-subtle threat aimed at preventing Roxy from testifying in any proceeding against Grant.

The Sullivan city council offered a reward of \$200 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the assailants. Grant Atteberry, while a prisoner in the jail in Lincoln, “contributed a dollar and did a big lot of talking.”

The Prisoner Returned to Sullivan

Moultrie County prepared to prosecute Grant for the rape of Roxy Atteberry. Bail was set for Grant at \$5,000. In the absence of bail, the accused remained in custody in Lincoln.

As the date for his preliminary hearing approached, the authorities on Wednesday February 12 brought Grant back to Sullivan. The prisoner refused

to leave the jail to attend the preliminary hearing in court, so Judge Campbell visited Atteberry at the jail and took his plea, which was that he “waived examination.” This waiver and the prisoner’s refusal to appear or testify somehow gave rise to a fear that Grant might be released on bail, which “enraged” the people further.

Some were also concerned that Grant — having “got off” from the charge of murdering his father only five years earlier — might somehow again escape conviction for the new offense against his sister-in-law.

One paper reported that, “People can be seen standing on the corners discussing the matter. Some felt that there was a probability of his not being guilty of the criminal assault on Mrs. Roxy Atteberry. But they think he ought to be hanged on general principles.”

The Lynching of Grant Atteberry — Wednesday, February 12

Late Wednesday evening, February 12, a crowd of some 20 masked men gathered in the basement of the South Side High School building, later known (after 1927) as the Lowe School. There they agreed on a plan for breaking into the jail and taking the prisoner.

There were at least two reports by eyewitnesses to the events leading to the lynching of Atteberry. One was written by an unnamed reporter for the *Decatur Herald Dispatch*, published Tuesday, February 13, 1896. The second was published by the *Sullivan Herald*, edited at that time by John P. Lilly. Copies of the issues of the *Sullivan Herald* from that period have not survived, but the *Herald’s* account was quoted extensively by the *Decatur Daily Republican*, Friday, February 14, 1896. Lilly later testified at the coroner’s inquest as a witness to the events. He was thus likely the author of the *Sullivan Herald* account.

Rather than paraphrase or integrate the reports of these two witnesses, their accounts may speak for themselves.

First, the *Decatur Herald Dispatch*, whose story began ...

... at a time when the men who composed the mob were arranging all the preliminaries in the basement of the new high school [South School]. Here the final organization was effected, a leader chosen and all probable happenings incident to such an affair gone over. The reporter from his reign of vantage near a basement window

overheard the discussion on the line of action of what would be done in case this and that failed when the jail was rushed, and our representative was thus also to know the actual number of men engaged in the undertaking without so much as seeing a face.

At midnight the men emerged from the basement and took up their march to the jail in absolute silence. They wore white masks, carried heavy sledge hammers and a half inch heavy rope. The jail is situated about three and a half blocks from the school house. ...

Demand was made for the keys and the sheriff peremptorily refused and warned the crowd to desist. The reply provoked no comment and whatever the much expected resistance or not from the sheriff and his two sons who were alone on guard, they instantly proceeded to batter down the front door. One blow from a sledge sufficed for it and the larger portion of the mob surged through. The sheriff from his upstairs window made a show of resistance and fired several pistol shots while the door was knocked in.

That portion of the crowd remaining on the porch drew their guns and midst shouts and howls the discharge was deafening.

The report of the pistols brought what few people there were about the Eden hotel to the scene. This small crowd however was met half a block below the jail and held in check by two guards, a detail from the mob with shotguns.

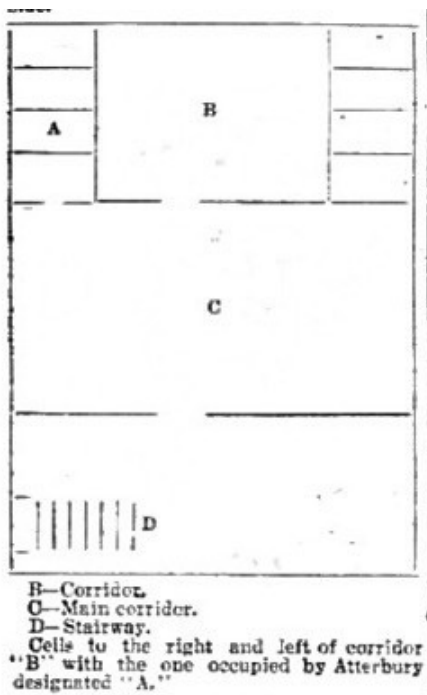
Only one or two men were without masks and the reporter occupied a position on the porch from which the operations of the mob who were on the inside could be seen until the mob leaders gained admission into the corridor. No difficulty was experienced in reaching this point but twenty minutes was consumed in reaching the prisoner and this seemed an interminable length of time to those in waiting below.

The jail fronts to the west and is a square brick building. On the lower floor are the living apartments of the sheriff consisting of six rooms. On the second floor is the jail proper. It consists of eight cells, four on a side with a big corridor in between. Atteberry was in the third cell on the south side.

As I stood on the porch I heard the noise of the heavy sledges on the cell door in breaking the locks but high above it all, I heard the agonizing howls and lamentations of the wretch they were after. His cries were met with comments to the effect that he would be shot like a dog in his hole, but this did not silence him. A man near me on the porch shouted up to stuff cotton in his mouth and the cry was taken up by others about.

At this juncture I saw a man appear in the hall with a lighted lamp which caused a great confusion among those near the door. He was ordered to blow it out but refused when it was promptly knocked from his hand. A moment later the iron door to Atteberry's cell swung back with a clash that could be heard a block and those who had hammered and battered it for admittance yelled down they were coming with their man.

He is of powerful build, six feet tall and weighs almost 180 pounds and he is inclined to stoop. ... Hearing the mob at work on the doors with their sledge hammers, ... the prisoner with wonderful strength born only of terror wrenched a leg from the table in his cell



and stood ready to resist the men who were crying for his blood. ... He used his club with good effect for a few seconds and was then overpowered by the strong and determined men who crowded into the cell. The same table leg which he had used in that last fight for his life was turned on him as he was dragged down the stairs.

I was driven back from the door entrance with several others to make way for the men to come out who did not appear as promptly as was expected. Taking Atteberry from his cell and getting him down stairs was as much of an effort as breaking down the door to his cell. He fought like an infuriated demon as only a man can for his life. In order to expedite matters when it was found his resistance was so strong and effective, clubs and butt ends of pistols were used on his head until he begged for mercy. Still he refused to move, and not until he was overpowered and the rope placed around his neck, was he brought out to the head of the stairway and down the stairs, he was hammered, beaten and kicked in order to keep him moving. When he was at last thrown through the door I could not recognize him for the blood on his face. He was clad in a blue calico shirt, white drawers and wore his socks.

On the porch he was seized by the guards in waiting and dragged ten feet over the sidewalk to a small tree where someone suggested they string him up. This plan, however, did not meet with approval and the march was at once taken up to the courthouse yard.

During the march, which for a part of the way was a trot, the prisoner's cries for mercy and protestations of innocence were harrowing. The only hitch in the entire arrangement so far as I could learn, occurred at the courthouse yard. The tree selected to hang him to was a large elm but the man assigned the duty of placing the ladder in order that the rope could be quickly placed over a limb set the ladder against a smaller tree of the same kind nearby.

Brought to the spot from where he was raised into the air, Atteberry fought to the last to keep his hands from being tied. This effort resulted in nothing for they were quickly and securely pinioned. During this time he shouted a prayer that could be heard two blocks away. It was broken and disconnected and sounded more like a wail than anything else. Those who heard it can never forget the impres-

sion it left. His last words were: "Thank God, you are hanging an innocent man."

While the rope was being adjusted he paced around as much as he was allowed, crying at the top of his voice: "This woman will tell you I never harmed her in any way. I am not afraid to die, but my God, why should I be hanged like a dog for another brute's work." "When I am dead and gone you will find out my innocence for I am innocent. God be with me. God be with me." He was asked to make a confession, but refused saying that he was innocent and had nothing to confess. This he protested to the last, and as I saw him lifted into the air a masked man at my right said: "Thank God, It's over; we'll never know who the second man was."

It required the combined strength of a dozen men to lift Atteberry from the ground. He was raised only about three feet, the rope carried to an adjoining tree and tied. The feeling of hatred against Atteberry rose to a point bitter beyond expression when he was taken from the jail and started for the scene of the hanging, and it never abated for a moment until he was hanging from the rope's end expiating for a heinous crime, which the community, almost to a man, believe him guilty of. No sound of any kind was heard to come from him and owing to the darkness I could not tell whether he struggled or not. The mob were highly gratified over their night's work and many expressions of approval were heard when it was all over. ...

Ten minutes after Atteberry had been hoisted into the air, not a man was to be seen in the courthouse yard. Quickly they disappeared, leaving a few to talk it over on the street corner. These soon disbursed and went home leaving the public square to enjoy its usual serenity of an early morning hour. The body of Atteberry swung in the yard surrounding the little courthouse until a few minutes after 7 o'clock when City Marshall Bupp acting under instructions of some of the authorities cut down the remains.

The second account was published by John P. Lilly in the *Sullivan Herald* and then republished in the *Decatur Daily Republican*:

The Sullivan eye-witness says the jail door was literally pounded

into kindling wood before entrance to the jail could be effected. There was only one shot fired in the jail. The bullet went into the ceiling. It was fired as a note of warning to Sheriff Lansden and his two sons, Charles and Mark.

Atteberry heard the attack on the outer door and getting out of bed, he broke up the prisoner's dining table and giving a leg to each of his fellow-prisoners and taking one for himself he asked them to come out and help him. They refused and Atteberry retreated to his cell to battle alone.

The mob made short work of all intervening locks between them and the prisoner's cell, and once there he was kicked down two or three times and the rope placed around his neck. He was then jerked through the corridors and led down stairs.

At the tree in the court house yard, the lynching was promptly executed. There was no wagon or ladder to use, but a small man with the rope in his teeth climbed the tree coon fashion and threw the rope over a fork, the mob on the ground pulling with a will until Atteberry's body hung a yard from the ground. His face was scraped against the tree until the skin came off. Before being strung up Atteberry persistently protested his innocence.

The corpse presented a ghastly appearance. The face was discolored a light blue except in places where the clubs of the mob had fallen during the fight in the cell. Here blood had been drawn and the flesh bruised and the skin torn. There was also a bruised spot on his head. The noose around the neck ended in a knot of the regular patten placed under the left ear. The rope had sunk into the flesh until on the outer edges there lingered a suspicion of blood. The body had not been disturbed and was dressed and remained in the same position as it was left by the mob.

The women who visited the scene contented themselves with a look from a distance, but the men gathered under the tree direct and discussed the affair with more or less levity. Not one word of regret, not one word of pity escaped from anybody.

Other newspaper accounts were not as comprehensive but added

important details. One stated that about 20 men had come to town the evening of the lynching via the PD&E train from the west, and that “about half” the mob were “from the region where Atteberry used to live near Moweauqua.” This report raises the question how much of the animosity toward Atteberry was a carry-over from the murder of his father five years earlier, for which he had been acquitted? (And the further question: could it be that Atteberry was lynched because the mob believed him guilty of patricide — not because they thought him guilty of rape?)

Another important detail was added by a Sullivan resident who was a witness to the mob’s preliminary discussions at the South School. These recollections of Matt Cummins were later embodied in “reminiscences” of Carleton Harris, and printed in the *M.C. Heritage*, August 1980, at 66:

Cummins belonged to the school board. He was going to the school board meeting the night they hung Atteberry. ...When he got close enough to see that there was a mob, he cut around to the west side of the school and nobody saw him enter. When he got inside, he went over to the east side and listened at the window and could see what was going on.

The mob was pretty noisy. They were discussing whether they would have a hanging. They had imported a hangman from out of town — Arcola or Tuscola or someplace — because none of them wanted to do the job. Mr. Cummins said that the hangman was telling the crowd that ‘you have hired me to have a hanging and now we are going to have a hanging.’ They were trying to back out of it apparently. The crowd had already taken up a collection to get him into town. Matt Cummins felt that Mr. Atteberry was hung cause they’d already paid the man to do it and he wasn’t going to back out of his job.

Another report — consistent with that of Cummins — was that the mob had a “leader” — “a tall person wearing a stove pipe hat that was clearly part of a disguise” who “gave directions” at the jail.

Atteberry was reportedly “first taken to a locust tree near the courthouse building,” but when the limb there proved to be too high, they moved on to a maple tree “under a limb 8-1/2 feet from the ground that had been sawed off about three feet from the trunk.” (More evidence of advance planning.) The next day the bark was off the tree where the victim had been hanged.

Another report stated that hundreds of people had gathered at the court house before the hanging, some wanting to assist, “but the masked men refused to allow anybody to have a hand in the lynching except themselves. Evidently they were thinking about the possibility of vigorous grand jury investigation.”

In the darkness, “people struck matches and held up torches and lanterns to have a good look at the lifeless form of the man ... People kept coming and going until long after daybreak”

The reports suggested that Sheriff Lansden had attempted to prevent the removal of the prisoner from the jail. When the mob demanded Atteberry, he refused to give up his prisoner and called on the crowd to disperse. According to the *Herald* account, a member of the mob fired a pistol into the ceiling as a warning to the Sheriff. Another account said the Sheriff “fired a shotgun into the air to frighten the mob, but that seemed to act as a signal for a volley of pistol shots that rent the air” Once the mob broke down the door and made it into the first floor of the jail, the Sheriff ceased resistance. Following the taking of the prisoner, Sheriff Lansden apparently followed the crowd to the court house but did not try to stop the lynching. “The sheriff who was present at the festivities under the tree was asked by someone to take charge of the body. In reply he said: ‘No boys. I’m done with him.’”

It seems to this writer, at a distance of over a century, that a gang of citizens, guided by men who must have wanted to avoid being shot or having to shoot a sheriff, would likely have communicated in advance with Sheriff Lansden — perhaps even choreographed the attack to avoid injuries on both sides and to give the Sheriff an opportunity to fire a few shots safely into the air to show that he was doing his job. Otherwise, it is hard to imagine why there were no injuries — either to the attackers or the defenders.

My grandfather I.J. Martin was in Sullivan that night. He was then 36 years old, married to Rose Eden, one of the daughters of John R. Eden. The assaulted woman was Rose’s first cousin. I.J. later told his children that he was returning home that evening, and that he had been prevented by some of the lynch mob from approaching the jail or the court house square.

It was later said that Circuit Judge W.G. Cochran “tried unsuccessfully to stop the hanging.” But the newspaper accounts report no details as to what those unsuccessful attempts were.

Grant Atteberry was not hanged in the classic western-movie manner — dropped from a platform through a trap door, or placed on a chair that was then kicked away. Instead, one man climbed a tree on the west lawn and tossed a rope over a limb. The rope was tied around Atteberry’s neck, and some of the men hoisted him off the ground, up alongside the trunk of the tree, and strangled him to death. Atteberry “struggled desperately ... but he was firmly held by two strong men who clung to him and did not release him until the rope had tightened.”



The Sullivan Court House as it appeared in the 1880s.

Eden House hotel guests watched from their rooms in the hotel across the street.

Just above is a view of the courthouse from the west side of the square. The one-story protrusion on the left was a coal storage facility. See 1898 Sanborn map of Sullivan.

A picture was taken the morning after the hanging, before the body was cut down. It confirms that the hanging took place on the north-west corner of the courthouse yard.



After the body was cut down and taken into the courthouse, men and boys scrambled to get pieces of the rope to be preserved as souvenirs.

The hanged man's wife was notified of his lynching after daylight the next morning. "She almost went into hysterics but was finally quieted by the neighbors."

The Aftermath

The day after the night of the hanging, February 13, a short private service was conducted in the dead man's home by a Methodist preacher. During the service, the widow reportedly "grew hysterical and between sobs exclaimed, 'How could they be so cruel.'" Her friends had difficulty in getting her to leave his coffin, but taking one last look she supposedly exclaimed, "Oh, God, Grant, does this part us forever? Oh God, Have mercy upon us." As the widow bent over the coffin crying, the children were in an adjoining room sobbing loudly.

These lurid adjectives and quotes may strike the reader today as "fake news" — particularly in light of the fact that the service was supposedly "private."

After the short service, the body was taken to the cemetery in a hearse, with one vehicle following — containing Grant’s widow, her sister, a brother, and a neighbor. The newspaper said a number of people, possibly as many as 75, followed the remains to the cemetery either out of respect or curiosity. The county paid \$9 in costs for the burial — \$7 for the coffin, and \$2 for a shroud.

Mayor A.K. Campbell impaneled a jury to perform an inquest, and the jury promptly found that Atteberry had been hanged by a masked mob — “unknown.” Then the county coroner, Dr. Hardin, who lived in Arthur, showed up and declared the earlier inquest to have been held illegally — perhaps because it had deprived him of his fee. A new jury was then impaneled and came to the same conclusion.

Opinions — both from the public and the newspapers — divided between those who were shocked that the murdered defendant had been denied due process and those who believed justice had been done. The *Daily Illinois State Register* in Springfield was typical of the due process position (February 14, 1896):

The lynching of Grant Atteberry at Sullivan is another blot upon the good name of Illinois. It makes no difference how bad a man he may have been; he was entitled to a fair trial under the form of law, and his death at the hands of a mob is murder. Mob law is the very essence of tyranny. Those who engage in it are law-breakers, and should be punished.

Southern newspapers, the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* (February 13, 1896), for example, and the *Biloxi Herald* (February 15, 1896), were more inclined to be sympathetic to mob justice. Here is the *Daily Picayune’s* judgment:

All people who hold at a high rate the virtue and purity of their women have been accustomed to resent with prompt force any encroachment or assaults upon them from any source . . . Every code of law upon the face of the earth recognizes that men have never surrendered to the makers of statutes, or to the jugglers with justice, the natural and instinctive right to defend their lives, their families and their rights from all invasion with such means as they may have at hand and with such violence as may be necessary to accomplish that defense and self-vindication.

If outraged citizens had any assurance that there was such a thing as the certain and instant administration of justice, they would gladly leave the redress of most of the wrongs they suffer to the courts of the country. But with the present experience with legal methods, the wonder is that there is not more personal vengeance and more popular justice than actually occurs.

(One might pause — keeping in mind the Southern origins of a large percentage of Moultrie County families — to wonder whether there was something in that culture, or perhaps the events of the Reconstruction era, that led them to be less fastidious about legal niceties such as jury trials and legal process than their Northern brethren.)

In any event, the question was now presented directly: would the leaders and members of the lynch mob be prosecuted for murder?

State's Attorney Meeker, a cousin of the raped woman and a nephew of John R. Eden, immediately issued a venire for a coroner's jury to inquire into the cause of death. The inquest was held under the direction of Mayor Campbell.

At least one local official had no intention of protecting the members of the lynch mob.

Judge Vail of the state circuit court, the presiding officer of the Sullivan court, was interviewed in his home in Decatur. He was asked what he thought of mob violence. His response was: "It is an outrage and a disgrace. This lawlessness breeds anarchy which should not be countenanced by civilized people. If the people are not satisfied and believe the law is not severe enough in such cases, let them change it. ... Every man who helps to lynch another is guilty of murder. ... Moultrie county has been for a long time a place for murders and bad men. A large number of murders have been committed and none of them ever convicted. When they have a cleaning out down there and get rid of these people, their land will be worth about ten dollars more on the acre." (Not the strongest argument in favor of procedural due process, particularly coming from a judge.)

On February 12 Illinois Governor John P. Altgeld, Vachel Lindsay's "eagle forgotten," was in Hot Springs, Arkansas for his health. He was there

asked what he thought about the lynching in Sullivan. He said “he knew nothing of it. He said there were 4,000,000 people in the State of Illinois and for the last two or three weeks he had had but little communication with them. ... If a lynching had taken place, he presumed the local authorities could cope with the situation.”

On February 13, the day after the hanging, a Decatur newspaper reported that “Many people at Sullivan now express deep regret that mob violence was resorted to. They are now thinking of the stain that will ever rest upon the town and the people.”

Sheriff Lansden was the first witness to testify before the coroner’s jury. He described the attack on the jail by “an unknown mob of about eighteen or twenty in number,” adding that “he had been intimidated by having pistols poked under his nose.” He said he was able to identify two or three of the mob, but the rest were unknown. He also testified that Atteberry had received no wounds at the jail that would have caused death.

The Sheriff’s last point was important: it meant the men the Sheriff could identify at the jail were not necessarily the same men who killed Atteberry at the court house. The Sheriff might avoid being blamed for identifying members of the mob or causing their indictment or prosecution for murder.

The three other prisoners in the jail that night were called to testify: Charley Maxedon, Emmett Ramson and Tom Roberts. They testified that Atteberry had given them each a leg of the broken table and asked for their help as he was innocent. They declined to help. The prisoners testified that they knew several members of the mob, that one man’s mask fell off, and they positively knew him. Other witnesses examined were John P. Lilly, the editor of the *Herald*, Horace Monroe, and R.W. Ham.

The jury then returned a verdict identifying three or four leaders of the mob, reportedly “prominent citizens,” but did not release their names.

The Decatur *Daily Republican* ruminated on the guilt of Grant Atteberry: “We do not presume to pass upon the question ourselves, but the men who executed him were not a class who would do such an act recklessly. The movements of the mob Wednesday morning didn’t betray any hesitation in the work. They seemed satisfied that they were right about it, and had gone to a good deal of trouble to see that nothing got away. It is fair to presume that the mob knew what it was about, that is to say, it knew a little more than the general public.”

The Decatur paper added a note in defense of Sheriff Lansden: He “no doubt feels a great deal chagrined to have such a thing happen under his administration, but he may rest assured that the people will not accuse him of insincerity. He is an old soldier and not a coward. He did all that was expected of him and more, too, to save the prisoner and escape great bodily harm himself. That the mob was his friends is proven by the leniency shown him that night.”

The “leniency” shown by the mob might help explain why the mob was able to extricate the prisoner without any injuries to any of its members.

On February 13th, Roxy Atteberry was interviewed and “positively stated that Grant Atteberry was her assailant. Now that he is dead the fear which prevented her telling has partially passed away, although she dreads the vengeance of Hinton Atteberry, who has vowed to make her suffer for the lynching. She states that her trouble with Grant arose over her husband’s estate, which Grant was trying to get.” Another paper summarized it a bit differently, saying Grant “hated her because he could not get control of her property.”

Roxy in her interview of the 13th thus suggested a different motive than the one suggested earlier — saying that it had to do with a quarrel over Ed Atteberry’s “estate” (though he was still in the insane asylum), rather than perceived insults relating to an illegitimate child of Grant’s wife, Annice.

Meanwhile, a warrant had reportedly been issued for Annice Atteberry “charging her with being an accomplice of her husband in the assault.” The warrant reportedly was not served, but no reason was given.

“Accomplice”?

On February 16 it was reported that Annice Atteberry was in Decatur, where she “will remain some days, and may go to St. Louis to reside permanently. . . . She states that she will bring suit for damages against Moultrie County for not giving her husband proper protection from mob violence.” But she did not bring suit.

With so many pieces of the story missing, and at a distance of over a century, it is impossible to be sure of anything. But one possibility that occurs to this writer is that Grant’s wife Annice might have been the other person who participated in the assault on Roxy. Consider:

— Roxy had been blindfolded, and there is no indication that the sec-

ond assailant either spoke or raped her.

— Annice had been the target of speculation about having had an illegitimate child while Grant was in custody for the murder of his father. Roxy had supposedly “refused to associate with her” — causing a grudge and giving Annice a motive to hurt Roxy.

— Brother Hint had an alibi.

— Roxy might have informed her uncle, John R. Eden, that the other assailant was Grant’s wife Annice — which would explain why the Moultrie County authorities declined to arrest Hint — without giving any reason. Just as important, it would explain why they declined to pursue any other possible accomplices.

— Even more important, it might explain why the authorities initially issued a warrant for Annice’s arrest — indicating they planned to prosecute her along with Grant — but after Grant was lynched, they decided that enough “justice” had been done and that it would be pointless and distasteful to prosecute Grant’s widow by herself ... for participating in the rape of her sister-in-law.

The names of the recognized members of the lynch mob — Fred Hoke, Frank Hoke, and John Miller — were made known to the grand jury. The three men were arrested and held without bail until the April term of court.

The Hokes were a prominent family in Sullivan. Samuel S. and Amanda Hoke had several children, including sons John F. (1858-1946) and Frank (1869-1951). Frank was a farmer and operated a blacksmith shop where he manufactured plows and wagons; he lived the last several years of his life in the nearby town of Findlay. There were a large number of Millers in town, including a John Miller.

The members of the grand jury were: George T. Hill, foreman; also W.P. Jeffries and J. Brossard, J.B. Wily, P.D. Preston of East Nelson, Reuben Daugherty and I.N. Saffe of Jonathan Greek, George W. Selby, Peter Lux, W.T. Harmon and Thomas L. McDaniel, A.F. Warren and Wm. White of Lowe, George T. Hill, David Perry and W.F. Widick of Marrowbone, George Shirey, B.W. Patterson, Charles Swisher, D. Milligan and Wm. Woods of Sullivan, G.M. Edwards, Jelo Munson and W.E. Treat of Whitley.

Judge E.P. Vail of Decatur delivered the charge to the grand jury in circuit court at Sullivan. As noted above, Judge Vail had said shortly after the lynching that it was “an outrage and a disgrace,” and that Moultrie County needed a “cleaning out.” Now, in the April term of the grand jury, he charged the jury with knowing that a “great crime” had been committed, and explained the duty of the grand jury in such a case. “He said he had heard that threats had been made against anyone who would be found active in bringing the guilty parties to justice and that these threats had even been made against himself. He said they would not affect him and he did not think they would interfere with the jury as he thought it was composed of men who would do their duty.”

Judge Vail did his job, but perhaps he had guessed by then what the outcome would be. The grand jury called several witnesses into the jury room and questioned them as to the events at the jail and the court house. It then gave its verdict on May 6, 1896. No indictment.

With a heavy dose of irony, the Decatur *Weekly Republican* reported the next day that the grand jury “came to the conclusion from all that the jury could learn, the man hanged himself. No one in the town would say that they recognized anybody but Atteberry.”

The Hokes and Miller were then freed from jail.

Nancy Denton — Engaged to the murdered father, David Attebery:

The Widow Denton never remarried. She died in November 1929 and was buried in nearby Decatur, Illinois.

Annice Atteberry — Widow of Grant:

Annice Louisa Stoltz Atteberry — widow of the hanged Grant Atteberry — moved to the East St. Louis area. An internet site identifies her children as Myrtle, Emma, and Clark Mackin.

After leaving central Illinois, Annice married James Thomas Elliott, who became the stepfather of her children. The 1910 Census for East St. Louis, Illinois, lists in one household: James Elliott, 57, head, birthplace Illinois; Annice L. Elliott, 47, wife, birthplace Illinois; and Clark Attebury, stepson, 17, birthplace Illinois.

Annice died October 20, 1951, in St. Clair County, Illinois. Her obit said she had lived there 50 years — so since roughly 1901. James Elliott died September 1, 1928, and Annice did not marry again.

Clark M. Atteberry's draft registration card states his date of birth as May 9, 1893, and place of birth as Sullivan. So he would have been conceived about 9 months earlier — i.e., in August 1892. That would have been during the interval between the murder of Grant's father in 1891 and Grant's trial in 1893 — a period during which Grant was in jail — which would be consistent with the report that Roxy had later snubbed Annice because Roxy thought her sister-in-law had had an illegitimate child. We do not know what attitude the Shelbyville sheriff at that time took toward conjugal visits. But the date of birth does tend, however slightly, to support the possibility that Annice carried a grudge and might have been a participant in the assault on Roxy.

Clark later remembered riding on a pony at age 2 with his father walking alongside. (As improbable as it seems, he must have been right about his age. By the time he was 3, his father had been lynched.) Clark died at 86 in Champaign, February 21, 1980. His sisters Myrtle and Emma preceded him in death.

Family history teaches us at least two things — that we can never be sure we know all relevant facts; and that, contrary to ancient scripture, the sins of the fathers should not be visited upon the next generations.

Roxy — wife of Ed:

Ed Atteberry — the husband of the assaulted Roxy, the “insane” brother who had allegedly participated in murdering his father — remained in the asylum and then at some point dropped out of sight. A newspaper report in the Decatur *Herald* seven years later said that Ed had been confined in an asylum at Anna, in Southern Illinois, but reported that perhaps he had escaped and was the insane man being held in custody under a different name in Popular Bluff, Missouri. Ed Atteberry died February 25, 1924, and was buried in Jacksonville, Morgan County, Illinois.

So far as we know, Roxy Anna Moore Atteberry never divorced her insane husband. By the time of the 1910 census Roxy and her household had moved far away — to Winona, Whitman County, Washington State, where she died May 23, 1934, age 75.

Roxy's first child was Elzie Cress Atteberry, born August 4, 1888. By 1910 Elzie was 22 and married — and thus not listed as in Roxy's household that year. Elzie Cress died in 1965 and is buried in Winona, not far from her mother.

In 1910 Roxy's listed sons were: Joseph A., 26, Charles Edward, 24, and Earl F., 20. The youngest son, Earl, spelled his last name "Attebery" as reflected in the 1910 census and his social security records. Earl's social security record indicates that he was born August 26, 1890. He would have been the little boy briefly "kidnapped" by Annice or her sister in 1896 before the lynching.

* * *

"Justice" means procedural due process — but also substantive fairness as perceived by the community. Sometimes it is hard to serve both equally. Most lawyers believe that procedural fairness is the best way to get to substantive fairness. More fundamentally, the rule of law means that bad folks and good folks should be governed by rules that apply to all and processes that apply the same way to all. Even killers and rapists are entitled to a fair trial.

I can understand why John R. Eden, a lawyer and Roxy's uncle, might have stayed silent when the lynch talk began to build. But I wish he hadn't. Then again, we don't know what he may have done behind the scenes to try to prevent the lynching.

History is about facts — evidence, ambiguity, inference, probability and even guesswork — but also about blank spaces.

Tragedies happen, children grow up, and life goes on. "The hands of the sisters Death and Night, incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soiled world." "Reconciliation," Walt Whitman.

XVIII.

The Great Public-vs.-Private Electricity Plant War — Or How Clarence Darrow Saved Sullivan’s Municipal Electric Plant

1891

James W. Elder was elected Mayor of Sullivan in 1891 on the “Peoples’ Party” ticket, defeating Frank Harbaugh of the “Citizens Party.” I.J. Martin told the story of that election, “remembered for the sensational buying of votes,” in his *Notes*, at 52-53. During Elder’s term as Mayor two related questions arose: should a plant for generation of electricity be built; and, if so, should it be privately owned or owned and operated by the city.

George Brosam was an Alderman and active figure in the Elder administration and was afterward Mayor. He was an enthusiastic proponent of public improvements such as street paving and also opposed the licensing of saloons. Alderman Brosam first proposed that the city should build and operate the plant.

The prominent banker William A. Steele (*supra*, at 138 et seq) opposed municipal ownership on the ground that it could not be publicly financed: he claimed the city would not be able to borrow enough money at affordable interest costs.

Piecing together the elements of the fight over public vs. private ownership is made difficult by the fact that few of Sullivan's newspapers from this era survive. Some key facts, however, may be gleaned from the newspapers of neighboring cities such as Decatur and Mattoon. They are the source of much of the quoted material that follows.

(I.J. Martin, at that time Editor of the *Progress*, was a strong supporter of municipal rather than private ownership. It is mildly ironic that his grandson, the author of these chapters, spent much of his professional life working as a lawyer for privately-owned utilities, including Commonwealth Edison, the provider of electric service for Chicago and much of northern Illinois.)

John H. Baker (known as J.H. or Jack) was a local businessman and prominent Democratic politician. He was born and raised in Sullivan, and attended a course in law at the University of Michigan, where he graduated with honors. He then returned to Sullivan to practice law. As early as 1881 he was working to help persuade the P.D. & E. railroad to build a new depot, for which he promised to provide the property. In that same year he joined with John R. Eden and Joseph Titus to incorporate the Sullivan Plow Company. Later he was President of the Illinois Bridge and Iron Company in Sullivan. He ran as a Democrat in 1882 for the Illinois Legislature and won.

Baker had an aggressive personality. In early March 1885 he got into a fistfight on the floor of the Illinois House with Representative Campbell from Hamilton County. A few days later, on March 31 1885, he reportedly got into another fight with the Hon. Clayton Crafts of Cook County: "The trouble rose on account of the stockyards bill, on which they were opposed. Crafts took Baker to task and on his resisting, struck him in the face, whereupon Baker struck back and kicked him in the stomach and marking his face badly. Crafts attempted to strike Baker with a chair, but was prevented and they were separated. Speaker Haines, without putting any motion, declared the House adjourned."

Baker's integrity was as questionable as his personality. Later that spring, in June 1885, it was reported that F.H. Tubbs, superintendent of the Western Union company in Chicago, told an investigating committee that he had been called to a meeting with Baker the previous year, and that Baker had "offered to kill the telegraph bill for \$2,500, that of this sum \$500 was to be given Baker for himself, and the remainder for distribution among other parties. The reading of the document occasioned quite a sensation among the com-

mitteemen. ... [Baker] denied that he had at any time made any proposition to Tubbs or anyone else, of the character referred to.”

Baker formed a private company — Sullivan Electric Co. — incorporated March 1, 1892, the two principal incorporators being himself and Joseph Titus. The company had started building an electric light and power house in Sullivan in September 1891, before the company was incorporated and before he had either a franchise granting a right to use streets for distribution lines or a contract to supply the city with power. His plan was to begin to light the streets before January 1, 1892.

Baker reportedly agreed to borrow the money to build the plant from Murray McDonald, subject to a side agreement that McDonald would later become a one-half owner in the plant. However, Baker independently raised the money to pay off the debt and remained sole owner. I.J.M. *Notes*, at 54.

Under Mayor Elder’s leadership the city of Sullivan reached agreement with Baker on a 20-year franchise and 10-year contract for street lighting beginning in December 11, 1891. The franchise gave Baker’s company the right to use city streets and land for its distribution system for 20 years, but the contract for street lighting would have to be renegotiated by the end of 1901.

The lights were tested Friday evening, December 11, 1891. They failed “to work up to expectation.” Workers then attempted to fix the system with the hope that “twenty arc lights will illumine our streets and alleys, while many of our stores will be resplendent in the glare of incandescent lamps” for the Christmas holiday.

At some point Baker got the plant into operation. The next summer he was negotiating with Bethany to provide it with electricity for its lighting system. In November 1892 he was building a large water tank at the site of the power house.

1895

In December 1895 disaster struck just before Christmas. The Sullivan Electric light plant was destroyed by fire on December 23. A Decatur paper reported: “Sullivan had a \$25,000 fire last night, resulting in the destruction of the new electric light plant. A telegram states that the cause of the blaze was a defective chimney which has been in a very bad condition for some time.

Mr. Baker was having a new brick one under headway at the time of the fire. Engineer Custer acted very bravely. He went into the plant while it was on fire, threw the pumps to working and started the engine at full speed, thus saving an explosion. ... Sullivan will be in darkness once more at this time of the year. Christmas being so near, it will be very inconvenient to our citizens, who will once more dust off the cast-off oil lamps." The damage was not covered by insurance — which meant it was Baker's loss.

1899

Years passed. Sullivan's citizens enjoyed their new electric street lights, and many purchased their own power directly from Sullivan Electric. The first 10-year street lighting contract would expire at the end of 1901, and a disagreement was brewing over the level of rates charged by Baker's company. Some members of the city council wanted lighting rates reduced below those in the previous rate schedule.

For the two-year period beginning May 1899, Isaac Hudson, a Democrat, served as Mayor. I.J. Martin described what happened:

During the administration of Mayor Hudson, 1899-1901, the so-called Baker machine was in full control. There were open charges of corruption, but the Mayor does not appear to have been involved. ... [Scott, then County Clerk] told some of his friends, confidentially, that four of the six aldermen had formed a plot to vote payment of claims or accounts authorized by themselves without previous authority or action of the Council. When [objection was made to the improper payments] the other four Aldermen would sit silent until the question was put to a vote, and they would then all vote for it.

City politics at that time were organized around two parties — the Democrats (including Mayor Hudson and John Baker), and the "Citizens" Party.

The "Baker Machine" was in political control during 1899-1901 but could not be sure it would be in control during the next administration — which is when the first 10-year electric service contract would have to be renegotiated. "The Mayor and Aldermen were 'willin,' and so a new contract was made, and a new and revised franchise was granted, although the old franchise would not expire for 12 years and the old contract had more than two years to run." I.J.M. *Notes*, at 58.

Secret meetings of the council were held. “These maneuvers resulted finally in a new ordinance to run 50 years, with all the provisions such as Mr. Baker wanted, and with nothing to protect the public interest. The new contract was placed on record, but the new franchise could not be found, although the record of its adoption appeared in the proceedings of the Council.” The terms of the new franchise ordinance were not disclosed until the next Mayoral Administration took office in 1901.

The old street lighting contract had provided for 20 lamps at an annual cost of \$80 per lamp. Under the new contract, there would be 40 lamps at \$90 each, with any others added at the same cost. I.J.M. *Notes*, at 58.

Because a contract would continue to be binding during its term, Baker and his allies expected that Sullivan Electric’s continuing profit from the street lighting contract would be protected no matter who was elected Mayor or Aldermen in 1901.

The rush to extend the contract during a friendly administration, the secret meetings, the secrecy of the new extended franchise — all these served to energize political opposition to the power company and its contracts. I.J. reports that an organization of citizens “was formed to contest in court the validity of the new contract and the new franchise.”

1900

In the meantime, city politics were greatly agitated. In 1900 new city elections were held for three aldermanic seats. “The Baker party put up a Democrat ticket, and a strong Citizens group put up three independent Democrats in opposition.” These 1900 city elections were a shambles. Again, I.J.’s *Notes* tell the story:

To prepare for this election, the Baker partisans had induced several traveling salesmen and gamblers to make Sullivan their headquarters, and spend their weekends here in an effort to qualify as voters. When the polls were opened, a number of these strangers offered to vote. These men claimed that their home was the hotel where they had lived for more than 90 days. The hotel was in the third ward, and these interlopers presumably all voted for [the Baker candidate].

The Citizens party won the elections, but Jacob H. Dumond, their

candidate in the third ward, had only a majority of one. It was here that the hotel transients had voted. The [electric] light crowd had spent too much here to admit defeat. They started an election contest against Dumond before the old Council, which canvassed the election returns. Their defeated candidate, who was a decent fellow, did not appear at the contest and did not seem to take any interest in the litigation that followed.

It would not be easy to cite another case more brazen, bold or reckless than the hearing of the contest before the Council. Two fellows who had been arrested for illegal voting on election day now came before the Council and admitted that they were mistaken about the time they began their residence at the hotel, and said they had not lived there for the full period of 90 days. When asked for whom they had voted, they said they had voted for Dumond! So the Council solemnly declared the votes illegal and deducted two votes from Dumond's tally, at the same time declaring Burwell [the pro-Baker candidate] elected.

The election was contested in court, and Burwell was enjoined from acting as Alderman until a final decision could be had. ... The case was not determined until near the end of the term, when the decision was in favor of Dumond.

Judge Cochran had issued an order restraining Burwell from acting as a member of the City Council. His decision was reversed by the Appellate Court, whose decision was then reversed again by the Illinois Supreme Court. This left Dumond — and the reform forces — the winners. *Hawking et al v. Burwell*, 191 Ill. 390 (1901). The *Sullivan Progress* proclaimed, "The Supreme Court has decided the Burwell injunction case in favor of the people."

1901

The political fight spilled over into the 1901 mayoral election, in which John H. Baker himself was the Democratic candidate and John E. Jennings the Citizens candidate. Baker would have had an obvious conflict of interest if he had been elected. On the one hand, his job as Mayor would be to look out for the interests of the people of Sullivan. But as owner and manager of the Sullivan Electric Co., his financial interests would favor protecting the electric franchise and the rates of the utility.

Baker sought to deal with his conflicts problem by transferring the stock in the electric company to a new corporation in which his wife and other relatives owned nearly all of the stock. I.J. noted that “much amusement was occasioned” when Baker tried to take credit for this scheme.

In any event, any such conflicts problem on Baker’s part was averted when John E. Jennings won the mayoral election — by a few more than 50 majority “in the largest vote ever polled up to that time in a city election.”

This set up a difficult term for Mayor Jennings commencing in mid-1901. Sullivan Electric had its new street lighting contract, thanks to the prior administration. But the city under the new administration repudiated that contract. It also obtained a court order annulling the extension of the franchise from 20 to 50 years.

Baker and the city now attempted to resolve the dispute through negotiations. Baker acted as his own attorney. Major Jennings and city attorney J.K. Martin [I.J.’s brother] acted for the city.

By the spring of 1901 Sullivan had 42 electric arc lights evenly distributed throughout the city. They were run on a moonlight schedule — lights being furnished the entire night when the moon “did not show up for duty.” The city offered Baker a new contract with the annual fee per lamp reduced from \$90 to \$60. Baker refused the offer and made no counter offer.

Efforts were made to effect a compromise. The M&F banker, W.A. Steele, tried to mediate. But Baker insisted that the new city council and new mayor would have to accept the franchise and contract approved by the previous administration.

Toward the end of the first 10-year contract period, representatives of the city proposed to Baker a temporary extension to permit further negotiations or to enable the city to make other arrangements to light the streets. Baker indicated something like that would be acceptable. But when the place and date for a meeting were set, Baker reportedly was furious: “You can tell those sons of bitches that I will meet them nowhere but in my office.” So further negotiations were deemed pointless.

On December 11, 1901, as the first 10-year contract came to a close, and in the absence of any new arrangements, Baker pulled the plug, shutting

down the supply of electricity. The city's street lamps went dark.

1902-3

The city aldermanic elections in the spring of 1902 decided the matter. The question was squarely presented: would Sullivan make a deal with Baker or some other private supplier of electricity, or would it build or acquire and maintain its own electricity plant?

During this fight, the *Progress* supported the Citizens Party but refrained from discussing either the contract renewal or the question of private-vs-public ownership. However, the *Progress* did publish letters supporting each of the alternatives. The pro-private ownership letter was written by I.J.'s friend, attorney Frank Harbaugh. I.J. himself wrote the "reply brief" favoring public ownership, though it was signed by an anonymous "reader." I.J.M. *Notes*, at 63.

The *Sullivan Democrat*, edited by Isaac Hudson, supported Baker. I.J. described some of the thrusts and counter-thrusts that appeared in the two newspapers — some humorous, some not — in his *Notes*, at 64-65.

Baker had allowed the streets to go dark for three months hoping it would force the people to accept his terms. The dark street apparently had exactly the opposite effect on public opinion.

The Citizens party carried the aldermanic elections in April 1902 by big majorities.

The Jennings Administration promptly began work on a new city-owned electricity plant. Mayor Jennings had the assistance of Jacob Dumond, chairman of the finance committee, and W.H. Chase, as well as J.K. Martin, the city attorney. The city's pumping station was expanded and converted into a generating station, and new poles, wires, and street lights were installed; and the current from the new municipal system was turned on a few days before the end of Mayor Jennings' term as Mayor in the spring of 1903. The project was financed by borrowing \$20,000, which was repaid \$5,000 each year out of the plant's revenues.

Support for the city plant continued into the next mayoral administration when James E. Dedman was elected Mayor in the spring of 1903,

defeating the Democratic candidate, George Brosam. In April 1903 at the end of the Mayoral campaign, when the Democrats held their final rally at the court house, "J.H. Baker was called for, but was not in a talking mood and did not respond."

I.J. Martin wrote that Mayors Jennings and Dedman had broad support from the Sullivan business community (I.J.M. *Notes*, at 65):

The Citizens Party during these years was an ideal organization of men devoted unselfishly to the public interest. With the Mayors Jennings and Dedman there was a list of sturdy aldermen: Jacob Dumond, John R. McClure, Walter Chase, Dr. S.J. Butler, Tobe Wolfe, and J.R. Bean. Joel K. Martin was the City Attorney throughout both administrations. David Lindsay was a very efficient Clerk, and ... the City Marshal was Charles Lansden.

But the list of officers does not show the names of all the active and effective leaders of the party. Capt. Rankin McPheeters was one of the best — certainly the most outspoken. Frank Hoke was equally active and dependable. Dr. Malone Butler was active and influential, and equally valuable though quiet were J.M. Cummins, Charles Shuman, Mack Birch, Gregg R. Hawkins and a score of others.

In July 1904 City Marshall Lansden reportedly led a search for gambling devices "and found a roulette wheel and a lot of poker chips in a room in J.H. Baker's building. ... Poker tables were found which could not be brought out of the doors and had evidently been built in the room. The outfit was taken to the police magistrate's office and on the next day they were stolen."

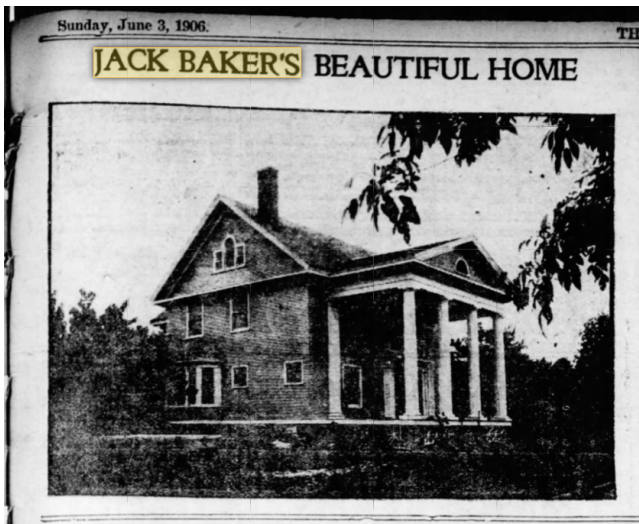
The Next Decade

Sullivan now had its municipal light system, which furnished the power for its arc light system; but Jack Baker still had the Sullivan Electric Company, which provided power to the city for purposes other than lighting and also to commercial and residential customers. City records show, for example, that Sullivan Electric provided power for the courthouse and jail.

In December 1909 when the Sullivan Electric power failed, the merchants and others had to get out their oil lamps and candles, and "the barbers had to have someone hold candles while they did their shaving." A similar

accident — a lightning strike — caused an outage in June 1911 which forced residents to get out their “old fashioned kerosene lamps.”

Baker expanded his electricity business to include supplying other nearby communities.



Central Illinois Power Company

The Central Illinois Power Company (“CIPS”) was formed in 1910 in Mattoon out of the Mattoon City Railway company, which controlled the Central Illinois Traction (“interurban”) company, and the Mattoon, Heat, Light and Power company. These businesses were connected in that electricity was used to power the operation of street cars and interurban trains. The interurban system was expanding, with plans to build into Paris and Shelbyville later in the year. Later that same fall CIPS installed a new generator in Mattoon that expanded its output 50 percent.

In early 1911 CIPS expanded its mission to include operation of street railroads and electricity generating plants for light, heat, power, water and manufacture of ice. By mid 1912 the company had expanded to include operation of light and power plants in twenty-five towns in central Illinois. This was a period in which utility companies were expanding and consolidating throughout the midwest, reflecting the economies of scale and scope in their operations. It was reported that Samuel Insull, the Chicago utility baron, and other Chicago capitalists were financing CIPS. The President of CIPS, M.E. Sampsell, was a Chicagoan.

Sullivan’s *Saturday Herald*, on June 22, 1912, ran a front-page article about Insull and the CIPS company:

Samuel F. Insull of Chicago is the head of a corporation which is planning the amalgamation of the electrical service in the following central Illinois towns: Arcola, Mattoon, Charleston, Kansas, Chrisman, Paris, Marshall, Casey, Greenup, Toledo, Newton, Olney, Effingham, Pana, Kinmundy, Robinson, Tuscola, Oakland, Shelbyville, Towerhill, Nokomis, Hillsboro, Irvington, Taylorville, Assumption, Moweaqua, Sullivan, Bethany, Arthur, Lovington, Windsor and others. . . .

Agents for the company have been at work in this section of the country for weeks. If they are successful in completing the merger, big power stations will be erected at different points in the territory and electric light and day electric power service will be given in all the sixty or more different towns in which the company will own electric franchises.

Two months later the *Herald* reported that CIPS had made progress: “Some of their recent purchases are the light and power company’s holdings of Bridgeport, Charleston, Arcola, Paris and Olney, Tuscola, Taylorville, Pana, Assumption and Stonington. Negotiations are now being made for Lovington.”

During the first two decades of the 20th century — the period in which CIPS was expanding its business — cities and the state of Illinois vied for regulatory control. The need for regulation depended in part on how competitive the local markets were — how many companies provided service within a particular town or city. In large cities there might be several. In places like Sullivan, there were rarely more than one.

Regulation of utilities like CIPS evolved as the businesses of the utilities expanded. Prior to 1900 utilities in Illinois such as electricity suppliers were “regulated”— or loosely constrained — by municipalities through control of the franchise. Cities controlled their own streets; many entered into franchise agreements with utilities, which gave them the power to dig up streets and operate pipelines or wire transmission systems, in return for which they had to live up to the terms of the contracts. The contracts governed quality of service and pricing — the setting of rates.

Illinois created its Public Utilities Commission in 1913 with jurisdiction over railroad, gas, telephone, and electricity companies. This jurisdiction included power to review and set rates. However, cities retained the power to grant franchises and negotiate the terms of those franchises.

1912-1914

In mid-1912 CIPS moved on Sullivan. The *Herald* alerted its readers in August that CIPS was seeking to buy both the Sullivan municipal plant and the privately-owned Sullivan Electric Co.:

A representative [of CIPS] met with the council in Sullivan on Monday night, preliminary to making negotiations for the municipal plant of the city of Sullivan. No offer was made and but little was said in regard to the subject. . . . A representative of the Public Service Company has at different times been here to purchase the plant of the Sullivan Electric Co. [Jack Baker’s company].

Then early the next year — effective February 1, 1913 — CIPS purchased Baker's Sullivan Electric Company for \$50,000, though it left Baker temporarily in charge.

In July 1913 a CIPS "display car" was brought from Mattoon to Sullivan via the Illinois Central and electrical "exhibitions" were given for Sullivan citizens showing "electrical appliances of every kind and make" which were reportedly of more interest to the women than the men.

The problem was — at least from CIPS' standpoint — that while it had purchased Baker's company, Baker's 20-year franchise from Sullivan had expired in 1912. The company had no right to use the streets of Sullivan for its pipes or cables. Sullivan had insisted in 1912 — as part of any extended franchise agreement — on limiting the rates Baker could charge. Baker and the city could not agree, which was apparently one reason Baker sold to CIPS. CIPS inherited the unresolved dispute.

So CIPS asked the city for a franchise to operate its electric plant and facilities. Through much of 1913 CIPS and Sullivan negotiated, but could not reach agreement.

The question of a franchise agreement was put on the agenda of the City Council in May at which time a proposal of the CIPS company was not accepted, and the matter was "adjourned from meeting to meeting." In mid-June a CIPS Co. representative was present at the Council meeting but no progress was made. The Council that summer and fall was considering the location of the new Wyman Park, which occupied much of its attention and time.

On Monday, August 19, 1913, at a special meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, "the light and power question was discussed, and in a manner that showed that this body stands for business and protection of the citizens of Sullivan." A CIPS representative was there — a Mr. Edwards. After discussion Messrs. H.M. Butler and Irving Shuman (who was about to be appointed Assistant United States Treasurer in the Wilson Administration) moved a resolution recommending that the City Council grant CIPS a franchise at the same rates under which they are currently operating in Taylorville for a term of up to 10 years. [CIPS wanted a 50-year franchise.] If CIPS would not accept, the Chamber proposed that it would undertake to determine how much it would cost the city to furnish light and power itself — i.e., the municipal ownership option. "It may be cheaper for the city to equip its own plant than to burden

this generation and the next with a franchise that is unsatisfactory to the present citizens and worse for the future generations.” A motion was made at the next City Council meeting embodying the Chamber’s suggestion. Nothing happened. The park location fight seems to have sucked all the oxygen out of the political atmosphere.

The *Saturday Herald* on October 23 ran a front-page column with the heading, “Municipal Ownership — Why Progressive Cities are Adopting It.” Editor America Lilly opined, without ever mentioning Sullivan’s dispute: “Municipal ownership is the only thing that goes to the root of the utility problem and prevents the rebuilding of private monopolies in utility service. American cities may hesitate, under present political conditions, to operate public utilities, but they should unquestionably own them.”

The Chamber of Commerce retained Professor Edward Waldo of the University of Illinois to perform a study of how much it would cost Sullivan to operate its own power plant and street lighting system and compare that cost to the CIPS proposal. Professor Waldo presented preliminary cost estimates on November 19 and 22, 1913, but was inconclusive on the main question of whether the city should produce itself or buy its electricity from CIPS. Waldo added: “You have already noted that the Public Service Co. reports a loss in the running of their present plant and I think it is very probably true. Their only hope of making a success of this plant would be in connecting with their larger power houses where they can obtain much great economies.”

The dispute with CIPS drifted unresolved into 1914. One of Sullivan’s newspapers noted in early January: “Is it the wish of the people to sell the municipal plant and turn all over to the Public Service company? It might be best to investigate. . . . It would be good policy to invite the manager of the Shelbyville municipal plant to visit Sullivan for a conference and not so many from the Public Service company.”

After reviewing the Waldo report, in mid-January 1914 the Chamber of Commerce resolved — on a motion made by Irving Shuman — “that we recommend to the council that they do not grant the CIPS company a franchise for light and power. The motion carried.”

This recommendation by the leading business organization in Sullivan was a major step in the direction of municipal ownership.

Still the City Council wasn't ready to decide. It spent most of the next meeting on a "rather warm discussion over the proposition of granting a franchise" to CIPS, but no definitive action was taken.

The *Saturday Herald* also took the side of municipalization. On January 24 it editorialized, referring to the Waldo study: "Sullivan can install a plant for much less, as has been proven by those who have taken the trouble to investigate in cities where the municipal plant has been installed. Possibly but few have figured the income from the plant. It has been estimated as high as \$10,000 per year."

In mid-February 1914 the Council, after much discussion, agreed that a committee should look into how much other municipal plant owners pay for lighting.

In early May the issue of the municipal light plant was "being widely and earnestly discussed on the streets." The Chamber of Commerce recommended that a vote be scheduled on issuance of \$15,000 in bonds "for the purpose of improving and installing a municipal light plant." The motion carried. The Council scheduled a special meeting to discuss the "municipal light plant," but we have no indication what was said or that anything was decided.

Newspaper files from the period are incomplete.

1915-1917: Clarence Darrow Wins for Sullivan

The public vs. private power fight in Sullivan came to a head in early 1915.

The Sullivan authorities decided to issue bonds for \$35,000 to raise money to build a new municipal water plant and municipal light plant. CIPS opposed the municipal plan and obtained a temporary injunction from County Judge Cochran preventing the bond issue. The injunction was later lifted.

A new Mayor and group of aldermen were to be elected in early 1915. The Citizens Party — the anti-Baker party — nominated and then elected Dr. A.W. (Stonewall) Johnson Mayor and an aldermanic candidate, John Eden Martin (son of I.J.), who favored enlargement of the city's light plant to furnish not only street lighting but also light and power to commercial and domestic

users in Sullivan. I.J. M. *Notes*, at 70.

The first Johnson Administration, from 1915-1917, was noted mainly for its prolonged fight with CIPS. The new municipal plant was selling electricity for light and power, and the city directed CIPS to quit using its streets for poles and wires.

The city gave CIPS notice to make no further extension of poles and wires in the streets and alleys, and a special ordinance was passed forbidding such trespass in the streets and fixing penalties for violation. When the company ... began sending linemen over [from Mattoon] at midnight to put up poles and wires, arrests were made and fines imposed.

CIPS was soon facing a long list of penalties.

CIPS then escalated the fight. It sought relief from both the Illinois Commerce Commission and the courts. Some prominent people in Sullivan took CIPS' side in the fight. In its petition to the ICC, CIPS was supported by a petition from Sullivan residents who said they wanted CIPS service.

Two influential Sullivan citizens who supported CIPS were Zach Whitfield and Irving Shuman, owner of the new Jefferson Theater. A Decatur newspaper called Shuman "one of the firmest friends of the Public Service Company in Sullivan." (Shuman had made the motion to the Chamber of Commerce a year earlier recommending that CIPS *not* be given a franchise.)

The Illinois Commerce Commission on December 23 issued an order directing CIPS to extend its lines and make the connections to serve all who applied. The ICC's order recited that CIPS had been "failing and refusing to furnish and provide service" to the appellants, and that it should do so. The Commission's order, however, provided that it would be effective "pending the determination by the courts of the rights of said city of Sullivan and said Central Illinois Public Service Company"

In other words, CIPS was ordered to provide service *if* — a very big "if" — it had a right to use the City's streets and property to do so.

One of CIPS' attorneys, James Vause of Vause & Kiger, armed with this order from the Commission, then went to the Master in Chancery E.D.

Elder in Sullivan and “obtained an injunction forbidding the Mayor, the Chairman of the Committee on Streets and Alleys, and the Chief of Police from interfering with [CIPS’] linemen.” Normally the applicants would have gone to the circuit court judge, but the judge was not available.

On Friday, December 31, 1915 — the last day of the year — CIPS’ general superintendent, B.F. Tucker, along with lawyers from their law firm, brought a gang of workmen to Sullivan to make wire connections between their lines and a number of business houses and private residences. Mayor Johnson had earlier promised that if they made such an attempt, their men would be arrested and prosecuted.

When the CIPS linemen showed up on that Friday and began extending wire, they soon found themselves in jail. City Marshal A.L. McCune had sworn a large number of special policemen into service, and 15 minutes after the CIPS linemen went to work, four of them were under arrest for trespass and on their way to jail. Later in the afternoon two other linemen were arrested and jailed. The six men were kept in jail until 7 o’clock that Friday evening, when they were released on bond. The linemen were all CIPS employees from Mattoon, Charleston, or Tuscola. The trespass charge was based on the fact that the CIPS workers were using the streets and alleys of Sullivan without a franchise, in violation of the recently-enacted municipal ordinance.

E.N. Watkins the local manager of the CPS plant, and A.P. Inlow, a local employee, were jailed, and Watkins was fined. The local magistrate who fined Watkins that Friday afternoon ignored Elder’s earlier injunction in favor of CIPS: “Under the city ordinance I must find the defendants guilty and I will assess against each of them a fine of \$100 and costs. The city has laws. We cannot afford to let outsiders come into the city and dictate to us what we shall do.”

James Vause, CPS’s lawyer, admitted in the magistrate’s proceedings that CIPS had no franchise, but claimed it had spent “large sums of money” in changing its plant, removing poles from the streets, and placing them in alleys. He also suggested that Sullivan did not have clean hands. “Peculiar things happen. A few days ago the wires leading from the CIPS plant to the office of Mayor Johnson were broken while snow was being scooped from the roof of the building in which the mayor is located.”

Strangely, the wire connections between the power plant and Shuman’s Jefferson Theater had also been broken. When asked about it, Mayor

Johnson said he did not know how that happened. “As you pass along the street you hear many things about the actions of the Public Service Company. You can judge for yourself how the wires came down.”

The legal battle was the topic of discussion in every street and every home of the city. “This trouble between CIPS and the city of Sullivan is going to end unpleasantly all around,” said City Attorney Rufus Huff. “I don’t like it. I have friends on both sides.”

On Saturday morning, New Years Day, James Vause went to Judge W.K. Whitfield in Decatur, and, based on his unilateral presentation, obtained an order from Judge Whitfield directing Mayor Johnson and Police Chief McCune to appear the following Wednesday to show cause why they should not be held in contempt for refusal to recognize the temporary injunction obtained from Master in Chancery Elder.

Wednesday afternoon, January 5, Judge Whitfield called the court to order. The Decatur hearing had drawn a large crowd from Sullivan. Mayor Johnson and Chief of Police McCune were there. So was the City Attorney Huff. So was Clarence S. Darrow of Chicago. So were Van D. Roughton, superintendent of schools, Aldermen F.M. Rob and J.H. Barns, and City Clerk Newbould, and ex-Mayor F.E. Pifer (one of the writer’s grandfathers), and C.E. Harsh, Tom McIntyre, Joe Woods, S.W. Wright, Roy Patterson, E.D. Elder (who had entered the injunction), E.J. Miller, I.J. Martin (the writer’s other grandfather), State’s Attorney J.K. Martin, and S.B. Hall. About 50 Sullivan people were there.

I’ll let I.J. have the pleasure of describing what happened (I.J.M. *Notes*, 71-72):

CIPS was represented by Vause & Kiger of Mattoon. Mr. Vause boasted that he would show those boobs in Moultrie County ... how to respect the courts of the land. He went to Judge Whitfield in Decatur and obtained a citation of the Sullivan Mayor and Chief of Police for contempt of court in violation of the injunction of the Master in Chancery.

At the hearing before Judge Whitfield in Decatur there was a large attendance of citizens of Sullivan, all in support of the Mayor, who was represented by the city attorney, Rufus Huff and E.J. Miller.

Just before the hearing began, Clarence Darrow, the famous Chicago lawyer, came into the room. Many of the Sullivan people knew he was coming, but Vause and Kiger were completely surprised.

The two main features of the hearing were proof that the CIPS had no franchise, and proof that the Mayor and Chief of Police had acted only in the enforcement of a city ordinance.

Darrow declared that the State Commission had no authority to issue the order in the first place, and he said to Vause, 'You might as well have petitioned the Gasfitters Union in your town, and if no such union were there you could have written the order yourself and it would have been as valid as the scrap of paper from the State Commission.'

Darrow argued that the Sullivan officials could not be in contempt for violation of the Magistrate's injunction because the injunction was void, CIPS having no franchise. Once the Judge agreed to consider the argument that the injunction was void, the case was essentially over.

The counter-argument would have been: Magistrate E.D. Elder's injunction was issued; it might have been reversible but it was not void; it should have been obeyed unless and until it was lifted or set aside; the proper procedure was to obey it and appeal — not violate it; and violations can be and should be punished. On the other hand, the injunction was issued in error; this was the appeal; and what would be the point of punishing Sullivan's officials for violating an injunction that was now being reversed.

So Sullivan won. I.J. took particular delight in the conversation with Darrow afterward:

In the lobby of the hotel after the trial, Darrow was much amused by the recital of the story of the long fight with the CIPS Co. He said, 'I think you are the most patient people I ever heard of. You know the company has no right, without a franchise, to keep poles and wires in your streets. They should remove them instead of trying to put in more.'

'It is common sense as well as common law that when anything is

wrongfully in a street, anyone may rightfully remove it. This company seems to have a preference for night work. I wonder how they would like some morning to find poles and wires neatly piled up on the side of the street. There are some places where such work would be done.

‘Of course, I would not advise the Mayor or Chief of Police or anyone else to engage in a job like that. It is better to handle the matter as you are doing, but it will be more costly.’ (It may be mentioned here that after two or three years of litigation, the Company gave up the fight but it had cost the city nearly \$10,000.)

The only thing that surprises me about that story now — 100 plus years later — is that the legal costs to the City were not far more than \$10,000 — even in 1916 dollars.

After the hearing that Wednesday afternoon, the City officials and citizens went home to Sullivan on the train. They were met at the depot by a local band and escorted to their homes “with music and with colors flying.”

Mayor Johnson told the citizens of Sullivan upon arrival, “One thing I want the people to understand is that the services of Clarence S. Darrow on behalf of the city of Sullivan are not costing the city one penny. A committee representing some of the citizens went to Chicago and secured his services and will pay the bills, and it will not be presented to the city of Sullivan at all.”

Major Johnson added: “We have sold our bonds and have the money and will soon have a light plant of our own.”

Attorney Kiger, CIPS’s lawyer, was on that same train heading home to Mattoon. He was called upon to make a speech from the platform of the train but sensibly declined.

In the city election the following year, April 1917, Mayor Johnson, the Citizens Party candidate, was opposed by Perry J. Harsh, running on the “Peoples Party” ticket. Harsh’s running mate for City Attorney, E.D. Elder, had been the magistrate who issued the injunction favoring CIPS that had been overturned by Decatur Judge Whitfield. During the 1917 campaign, the Peoples Party supporters distributed circulars attacking the municipal light plant.

The Citizens Party won the 1917 election. I.J. gloated a bit: "Perry Harsh fared a little better [than Elder], but Elder, the champion of the CIPS, was defeated by a vote of more than two to one."

Municipal control had prevailed. P.J. Harsh was elected Mayor in 1921 but "the municipal light plant was firmly established and was strong enough to go through a term of a hostile administration a few years later." I.J. Martin, *Common Place Book*, 1927, at 23.



XIX.

When Automobiles Came to Sullivan

Transportation illustrates the way technological innovation can quickly and radically change the way people live.

When I.J. Martin was born in 1859, Sullivan people got around by walking or on horseback, or via horse-drawn carts and wagons. He was 11 years old when railroad service first came to Sullivan. The railroads made it possible for people in his generation to travel easily to Decatur and Mattoon — and, with a little more effort and cost, to Chicago and even the East and West coasts. The telegraph made it possible to communicate almost instantly with people at long distance and with much faster turn-around time than the U.S. post office.

During my father's early childhood (Robert W. Martin, born 1895), there were no cars in Sullivan; people traveled by foot or by horse. A few brave folks owned bicycles. He was part of the first generation to see automobiles on the streets of Sullivan — and to have a telephone in his family home.

A German named Benz made the first automobile in 1885. The first American horse-less buggy — a gas-powered automobile — was built by Charles and Frank Duryea in 1893. The first time people in Illinois saw some-

thing like an automobile was in the fall of 1898 during a bicycle meet in Chicago when the “Woods electric” rig made its first appearance. The first automobile show in Chicago took place in January 1899. That same fall an outdoor show was held in Chicago in which auto races were held on a track. Samuel Miles, manager of the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers, presented an auto show in Chicago in 1901.

The first automobiles to appear in central Illinois were not the product of assembly-line efficiency. They were one-of-a-kind contraptions put together by local tinkers and engineers, such as Paul Hiekisch in Decatur. Hiekisch ran a machine shop on East North Street. He hailed (appropriately enough) from Halle, Germany, where he had operated a sewing machine factory. In Decatur he worked first for H. Mueller, and later for the Wabash machine shops. In 1889 he opened his own business making and repairing stoves. When the bicycle craze struck central Illinois, he went into the bicycle manufacture and repair business.

When automobiles appeared on the horizon, Hiekisch turned to this new technology. His first home-made car, which he named the “Decatur,” was powered by a gasoline-powered steam engine, roughly 6 horse power. The *Decatur Herald* reported in the fall of 1901 that he and his son intended to make several such machines and sell them along with their stock of bicycles.

It took Hiekisch a few months to get the kinks out of his first vehicle. He finally got it “to a state of perfection,” and was able to take friends and neighbors — two at time — for rides over the paved streets of Decatur in 1902. However, Hiekisch could not turn his one car into a commercial operation. By the fall of 1902 he was offering the car “free of charge to anyone who wishes to decorate it and go in the floral parade during the carnival.” He had “decided to give his automobile to the first party who applies.”

Hiekisch was far from alone. There were plenty of people around hoping to make a buck off the automobile. These included salesmen. The *Decatur Review* reported that when someone on the west side of Decatur rang a doorbell, a domestic servant answered:

She met an agent who had been given a tip that he could sell the man there an automobile. He said something about an automobile to the domestic who shook her head and said, ‘we just sent in our order for beer today.’

In the summer of 1902 it was reported that Decatur was “getting to be an automobile town.” There were from 12 to 14 automobiles in the city — more than in any other town in the state outside Chicago, speculated a pride-filled Decatur reporter. All were gas-driven machines, but one man had just placed an order for an “electric surrey.” It was powered by two electric motors with a battery weighing 600 pounds, and was predicted to attain speed ranging from 5 to 15 miles per hour. Two families had two cars each. Automobiles had become so common that they attracted little more attention than a horse and buggy. By contrast, Springfield reportedly had only one or two.

It was not long before smart businessmen figured out that there were economies of scale in the manufacture of automobiles — meaning that they could be more efficiently and cheaply produced at higher volumes. In Detroit Henry Ford and a group of investors formed the Henry Ford Company, but a dispute soon led them to leave the company — which changed its name to the Cadillac company. Ford and his colleagues then in 1903 formed their own new company — the Ford Motor Company. Ford sold various models in the first five years. In 1908 he introduced the Model T, of which millions were sold over the following two decades.

By 1904 automobile ads were appearing in the Decatur newspapers, testifying to the expanding public interest. Names unfamiliar today were attached to these early vehicles: Locomobile, for example, and the Thomas Flyer, the Stanhope, the Premier, the Maxwell, and the Pierce Arrow. Rambler automobiles were offered in both one-seat and two-seat varieties.

In 1905 about 50 automobile owners in Decatur formed the first motor club. The members faced a hostile world. The Decatur city council “loved the motor car with about the same intensity that the Sons of Heaven on the Chinese governing board love the rail car and the steamboat. There were about 10,000 horses in the county that would “jump out of their collars, turn equine hand-springs and land in a ditch with all four feet in the air kicking, at the sound of a motor horn heard half a mile away.”

The first resident of Sullivan to own a car was Charles Kuster, who built it in 1903. Charley was then 31 years old, of German descent, married with three children. He had moved to Sullivan in 1896. Charley was an engineer and skilled electrician, and ran a buggy shop. He bought an auto “body” and supplied the engine himself. Carleton Harris, in his transcribed reminiscences, said that Kuster’s car “looked like a regular buggy, but it had a rope

drive back to the rear wheel.” *M.C. Heritage*, August 1980, at 67.

Charley and his friend, J.H. Baker, were soon driving his car to and from neighboring towns, but he quickly outgrew his hand-made car. In 1908 Charley bought a new 10-horsepower Ford — a model C touring car.

Increasing consumer demand led to opportunities — to sell cars, to provide storage, and to service and repair the cars. The early automobiles were not water- or snow-proof, and owners did not at first have garages to protect them from the weather, let alone curious neighborhood children. Demand also opened up the opportunity to provide “livery” service — essentially taxi service.

Charley Kuster, Sullivan’s first car owner, soon decided to go into the dealership business. Then as now a dealership franchise typically restricted the dealer to sales within a defined area. In the fall of 1908 Charlie secured the local Ford agency. Cars were shipped from Chicago to Sullivan via the C&EI railroad. Within a few months Kuster and Alvin Jones as “agents for the Ford Automobile company had sold 12 machines ... “

In January 1909 Charley rented rooms in a building on West Jefferson Street where he would carry a stock of automobiles. In the spring of 1909, an ad in the Mattoon newspaper said: “Ford modern C touring car, in fine condition; have bought this year’s model and don’t want two; will give demonstration to intending purchaser. Chas. Custer.”

By February 1909 the *Decatur Herald* estimated that there were more than 500 automobiles within a radius of 40 miles of Decatur — with more than 150 owned in Decatur alone. It published a list of the owners and their cars. Six were from Sullivan:

Chas. Kuster — Ford.
Alva A. Jones — Mitchell.
E.E. Bushart — W.H. Kiplinger.
D.W. Van Gundy — Cleveland.
E.J. Enslow — Jeffery.
Irving Shuman — Cleveland.

A report on April 25, just two months later, was headlined, “Sullivan has machines and enthusiasm is growing. The auto craze has struck Sullivan” It reported two new Sullivan owners since the February report:

Dennis Landers — 5-passenger Maxwell.

Sam T. Miller — 5-passenger Maxwell.

The reporter added: “E.J. Enslow, one of the four who owned a car prior to this year, is a careful and expert driver. He purchased a Rambler last fall, price about \$2,300. Irving Shuman purchased a Cleveland car last summer, using it but a short time when it was purchased by D. Van Gundy. Mr. Shuman now owns a two-horse-power Maxwell runabout..”

In April 1909 there were two garages in Sullivan: the Kuster garage and Ford agency; and the Dolan & Newbould garage on Harrison Street, which handled Maxwell cars. A reporter editorialized that Dolan & Newbould “have a well-appointed garage just north of the square and have in connection a machine shop where all sorts of repairs are done. Mr. Dolan being an expert mechanic and repairer.” Soon there would be a third: “to be opened next week” by Frank Moore and Ray Jenkins, who represent the Buick company.



Sullivan Auto Co. Garage — Harrison and Hamilton streets.

Later in 1909 John M. Bushart joined Charley Kuster’s garage operation. He “purchased an interest in the Kuster & Jones Automobile garage Tuesday, and the new company will be known as the Sullivan Automobile Company.” The company bought the lot on which the E.B. Eden livery barn had previously stood, on the corner of Harrison and Hamilton streets.

The new company “will build a fire-proof, steam heated brick building with ample room for their own automobiles, and also for their customers’ cars. The new garage would sell cars and also provide servicing and needed supplies.” Also, “they expect to establish a livery service in connection with the garage, as there is a growing demand for that kind of service in Sullivan.”

In November 1910 a call was placed to the Sullivan Auto Garage, and Alva Jones hurried out “a very few minutes” later in a Ford car to take an injured man to Dr. Stedman’s office “as fast as the car could be let run on the main street of the city.”

The auto business continued to boom. By the end of 1909 the new Sullivan Ford dealership was so confident that it contracted for “ten car loads of Ford automobiles” to be delivered in 1910. In late January 1910 the new Ford agency received three 5-passenger cars to sell. Another three carloads arrived by the end of April — forcing the company to use its new garage building before it was completed.

With the increased auto traffic, attention naturally focused on the condition of the roads. Dirt roads in many locations had been “macadamized” in the 19th Century to improve road structure and surface for buggy and wagon traffic. The first paving done in Sullivan was in 1896 when West Harrison was paved from the three railroad depots to and around the square, a distance of nearly a mile. The 1896 pavement was done with hard pressed brick. In 1904 another mile of paving was put down on East Harrison and Worth and East Jackson streets, extending to the city limits north and east.

In 1906 Sullivan built a new macadam road “through a stretch of level black farm land” east from the town to the new Masonic home. The state built a mile of this road; the other half mile was built “by subscription” — presumably by city residents — to continue the road to the Masonic home.

In 1913 Charley Kuster moved his family to Springfield where he worked as an electrician at the state capital. Bushart carried on the garage business alone. Kuster died July 29, 1923, and is buried in Oak Ridge cemetery.

By the spring of 1914, partly as a result of increased automobile traffic, Sullivan was planning to build a new east-west hard road through town with state and county money. The state portion west of town was to be of concrete or brick on concrete foundation, with gravel on each side. “By the time the

mile and three-eighths of state aid road is completed, there will be ready for use a straight stretch of four and three-eighths miles of the finest road to be found in central Illinois. This will extend from the county farm, a mile and three-eighths west of the city limit of Sullivan and the present terminus of the state aid road, to the Masonic home, a mile and a half east of Sullivan. Three quarters of a mile of this is city street which will be paved by the city this year.”

Townships in Moultrie county likewise improved their “earth roads” — which a prideful reporter noted “cannot be surpassed anywhere in the state.”

The growth in the number of automobiles over the first 15 years of the new century was astonishing. One newspaper mused in mid-1915: “In 1900 at a big political rally when delegations came from school districts throughout the county, an automobile owned by some young men living in Mattoon was in Sullivan a wonderful sight to behold. . . . Horses were frightened out of their better instinct at sight of them. Today [1915] they are commoner than farm wagons and ignored by the roadster.” He added: Last Monday in a parade “were 68 automobiles,” and, “We had estimates of at least 500” in Sullivan.

Increased traffic brought more frequent incidents of speeding and accidents. It was a statewide problem. In late May 1916 the Secretary of State appointed Mayor Finley E. Pifer as a special representative for Moultrie County to act as automobile and motor bike investigator — watching for and reporting law violations, filing complaints, making arrests, and assisting in prosecutions.

Nothing could stop the mushrooming growth in the automobile business — nothing, that is, except war. By 1915 even though America had not yet entered the war against Germany, many auto companies were unable to produce as many cars as the market demanded. Auto dealers confirmed “that the inability of automobile concerns to secure materials is the chief cause for the low output.” One dealer added “that in the event the war continues much longer, all auto concerns will be forced to shut down their plants in the course of time. The Packard company has felt the effects of the war. They furnished a great number of trucks for the armies in Europe and as the result practically all of the material contracted for was used in building the trucks. . . . Many of the manufacturers of smaller cars have already practically closed down their plants.”

However, if the coming of war bent the growth trajectory, it did not break it. In June 1916 when John A. Freeland died, his funeral “was by far the largest automobile funeral ever held here. There were 98 automobiles in line.”

M.C.Heritage, November 1989, at 113.

Quite a change from little more than 15 years earlier when Charley Kuster had begun driving around Sullivan in his self-made buggy with a rope drive.

XX.

When Telephones Came to Sullivan

During the 1870s Sullivan was served by a single weekly newspaper — the *Sullivan Progress*. It had been acquired by W.H. (Henry) Smyser and W.J. Mize in 1873, and had its office on the third floor of the Titus Opera House. John R. Eden and his partner C.C. Clark had their law offices on the second floor of the Opera House, just below the *Progress*.

One summer Mr. Clark's sister came to town for a visit, and Henry Smyser was taken with her, "so much so that the people began to remark upon it, as people in a small town will. One day Henry threw his quid of chewing tobacco out of the window and it fell on the young lady's white plumed hat as she passed along the street below. A romance was busted, and she went right up two flights of stairs and made Henry pay her fifteen dollars for the ruined hat." Walt Eden, *Memoirs*, at 33.

Mr. Clark, the lawyer, had the first telephone-like device in town in his office. Walt Eden remembered it years later:

The first telephone I ever saw was a rather crude affair installed by Mr. Clark to connect his office with his home. No telephone system had been started then. He ran a wire from his home to the office

and ran it through the window jam, and fastened it on to a little round piece of wood with a hole in it like a doughnut. A piece of tin or some sort of metal was fastened to this piece of metal. One could hear a person talking at the other end of the wire. It had no receiver but you talked through it like you would through a metal tube, and then placed your ear down against the piece of wood and received the answer. I don't remember how one attracted the attention of the party at the other end of the line to whom he wished to talk. Walt Eden, *Memoirs*, at 33.

Not until the late 1890s did switched telephone service — with calls switched on a switchboard by operators, like railroad cars in a switchyard — come to Sullivan.

Alexander Graham Bell developed the first working telephone in 1876; it was demonstrated in Chicago the following year. Telephone service began to be provided in Chicago in 1878.

Telephone service as it developed in coming decades consisted of both local exchange service and long-distance or toll service between and among exchanges. The local and toll services arrived in Sullivan almost hand in hand.

The first venture in providing local telephone service in Sullivan by means of an exchange switchboard was by the Mattoon Telephone Exchange Company, headed by Dr. I.A. Lumpkin. Lumpkin's Mattoon company installed an exchange system in Sullivan in the fall of 1898 — described as a “full metallic” system. The first Sullivan subscriber was W.C. Cawood, who had a telephone at his store. When the system was up and running, there were two young women operators at the telephone company office during the day, and a man at the exchange board after 6 p.m. By February 1900 Lumpkin's Sullivan operation reportedly had 130 subscribers.

The geographically-logical connections to the outside world were via Decatur, Shelbyville, and Mattoon.

Efforts were soon underway to build a toll line connecting the Sullivan exchange with the Citizens' Mutual Company of Decatur. A.R. Pifer of Lovington and Cicero Lane of Sullivan in 1895 had secured a franchise from Sullivan and Moultrie County to build a line to Lake City, hoping after that to take the line to Decatur. Another group, comprised of local grain dealers and con-

fusingly calling itself the “Belt” Telephone Company, also prepared to go into the long distance toll business connecting Sullivan and Decatur. Separately, a franchise for a “Central Union” toll line connecting Sullivan to Decatur was approved by the Sullivan City Council in September 1898, then rejected by the Mayor, and then apparently passed over his veto.

By January 1897 construction of a toll line had been commenced from Shelbyville north to Sullivan via Windsor. Rains delayed the construction work, and the line was not completed until early June. The Shelby County Telephone Company persuaded the Sullivan City Council to enact an ordinance in August 1897 giving it the right to lay lines through Sullivan’s streets and alleys.

However, service over the completed toll line was not so good. At a meeting in Sullivan in mid-September 1897, the manager of the Shelbyville company was presented with a resolution “setting forth that whereas the telephone line wasn’t worth the powder it would take to blow it up, and that the stockholders had paid money for a telephone and not a roll of wire and bunch of poles,” no money would be paid to the company “until the system was made to work with a reasonable degree of satisfaction.” The unhappy Sullivan subscribers suggested that if the problems were not fixed, the Sullivan council might order that the company’s poles and wires be taken down “as no permission was ever given to put them up.”

Apparently the technical problems were ironed out. By April 1898 the telephone office was reputedly “the choice loafing place in town. Bulletins are received every day on the progress of the war [in Cuba], and of course everyone is anxious to know the latest.”

Then in either 1900 or 1901 Lumpkin’s Mattoon company sold its interests in the local Sullivan exchange to a group of Sullivan investors. The Sullivan company was incorporated in April 1901 with capital stock of \$10,000. By May 1901 the Sullivan Telephone Company had 140 phones installed. The officers of the company were: John R. Pogue, President; James L. Kirk, vice president; A.O. Harrison, secretary and manager; and S.R. Miller, Treasurer. As of the spring of 1901, the company had connections with the outside world through toll lines via the Coles County Company to Mattoon, the Moultrie County company to Decatur, and the Shelby County company to Shelbyville.

Business for the Sullivan exchange was good in the early years. In 1903 the company put in a new switchboard capable of using 300 phones. In

1904 it was adding more than 20 new phones per month. In mid-1906 the Sullivan exchange had its offices on the second floor of the recently-built (1892) I.O.O.F. building on the south side of the square.

In October 1906 it was announced that a new local exchange company was being organized in Sullivan — to be called the Sullivan Mutual Telephone Company, with William Sherburn president and J.F. Fleming, secretary. In addition to Sherburn and Fleming the board consisted of Irving Shuman, J.R. Bean, James LeGrand, and L.C. Horn. They apparently brought over James L. Kirk from the established company to manage the new business.

In early February 1907, the new firm received a franchise from Sullivan authorizing it to begin construction of its plant. The franchise required that its system be in working order by August 1907. The manager of the new company was James Kirk. In June 1907 the Sullivan company was laying cables around the square under ground.

It must soon have become apparent that Sullivan was not big enough to support two local exchange companies. In late June 1907, after some haggling over the price, the Sullivan Mutual Telephone and Telegraph Company acquired the assets — phones, wires and poles — of the Sullivan Telephone Company for \$13,800. On July 1 the assets of the two companies were united into a single entity, the Sullivan Mutual Telephone Company, with Kirk as the manager. The new company initially occupied the office of the Sullivan company on the second floor of the I.O.O.F. building and then moved into a new building owned by Shuman just to the south. Monthly rates were set at \$1.00 for residences and \$1.50 for office phones. Soon Sullivan residents were ordering phones but not able to get them due to backlogs in filling orders.

The consolidation agreement contained a provision in which the successor agreed that “any and all telephones ... shall be charged for at rates not exceeding \$1.00 for residence telephones and \$1.50 for business houses and public places. It is further agreed that said franchise shall be submitted to the city council of the city.”

The Sullivan *Saturday Herald* reported favorably on the consolidation: “All parties concerned are pleased and satisfied with this arrangement, as one phone and good service has been the sentiment of the people, and the companies have had the matter left with them to decide, and it is settled now by mutual agreement, we will get what we asked for.” (June 22, 1907.)

The good will did not last long.

First, the new Mutual company soon asked the city council to approve higher rates. Specifically, they asked for a new franchise which would give the company the right to raise rates. The city council approved, but the proposal was vetoed in March 1909 by Mayor Ellis.

The company tried again — filing another petition asking for a new franchise and the right to increase rates. It claimed it “cannot operate successfully under the present stipulated rates”

Second, the new company asked for payment of three month’s “rent” in advance. Apparently, the charges levied were for rental of the telephone unit rather than for service over the company’s exchange. This caused quite a “stir” — “a very unpleasant state of affairs. It might be a wise plan to reconsider some steps that have been taken. The people have been disappointed in what they expected at the hands of the Mutual. ... After due consideration and thinking the matter over after receiving our notice, we had concluded to be reconciled to our fate, but for the last few days we have spent about 15 to 20 minutes calling at the phone before we could get an answer, then when we concluded it was no use, all at once our number came to our rescue, then the other party, who had left orders for us to call them at a stated time were gone supposing we had failed to call. To pay in advance is not so bad as to pay for what we cannot get and use when we need it ... Give us a phone that will work, not a dumb box on the wall.” *Saturday Herald*, July, 1907.

These problems — price level and prepayment — were worked out in a compromise that seemed to satisfy the company and the ratepayers. Rates were roughly cut in half, according to R.M. Peadro in a column published July 20, 1907. He explained that under the “mutual” system, all users were stockholders, and the stock cost \$35 per share. Peadro had one phone in his office and one at home. Under the old system, his “dues” for three months had been \$10.50 (\$2 for the business phone, and \$1.50 for resident phone). Under the new “mutual” arrangement his total costs were reduced to \$5.00 for three months. “Besides the saving, you own the phone you use, and if you sell your stock the phone goes with it.” “The gentleman who took hold of this matter and made it possible for this community to save this large amount of money certainly deserves great credit”

After further negotiations and arm wrestling, the local Mutual Telephone Company management decided to abandon the effort. They proclaimed that they had made no money in the past two years even though they had added new subscribers. In mid-May 1910, with the approval of the stockholders, they decided to dispose of the exchange and appointed representatives to negotiate a sale. They found a buyer — a group of business people in Decatur, the “Automatic Telephone Company,” headed by H.S. Hankins and James M. Portwood, for \$22,500. The buying group were the same parties who owned the Home Telephone Company of Decatur and other exchanges in Macon County. The deal was structured as an asset acquisition rather than a stock purchase, and depended on obtaining a franchise from Sullivan.

In early November 1910 the Sullivan City Council granted a 20-year franchise to the new Sullivan Home Telephone company giving it permission to charge \$1.50 for residences and \$2.00 for offices and stores. The city got 7 free phones in the deal.

From that point on the Sullivan Home Telephone company was part of a larger business entity controlled by outsiders, including Charles B. Cheadle of Joliet. Cheadle explained that year how the company’s new “automatic” telephone differed from earlier models:

The calling device differs somewhat from the type heretofore used. . . . I have actually called six numbers, rang the bell in each case and disconnected six times in thirty seconds. This shows the simplicity and rapidity with which the mechanism can be operated.

Many interesting features might be mentioned. For instance, two or more persons may have telephones on one line and any one of them be rung automatically without disturbing any of the others on the line. If the line which a person is calling is busy, the person calling will receive a busy signal and in that case he will simply wait a short time and renew his call. It is possible to call through several exchanges and connect with the telephone desired.

In July 1926 Cheadle’s company — consisting then of the Sullivan company and 10 other local exchange companies — was incorporated into a new company called the “Illinois Central Telephone Company,” headquartered in Joliet.

In March 1928 “a controlling interest in the Central Illinois Telephone Company and the National Telephone and Electric Co. ... was sold to Maurice F. Lennon ... who later transferred his holdings to the Community Telephone Company of Chicago, which owns and operates a system of telephones throughout Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin and other states. C.B. Cheadle and his associates who have developed the properties of these companies has retired. ... The companies operated 25 exchanges,” including Sullivan.”

XXI.

The Closing of the Saloons 1906-7

Liquor, money, politics and religion have a tangled history in Sullivan as they do in other places in Illinois and America.

Sod-Corn Row

An earlier fragment of Sullivan's history recounts the presence of groceries and saloons along the north side of the square known as "sod corn row." *Supra*, at 23. Liquor could be purchased by the keg, barrel or gallon jug in the stores, or by the pint in a grocery, or by the drink in a saloon. Whiskey led to drunkenness, violence, and sometimes broken homes.

The sale of whiskey in any quantity was initially unregulated. Saloons and grogshops proliferated throughout the state, and pressures began to build for some kind of restriction or regulation.

In the 1850s the temperance movement produced the "Maine law" brand of reform: a total legislative prohibition on alcohol. In Illinois these pressures led to a popular referendum at a special election in early June 1855.

The Democratic party had traditionally been against enacting temperance measures into law. The temperance proponents were allied with antislavery forces. Cole, *The Era of the Civil War*, at 208-09.

In the run-up to the popular referendum in June 1855, the political parties were less prominent than the preachers. The Methodists generally favored prohibition while most of the Baptists were opposed. In Sullivan a debate was held with Col. John W. R. Morgan, pastor of the Methodist Church, favoring the prohibition law. His scheduled opponent was Dr. W.A. Kellar of the Christian Church, but he died before the debate and Rezin C. Martin, a preacher of the Lynn Creek Baptist Church in Whitley Point, took his place. The debate was held in the Christian Church, “which was filled full of listeners, and many stood outside and listened through the open windows.” Similar debates were held in Lovington and Bethany. I.J.M. *Notes*, at 31-33.

The proposed prohibition law was overwhelmingly defeated, with the temperance vote in northern counties “smothered in what was called by them the ‘moral and intellectual darkness’ of southern Illinois.” Cole, at 210. The defeat of the statewide movement left it to individual cities to decide for themselves whether to license saloons and on what terms.

In the 1870s arose the “Murphy temperance movement” to encourage people not to drink and to ban the sale of liquor. By 1877 temperance again became a political issue in Sullivan as in other parts of Illinois and the country.

Walt Eden, later a Mayor of Sullivan, wrote in his memoirs that by the mid-1870s the Murphy Movement was “in full swing”:

Meetings would be held two or three times a week in the court house or in the churches. It was like a great revival meeting. Sometimes a speaker would be brought in; meetings would be held every night. The appeal was to have the people sign the pledge.

I remember one outside speaker in particular who held meetings every night at the Christian Church for several weeks — Luther Benson, a reformed drunkard. He could get up as much excitement as Billy Sunday did in his day. Most everybody signed the pledge under Benson’s pleas. The W.C.T.U. came into existence then, and all pledge signers joined the order. Eden, *Memoirs*, at 31.

Victor Thompson was the first regularly-elected Mayor of the new “city” of Sullivan. A clothing merchant, he was elected on the “Citizens” ticket and served two terms, from 1873-1877. I.J. Martin wrote that he was “super-seded on account of the temperance wave that voted out saloons.” *Common Place Book*, 1927 (edenmartin.com local history web site).

1877-1881 - the Saloons were closed.

With the question of whether to permit/license saloons left to individual cities and towns, the license issue became a key issue in municipal politics.

Xavier Trower, a banker, ran for Mayor of Sullivan in 1877 as an anti-license candidate. He won the election but was forced to leave town when his bank became insolvent, a story told elsewhere. *Supra*, at 134. The details are fragmentary, but it appears that the saloons were closed soon after the 1877 election and remained closed for four years.

William Kirkwood was chosen Mayor at a special election in May 1879. His election marked a temporary “subsidence of the temperance enthusiasm, although saloons were not immediately reestablished.” Mayor Kirkwood laughingly remarked later that “the boys had to rely on drug store whiskey for a while longer.”

1881-1883 — the Saloons reopened.

Sullivan’s Mayor during the two-year term April 1881-1883 was Benjamin S. Jennings. In the April 1881 election Jennings had supported the “personal liberty” position — i.e., permitting adults to drink in saloons — and he and his ticket of aldermanic candidates had been elected on a pro-license platform by majorities ranging from 12 to 46. Two saloons were allowed to operate during his two-year term.

However, licenses were granted to saloon keepers who were “incapable of conducting an orderly business. One of the two saloons had been a wild and disorderly place, and the administration had been much discredited.” I.J. M. *Notes*, at 49.

In 1883 the Illinois Legislature enacted and the Governor signed the so-called “Harper Bill,” sponsored by a Chicago legislator named Harper,

which provided for regulation and licensing of saloons. The new law made it unlawful for any city or town to license a dram shop except upon payment in advance of a license fee not less than \$150 per year. The amount of the license was left the city or town.

1883-1885 — the Bristow Administration: the Saloons were closed.

The liquor issue came to the forefront in the 1883 Sullivan city elections as it did in many Illinois communities. One Decatur newspaper summarized the statewide political situation by suggesting that Democrats generally championed the liquor interests and favored low license fees. “A majority does not favor prohibition, but in a vote on high or low license [fees], a great majority would declare in favor of high license. The country people, although not interested pecuniarily, still have a sympathy for high license and a general sentiment in favor of restraining the number of saloons.”

Mayor Jennings ran for re-election in April 1883 on the “Citizens” ticket as a pro-license candidate. He was opposed by a popular businessman, Demosthenes F. Bristow and a group of aldermanic candidates running on the “Peoples” ticket who had pledged their support for banning the saloons. Bristow and his supporters won, and they promptly established a no-license regime in Sullivan.

However, people were still able to buy booze — either from other places where it was legal to buy, or from bootleggers. As I.J. Martin wrote, “Sullivan had never been without saloons, and the drinkers seized every chance to advance their ‘personal liberty.’ Street fights often occurred; and one wild Christmas Eve there was almost a riot. James T. Taylor was City Marshal, and a good one. He and his deputies quelled the Christmas Eve riot so vigorously that some of the bullies — the Corys and the Carters — left town.”

One of the aldermen during the Bristow mayoral term was Stephen Sweeney. I.J. Martin described him as “a rather pale drinker, but in the main harmless though apt to be a little quarrelsome. In the first year of Bristow’s administration, Marshall Taylor arrested Sweeney on the charge of being drunk and disorderly. Sweeney made fun for the crowd of onlookers by protesting: ‘You can’t arrest me, I’m an alderman. I’ll arrest ye!’

“Near the end of Bristow’s term, it was felt that the saloon party was gaining ground. In order to eliminate some of the personal bitterness from the contest, it was decided to submit the license question to a vote of the people and elect officers pledged to abide by the vote.” Martin *Common Place Book*, at 19.

1885 — Mayor Shinn and the pro-License forces win.

William Hollis Shinn, the Moultrie County States Attorney, was nominated for Mayor in a “Citizens” primary over Murray McDonald, an anti-license candidate. Shinn had no opposition in the general election.

Shinn had been a drummer boy in the Union army during the Civil War. Later he attended McKendree College and studied law with James Craig in Mattoon. He began practicing law in Sullivan in 1877.

After the polls closed on election day, the new Mayor-elect went home for a rest. A few hours later he was called out by an enthusiastic group of his supporters who called for a speech. Shinn replied happily, and his supporters were “all hilariously jolly.” Shinn then invited his supporters into his house, went to his cellar, and brought up beer for the boys. Unfortunately, Sullivan was still under the no-license regime of ordinances, which forbade anyone giving away intoxicating or malt liquors. A Decatur newspaper somewhat gleefully reported that the Mayor-elect “was therefore speedily placed under arrest, and is now awaiting trial for a violation of the city ordinances.” Whether Mayor Shinn was tried or the matter somehow settled was not reported.

Although the pro-license forces had prevailed, the questions remained: (a) how many saloons should be licensed, and (b) whether the licenses should be “high” or “low” (expensive or cheap).

Three of the holdover Aldermen — William Thuneman, J.M. Cummins, and Morris Ansbacher — favored a “low” fee of \$500. Thuneman argued that “too high fees led to law violation because an orderly saloon could not obey the law and be able to pay expenses. ‘They would have to be criminal to make money.’” Others opposed a high license fee on the ground that it would put an end to five cent beer.

On the other side, the temperance supporters and the new Mayor favored a higher fee of \$1,000 in the belief that a high fee would make for a better class of saloons.

I.J. Martin summarized the political fight this way:

[The saloon advocates] argued that we could have four saloons at the low fee which would produce as much revenue as two at \$1,000. Besides four would produce more rent for property owners and employment of people. Mayor Shinn replied that more places and more employees were just what he wished to avoid.

The holdover Aldermen — William Thuneman, J.M. Cummins, and Morris Ansbacher — all opposed the increase to \$1,000. Dr. J.A. Dunlap, Thomas Lee Wiley, and Mayor Shinn were for \$1,000. The remaining Alderman, L. Lambrecht, was for a compromise of \$750. . Finally, Lambrecht voted with Wiley and Dunlap (with the Mayor casting the deciding vote) to charge \$750 the first year and \$1,000 a year thereafter. As nearly three months had been taken up in the deadlock, the license was really set at the rate of \$1,000 per year. I.J.M. *Notes*, at 50; *Commonplace Book*, at 19-20.

The first two saloons were opened in June 1885. This inaugurated a license period of 20 years. The issue of whether to license saloons was not voted on again until 1891, and the pro-license forces won by a decisive majority.

The administrations of Mayor James W. Elder, 1891-1893, Mayor George Brosam, 1893-1895 and 1897-1899, Mayor Alpheus K. Campbell, 1895-1897, and Mayor Isaac Hudson, 1899-1901, were all pro-license.

During the administrations of Mayor John Eden Jennings, 1901-1903, and Mayor James Dedman, 1903-1905 other issues took precedence over the license issue.

1905-1906 - Mayor Andrew Denton Miller and the Closing of the Saloons in 1906.

Dr. Andrew Denton Miller was elected Mayor in 1905 on a "Citizens" ticket. Before the election, an opposition group including Charles Swisher and Aaron Miller reportedly sought to raise campaign funds from the saloons and billiard halls on the asserted ground that Dr. Miller was a pro-temperance candidate. During the 1905 campaign Dr. Miller was able to keep the saloon forces neutralized. Following the election, Swisher and Miller, aligned with the Jack Baker political forces, sponsored a petition for a local option vote.

On March 22, 1906, the Sullivan City Council was presented with a petition from 228 voters asking that the question of licensing saloons be submitted to the people for a vote in the upcoming spring elections. Supporters argued: "The people have petitioned us and if we do not grant their wishes, they have no right."

The Council granted the petition by a vote of four to one. The yeas were J.R. McClure, Ed David, H. Moore, and A. Newbold; the single nay was from Tobe Wolfe. Mayor Miller was absent at the vote.

During the following month, political activity was intense. There were then nine saloons operating in Sullivan, each paying a \$1,000 annual license fee. They all had an interest in preserving licensing. The political fight had implications for both the morality of Sullivan's citizens and the stability of its city budget.

Even before the vote was taken, one Sullivan building owner, Mrs. Stella McDonald, gave notice to a saloon keeper in her building that he would have to vacate when his lease expired. She told him she no longer wanted her building used for such purposes.

On April 18, 1906, the Sullivan voters determined the matter, voting by a majority of 98 to turn the town "dry." A Decatur newspaper described it as a victory of the "cold water people."

Church congregations cheered at the news. Rev. Dr. Wheat of the Sullivan Methodist church opined that loss of the license revenue from the taverns would not be so bad. He said, "There never is any money in the Sullivan city treasury anyway so that the recent action of the city council ... will make no particular difference so far as the finances are concerned. He is of the opinion that Sullivan will be much better off without the saloons than with them."

Other towns in Central Illinois also voted on the license question at about the same time. Lovington, Tuscola, and Arcola all voted "dry." Moweaqua, Monticello, and Taylorville, among others, voted to stay "wet."

With the closing of the saloons, where were the good citizens of Sullivan going to get a drink? One possibility presented itself: to create a private club where liquor could be served to members rather than sold, therefore avoiding the licensing requirement. Within a few weeks an "East Side Club" opened

its doors on the east side of the square. The club's operation was "the cause of a great deal of talk and also a topic for considerable gossip during the dull days." The club's members defended their operation on the ground that it had not been organized for the purpose of dispensing alcohol, but merely to have "a place of recreation." By August the new club had closed its doors.

At least twice during the months following the vote, a railroad agent named W.B. Garrigus was arrested for illegally selling several cases of intoxicating liquor which he had brought in by rail. Also, several other Sullivan citizens, including J. H. Waggoner, a member of one of the county's founding families, were arrested and fined for illegal sale of liquor.

In January 1907 the Sullivan City Council passed an ordinance giving itself the power to close any saloon or other place of business selling bootleg liquor, and to hold individual owners of such businesses, and the owners of buildings where such business operate, legally responsible.

The Illinois "Local Option" Law of 1907.

The main question in 1907, however, was not how to deal with sellers of bootleg alcohol but rather whether sale of any alcohol would continue to be permitted. Illinois in 1907 enacted a "local option" law which permitted individual municipalities or other "territories" to enact local ordinances banning any such sales. The bill, known as the Berry-Sheldon law, permitted the voters of a county, township, city or village, by petition of 25% or more of the voters, to put an anti-saloon proposal on an official ballot. The results would then be controlling within that territory. If, for example, the voters of Moultrie County voted to make Moultrie "anti-saloon territory," then that result would bind the city council of Sullivan or any other local authority unless and until it was reversed by popular vote.

Sufficient signatures were obtained, and in April 1907 the matter of whether to permit the sale of liquor was submitted to the Sullivan voters. Pursuant to the terms of the state law, approval of the proposal would make it unlawful "to sell intoxicating liquor in any quantity whatever," or to issue any license to sell liquor in any quantity whatever. In other words, not just individual drinks in a saloon, but any sale of alcohol in any quantity — even by the barrel — would be made unlawful.

The same political elements that had been at work in Sullivan the prior year came out in force. A Sullivan reporter for the *Decatur Herald* wrote, "The

issue in the coming city election are the all absorbing topics of conversation among citizens just now. As local interests and the question of license or no license are the questions in which the people are most concerned, the Republicans, Democrats and Prohibitionists are working side by side to further the best interests of Sullivan and to bring about results at the polls next Tuesday which will speak the sentiments of higher morality and soberness.”

This time the Citizens Party’ candidates, including its mayoral candidate Nathan Ellis, supported temperance. A “mass meeting” was conducted by the Citizens supporters at the Titus opera house the Saturday evening before the vote. Former Mayor Jennings and others explained that during the period in which the Citizens had controlled the city, they had covered the city’s operating expenses and at the same time reduced its debt. They were again supported by the W.C.T.U., which held a rally at the Christian church.

At the request of the “Law and Order League,” the revival preacher Reverend Charles Scoville came from Iowa to give an address the Monday afternoon before the Tuesday vote. “Throwing his whole soul into his subject, he pleaded with the voters to go to the polls and cast their votes against saloons, for the protection of their homes and the safety of their wives, sons and daughters.”

That Monday evening Scoville spoke again, to a meeting of “men only” at the opera house. “The house was crowded to overflowing and many were turned away. He made many strong and convincing arguments against the licensing of saloons, thrilling his hearers, who again and again applauded his utterances.”

Why, a reader today might ask, were the women excluded from the opera house meeting Monday night? A Decatur newspaper provided the answer: “The women were excluded from this meeting for the sole purpose of giving more room for the Sullivan voters to hear this magnetic speaker.” ... Sullivan “voters”! In 1907 women did not yet have the right to vote in Sullivan city elections. (They were accorded that right for the first time in 1913 when Sullivan voted on the site of the new Wyman Park.)

To be on the safe side, the Law and Order League offered a reward of \$25 for any information about persons giving away or selling liquor, or about illegal voting.

The Citizens ticket — all anti-license — carried the city elections; and the proposal to outlaw any sale of liquor in Sullivan carried by 98 votes, the same as in the 1906 vote. Lovington, Allenville and Dalton City also voted “dry,” as did Findlay, just across the county line in Shelby County.

1907-1933 — The Dry Era.

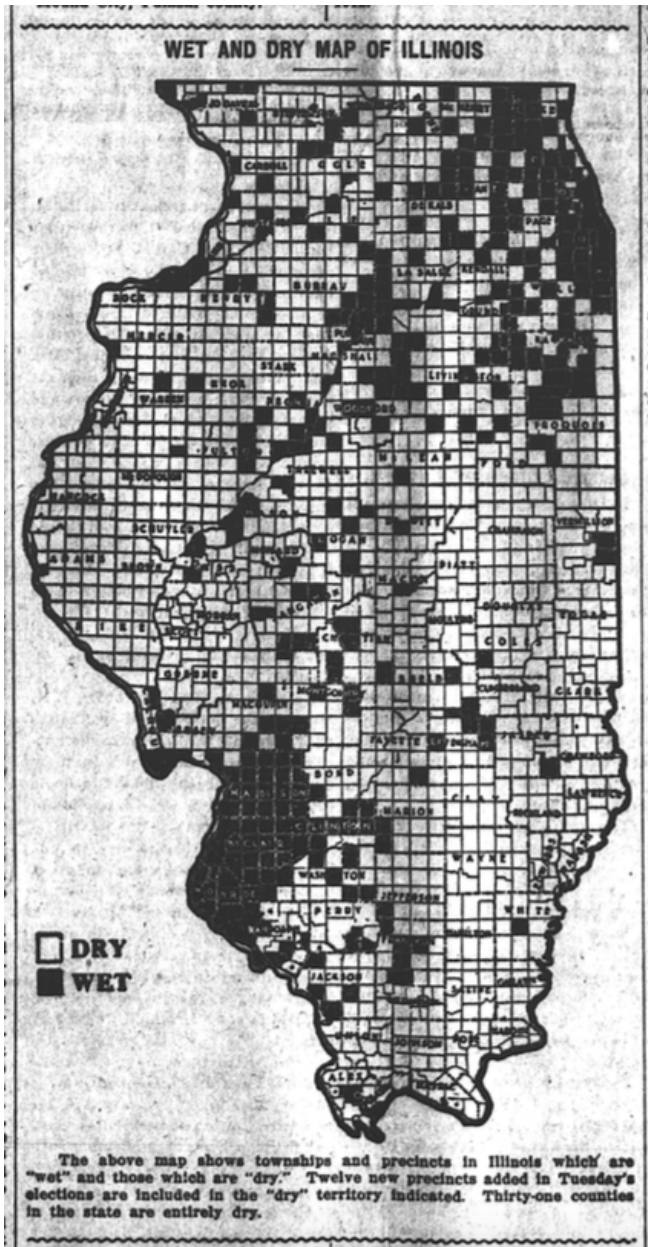
The anti-license folks had succeeded, and saloons were prohibited in Sullivan until 1933, which, not coincidentally, marked the repeal of the 18th Amendment and the end of national prohibition. Sullivan was not alone, of course. The same pressures for morality and against the liquor interests were at work throughout Illinois and the rest of the Midwest.

A map published in a Sullivan newspaper following the election in November 1913 showed that most counties and townships in central and southern Illinois were “dry,” while the “wet” townships were concentrated near Chicago and St. Louis.

The enactment of the anti-license ordinance in 1906 and its confirmation in 1907 did not, of course, mean that thirsty citizens could not get a drink. The *Decatur Review*, in an article on January 21, 1911, wrote:

Sullivan although a dry town had more drunks on the street Friday evening than there has been for a long time, taking the whole sidewalk as they walked along the square, and they didn't seem to be molested or placed in the lock-up.

The city passed an ordinance a short time ago to close [the saloons] but it seems booze is still selling.



Dry and Wet townships in Illinois in 1911.

XXII.

The Killing of Sheriff W. M. Fleming

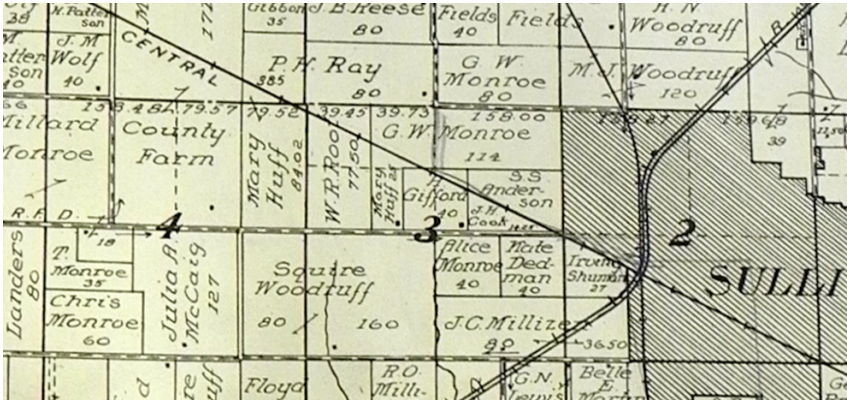
On Friday, September 5, 1913, Nimrod (“Nim”) Huff, then 28 years old, shot and killed Moultrie County Sheriff W. M. Fleming, then 57 years old, at the Huff farm about two miles west of Sullivan. Sheriff Fleming was apparently the only peace officer of Sullivan or Moultrie County ever to be killed in the line of duty.

The Huff Family

Nim Huff (1885-1913) was a son of Rufus Huff and his wife Mary, whose maiden name was Neeves (sometimes spelled “Neaves”).

Rufus Huff (1851-1935) was a well known lawyer, farmer and local politician. He had been a “pro-license” candidate for police magistrate in Sullivan in the spring of 1889. He was later active in the Democratic party and a supporter of the faction of J.H. Baker, the principal owner of the local electric plant. Rufus was elected to the state legislature in 1898 and served a single two-year term.

Rufus and Mary Huff and their family lived on a farm two miles west of Sullivan, just south of the Illinois Central Railroad line.



In November 1889 it was reported that state representative Rufus Huff was missing from Sullivan and “thought to be in Chicago in a demented condition.” The local police reported that he had left Sullivan ten days earlier for Chicago, “and it was probable that the man was wandering about the city in a helpless condition. His departure from his home was hasty, and occurred while other members of the family were absent. Rufus had been giving evidence of a failing mind for nearly two weeks prior to his disappearance, and he was being kept in restraint.” Later a friend told reporters that Rufus had turned up in California.

In the 1900 federal census, Mary Huff was listed as head of the Huff household, with sons Walter, Nimrod and Roger; Rufus was not listed as one of the household. But at some point, Rufus came home and the matter seems to have been forgotten, at least publicly. In the 1910 census Rufus was listed as head of the household, with Mary the wife, and sons Rufus and Robert. By 1910 son Nim was 25 years old and on his own.

In 1913 “Wm. R. Huff” was practicing law in Sullivan in the office of “LeForgee, Vail & Huff,” on the south side of the square over the City Book Store. Huff was the Moultrie County member of the Decatur-based firm and was entitled to half their earnings on legal business in Moultrie County. He later got into a dispute with his partners, sued for an accounting, and lost his case. Rufus appeared in a picture of the 1897 Moultrie County Bar Association, third row, next to the end on the right.



1897 BAR ASSOCIATION—Members of the Moultrie County Bar Association in 1897 included front row, William K. Whitfield, William N. Whitaker, Edwin J. Miller and Raymond J. Meeker; second row, Joseph B. Titus, John

R. Eden, Jonathan Meeker and William Granville Cochran; third row, George A. Sentel, Miles A. Mattox, John H. Baker, John T. Grider, John R. Pogue, Rufus Huff and Robert M. Peadro; and back row, Walter Eden, E. D.

Hutchinson, Isaac Hudson and John V. Burns. Not pictured but considered members at the time were Francis Marion Harbaugh, Joel K. Martin, John Eden Jennings, then in Bloomington and Frank Spitler, then in Colorado.



Rufus Hunt, 1897

Rufus' wife and Nim's mother was Mary Neeves Huff, a daughter of Nimrod Neeves, a prominent farmer who owned large tracts of land in Coles County and Kansas. In 1898 Nimrod Neeves (then about 73 years old) had been the defendant in a sensational suit for damages by Minnie Cohenour who claimed she had borne him a child and sought damages for alleged breach of promise and seduction under promise of marriage. Old Nimrod responded that it was "an impossibility" for him to have been the father of the child — apparently not because of his age but because of where he was when the infant was conceived. Minnie's claim for \$20,000 was tried to a jury in Moultrie County, which awarded her \$200. "There was a mass of conflicting testimony, but the opinion of the physician who attended Mrs. Cohenour during her confinement favored the theory of the defendant and the jury evidently gave him the benefit of the doubt."

One of the sons of old Nimrod was Bob Neeves, who lived in Gays, near Mattoon. He had what the police called a "pistol duel" with one William Mundy in Decatur in September 1902, and was charged by Decatur authorities with assault to do bodily injury. He was reported "to be worth considerable money," including "sums which will come to him from his father's estates." Another son of old Nimrod, "Chinney" Neeves, was indicted and jailed in November 1913 by a Moultrie County grand jury for making threats against a witness.

Nim Huff

Nim Huff (1885-1913) was the second of three sons of Rufus and Mary Huff. As of September 1913 Nim had been courting for several months Miss Ada Sipe, who worked as a domestic helper for Mr. and Mrs. Perry Bland, of Sullivan.

Young Nim was evidently a fine athlete. He had played on the high school football team. In 1903 he played on a traveling baseball team from Decatur; and four years later he was reportedly playing for an Eastern Illinois league team. One of the local newspapers in 1910 called him an outfielder of "exceptional ability." Nim's younger brother Roger was likewise a star athlete and baseball player. He was captain of the Sullivan high football team in 1906.

Nim Huff was also a mean drunk. In the spring of 1907 he and a friend named Salathiel David Miller went to Shelbyville and allegedly "while intoxicated" beat a crippled boy named Milton Griffith. One of the local newspapers reported: "Nim Huff and Miller, two Sullivan baseball players of considerable fame in surrounding towns, while in a beastly state of intoxication Wednesday

night assaulted and severely injured Milton Griffith, a half-witted boy, on the streets of this city. Public feeling was aroused and great precautions had to be shown by the police to prevent mob violence to the men while in jail. Griffith is a harmless youth and that he should be the victim of such a beating as he received aroused considerable feeling." Nim was convicted and fined for assault.

A few months later, in November 1907, Nim showed up drunk at the Sullivan electric light plant where he had reportedly gone to "loaf." "He persisted in throwing his hat on one of the belts and Farlow, who is in charge of the plant, requested him several times not to do so and finally told Huff he must stop. Huff became very angry and attacked Farlow, drawing a knife on him. Farlow proceeded with his fists to give Huff a blackened eye. The night policeman was summoned but on his arrival at the scene of the disturbance Huff had left for home. No arrest has yet been made."

In the fall of 1912 Huff was coaching a football game in Decatur between Decatur high school and Sullivan high. "On the occasion of the game, Huff's conduct became so offensive to both players and spectators that he was finally ordered to leave the field. When he refused, Sullivan was penalized."

On another occasion it was reported that in Pana Huff "got in a general fight following the football game. It was charged that he carried in his sleeve and used to good effect a portion of lead pipe."

Nim reportedly once took a "drink cure but relapsed, then straightened up, but fell again. Many stories are told of Huff's escapades in Sullivan, where he was known as 'The Outlaw.' He was reported to be a member of a gang that was responsible for a number of depredations. He was arrested several times, but his father paid his fines."

Several newspapers described Nim as a "bootlegger." One article reported: "For a long time he has been running a place on Harrison Street which has been a cause of complaint with the neighbors."

Sheriff Warren M. Fleming

Warren M. Fleming was born near Janesville, Ohio, in January 1856. He came to Moultrie County when he was about 21 and made his home near Arthur where he engaged in the furniture and undertaking business. Married in 1879 he had eight children. Fleming was elected to a two-year

term as Sheriff on the Democratic ticket in late 1910, succeeding Sheriff W.O. Funston. After being elected Sheriff he moved to Sullivan, where he lived in the county jail residence.

Friday, September 5, 1913, started out badly for Sheriff Fleming. Early that morning he and John Bristow had driven to Lovington on business. Just as they arrived there, their car broke down. They called for help, and a car was sent from Newbould's garage in Sullivan. The crippled car was then hitched to the back of Newbould's car for the ride back to Sullivan. The two officers were riding in their car, the one being hauled. Then one of the wheels of their car came off and rolled into a fence. "Out went the sheriff and like a tumble weed traveled in the same direction as the wheel and came to a stop in a ditch." Newbould kept driving toward Sullivan, at first unaware that he had lost the detached vehicle and its passengers; when he realized what had happened, he went back "to gather up the spoils and spills." The news account of this incident reported that Sheriff Fleming "arrived home all rigged up in something that resembled the much talked of slit skirts."

By Friday late afternoon the Sheriff was sufficiently recovered that he was back on the job.

Ada Sipe.

Ada Sipe was a domestic servant for Mr. and Mrs. Perry Bland for whom she had worked for two years. Ada was the 19-year old daughter of Jacob and Flora Sipe, who lived on a farm near Cushman, north of Sullivan. They had reportedly advised Ada to stay away from Nim Huff, but she had "turned a deaf ear to parents and others offering her good advice."

Perry Bland was a traveling salesman, often away from home. The Blands lived on East Jackson Street, two blocks north of the court house, in a home later owned by the prominent dentist, Donald Butler. The Blands were next-door neighbors of my grandparents, Finley and Hattie Pifer. Perry Bland sold cigars, then electric lighting systems for farms, At one time he went into the business of manufacturing "proprietary medicine," and later operated a hairpin factory.

While working for the Blands, Ada "at times was out too much of nights, and Mrs. Bland would not keep her. She went away, and after being

away several months, came back and begged to be taken in, saying she would do better, which she did.”

By September 1913 Ada had been trying for about three months to “get rid of Huff’s attentions; then he would become enraged at times and force his attention upon her and make threats.”

Friday Afternoon, September 5.

About 4 p.m., Friday, September 5, 1913, Nim Huff showed up at the Bland home. Nim was reportedly not happy about Ada’s decision to break off their relationship. He had apparently been drinking.

Once inside the Bland house, Nim went to the kitchen at the back of the house. Someone heard him say, “there’s going to be trouble.”

Nim had brought with him an “old, rusty, dull corn knife.” He struck at Ada’s face with the knife. She warded off the knife with her right arm, which was cut. Ada somehow managed to catch the knife in her hand, but he bit her hand to force her to let it go. Nim then struck her on the forehead and the back of the head. The corn knife was later found on the Blands’ front porch behind a trunk.

Ada shouted for someone to call the police, and both Mrs. Bland and Mrs. Fultz made calls. (Mrs. Fultz is not otherwise identified in the news articles.) One call from the Blands went to the sheriff’s office where Deputy Sheriff C.H. Bristow answered the phone. The sheriff had gone to Dalton City so Deputy Bristow left the office to go to the Bland home. Another call went to the Sullivan city police.

After becoming aware that the police had been called, Nim left the house and walked around the block, “swearing he would clean out the whole bunch.” After walking around the block, he went up on the porch of the neighboring house, to the east of the Blands. It was the home of Mayor Finley Pifer and his wife Hattie. Nim sat down on the Pifers’ front porch. He remarked, “Ada cut herself.” Hattie had no doubt heard the commotion next door; in any event she was on the front porch. She was a smart lady, and she wanted this drunk, violent man gone from her porch. She told Nim a policeman was coming. Nim “slapped himself on all his pockets, and said ‘I have got nothing [no weapon]. I can whip him with my fists.’”

There were two different versions of what happened next.

The version from the deputy sheriff and city policeman was that they tried but could not catch up to Nim. Policeman John Tolley reportedly came north from his office on Washington street to Jackson. Nim saw him coming “and walked towards the Presbyterian church.” He was “about 200 feet ahead of” Tolley.

Deputy Sheriff Bristow seems to have received a call moments after Tolley. He later testified that he left the sheriff’s office, jumped in a buggy driven by a man named Cooley and asked him to “take me to Blands, quick.” When he got to Jackson Street, Bristow noticed people looking west, and also saw Policeman John Tolley to the west, “about even with the Presbyterian Church.” Bristow drove in that direction and Tolley came running to the buggy. Tolley said, “Come on: I want to catch that fellow.” Together they drove west toward the school house. They saw Nim turn. “When we got there, we asked several what was the trouble. Nobody knew; if they did, they wouldn’t tell us.” They asked if anyone had seen Nim but could get no information. They then drove around the school house. Not finding Nim they went back to the Bland home.

A different version suggested that the deputy sheriff and policeman could have captured Nim but let him get away. According to the *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, when Bristow and Tolley first arrived at the Bland home, Nim “came out and, calling on the officers not to shoot, started to run. As there was no warrant issued for the young man’s arrest, he was allowed to escape.” *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, September 6, 1913. No other newspaper account that I have seen repeats this version.

Back at the Bland home Bristow and Tolley found Ada with the cut on her arm, the bite on her wrist, and bruises on her head. Ada told the officers she would swear out a warrant for Nim’s arrest. Bristow then went to City Attorney, J.K Martin, to get a warrant, and then accompanied a justice of the peace to the Bland home to obtain Ada’s acknowledgment and signature. Bristow then returned to the office with the warrant and explained what had happened to Sheriff Fleming, who by then had returned.

Following his escape Nim placed three telephone calls to the Bland residence to talk to Ada; but he would not tell her where he was. Ada then asked the “central girl” — the telephone operator — where he was, and she said she thought he was on line 49, the same line as the Van Gundy residence.

The sheriff, deputy, and policeman went to Van Gundy's residence, but learned nothing about Nim's whereabouts. They then returned to Sullivan.

Someone reported to the officers "that one of the Van Gundy boys was taking their car out of the shop to take Nim Huff out of the county. The officers hired another car and driver to start in pursuit. Before they got started they heard he was at his father's farmhouse in the country, sitting on the porch."

Sheriff Fleming, Deputy Bristow and Police Chief John Tolley then drove out to the Huff home with the warrant for the arrest of Nim. They were in a car driven by Ben Cochran. By the time they arrived at the Huff home, it was dark.

Nim's younger brother Roger had arrived home at the Nim farmhouse not long after Nim got there in the late afternoon. Roger was well known in the community — "a famous baseball player, and at one time captain of the team of the University of Illinois." According to Roger's testimony before the coroner's jury, his brother Nim was "a dope fiend":

He was in a crazed condition Friday evening... His lips were blue and swollen and his eyes were bloodshot. I had been at my uncle's home in the afternoon and while there learned that Nimrod had been getting into trouble. When I arrived home I found him sitting on the fence and my mother and father were also there trying to persuade him not to go back to town. He had a bottle of whiskey and a shotgun with him.

Shortly after I arrived, John Taylor came along in his buggy, driving towards town and Nimrod shouted at him. I went out and talked with Taylor and told him that we did not want Nimrod to go to town. Then Nimrod came out with his gun and got into the seat with Taylor. He set the shotgun between them.

Almost at that moment, the auto with the officers came along and stopped after it had got by us. Nimrod climbed out of the buggy and walked towards the horse's head. Then he raised his gun and fired at Sheriff Fleming, after saying: Don't come another step or I will shoot.'

I then turned and went into the house for fear that the officers might take me for Nimrod.

One of the newspaper accounts reconstructed events at the Huff farmhouse this way:

In spite of his mother's pleadings and tears, he [Nim] kept on drinking and kept a shot gun in his possession, insisting that he was going to town. The family tried to keep him at home. John Taylor was passing and Huff called to him and got in his buggy to come to town. Just at that time, the sheriff and his party arrived, passed the buggy and stopped, and the officers alighted and walked toward the buggy.

Deputy Bristow testified before the coroner's jury:

We went there and just before we got to the [Huff] house, we saw the buggy in the road; I think Mr. Fleming said to throw the lights on them, so we could see them; we saw three parties and drove on around, and Fleming said stop, and he stopped the car and he and I jumped out about the same time. He was in the back seat and I was in the front seat. We started back toward the buggy; we had the flash lights and had them lit; we took three or four steps and at the first report, Mr. Fleming said, 'Oh my God, I am hit,' or a remark to that effect.

Just that quick I dropped to the ground and laid there. Mr. Fleming staggered back and died; my opinion at first was that he laid down to keep out of the way of the shooting; I found out different afterwards; the second shot was immediately after the first one and about that time there was several hallooing. Mr. Huff and Roger [Huff] were both hallooing, not to shoot, and Mr. Huff ran out to Mr. Fleming and I got up and went back to where he was, and we worked with him for quite a while.

One newspaper version said that when the Sheriff's car arrived, the buggy had stopped: "In the buggy were Nimrod Huff, W.R. Huff, his father, Roger Huff, his brother, and John Taylor, a farmer living nearby and owner of the rig."

After Nim shot the Sheriff, he seemed "dazed." "Likewise the other men in the buggy sat speechless with horror. . . . Roger Huff, his father and John Taylor, the other occupants of the rig, declared that they were powerless to prevent the crime. They say that they . . . were taking him somewhere where he

could harm no one.” *Decatur Review* September 6, 1913. (Apparently, no one later pressed Nim’s father or brother as to where they were planning to take him, or for how long.)

Deputy Bristow had testified that he and the Sheriff were about fifty feet from Nim’s buggy when the shots were fired. Bristow dropped to the ground and the next shot passed over his head. A newspaper account said that city policeman Tolley was “slightly wounded” with a few of the shot lodging in his leg. Bristow also testified that he did not know Nim had a gun until the first shot was fired, and also had not heard a word spoken by any of the other parties until after the shots were fired. He later picked up Sheriff Fleming’s gun and also two shells they found in the road. He said the Sheriff did not say anything else, and that he thought the Sheriff lived about one-half hour after he was shot.

After Nim shot Sheriff Fleming, he ran off into a neighboring cornfield.

Bristow went into the Huff house: “I was trying to get through over the telephone, and central wouldn’t answer; we couldn’t get any telephone service at all.” Ben Cochran drove his car to town for a doctor. He met Dr. W.P. Davidson at the railroad station and drove back to the Huff house.

“A couple of minutes after [Cochran] got back, he heard a shot to the northeast of them; someone said, ‘Nim has shot himself.’ He called just before he shot. Roger Huff asked for a lantern and went to him.” They found Nim dead in the cornfield. He had placed the muzzle of the shotgun against his side and fired the shotgun with his toes. “When the men reached him a short time later, he was still alive and moaning. It was seen at once that his wound was mortal, and nothing could be done to save him. He died about a half hour later.”

The Aftermath

The next morning, Saturday September 6, the coroner’s jury met to inquire into the death of Sheriff Fleming. They were: Dr. J.F. Lawson, C.R. McPheeters, F.A. Reese, John A. Webb, M.A. Mattox, and W.S. Harris. They found that the sheriff had been killed by Nim Huff.

A separate coroner’s jury inquired into the death of Nim Huff. They were: Mayor Finley R. Pifer, W.L. Hancock, A.N. Woodruff, Grover Hines, Dennis Landers, and A. Gifford. They found that he had shot himself.

The following Monday it was reported in the *Mattoon Journal Gazette* that, “The people of Sullivan are at white heat. They are about ready to fix the blame upon City Marshal Tolley and his deputy because they failed to place Nimrod Huff under arrest on Friday morning . . .” This account followed the same Mattoon newspaper’s story two days earlier that Bristow and Tolley could have arrested Nim outside the Bland home but decided not to because no warrant had yet issued.

Also on Monday, a mass meeting was held at the court house in response to a call by Coroner (and temporary Sheriff) Scarborough. The people at the meeting approved a resolution expressing sympathy to the Fleming family and stating: “It is the sense of this meeting of citizens that as this sad event grew largely out of an illegal selling and use of strong drink that we hereby urge the strict enforcement of our local option laws by our officials . . .”

Sheriff Fleming’s funeral service was packed with friends and admirers. The burial was at Arthur, and two cars of a passenger train were required to accommodate those who went to the grave site. Rev. A.L. Casey of the Methodist church, said Fleming was “a most conscientious and consistent Christian man, living an every day Christian life before and with every man with whom he had dealings.” Judge W. G. Cochran told how the Sheriff “had endeared himself to each of the Moultrie county officials and to the Moultrie county bar. There was a great profusion of floral offerings from county officials, the bar association, the Odd Fellows, Order of the Eastern Star, and Women’s Foreign Missionary Society. All business was suspended in Sullivan during the funeral by order of Mayor Pifer. Sullivan “fully realized from the evidence of statistics that Warren M. Fleming . . . is the only sheriff in the great state of Illinois in the past 14 years that has lost his life by being killed while performing his duty. No wonder, then, that our people are stunned with the blow.”

The obituary of Nimrod Huff stated: “We know that Nimrod Neeves Huff erred, that he was often in trouble. We know it was not the man that brought this calamity upon the county by the last and fatal crime. The whiskey and dope that maddened his brain did the deed. ‘Let he (sic) who is without guilt throw the first stone.’”

As a result of Sheriff Fleming’s death, under state law the Coroner, Dr. W.E. Scarborough, became sheriff until another sheriff could be elected. Scarborough had served in the Spanish American War and was a captain of Company C, 4th, Illinois National Guard, eligible to serve as captain in the regular

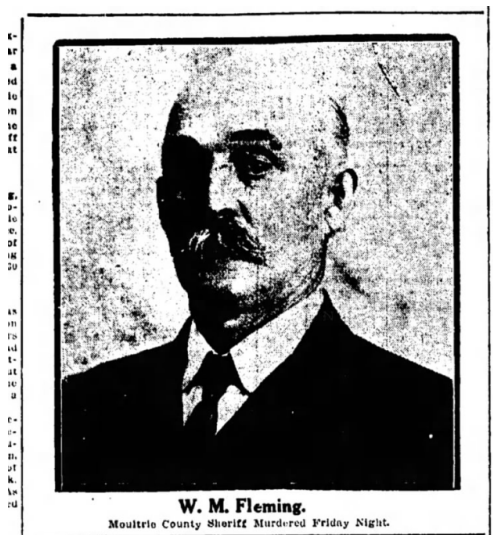
army. He had been coach of the Sullivan High School undefeated championship football team in 1911. He ran in the election for sheriff but was defeated in the Democratic primary in 1914. The deceased sheriff's son, Frank Fleming, ran for Coroner.

The community did not hold the sins of the son against the father. Rufus Huff was elected City Attorney in March 1915, and was serving in that role in 1915 when the struggle over municipal-vs-private electricity exploded into litigation between CIPS and Sullivan. In that fight Sullivan was represented by Huff and Clarence Darrow. Rufus resigned from his city post the following year in protest against the way water and light bond money was being spent. He was replaced as City Attorney by J. K. Martin. Rufus died in 1935 at the age of 84.

Roger Huff — the athlete and brother of Nim — died in 1917 as the result of diabetes. He was 28.

“Ada Sipe Moore,” the victim of Nim’s corn-knife attack, reportedly married Frank Pfeiffer in Kankakee on July 30, 1925, and then disappeared from view.

Over three-quarters of a century after Sheriff Fleming’s murder, the Moultrie County Board in 1990 presented several of the Sheriff’s descendants with a memorial flag and lapel pins in his memory as the only Moultrie county law enforcement officer ever to be killed in the line of duty.



XXIII.

Wyman Park

Albert Wyman came to the United States from Prussia in 1858 as a young man. His parents borrowed money on their home to give him \$100 to make the trip and get settled. Albert served in the Union Army during the Civil War. After it was over he moved to Mattoon, and then came on to Sullivan in 1870. Legend has it that when he arrived he had less than a dollar, with which he bought a skin and made a pair of shoes, which he sold. He got enough to buy a larger skin, and he made more shoes; and so he continued until he was able to set himself up in the shoe and boot business.

Wyman did business on a strictly cash basis. He was assisted in his business by his clerk and friend Thomas G. Hughes. Albert had no family and no costly habits. He invested in real estate, including the two-story building he built in 1885 on the southwest corner of the square where he had his store and above which he had his living quarters. In addition to real estate, Albert loaned out money at six percent, and kept accurate accounts. His wealth continued to grow.

Albert used to stop by a saloon for a glass of beer. But he reportedly never treated others, and was never known to accept a treat. He joined a business man's social club, not for the cards or billiards but for the pleasure of friendship. He always left for home at 9 o'clock. He did not need a watch. Residents could,

it was said, set their clocks by Albert Wyman's appearance.

On one of his walks in April 1912 Albert fell on the Illinois Central tracks. He was assisted by section men and walked home. He had broken a rib, and heart trouble later developed. He died not long after.

Albert Wyman in his will left his business building and its contents, including his stock of boots and shoes, to his former clerk and friend Tom Hughes. He also left Mr. Hughes and his daughter several thousand dollars in cash. The rest he bequeathed to the city of Sullivan for a public park. His will provided that the land should be at least 40 acres and not more than 60 acres, and that it would "always be kept open and free for public use."

His will required that the City Council enact ordinances providing that there would be "no circus, side shows, menagerie, hippodrome or similar show exhibited in said park, no baseball, football or any game or used for any other purposes with admission charged." Horse racing and all forms of gambling were prohibited. And "no intoxicating liquor" shall be taken into the park.

Wyman also provided that a custodian should be appointed and his services paid for out of the city's revenues.

The citizens of Sullivan were delighted to have the money and the park, but disagreed over where it should be. The site question was discussed by the local chamber of commerce in mid-February 1913.

The first step was for the City Council to accept the legacy and enact an ordinance accepting the Wyman gift, which it did in February. In April it voted to spend \$40,000 to build the park. The next step would be to decide the park site.

Several land owners offered to help solve the problem by selling their own land.

1. B.W. Patterson offered a tract of 41 acres southeast of the city, a 20-minute walk from the courthouse, for \$12,000. A stream ran through the land, and a pond was there, along with 300 fine trees. It was objected, however, that 17 acres lay south of the Illinois Central track and would not be accessible except by an underpass

The Patterson site was favored by John E. Jennings, an attorney for Patterson and friend of the late Mr. Wyman.

2. Joseph Titus offered a tract of prairie land north of the city near Freeland's Grove where Lincoln had spoken during his campaign speech in 1858.
3. Flora Ashbrook offered a 35-acre tract of land at \$225 per acre, though she later reduced the price. The leading businessman and civic figure W.A. Steele, the President of the Merchants and Farmers Bank, offered to sell for a nominal amount the "school lot" land adjoining the Ashbrook tract; and Irving Shuman, a senior officer of the First National Bank, tossed in another tract of adjacent property.
4. The Seass family offered the old race track property north and west of the city — the site of the old fair grounds.

The Ashbrook-Steele-Shuman site was an early favorite. Although Steele was offering his piece of land essentially free, he was also asking to be released from a contract he had entered into with the city which obligated him, for a certain amount each year, to take care of Greenhill cemetery. Attorney Jennings pointed out that though Steele would be giving land, he was also asking to be relieved of what had turned out to be a burdensome contract.

A column signed by John E. Jennings in support of the Patterson project, appeared in the *Sullivan Progress* in May 1913 and explained the background of the Steele, or "graveyard" proposal:

Many of the older citizens of Sullivan are familiar with and remember the conditions that surrounded the conveying of the 'School Lot' to Mr. Steele. It was generally understood that this 'School Lot' that fronts on Water and Calhoun streets and adjoins the 'Potter property,' as mentioned in Mr. Steele's proposition, was to be beautified and become a part of Greenhill cemetery, but that no graves were to be sold in this portion, it being divided from Greenhill cemetery by a 60-foot street running north and south.

We quote from the pamphlet issued by the Greenhill Cemetery Corporation, on page 5: 'Greenhill Cemetery is located in the south part of the city of Sullivan and contains about six acres of ground.

What is known as the old cemetery contains two or three acres of ground and was dedicated and set apart for burial purposes about forty five years ago by James Elder, William Kellar, and William Patterson. No conveyance by deed appears on record, the land being simply thrown open to the public as a burial place.'

W.A. Steele, who owned a tract of land adjoining the cemetery on the north and west, containing about four acres, at the request of several citizens, decided to offer the same to the city as an addition to the cemetery. In July of 1900 he went before the City Council and made two propositions: First, that he would sell the tract to the city for cemetery purposes, and second, that he would himself lay out the grounds and add it to the old cemetery, reimbursing himself by the sale of lots, on condition that the city give him entire control of the cemetery, both old and new, and allow a small amount each year for its care. The city accepted the latter proposition and passed an ordinance covering the conditions agreed upon.

Greenhill Cemetery was duly incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois. Rule 1 ... provides: 'All work in the care of lots must be done by the Cemetery Company.' ... Is there any philanthropy on the part of the Cemetery Company, which is W.A. Steele, in its efforts to escape from this self-imposed burden by giving the cemetery to the city?

As another newspaper put it: "It is a fact, well known to the people of Sullivan that Mr. Steele has tried to secure release from a contract entered into by himself and the city that for a certain sum per annum he should take care for Greenhill cemetery. This contract was embedded in ordinances when Mr. Steele took over the old cemetery several years ago and sold the burial lots in what is known as the New Cemetery. Mr. Jennings says that Mr. Steele is tired of the bargain, and that entwining Wyman Park around the graveyard offers for Mr. Steele an escape from a bad bargain."

Another problem was that the Ashbrook-Steele-Shuman property almost completely surrounded the Greenhill cemetery. Among the folks whose family members were buried at the cemetery or who had acquired plots at the cemetery, feelings ran high against the proposal to surround it with a park.

By May strong opposition had crystallized against the Ash-

brook-Steele-Shuman tract because of its proximity to the cemetery. These opponents would have been happy to have the city council itself kill off that proposal. But because of the uncertainty, they argued that the matter should be put to a vote of the citizens. Faced with opposition, the city council put off any decision at its May meeting.

At the council's June meeting, Messrs. Steele and Shuman presented their proposal — including drawings and other details. Their presentation evidently stimulated even more opposition. A number of citizens — including many active women — circulated a “remonstrance” which stated:

We the undersigned ... do hereby most ... gravely [*sic*] ... protest against any action ... that would locate the Wyman Park site around and about the public burial ground on the ground that the proposed site was not “suitable” for a public park.

When supporters of the Ashbrook site responded to the remonstrance, the ladies replied forcefully, as reported in the *Decatur Herald*: “Many false and exaggerated statements are being made and enlarged upon by those who opposed the remonstrance These women have no idea of loading or choosing or suggesting any park site to the city council. Their only aim in presenting this remonstrance is to show ... that the majority of the people interested in Greenhill cemetery are opposed to having the park site located in and around the burying ground”

It was generally expected that the city council would make its decision at its meeting on July 7, as reported: “It is now believed by all the knowing ones that without a doubt the city council will dispose of the Albert Wyman park site question by making the selection at this meeting. During the past week the intense public sentiment has been so freely and openly expressed by the people who are interested in Greenhill cemetery, opposing the Ashbrook-Steele-Shuman proposition that it is believed now to be a dead issue. Other park sites are now taking a new lead”

However, the Ashbrook-Steele-Shuman proposal was far from dead. On July 7 the council chamber was “filled almost to overflowing with spectators.” After “long and heated arguments from attorneys representing their clients and from those personally and financially interested in” the four proposals, the City Council — by a vote of 3 to 2 — ducked: it decided to leave the selection to a vote of the people September 1. “The meeting lasted until after

midnight and leaves the park site in as bad if not worse tangle than before.”

This was to be the first time in the history of Sullivan that women would have a right to cast a vote. (The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote was not ratified until August 18, 1920.)

Within a few days, however, it was rumored that Mayor Finley Pifer was having second thoughts. One newspaper reported, “It is rumored now that Mayor Pifer and some of the aldermen are opposed to holding an election September 1, for the purpose of allowing the people to vote on the selection of the Wyman park site, and that no election will be held, although it was voted at the last council meeting to have an election. Many feel this is an unjust stand toward the people.”

At its August meeting, the City Council postponed the vote indefinitely. Public discontent was clearly growing: “There has been so much controversy through the columns of some of the local papers concerning certain individuals who have taken an active interest in the Wyman Park site that the people in a general way are disgusted and have lost interest in the magnificent bequest”

Responding to the discontent and unhappiness with delay, the City Council changed its mind and on September 2 voted to submit the site proposition to a vote, setting the date for September 12. But they made the vote advisory only: “It will be a test election to determine the sentiment and the choice of the people. ... After this election is held the question will then go back to the council to settle legally.”

The decision appeared to many as a contest between the general public, particularly the ladies, and the Sullivan business community, represented by the two banks, the two newspapers, and the business interests. Steele was President of the M&F Bank, and Shuman was a senior officer at the First National Bank of Sullivan. They “engaged all the automobiles obtainable in both the Bushart and Newbould garages to give the women free rides to view the different park sites during the week” and to convey the voters to and from the polling places.

Friday, September 12, 1913, was voting day. The polls opened at 6 a.m. in the Armory hall on West Jefferson, and closed at 5 p.m. Twice as many women voted as men. The results were:

Seass fairground site — 283
Patterspon park, southeast of the city — 225
Ashbrook-Steele-Shuman graveyard site — 174
Titus site north of the city — 123.

So no site had a majority, but the graveyard site clearly lost. The Titus site had received the fewest votes. Yet the public vote had been advisory only; the power to decide rested with the City Council.

The council then met for three evenings — from the following Monday evening until Wednesday evening. Taking into consideration the results of the vote, the members — the three aldermen, F.S. McClure, F.M. Ray and Charles Blackwell — were initially deadlocked but “with the help of Mayor Finley E. Pifer” voted on Wednesday to choose the Titus site, which had received the fewest votes. Mayor Pifer reportedly cast the “deciding vote.” The site chosen consisted of 38 acres of Titus land, along with two lots to the south belonging to Mrs. David Enslow and Charles Monroe.



There was some initial disgruntlement. One newspaper reported that the decision came as a “great surprise” in Sullivan because so few people had voted for that site in the election.

Within a few days, however, the citizens were reportedly becoming somewhat less disgruntled (more grunted?). One newspaper reported that Sullivan people “have about quit kicking on a bad bargain and are coming around and beginning to talk park improvement, which will be commenced by the park board” — which consisted of Aldermen Charles McClure of the first ward, F.M. Roy of the second ward, and Charles Blackwell of the third ward.

Mr. and Mrs. Titus offered to give an additional five acres to the city, which the city council decided to use for a playground and athletic field adjoining the park on the northwest. On November 6 the city council enacted an ordinance authorizing the purchase of the Titus site.

In early January 1914 D.W. Frantz filed a lawsuit seeking an injunction against the city authorities on the grounds that Mayor Pifer, who had cast the deciding vote, was “a financially interested party” in a portion of the tracts chosen for the park, the Enslow lot. Judge Cochran made short work of the lawsuit; on January 27 he entered an order authorizing the trustees of the park fund to pay over the Wyman funds to the city authorities: \$30,000 from the trust — \$21,000 for the land, and the balance for improvements. The Titus tract — the largest chunk of acquired land — cost \$15,340.

Now the park and lake reservoir had to be constructed. Work began in March 1914, with priority given to building an athletic field and a one-quarter mile track. The large barn previously on the Enslow lot was moved and remodeled as a club house. Engineers staked off the park property in early April. Excavation of the lake was begun in April, and construction of the dam began in early May.

A labor dispute briefly delayed the work. In mid-April four of the teamsters who had been doing the excavation work on the lake went on strike; they had contracted to work for \$4 per day but after a few days work demanded \$5 per day or they would quit. The city supervisors refused to meet their demand and shifted the excavation work to a new contractor.

Dredging the lake and construction of the dam was completed by late June, and the rains began to fill up the basin. The work was delayed again when the traction engine used in the digging was stalled in quicksand. Dirt was piled up against the dam to make a wide drive way at the east end of the new lake.

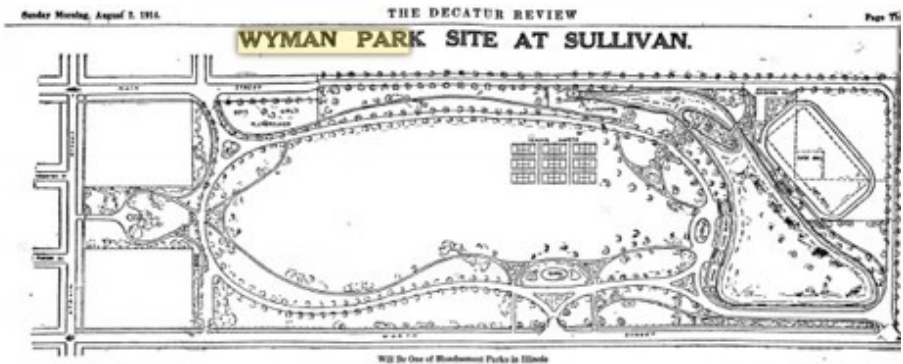
Mayor Pifer and Alderman Charles McClure, chairman of the park board, reportedly “donated” much of their time during the summer of 1914 working at the park — “not only looking after the work but getting into the work themselves.” Lucas Lambrecht, the new superintendent of the park, also reportedly devoted much of his time to the project.

By late July teams were at work grading the drives and leveling the adjacent fill ins. Concrete walks were built at the south entrance of the park;

flower beds were graded; and the old decayed fruit trees removed. The park commissioners purchased 447 new shade trees and several thousand shrubs for the park from a Chicago nursery.

Another lawsuit seeking an injunction was filed by W.H. Birch against the city officials in the fall of 1914. This briefly delayed the work until the case was disposed of by Judge Cochran in September.

Events on the world stage do not seem to have much affected work on the new park. On July 28, Austria declared war on Serbia. Russia mobilized on July 30. Germany responded by declaring war on Russia August 1, triggering French mobilization. On August 1 teams of workers at Wyman Park were working on the new baseball field at the northwest corner of the park — northwest of the new lagoon. Britain declared war on Germany on August 4 because of its violation of Belgian neutrality.



Wyman Park, 1914

The layout of the new Wyman park in 1914, with the baseball field northwest of the lake and the tennis courts just south of the lake, was very different from the way many of us remember it 40 years later.

Fine late autumn weather in 1914 enabled the landscape gardeners to plant the new trees and shrubs, prepare the flower beds, and otherwise beautify the grounds. On Thanksgiving day hundreds of people walked or drove to the park to see the work and note the progress. Twenty-five cans of fish — 600 black bass, perch and crappies from Havana — were dumped into the new lake in November.

By late December 1914 the water in the lake had accumulated — and the winter temperatures had cooled — to the point that ice was harvested from the lake for storing and resale at the Sullivan ice houses.

Work on the new Wyman Park and lake was finished in 1915. In February the park received from the state: six pairs of call ducks, one pair of Mallards, one pair of Canadian geese, six pairs of English ring-neck pheasants, three pairs of golden pheasants, three pairs of silver pheasants, and one pair Lady Amhearst pheasants. It is not known whether any of the pheasants survived the 1915 hunting season.

Two deer, the gift of Marion Cunningham of Texas, also made their home in the new park, where a five-acre section of the park was fenced off to provide them their new quarters. By 1928 the number of deer had multiplied to 11.

The “Friends in Council” — a prominent ladies organization — volunteered to take care of the flower beds in the new park during the coming summer. By April large crowds were gathering on warm weekend days. A boat even made an appearance on the new lagoon. “With 2,000 fish in the lagoon and a number of ducks, both tame and wild, as well as wild geese and a large number of pheasants, the park has been well stocked . . .” Late that month the park commissioners purchased new swings for the children’s playground and installed three new clay tennis courts.

Volunteers built new bath houses at the lagoon that summer. “The present house used to dress in for men is not large enough to accommodate the large number who go bathing each day. The lagoon has become the most popular place in the city and is in use from early in the morning until late at night.”

The new lake proved to be a hazardous attraction. “Peanut” Sparks nearly drowned one Sunday afternoon. He wandered into deep water, sank, and was rescued by older boys. A month or so later, in late July, Guy Lowe narrowly escaped drowning when he attempted to swim across the lake and back. “When about half way back, he called for help, but went down several times before help could reach him. He had presence of mind enough to draw a deep breath each time he came up, and in that way was able to hold his own until two other swimmers could reach him.” The first drowning in the lake apparently occurred in August 1923 when Glen Conlin, the 18 -ear old son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Conlin, died when he “became exhausted while trying to swim to the diving board.”

The new park was formally dedicated on Wednesday, September 1, 1915. The city council and Chamber of Commerce took charge. The program included a tennis tournament for boys in the morning, a national guard military drill, and band concert. Speeches were made by city signatories, including the new Mayor S.W. Johnson and Judge Cochran. Tribute was paid to Albert Wyman, whose gift had made the new lake possible. Lunch was served on the park grounds. (No beer or wine.) Contests were held, and prizes were awarded. A baseball game was played by a Sullivan team against Bethany, and swimming events were staged at the new lake. In the evening a band concert was given on the public square.

A month later, the Sullivan high school football team played its first game in Wyman Park, against a team from Mattoon.

Even after the dedication, work to improve the new park continued on for a few years. In August 1916 a new white bandstand and gateway with two white cement pillars were placed at the south end of the park. Band concerts were given on that bandstand for many years on Sunday afternoons.

Moultrie County held a centennial celebration there in August 1918 near the spot where Lincoln had answered Senator Douglas in 1858.

One of the principal uses of Wyman Park in the early years and continuing through the next century was the annual Fourth of July celebration. In 1919, the summer after the end of the World War, 12,000 visitors celebrated the "Victory Fourth" in the park, reportedly the biggest event in terms of attendance held in the county up to that time. "All day automobiles and carriages came fast, until not less than 6,000 cars were parked in Wyman park by evening." Some 400 world war soldiers (probably including the author's father) gathered in the high school at noon for a luncheon, and the stands outside the park reportedly did a big business all day.

In 1919 a private group, the Freeland Grove Park Association, was organized as a stock company to purchase land adjacent to the southwest corner of the park for the purpose of conducting livestock shows run by the farm bureau. By 1921 an enclosed "dancing pavilion" was built in that part of Freeland Grove, just west of — and separate from — the Wyman park property. The pavilion property was also used as a free tourist camping ground.

Families used the park facilities for picnics, and political parties used them for their rallies. Chautauqua groups held their fall sessions there beginning in 1920. William Jennings Bryan spoke at one of these Chautauqua Saturday evening sessions in 1921. Even members of the Ku Klux Klan used the park for one of their meetings in July 1923.

However, during the Depression the Freeland Grove association fell on hard times, as did so many others. The property was turned over to a creditor holding a mortgage on the property in June 1935.



John Freeland home, Freeland Grove

XXIV.

When The Movies Came to Sullivan

For over two thousand years people have been entertained and inspired by live recitations, songs and performances of plays by actors and musicians on stage. The transition from live theater to silent moving pictures, and then to movies with sound, was not instantaneous. In Sullivan it began just before the First World War.

The Titus Opera House

The Titus Opera House was for almost forty years the most prominent place in Sullivan — the place where plays and musical productions were staged. The opera house, built in 1871, was located at the west end of the row of buildings on the north side of the square, at the corner of Harrison and Main streets. It was described in the 1881 *County History* as “fashioned after Haley’s, of Chicago It has a parquet and gallery, nicely frescoed ceiling, a full set of scenery, side boxes, etc. The whole building is lighted with gas, and has all the conveniences usually found in cities. The house is far ahead of the town” (at 182). The Titus Opera House burned down in February 1910. The building which replaced it later housed Dunscomb’s furniture store.

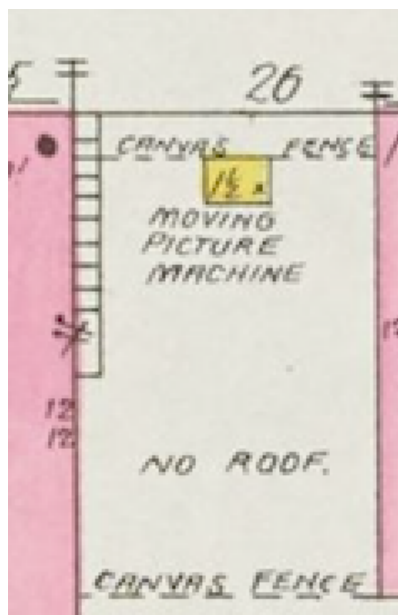
Surprisingly, the movies had come to Sullivan even before the old

Titus opera house was destroyed. The first movies were almost certainly shown at the opera house itself. A report in the *Decatur Herald* of November 2, 1901, stated: "At Sullivan. Charles H. Lewis' *moving pictures* will be shown in Titus' opera house at Sullivan on the night of November 14th. These pictures were shown in this city during the carnival and pleased everyone who saw them. The machine is one of the very best in the country and the pictures are along lines certain to interest the people."

Two years later, "The stereopticon and *moving picture* entertainment given by Professor Peadro and Rev. Mr. Davis at Titus opera house last evening, was well attended. Miss Titus favored the audience with two selections and was at her best."

The Open Air Lot — "Moving Picture Machine"

After the Titus opera house entertainments, the next movies appear to have been those shown outdoors in an open lot on the south side of Jefferson Street, half a block west of the court house. The Sanborn map of Sullivan as of September 1907 shows a "Moving Picture Machine" in an open space lot, enclosed by a canvas fence but with "no roof."



Open Air Lot for "Motion Picture Machine," Sanborn map, 1907

The Electrical Theatre and Arcade — Southeast of the Square

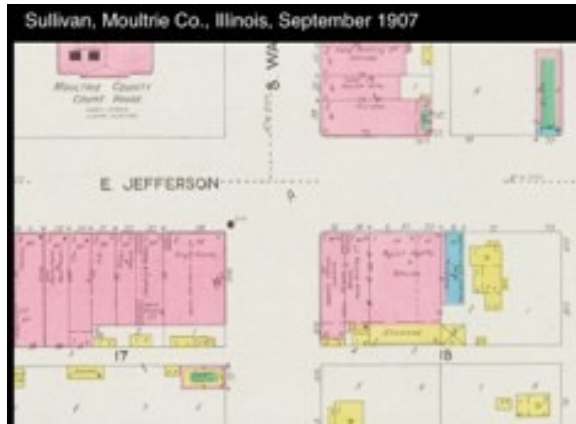
Apparently the first theater structure other than the Titus opera house to show movies in Sullivan was located in the Elder building at the southeast corner of the square. Prior to the fall of 1907 it had been occupied by a “Nickleodeon.” The *Saturday Herald* of August 3, 1907, reported that the building had been occupied by the Nickleodeon “until a few days ago.” Then, in early August the Harrison brothers reportedly purchased the equipment to put on an “electrical” show.

In late November 1907 an announcement for a “grand opening” appeared in the newspaper. Messrs. “Berger & Pringle” were the managers. Louis J. Berger was described in a news article as assistant manager of Dreamland Park and Bijou Theater in Decatur. The same article reported that Berger would open “an electric theater” in the second door east of the southeast corner of the square

The opening was to occur Saturday afternoon, November 23, at 2 p.m. and programs would continue every evening at 7:30. “All the latest scenes, tours, happenings and comedies of the country” would be featured. Ladies, men and children were welcomed. Admission to the arcade was to be free, but admission to the theatre cost 5 cents. The ad announced that the program would be changed every evening. A special matinee was offered on Thanksgiving day. Although moving pictures were not the only fare offered, it is clear that they were included. The news article accompanying the advertisement reported: “There will be a complete change of program every night, *moving pictures*, illustrated songs and a penny arcade.”

It was not long before the new theater ran into financial trouble. In December: “Higgins and Dickerson attached the Electric theater at the southeast corner of the square that has been conducted by Pringle and Berger. Higgins and Dickerson have taken the management and will conduct it themselves. Guy Uhrich of this place taking control. The show was opened to the public again Friday evening. And the management reduced the admission to 5 cents. Ladies and children especially invited. Change of pictures every night.” Apparently, after initially advertising their entertainment at a nickel, the prior management had increased prices, which were then reduced back to a nickel by the new managers.

The “Electric Theater” appeared on the Sanborn map of Sullivan as of September 1907, where it was described as a “moving picture theater.”



Detail from Sanborn map, September 1907.

The Electric Theatre did not long survive though its demise is apparently not documented.

The Bijou — Northwest of the Square

Less than a year later, in November 1908, Guy Uhrich opened a new “Bijou, moving picture theater in the room just north of the M and F bank” northwest of the courthouse. Uhrich, when he was not showing movies, was a licensed embalmer and funeral director.

He had also sold stationery, school and office supplies, and “made tents and awnings” at the northeast corner of the square. *Moultrie County Fair, 1910*: February 1991, *M.C. Heritage* at 11.

The day before Thanksgiving in 1908 the Bijou gave away a turkey to a lucky ticket holder. And on Christmas day 1908 it showed the "Passion play" all day. The newspaper ad announced: "over 2,000 feet of moving pictures," and admission 5 and 10 cents.

The new theatre struggled to overcome adversity in the new year, 1909. In April a smallpox scare forced the closing of many schools and other public buildings, including moving picture theaters, in Illinois. On April 3, 1909, the Sullivan newspaper reported that the "Bijou theater will open again next Monday night as the health officer, D. Lawson, thinks there is no danger of the epidemic pictured by the outside newspapers reaching here."

The Star — West Side of the Square

We do not know whether it was the epidemic or some other misfortune that killed the Bijou, but we do know that its equipment was sold off, its operations moved, and its name changed. On May 29, 1909, the *Saturday Herald* reported:

Davis and Stevens having purchased the Bijou of Guy Uhrich will continue the performance each evening. The Star theater, 3000 feet of up-to-date films, two songs and souvenirs next Saturday. Matinee at 2:30 p.m. Evening performances will begin at 7:30 sharp. Admission for adults 10 cents, children 5 cents. West side square.
— Davis & Stevens.

Although movies were apparently gone from the Bijou, the old theater still existed for a while. On July 3, 1909, the *Saturday Herald* reported that a piano recital by Mrs. Emily Cuthbert Waggoner "at the Bijou theatre was exceptionally fine and was heard by a fair-sized audience in spite of the inclement weather."

The new Star theater was not limited to movies. The same newspaper that announced the piano recital at the Bijou also reported that "W.J. [William Jennings] Bryan will speak at the Star theatre three times next Monday, in the forenoon, afternoon and night." Bryan had run for president the third time in 1908 and in 1909 was traveling the Chautauqua circuit to make a living. He returned to public life in 1913 as Secretary of State for President Woodrow Wilson. He participated as both counsel and witness in the famous Scopes trial in 1925.

The managers of the Star soon collided with local authority. The newspaper reported that they had been “notified that they would have to close or comply with the law relating to doors swinging outward. They changed the doors and are now doing a lawful business as to that.”

By the end of that month, Davis had sold his movie equipment. The *Saturday Herald*, July 31, 1909, reported: “Davis and wife who conducted the Star theater here a few weeks were in town Sunday night. They are now en route to California. The Star theater outfit will be sold August to satisfy a mortgage held by B.D. Uhrich.”

In August the newspaper reported that “the outfit of the Star theater” had been sold again to satisfy a mortgage, and the purchaser was R.H. Miller of Tuscola. It added that Miller has “a tent show here this week and most of the outfit will be used in the exhibition.” The “room west of the court house where the Star theatre was located” was fixed up — “repapered and improved” — and occupied “by a stock of merchandise.”

Thus disappeared the Star theater after its brief life on the west side of the square.

Enoch Purvis’ “Talking Pictures.”

Overlapping the brief existence of the Star was an operation just “west of the southeast corner of the square.” The *Saturday Herald* reported on June 26, 1909, in an article entitled “Talking Pictures:”

The magic lantern shows at the district school house were for a long time a big attraction. These picture shows keep growing. The *moving pictures* are astonishing the audiences with their life-like performances. Enoch Purvis is adding the latest novel attraction in the line of lantern shows, his pictures will not only move, but beginning the week of July 5, for a week he will have *talking pictures*. Biggest attraction of the kind yet. One door west of the southeast corner of the square and admittance only 10 cents.

The Enoch Purvis attraction thus marked a major step forward — “talking pictures” — even if only temporarily, “for a week.”

Separate news announcements reported in early July that “talking

moving pictures [would be shown] at the Air Dome all next week.” These Air Dome performances were probably the same ones announced as being put on — also in July 1909 — by Enoch Purvis; and the “Air Dome” was probably the open air lot shown as *southwest* of the square on the 1907 Sanborn map (*supra*). It was clearly an unenclosed facility. A news report of July 10, 1909, states that, “Owing to the inclemency of the weather the moving picture show has forsaken the Air Dome and has been showing in the opera house this week.

This indicates that the Titus operators of the opera house did not take an ungenerous attitude to its competitor. But perhaps they charged rent.

The Globe — South Side of the Square

The operations at the Air Dome were evidently intended to be temporary. The Globe was something else again.

On October 23, 1909, the Decatur *Daily Review* reported:

GLOBE THEATER NEXT.

Sullivan is to have a new up-to-date moving picture show which will be absolutely fire proof, and have a raised floor with opera chairs, which is something better than has ever seen here before. S.T. Herman of Monticello is the manager and it will be known as the Globe theater, and will be ready for business Saturday night, in the old post office building on the south side of the square.

The new Globe got off to a great start. In early November a Decatur newspaper reported that it “had the largest crowd at the performance Saturday night that they have had since starting their moving picture show here. At the three performances there were people standing out in the street waiting to get on the inside. S.T. Herman, the manager and owner, has put in the nicest moving picture show which has ever been in the city, and deserves a good crowd. He has a raised floor and opera chairs to add to the comfort of those visiting his theater.”

A news item in the *Saturday Herald*, December 18, 1909, helps identify the location of the Globe. It reports that: “A postal telegraph office will be established in Sullivan, in the rear room of the Trower building just south of the square, over the Globe theatre.” Another news report that same day, December 18, entitled “Fire in Nickelodeon,” informed readers that the Globe

had experienced a small blaze “causing a small explosion, but on account of its being in a fireproof cabinet, the fire was kept under control. One thousand feet of film, valued at \$150, was destroyed, causing a total loss of about \$200. Mr. Herman, the proprietor, was experimenting with the machine when the accident occurred. ... Rooms on the second story were filled with smoke ...”

Then on January 21, 1910, came another report which helps nail down the location of the Globe. The *Decatur Herald* described “the discovery of a hole cut part way through the brick wall between the Globe theater and Milton David’s hardware store,” which led to the arrest of Herman Patterson on the charge of attempted burglary. “Patterson is a 16-year old boy who has been employed as operator of the moving picture machine in the theater.” Patterson denied any intention of burglary and was released.

So — the theater was next to Milton David’s hardware store in 1910. In 1907 the Sanborn map shows that the only hardware store in the line of buildings on the south side of the square was in the second building from the west end of the block, just to the east of the I.O.O.F building.

Movies in 1909-1910 did not yet come with soundtracks. Thus, theater operators needed to provide their own accompaniments. In early 1910, Mrs. John Lucas was the regular accompanist and singer at the Globe. While she was away on a brief vacation in January, Miss Crella Sona “did the playing and singing.”

On February 17, 1910, a Decatur newspaper reported that S.T. Herman, “who has been the owner of the Globe theater ever since it was opened in this city, has sold out to a party from Monticello, who will take charge at once.” Perhaps to disabuse readers of any notion that the theater was failing, the report continued: “This theater has taken in more money in the past week than it has in any week since it was opened, the room being crowded for all three shows each night.”

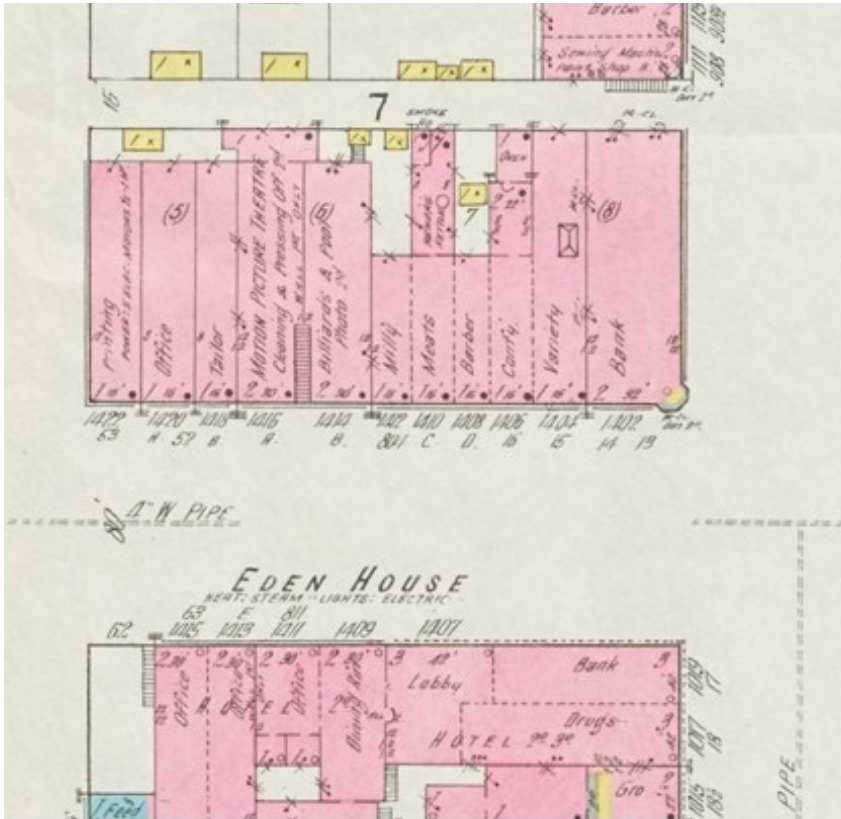
On February 20, 1910, the Titus Opera House burned.

Then in March 1910 the Globe moved “from the room they have occupied on the south side of the square, ever since they started up here, and will go into the room on the southeast corner of the square, where the other moving picture show have their outfit stored. The room the Globe is moving out of is to be rented for a business room in the near future.”

The new temporary quarters of the Globe were thus on the southeast corner of the square. The 1914 Sanborn map shows a “motion picture theatre” on the east side of the square, three store fronts from the south end. However, the Globe soon moved again.

The Globe Theater on Harrison Street — Across from the Eden House Hotel, West of the Court House.

By July 1914 according to the Sanborn maps, an unnamed “motion picture theater” was operating in the commercial building a block west of the courthouse on Harrison Street, just opposite the Eden House hotel. It was next door to a billiard and pool hall. It was gone by 1922, replaced on the Sanborn by something called “Confy.” (Confectioner.)



Sanborn Map, 1914.

On September 23 1913, the *Decatur Herald* reported that J.H. Ireland and B. Fultz, “who for the past four years have been the proprietors of the *Globe theater, West Harrison street*, have sold the theater to Mr. Herman of Monticello” — the previous owner who had sold in 1910. The *Globe* continued to operate on West Harrison for several years.

The *Moultrie County News* newspapers do not survive from 1914. I do not find ads for this movie theater in the 1915 MCN papers. Ads in the *Sullivan Progress* for Feb 10, 1916 and Feb 17, 1916, indicate there was a *Globe Theater* showing movies, but they don’t say where it was located. The issue of April 13, 1916, reported that the *Globe theatre* had reopened after having been thoroughly remodeled, that the theatre was showing both *Paramount* and *Triangle* films, and that “*Manager Ireland*” spoke to the patrons at the reopening event.

The Jefferson Theater — at Jefferson and Hamilton

The November 11, 1915, issue of the *Moultrie County News* announced the planned opening of a new theater, on the southeast corner of Jefferson and Hamilton streets, to include moving picture shows. The location was west of the old masonic temple on a lot now used by a Verizon store, formerly a Shell gas station. Opening Night was to be January 1, 1916. Irving Shuman was the owner, Bert Fultz the manager.

On Saturday, January 15, 1916, David Bispham, a well-known baritone, opened the new theater by performing in a musical play, *Adelaide*, and a comedy with music called *The Rehearsal*. Season tickets were being offered covering at least six standard productions, including opening night, moving picture shows and vaudeville during the first six months.

Movies were clearly part of the Jefferson menu: “Mr. Shuman has his moving picture machines already installed ready to commence with his moving picture show by the first of next week. It is possible that he may put on a few reels Saturday night before the opera begins. Mr. Shuman has two machines in the booth besides a spot light. The stage is larger than the one in the old Titus opera house: “

On opening night, January 15, people came from all over the state for the premier show.

Mr. Shuman spoke of his gratitude to Sullivan and his friendships with its citizens.

The Jefferson Inn was opened in the same building as the theater. "The room was gorgeously decorated in the national colors and high class music was rented throughout the afternoon. Crowds of people patronized the Inn on its first afternoon In appearance it resembles the high classed cafeterias of the large cities"

Within the year Irving Shuman sold the Jefferson Theater to the Pugh Stores Company of Chicago, of which Shuman was vice president in charge of finances. (Quite a potential conflict of interest, but one which full disclosure and a careful appraisal of the property surely solved.) The price was reported to be "in the neighborhood of \$40,000.

SULLIVAN'S NEW THEATRE OPENING AND NAMING

HAMILTON AND JEFFERSON STREETS SULLIVAN, ILLINOIS.

PLAN OF SALE OF SEATS

On opening night which will be on or about January 1, 1915, the owner and manager are desirous of presenting a standard production such as has never been produced in Sullivan before, and believing that the business men and citizens should support and approve of the large initial investment that has been necessary to make this production possible, it has been deemed advisable to ask the business men and citizens to manifest their support and approval by subscribing for season, half-season, or at least opening night tickets, on the following basis, seats transferable to members of family only.

Season tickets, covering at least six standard productions, including opening night, all moving picture shows and vaudeville attractions during first six months after opening of theatre—Single tickets, Box \$12.00, Single tickets: Main Floor \$10.00, Single tickets, Balcony \$8.00.

Half-Season tickets, covering at least three standard productions, including opening night, all moving picture shows and vaudeville attractions during first three months after opening of theatre—Single tickets, Box \$8.00, Single ticket, Main Floor \$6.75, Single ticket, Balcony \$5.25.

Single tickets, for opening night, in first fourteen rows, \$2.50.

Single tickets, for opening night in back eight rows \$2.00.

Single tickets, for opening night in other than box seats \$1.00.

Applications and blue prints of seating arrangement will be found at McPheters Drug Store and

with Bert Fultz, Manager, Monday November 1st and the reservations of seats will be made in order the applications are received, except that preference will be given for opening night seats, to holders of Season and Half-Season Tickets. Allotment of seats in that order will be made December 15, 1914, when announcement of company and production for January 1st will be made.

SELECTING NAME FOR THEATRE

Believing that the citizens of Sullivan are interested in the success of the new theater and mercantile building now nearing completion at the Southeast Corner of Jefferson and Hamilton Streets, and being desirous of having the citizens participate in the proper naming of said theatre and building, it has been decided to give \$5.00 in gold and a box season ticket, valued at \$12.00, to the person suggesting the name which is finally selected by the following Judges: Mayor H. W. Johnson, County Judge John T. Grider and Circuit Court Clerk Fred Gaddis.

Constatants should address plain envelope to Homer Wright, secretary of Chamber of Commerce. Letter enclosed should be on plain paper with name suggested at top of sheet and put over 100 words following giving reasons for name being suggested. Also, separate sheet giving constant's name and address, which will be retained by Mr. Wright, the sheet with name suggested to be delivered to judges for their consideration, on December 15, 1914. No suggestion including name of owner in any manner will be considered by the judges.

BERT FULTZ
Manager

IRVING SHUMAN
Owner

The Jefferson Theater operated for almost nine years before burning on December 1, 1924. A *Sullivan Progress* article on December 5 reported that the fire started in the basement of the neighboring armory.

The Illinois Theatre.

Almost immediately after the Jefferson burned, talk began about what would replace it. J.H. Ireland, the former manager of the Jefferson, contemplated opening a new theater on the east side of the square. Art Palmer also looked for a room somewhere that he could operate as a movie theater.

Then in late January 1925, Blaine Maxwell announced that on February 1 he would open a new movie theatre in the I.O.O.F. building on the South Side of the square, probably the former premises of the Globe. The new location had no stage and could only be used for movies. It had seating capacity of 280. Maxwell was the operator himself, assisted by Harry Fields, with Mrs. Mae Lucas at the piano. Advertisements for the new theatre began to run in early February.

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**The Illinois
Theatre**

South Side Square
SULLIVAN, ILLINOIS

Sunday and Monday, February
8 and 9 "LEARNING TO
LOVE" with Constance Tal-
madge and Antonio Moreno. Al-
so Pathé Comedy.

Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb-
ruary 10 and 11th "HEARTS
OF OAK" with Hobart Bos-
worth and Pauline Starks; also
Fox Comedy "Stretching the
Truth"

Thursday and Friday, February
12 and 13th "DARIN" LOVE"
with Elaine Hammerstein,
Huntley Gordon and all-star
cast. Also Educational Comedy
"Easter Bonnets".

Saturday, Feb. 14 "WATER-
FRONT WOLVES" with Ora
Carew and Jay Morley; also
Acamp's Fables and KINGSTONS.

When Maxwell's theatre opened, J.H. Ireland seemed to give up the contest; he moved to Decatur to go into the automobile business. Conversations about rebuilding the old Jefferson continued but went nowhere.

Maxwell was reportedly planning a new theatre building, but was uncertain because of talk that the Ritchie Brothers, the owners of the Jefferson property, might rebuild. In late July, J.L. McLaughlin, a well-known lawyer, secured an option on the Jefferson property and stated he and others were planning a theatre building.

Then J.H. Ireland returned from Decatur, purchased lots on the east side where he planned to build a new theatre, and prepared drawings for a "modern theatre with stage." The fall passed. In October, the *Sullivan Progress* reported, "The hole in the East side of the Square is being plugged up with a fine modern theatre building." In mid-January 1926, Ireland's spokesman "definitely stated that there will soon be a new show house here." Yet nothing happened. In the meantime, Blaine Maxwell was still running the Illinois Theatre in the I.O.O.F building.

Through the rest of 1926 and most of 1927, progress stalled. The Illinois Theatre continued to show movies, but community sentiment favored a new building with a modern theatre. Theatre operators from Mattoon and Paris made proposals; and J.H. Ireland reportedly continued to think about coming back from Decatur to build a new theater.

The Grand Theatre

It was not until December 1927 that a breakthrough occurred. At that point H.S. Butler, a Hillsboro contractor who was running a theatre in that city, indicated a willingness to erect a comparable structure in Sullivan. He presented his proposal to the Sullivan Community Club, which sent a delegation of 14 leading business men to Hillsboro to kick the tires. Those who went were Judge George Sentel, John Gauger, Chester Horn, Homer Shirey, J.H. Pearson, J.B. Tabor, Ed Brandenburger, Guy Little, Ray Meeker, Mayor Patterson, Homer Wright, Rev. MacLeod, Dr. Don Butler and J.L. McLaughlin, the chair of the "new industries committee" of the Club. They also took in a show at Butler's theatre. Butler's proposal was that the community provide the money to buy the site, and Butler would finance the building.

Although the vacant lots on the east side were still available, the

avored site was on the north side of the Square — owned by R.D. Meeker and the Thunemann estate. It was priced at \$2,850. The building was expected to cost \$25,000 or more. Mr. Butler's Hillsboro theatre was named the "New Grand" — and the Sullivan theatre was to be patterned after it.

The Sullivan business group gave Ireland — the former manager of the Jefferson — an opportunity to be heard, but he offered no concrete proposal. An agreement was reached with Butler quickly, The citizens of Sullivan covered the \$2,725 cost of the north side lot through public subscriptions. As the deal was closed, Maxwell's Illinois Theater was still showing pictures. It offered "The Big Parade" — acclaimed as "the greatest moving picture of its kind ever made" — for three days in January 1928.

Theatre Contract Signed; May Start Building In March



WHAT SULLIVAN'S NEW THEATRE WILL LOOK LIKE

MOULTRIE COUNTY'S NEW PLAYHOUSE



The Grand Theatre in Sullivan which opens Saturday.

**Grand Theatre Will
Open Saturday Matinee;
"Easy Come, Easy Go"**

Five Modern Playhouses on North Side of Square One of Blue Place of Sullivan. No Expense has been Spared to Give Moultrie County Its Entertainment Home. Hillsboro Contractor and Theatre Man Will Own and Operate It.

**LOVINGTON PUBLISHER
HONORED BY BEING
NAMED POST MASTER**

T. L. Conn has been named postmaster at Lovington. He is at present and has been for many years past the editor and publisher of the Lovington Reporter. The Reporter is now Moultrie County's official newspaper.

Mr. Conn succeeds Nate Williams who has held that office for a number of years. Mr. Williams was a candidate for reappointment but the meeting of authority in Lovington postal affairs has fallen on the shoulders of Mr. Conn and on Saturday evening of this week he will be checked into office.

The appointment of Mr. Conn is a recognition of the press and his fellow publishers all over the middle west are celebrating with him because the grand Republican party has deigned to recognize the profession by the appointment of one of its progressive members to a position of trust and influence. We know that Mr. Conn

The Grand Theatre, Moultrie county's big modern new playhouse opens its doors Saturday with a matinee at 2:15.

Started on March 18th, work was proceeded with dispatch and when the doors are formally opened, the people will see a theatre of which they can be justly proud.

Henry S. Butler of Hillsboro has built this theatre. The Publics Community club sponsored a move whereby the ground on which the theatre was built on the North side of the square was donated to the builder. Mr. Butler now owns and operates the Grand theatre in Hillsboro.

The new theatre with its modern equipment is a \$48,000 project. Few other the size of Sullivan have a better entertainment house.

At the formal opening Saturday 5p. and Mrs. H. S. Butler and Mr. and Mrs. A. S. Weingard of Hillsboro will constitute the reception committee. Mr. Weingard is manager of the Grand theatre in Hillsboro.

There will be a short dedicatory service at which George A.

COCHRAN-KEYS RE-UNION HELD SUNDAY IN WYMAN PARK

The first annual reunion of the Cochran-Keys families was held June 24th in the auditorium at Wyman park. A large number of relatives numbering near 75 were present and the weather was most satisfactory this meeting would have increased to over 100.

Kathryn Robinson United In Marriage With James Simpson

Popular Young Couple Married morning in Detroit. Will reside in Feedall Grove Residence.

Shall be a match on their many friends, Miss Kathryn Robinson of this city and James R. Simpson.

SHREVEVILLE PUSHED HARD ON HOME COURSE BY LOCAL GOLFERS

Despite the stormy weather on Thursday afternoon of last week sixteen Sullivan golfers motored to Shreveville to cross swords with the addicts of golf at that community.

While Sullivan really expected to be given a great trouncing they surprised both the Shreveville and Sullivan clubs.

The new Sullivan Grand Theatre was modeled on Butler's new theatre of that name in Hillsboro (shown on the left).

At 1:10 p.m. on Monday, March 12, 1928, Mayor C.R. Patterson broke ground on the site of the new theatre. Construction proceeded rapidly in April. Arthur Cannon was hired as the manager of the new Sullivan Grand Theatre. The proprietor changed his original plans by including a balcony, providing an extra 100 seats over the 500 on the main floor.

On Friday, June 1, 1928, the *Sullivan Progress* reported that the rival Illinois Theater had ceased operations five days earlier.

THE SULLIVAN PROGRAM FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1928 THE SULLIVAN PROGRAM FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1928

THE GRAND THEATRE
Moultrie County's New Playhouse
OPENS SATURDAY, JUNE 30th, 1928

There and no Moultrie County's new Moultrie playhouse. Shows in every respect. Both in the building and construction. Every seat in the house a good view. Seats and seats.

SHORT PROGRAM OF DESELECTION FOLLOWED BY

Richard Dix in "Easy Come, Easy Go"
SUNDAY NIGHT AND MONDAY

Adm. any seat, Children 10c-Adults 25c Matinee 2:15, Night Show 7 and 8:45

PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST WEEK

SUNDAY, JULY 1st SUNDAY MATINEE AND MONDAY NIGHT "The Wheel of Chance" New cast and wonderful production.	WEDNESDAY, July 4th Continuation production beginning at 10 o'clock & 11 o'clock "The Big Noise" We intend a special feature in addition's many points to see the new theatre. Regular Price of Adm. 10c and 25c	THURSDAY and FRI. JULY 6 and 7 GRAND MATINEE AT 2:15 "The Ding Dong" New cast and wonderful production.
MONDAY and TUES. JULY 2 and 3 THURSDAY JULY 4 "The Count of Tera" New cast and wonderful production.	SATURDAY, JULY 7th GRAND MATINEE AT 2:15 "The Flying Cowboy" New cast and wonderful production.	

We Plan to Show One Big Super-Production Each Month
The Best in Pictures -- Moultrie County's Big Entertainment Headquarters

THE SULLIVAN PROGRAM FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1928 THE SULLIVAN PROGRAM FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1928

The final work on the new Grand was completed, and the opening took place June 30, 1928. At the formal opening, President George Sentel of the Community Club was the principal speaker. Mayor Patterson also offered remarks, as did the new proprietor, H.S. Butler. Floral pieces had been provided on stage by the Commercial Club. But attendance suffered because of competition from a tent show that was in town that evening.

Children could attend for a dime. (When I went to the Grand in the late 1940s for Saturday matinées, they charged us kids only 9 cents. A nickel would buy a fudgesicle or a Hershey semi-sweet chocolate bar.)

The Talkies Arrive In Sullivan

Initially the Grand showed only silent movies. The news article covering the opening reported that Mrs. Scott Myers “will be at the piano, accompanied by Lloyd Brown on the violin.” On the opening day “Roy Light will preside at the drums.”

The *Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson, the first feature-length motion picture with lip-synchronous singing and speech had been released in New York the previous fall. One of “the greatest events of the picture season” in New York was the showing of Cecil B. De Mille’s “King of Kings” for three days, October 5-7, 1928.

The great stock market crash of 1929 began a year later, October 24, 1929. A few days after the crash began, the Grand played Paramount’s new movie, “Show Boat,” — not the later version based on the Jerome Kern and Hammerstein stage musical. This early movie was released in two versions — one a silent film and the other a part-talkie with sound prologue.



The advertisement by the Grand in the *Sullivan Progress* does not disclose which version was used by the Grand but it was surely the silent version.

In December 1929 the Grand arranged for installation of an “Ampliphone” to enable it to show “talkies,” and announced that the new equipment would be ready for operation about January 20. Then in late January 1930 the managers of the Grand began identifying films in their advertisements as either “all-talking” pictures or not. The first talking picture was apparently Metro Goldwyn Mayer’s “All Talking Picture” — “Navy Blues.” Admission for adults was raised for this show from 25 cents to 40 cents.

Movies helped the citizens of Sullivan and the rest of the country get through the Great Depression that followed.

XXV.

The Ku Klux Klan in Sullivan — 1922-1925

The Ku Klux Klan (or “KKK”) first appeared in the United States in the South during the decade following the Civil War. It was rooted in racism and violence, and was dedicated to overthrowing the southern state governments created during the period of Reconstruction.

A second Klan movement arose during the period of the First World War and spread throughout the country in the early 1920’s. It reached the Midwest during the years 1922-1925. The national organization was based in Atlanta, but there were separate organizations in the states, including Illinois. This new movement promoted white supremacy, opposition to Catholics and Jews, opposition to immigration, and often opposition to alcohol. It was often aligned with protestant churches and fraternal organizations. Its members adopted costumes including robes and masks resembling those of the Reconstruction era, and practices such as cross burnings and parades, intended to intimidate opponents and critics. Yet its spokesmen claimed to be against the “causes of mob violence and lynching,” and its use of fires was intended to “prevent fire and destruction of property by lawless elements.” It was against the I.W.W. (the Wobblies) and Bolshevism. It supported right-wing candidates in both parties for public office and opposed moderates (such as Albert

Beveridge, Senator from Indiana); and it collected dues from members, some of the money finding its way back to national headquarters.

In “History: The 1920’s Saw the KKK’s Rise in Illinois,” February 28, 2017, Tara McClellan McAndrew described this second-generation Klan as “a self-proclaimed morality police” which was reacting to repercussions from the war and prohibition and included opposition to “immigrants and what it saw as looser morals represented by speakeasies, bootlegging and, ironically, political corruption.” This second incarnation of the Klan was more like a “bigots’ social club than marauding gang,” a sort of “great fraternal lodge” with aspirations to nationwide political power. McAndrew, at 6.

The old newspapers reveal that during this second period, the Klan was active in Moultrie County, including Sullivan. They show that critics of the Klan — including a few newspaper editors and some ministers — were not afraid to express forceful opposition to the Klan’s program and tactics.

1922

Evidence of Klan activities appeared in Decatur in 1922. In August a group of 200 hooded and gowned figures burned a nine-foot high fiery cross on a bluff overlooking the Sangamon River, just east of Decatur, forcing Wabash trains to run under slow orders for two hours. In early December a group of hooded, white-robed men appeared in a west side Decatur church and made a contribution of \$50 to the pastor, along with a letter specifying that it was to be used in paying for a newly-purchased church building.

The Klan’s activities provoked intense debate — some of it heated — within the local churches. A Decatur minister of the First Christian church, Rev. W.W. Henry, defended the “invisible empire” in a sermon in early September 1922, and other ministers “told of how Klans in their parishes had assisted materially in the support of the church.” Other Methodist ministers pointed out that the Klan was anti-Catholic and opposed its activities.

In mid-October a large Klan meeting in Lerna, Coles County, not far from Whitley Township, was attended by an estimated 1,000 people in some 250 automobiles.

Evidence that controversy over the Klan had reached Sullivan by late 1922 may be found in fact that on December 13 Sophomores in the Sullivan High

School debated the subject of the KKK in the high school auditorium.

1923

The new year of 1923 was welcomed in Decatur with a meeting “before a packed audience” in the Decatur high school. Two ministers — both identified as “Knights of the Invisible Empire” — addressed the crowd to discuss the “True Principles of the Ku Klux Klan.” One was Reverend McMahon, pastor of the First Christian Church of Mattoon, a frequent speaker at Klan meetings in central Illinois. This meeting followed by a series of open meetings, one to be conducted each month; and 2000 tickets were issued by the Decatur Klan “to business men, professional men, city officials and others”

In May 1923 the Klan held a huge initiation at the state fairgrounds in Springfield. “Beneath the flaming cross of the order, in the presence of 5,000 knights, 675 candidates were inducted into the Abraham Lincoln klavern ... in a solemn ceremony in the coliseum at the state fairgrounds late Saturday night and Sunday morning.” Springfield’s *Illinois State Register*, May 27, 1923. Klan critics suggested that it had been approved by then-Governor (and Republican) Len Small, and Democratic opponents of Small, many from Chicago, undertook to search the state payroll for Klan members. Governor Small said he had no idea who had approved the massive Klan initiation. McAndrew, at 4.

That same month the *Sullivan Progress* reported the death of a Klan member in Shelby county. “A committee waited upon the bereaved wife and informed her that the organization ... was a most secret society, and they intended to take part in the funeral services of her dead husband and expected her to keep her mouth closed — tight. It is further said that she informed the committee that her husband paid \$21 to become a member and would have gladly given \$121 to have gotten out of it.” The editor opined that “it’s a most serious matter when they use one’s departed to advertise an organization that makes enemies out of neighbors, foes out of friends.”

The Klan then ratcheted up its activities in Sullivan. On July 8, 1923, it held a meeting in Freeland Grove. The *Sullivan Progress* reported as follows:

Bills advertising the meeting were distributed around this city Saturday evening. A big crowd was in attendance. The speaker for the occasion was Rev. J.F. McMahon, a Christian preacher from Mattoon. [The same Mattoon preacher who had spoken earlier in the year in Decatur.]

Following a band concert, a man named Brown, who stated that he was the official organizer for this part of the state, with offices in Jacksonville, gave a short address. He told of the rapid strides the Klan is making in increasing its membership. He derided the campaign being waged against the Klan and predicted that within a year there would be over 500,000 Klansmen in Illinois. He also stated that efforts were under way to perfect a woman's auxiliary organization in this state.

Rev. McMahon then called on Rev. E.U. Smith of Windsor, for prayer, after which he took the floor and spoke for a period of about two hours. His talk was a mixture of religion, patriotism and opposition to those matters which do not meet with the approval of the Klan. ... He also stated that anybody objecting to the Klan because of the fact that it is constituted of pure whites must have some black blood in his or her veins.

The four requisites for being a Klansman he stated to be, White — American born — Gentile — Protestant. Lack of applause at this juncture caused the speaker to berate the audience for its lack of enthusiasm. ...

Editor Tom Shoaff and his Shelby County Leader, of Shelbyville, were denounced in most fiery language because Mr. Shoaff has had the temerity to oppose the spread of Klanism in Shelby County. He stated that the Leader was a Catholic newspaper, hence its attacks. ...

The dues are \$10. Of this \$500 goes to national headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. ... During the meeting a collection of over \$24 was taken for the band boys.

To his credit, the editor of the *Sullivan Progress*, Ed Brandenburger, wasn't buying it any more than his counterpart Editor Shoaff in Shelbyville. Brandenburger published an editorial a few days later, "The Klucking of A Klan Kleagle" (*Sullivan Progress*, July 13, 1923):

Rev. J.F. McMahon ... is an orator. His talk doubtless impressed some. He told many things which provoked a wave of patriotism. ... The KKK is the child of advertising and intolerance. ... The press has flayed it. It has been bitterly denounced. ... Its mysticism as an

“invisible Empire” has had its appeal to a certain phase of humanity, which delights in feeling and parading its superiority over others.

What is Klanism? ... Take a large portion of religion, mix with this an equal portion of patriotism ... Then take a portion of race prejudice, combine it with an equal portion of religious bigotry; to this add a portion off sensationalism, mysticism, suspicion and invisibility. Stir all ingredients fully, don a white robe and fantastic cap and in the dark of night in the ghostly shadow of a fiery cross, drink deeply. ...

When you raise on American soil a banner which says that because you were not born so or so because you do not believe religiously as we do, you are not eligible to membership within our ranks and you are not a true American in every sense of the word, right then and there such an organization departs from the “100 per cent” path and finds itself on a bypath which leads to caste and Phariseeism

Do you, brother, need a Klan to idealize your Americanism for you? Does the spirit of intolerance induce you to join up with those who seek strife and discord between neighbor and neighbor? Would you foster the spirit and the organization that raises the cloud of suspicion between you and your fellow man? If you do, join the Klan. ...

The Reverend from Mattoon and others of his kind will eventually see the error of their ways and will cease in their militant propagation of class hatred and race prejudice.

Less than a week later, on July 16, 1923, 800 Klansmen met near Sullivan on Grover Garrett’s timber pasture in Whitley township near the Whitfield church. A Decatur newspaper reported that the Garrett pasture “has been the site of several recent KKK gatherings.” At the July 16 meeting “a class of nearly 100 candidates for membership were naturalized.” *Decatur Herald*, July 19, 1923. Many Sullivan people reportedly attended a KKK rally in Paris at the fairgrounds on July 22. And on August 7, a “KKK Day” was held at the Shelbyville Chautauqua, with “Cap” Skipwith, Grand Cyclops” of Bastrop, Louisiana engaged to make the principal address. Two bands were also hired to perform.

A month later, “A large crowd attended the Ku Klux Klan meeting in Findlay Saturday night. A fiery cross was burned and some of the members

appeared in uniform.” About the same time, a meeting was held for Bethany residents “northeast of town.”

KKK agitation in Sullivan continued through the fall. In early December a crowd again gathered in the Freeland Grove Auditorium in Wyman Park on a Sunday afternoon to hear a KKK lecture, but “were disappointed when the national officer of the klan who had been advertised as the speaker did not appear.” They were forced to listen again to the Reverend McMahan of Mattoon.

(The Freeland “Auditorium” stood in the grove which then bore the name of the former owner, where the American Legion Pavilion is now located. John A. Freeland was the prominent early citizen of Sullivan who suggested that the county seat be named in honor of General John Sullivan, of Revolutionary War fame.)

In December, just before Christmas, the Klan planned to serve as “Santa Claus to the Mattoon kiddies .. with a large and beautiful Christmas tree at Seventeenth street and Broadway.” Free treats were to be passed out to all the children.

1924

Klan organizing rallies continued in Moultrie County and Sullivan in 1924. A KKK revival in Windsor had been in progress for “a few weeks” in May.

That same month on May 28 the Klan held another meeting at Wyman Park. Then they marched around the town square, with about 30 cars. Some of the klansmen were “in regalia.” “Leading the parade was a klansman in robe and mask riding a white horse which was also masked.” The parade “continued to a point near the slaughter house southeast of Sullivan where a meeting of the order was held, the display of fireworks that accompanied the gathering being visible from the city.”

People in central Illinois and elsewhere throughout the country had become used to “Chautauqua” meetings, which had originated near the lake of that name in southwestern New York. They offered entertainment, music, public speakers, and religious and moral edification. Not surprisingly, the Klan sought to take advantage of the public’s enjoyment of these assemblies. In June 1924, the KKK met four days at the end of the month — “Four Big Banner Days” — at City Park, Arthur, in what was billed as “Klantauqua.” Charles G.

Palmer, a Grand Dragon of the State of Illinois, was there in full regalia; and Dr. I.J. Mitchell spoke on the dangers of "American Bolshevism." The 30 members of the Danville KKK band also performed. The KKK took out an ad in the newspaper: "Everybody Welcome. Bring the Children."

Then in July the Klan staged a three-day "Klantaqua" event in Decatur, attended by an estimated 5,000 men, women and children. Community singing was featured, as was a program given by "a ku Klux Klan quartet." Picnic lunches were numerous over the grounds. More than 200 men and women applied for membership in "the Invincible Empire." The concluding lecture was followed by an "attractive" fireworks display. An "army of automobiles" was parked on the grounds during the entertainment program while "a large number of white-robed Klansmen took charge of traffic control." The only sour note was the suggestion by one speaker that "printed matter unfriendly to the Klan had been distributed" during the Klanclave.

The Sullivan KKK also had a "woman's division." It was led by Mrs. Minnie Heacock, a lady prominent in church activities, who several years later was arrested on a charge of embezzling a Sullivan grocer, J.H. Alumbaugh.

In late August a major event was staged in Champaign. "Ku Klux Klan Special Today" screamed the *Decatur Herald* headline, August 30, 1924. "Special Train for Champaign leaves Depot 1 p.m." "Klansmen, attend this big barbecue, an all day rally of the KKK in Champaign today. A big program has been arranged — national lecturers in afternoon and evening — a big street parade at night — an authorized Ku Klux Klan band in full regalia. The largest display of fireworks that has ever been offered in Illinois will be a feature of the evening. A grand prize of \$50 will be given the largest delegation from any one city."

In early October the Klan meet in the Opera House in Monticello, drawing attendance from all over Central Illinois. The Grand Dragon of Illinois presented the Piatt County "Klanners" with a charter and installed a new corps of officers.

1925

From the incomplete newspaper accounts one gets the sense that by 1925 enthusiasm for the Klan had waned, at least in Moultrie County.

At the beginning of the year, the Klan made a \$5 contribution to the county's tuberculosis fund. It contributed another \$5 to the Christmas seals. In April the Klan conducted ceremonies at the grave of a member in Sullivan. And in June about 30 robed Klan members were in charge of the funeral of one of their members in Bethany.

The Klan hadn't quite become extinct, but the newspaper accounts suggest that it was on life support, with no major recruiting or campaign events.

In August 1924 a Sullivan Klan committee had agreed to buy 50 tickets to the summer 1925 Chautauqua gathering, apparently hoping to get representatives on the program. However, when the time came for the event in August 1925, no evidence of the KKK appeared on the program.

Perhaps the lack of press coverage reflected an attempt by Editor Brandenburger of the *Sullivan Progress* to deprive the KKK of the oxygen of attention it needed to thrive.

In mid-October Editor Brandenburger was "bawled out" on a street corner on the Square by G.W. Davis, a local resident who objected to an article in the *Progress*. In particular Davis "shouted that the real reason why we 'had it in for him' was because he was 'a member of the Ku Klux Klan.' (We are ready to take an oath that this allegation was real news to us)." *Sullivan Progress*, October 16, 1925.

The next week the *Progress* ran another article — this time from the unnamed "Exalted Cyclops" of the Sullivan Klan No. 149 Realm of the Invisible Empire. This Cyclops wished to clear up the fact that "Mr. Green Davis never has been or never can be a member of the Sullivan Realm No. 149, KKK. ... The Sullivan Klan are real boosters for Sullivan, we're for our home town first, last and all the time and will not tolerate anyone who is not a real gentleman in our realm and you can make the last part of this as strong as you like." The Cyclops continued: To be a real Klansman, a man must be a gentleman, live within his income, have wisdom, and be optimistic. Last, he "must be square" — an "honest man and a square shooter." *Sullivan Progress*, October 23, 1925.

So:

— G.W. Davis was unhappy because the *Progress* editor thought he was a Klan member;

— Editor Brandenburger denied that he knew it, or that that was a motive for any criticism;

— And the Exalted Cyclops denied that Davis was or could be a Klansman because he wasn't an honest, prudent, wise and optimistic gentleman.

The Klan held an "open meeting of the Sullivan Charter No. 149" on Monday evening, November 23, 1925, in the Knights of Pythias Hall. A "large crowd" reportedly attended, and musical and literary numbers were given by several ladies:

Reading: Mrs. Albert Lucas

Piano solo: Maxine Robertson

Piano solo: Geneva Daum

Violin solo: Hewell McFerrin, accompanied by Miss Gertrude McClure.

Following the program, lunch was served.

Pretty tame stuff for the burning-crosses crowd. Perhaps the local leaders had sanded down the rough edges to the point where the Klan couldn't be distinguished from other supposedly do-good fraternal organizations. Or perhaps the loss of energy had more to do with economics: the unwillingness of local citizens to keep paying dues to a distant organization, and the inability of the organization to sponsor big parades or fireworks displays without money.

Or just possibly the good folks of Sullivan and the surrounding parts of central Illinois thought about it and came to the conclusion that they didn't want any part of a racist, nativist, anti-immigrant, political organization using insults and intimidation to promote its objectives.

And that was almost a hundred years ago.

XXVL.

African-Americans in Sullivan

Race pervades American history, but not that of Sullivan or Moultrie County. Very few African-Americans have lived in or near Sullivan. That absence is a part of our history too.

The original state constitution of 1818 did not quite prohibit slavery in Illinois. It prohibited the “introduction” of slavery or “service” by adults “under any indenture hereafter made.” However, the Illinois legislature passed “black codes” which existed until 1865 under which blacks could not vote, sue whites, or serve in the militia. Blacks living in Illinois were required to obtain and carry a “certificate of freedom” to avoid a presumption that they were slaves.

The constitution of 1848 put an end to involuntary servitude of every form in Illinois. However, it contained a provision, Article XIV, which stated: “The General Assembly shall, at its first session under the amended constitution pass such laws as will effectually prohibit free persons of color from immigrating to and settling in this state; and to effectually prevent the owners of slaves from bringing them into this state for the purpose of setting them free.” This section was separately submitted to the people for ratification and was approved by a vote of 50,261 to 21,297. Arthur C. Cole, *The Era of the Civil War*, 1919, at 225.

The 1853 anti-immigration law laid a heavy fine on anyone bringing a free black person into the state. Blacks caught entering the state were subject to arrest and fine. In default of payment, the negro was to be sold at public auction to the person bidding the shortest period of service in return for payment of the fine.

The “black laws” were repealed in 1865, at the end of the Civil War. This opened the door to black immigration into Illinois from the South. Blacks settled mostly in urban centers. Cole, at 336. But none settled in or around Sullivan. The *Decatur Republican* on December 3, 1868, reported, “There is not a single colored person in Moultrie County.”

Four decades later, an article in the *Decatur Herald*, September 11, 1906, “Facts About Sullivan,” stated in the first paragraph: Sullivan “has an area of four square miles and white population 3,500. There is only one colored person.”

Uncle Charlie Tanner

That one colored person was Charlie Tanner, who lived in or near Sullivan much of his adult life, and was well known and liked. “Uncle Charlie,” as he was known to many, had been born a slave in a stable near Lexington, Kentucky before the Civil War, perhaps about 1840. “My master’s house burned down just before I was born,” Charlie explained. “My mother and the boss’ wife were both sick, and there wasn’t a place on the whole big plantation to take them to but the stable. I was born on one side of the stable one day and the master’s daughter was born on the other side of the stable the next day.”

Charlie was sold four times before the war. The first time was to a Tennessee family, the second to a family “on down the river” in Mississippi. One of those families was named Tanner, which is how he got his last name.

Charlie did not like Mississippi so he ran away during the war, escaping in stages, up through southern Illinois via the “underground railroad” to Moultrie County. He found protection from a man named Hostetler who lived at Lovington. When the war ended, Mr. Hostetler gave him a small piece of ground, which he farmed. He worked hard, saved and acquired more land. Then he lost almost everything. Accounts differ, but the main story was that he lost his money in a crap game. Charlie himself said he lost it because of sickness and inability to work for long periods of time.

For a while Charlie worked as a handyman at a livery stable in Lov-

ington and stayed in a little room there. Later he owned a few acres near Windsor, south of the Bruce-Findlay road. A neighbor was Bill Kirkwood. At my mother's request, Bill wrote her a letter about Charlie in April 1976. It is reproduced in the *M.C. Heritage*, November 1980:

Charlie bought junk in a one-horse wagon. We kids gathered old bottles, old worn out overshoes and boots, worn out rags. When mother quit patching them, they were worn out, but Charlie would give us a nickel or a dime. If we had an old copper wash boiler or tea kettle or two, we might get a quarter, which to us was a fortune. Charlie had no scales, just guessed at it, but he would always say, "Now I won't cheat you 'chilluns'."

Charlie was average height, slightly stopped, hair was grey. He wore an old battered hat, his clothes were patch up on patch, but usually clean.

Charlie was a very polite, humble, warm-hearted person. He passed our home often when buying junk, many times about noon, would stop to water his horse. Mother would always ask him to eat. He would say humbly, "Now, I can't eat with you white folks, but if you don't mind just set me a plate here on the back step." Mother would load his plate and he thanked her kindly. We kids would gulp our meal just to get to talk to him and listen to his tales of his slave days and the whippings he had suffered. ...

Charlie loved horses — raised them, trained them, took care of them, calmed them down. He once took a bad horse called "Man Killer," and soon had it eating out of his hand. The horse became a sort of watch dog, keeping strangers away. Sometimes Uncle Charlie would stay in the stable and sleep by the horses.

"Horses are a lot smarter than folks think they are," Charlie told neighbors. "They can tell if a man is scared of them. And if he is scared of them, he'd just as well give up. A horse doesn't like to work any more than a man does. If a man is scared of a horse, he can't make him work. A man has got to keep his temper, too. A man that can't control his temper needn't expect to control a horse."

Charlie worked with horses around Sullivan. Once in August 1917 he drove his rattle trap wagon to the fair grounds just northwest of town. The wagon

was drawn by a handsome brown stallion, and Charlie said he wanted to show his horse. A Sullivan man, Lew Burgess, took a look and realized that Charlie should be allowed to show his horse. Burgess went down town and paid the entrance fee for Charlie on condition that he would show the horse himself. "Lawd, Mistah, I can't do that. Look at my clothes," said Charlie. Burgess explained that he would hide the ragged overalls with a lap robe. So Charlie showed his horse.

Soon after, Burgess dropped by the fair ground to see how his friend was doing, but he wasn't there. A neighboring man volunteered: "Say, I know that old man. He's from my town. He's the only ___ in Sullivan and he's got money to burn. Why, that old man could buy a good big slice of this fair ground and never miss the money." Burgess vowed that he would never pay another man's entrance fee until he had had him searched.

About the same time, Charlie was the victim of a theft. He loaned a horse to a Decatur man who then sold it to someone else. The thief was indicted, the Sheriff found him in Bloomington and brought him back to Sullivan for trial. Apparently Charlie got his horse back. It is not known if the thief was convicted.

Bill Kirkwood told another story about Charlie from around 1920, late in Charlie's long life:

There was a race track in the field just east of Joe Woods' house. On one Fourth of July, I believe around 1920, I had a mare in a race there and won. Poor old Charlie had an old half-starved horse and started in a different race. The wheels on his bike wobbled and rattled, his harness was tied on with string and wire I believe there were about six starters in his race, and when the dust had settled in the first heat at the finish, Charlie was just coming into the stretch mumbling, 'Come on Boy', 'Come on Honey.' Charlie was badly beaten but the crowd gave him an ovation just as if he had won. I will always remember the look in poor old Charlie's eyes. He seemed to say sadly, 'This is the last race for me and my old hoss, but we tried.'

Charlie never married. Once when he was an old man he went back to his first home in Kentucky but was "greatly disappointed to find that the life he found there did not coincide with the imaginary happiness he had built up from memories of his childhood days." In a short time he came back home to Moultrie county.

He loved his horses, particularly the thoroughbreds that he raised. He told people that he longed to “get to Heaven with my Man-Eater.”

Charlie died on December 18, 1926, at the county poor farm just west of Sullivan, where he had been living for several months. The Rev. R.D. Brown, pastor of the Christian church at the Kellar chapel, performed the service. Some folks from Lovington paid his funeral bill. He was buried in Kellar cemetery. The headstone, also paid for by a Lovington friend, reads: “Former Slave — Charlie Tanner — Age not Known — Died Dec. 18, 1926.”

His obituary said he died as a result of “complications due to extreme age.” It also said he was the “only Negro resident of Moultrie County.” His estate consisted of two lots in Lovington appraised at \$150 and \$235.

A hand-painted photograph of “Uncle Charley” used to hang in the old Holzmueller Star photographic studio in Sullivan. I have it now, here in my library at home. Mother told me once that her father, Finley Pifer, gave Charlie the coat he wore in the picture.



Ettie Layman Vineyard

The *Sullivan Progress* issue for the first week of May 1878 does not survive, but a long article from the *Progress* was reprinted in the *Daily Milwaukee News*, May 12, 1878:

Last week Ettie Layman, an intelligent, respectable white young lady of the Northwest part of this county, married Nelson Vineyard, a negro. Such a thing possibly never before occurred in this county, nor did it this time, as the parties left the county to become united.

Ettie lived with her parents about four or five miles Northwest of Lovington. She has taught three terms of school in Moultrie County, and two terms in Piatt County. She is said to be intelligent, well educated, good looking, and a favorite in her neighborhood. Her parents are well-to-do, respectable, and set great store upon their daughter.

Vineyard, the negro, went to the neighborhood about a year ago. He is not a mulatto, but a genuine negro, though he is said to be educated, honest and upright in his dealings. Ettie had quite a number of suitors, but she became infatuated with the negro, and discarded her other suitors on his account.

Her parents have been strongly opposed to her meetings with Vineyard, and have done all they could to prevent the strange union, but to no purpose; she was bent upon marrying him.

Vineyard's father was a slave; but Vineyard was brought up in Pike County, Ill. He farmed last year with Taylor Tryon, a brother-in-law of Miss Layman. It was at Tyron's house that the intimacy sprang up between the pair.

Ettie's mother was greatly grieved over the daughter's strange liking, and coaxed, begged, and did everything she could to dissuade the daughter from marrying to such cross purposes. Friends of the family importuned her to give up the idea of marrying a negro. It was all for naught; she was bent upon marrying him.

One day last week she left home, stating that she was going on a visit to some friends at Mount Zion, Macon County. On the next day,

the negro left. They met at Hervey City, went to Decatur, procured a license, and, going to a small town East of Decatur, they were joined in the bonds of wedlock.

Ettie is about twenty one years old, and Vineyard is about twenty-eight or thirty.

* * *

After their marriage, the Vineyards moved to Park Township, Sedgwick, Kansas, where they appear in the 1880 census: "Nelson Vinyard," 28, with spouse named "Etta Vinyard," 25. No children.

* * *

Seven years later, on October 25, 1887, an article appeared in a Nashville newspaper:

A New Mexico Romance

An Albuquerque, New Mexico letter says: There occurred here yesterday a death that ends a strange romance. Mrs. Nelson Vineyard, the white wife of a colored waiter at one of our restaurants, died and was buried by charity. Mrs. Vineyard, but a few years ago, was the courted and flattered belle of a small town in Illinois, near which her father, a wealthy physician, owned a farm on which Vineyard worked as a hostler. The fair girl became enamored of the black man and finally eloped with him and married him.

The girl's parents, driven almost to distraction by the disgrace, sold out and moved to a Western city, where fortunate investments, it is said, have added largely to their wealth.

Mrs. Vineyard came to New Mexico with her black husband and has lived with him and borne him two children, to whom she proved a loving mother, and to Vineyard she was a faithful and apparently a devoted wife. Her education was far above the average, and she had managed to collect a few choice books, which she made her trusted companions. To the last she never appeared to regret her choice, and seemed to love him intensely.

* * *

What happened to Nelson Vineyard after the death of Ettie in 1887 is not known for sure. There may have been more than one man by that name. However, on May 2, 1893, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported:

The police commissioners met last night ... and, after a hearing, censured Officer Fawcett for unnecessary violence in making an arrest. ... The clerk then read an affidavit from Nelson Vineyard, a colored man, stating that on April 12, at Second and Union streets, he was approached by Officer Fawcett, who asked him whether he was following disreputable women. On being told that it was not the officer's business, that he was going home, the affiant swears that the officer beat and arrested him. Vineyard was before the municipal court next day and was acquitted of the charge of drunkenness brought by Fawcett....

On questioning, ... Fawcett admitted that he had called Vineyard a black _ _ _ _ _.

A few years later the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* carried another article January 19, 1900, as follows:

Nelson Vineyard, colored, committed suicide at his home, 2716 Elliot avenue, yesterday forenoon by shooting himself through the heart. Despondency, caused by intense physical pain, is believed to have been the motive for his self-destruction. Vineyard was forty-six years of age and leaves a widow and three children.

Vineyard had lived in Seattle about ten years. During the greater part of this time he was employed as a saloon porter. He bore a reputation for greatest honesty; but had a fiery temper, and several of his quarrels with his wife brought him into police court.

Several months ago Vineyard contracted a severe cold which settled on his liver, and since then he had suffered intense pain almost continually. About a week ago he made up his mind that he was about to die, and sent for his lawyer to put his affairs in order. At that time he told his lawyer that if he was sure he was going to die, he would cut matters short by committing suicide. ... He had his life insured for \$500 and left a small amount of real estate.

Four days later, the Seattle newspaper carried another article:

Scarcely Out of their Teens, but Charged with Felonies.

L. Vineyard, a young man under 20 years of age, was arraigned in Judge Cann's court yesterday afternoon on charges of felony. [He] was accused of burglarizing E.C. Chesty's store Sunday morning. ... Vineyard is colored. He is a son of Nelson Vineyard who committed suicide about ten days ago.

* * *

Samuel Bush

In June 1893 this article appeared in the *Decatur Herald-Despatch*:

LODGED IN JAIL

THE NEGRO RAVISHER CAUGHT NEAR SULLIVAN

The negro who criminally assaulted Mrs. Hubbard Dill last Monday and Mrs. Wm. Vest of Mt. Zion the following day is now in the county jail. He gives his name as Samuel J. Bush, and says that his home is in Macon, Miss. ... Bush was captured at the home of a man named Sergeant living nine miles southeast of Sullivan and close to the town of Windsor. ... The clue furnished Marshall Mason by ex-Sheriff Lansden of Bethany proved to be the correct one, but before the men sent out by Marshall Mason reached the spot, two Moultrie county men had the negro in charge. ... The captive was brought to Sullivan at once and put aboard the Wabash train

The news that the negro had been captured spread rapidly and there was a big crowd at the depot when the Effingham train pulled up to the platform. ... Bush ... claimed that on the way over from Sullivan he had been threatened and forced into acknowledging that he was the right man by representations that he would get off easy by a clean breast. He also said that he made the statement looking into muzzles of revolvers. ...

Mrs. Hubbard Dill, who was assaulted by the negro Monday, was in the city yesterday afternoon and an effort was made to let her endeavor

to identify the captive. The officers considered this unnecessary at that time. They felt reasonably sure that they had the right man

All afternoon there were rumors that Mrs. Vest would be here to identify the negro but she did not come.

James Harris, for a number of years a police officer in Sullivan, is the one who engineered the Moultrie county end of the work of capturing the negro. Harris of course had heard of the assaults upon Mrs. Dill and Mrs. Vest, and had seen a description card sent out by Marshal Mason. Thursday evening Harris met a young man who in the course of the conversation mentioned the fact that a negro was tramping across the country south of Sullivan. An occurrence of that nature is said to be a rarity in Moultrie county, especially away from the railroads, hence the young man mentioned it. . . . Harris at once thought of the negro wanted at Macon county, and from the scant description he received concerning the tramp, concluded he was the man wanted. . . .

The negro was badly scared when first captured and perhaps has not yet recovered from his fright. He was not armed and had not even a pocket knife with which to make a resistance. . . .

The negro made a partial confession to the men who arrested him. He denied having assaulted Mrs. Dill or Mrs. Vest but admitted having been at both houses. He said that he visited the Vest residence and asked for a drink of water, and that Mrs. Vest gave him a dipper from which to drink. He then asked for something to eat, and Mrs. Vest became frightened and screamed. The negro said he sought to reassure her, and insisted that he would do no harm. In his effort to quiet her fears, he says, he put his hands upon her and she at once broke from him and fled. Fearing that he would be accused of an assault, he fled. He said, too, that he would have given himself up but he feared that he would not be given credence if he related his story. It may be remarked here, that this story of the negro is accepted, just as he explained, as being very fishy. . . .

At 1:45 o'clock this [Saturday] morning, a body of armed men numbering between seventy-five and one hundred suddenly drew up in front of the [Decatur] jail from the rendezvous on East Wood street. The 400 or 500 more who had waited all night for just this occurrence set up a yell that froze the blood of the doomed negro behind the bars.

... Not one man in the mob was masked ... [Many of the men in the mob were said to be from Mt. Zion, the home of Mrs. Vest, one of the alleged victims.

Deputy Sheriff Midkiff and ex-Sheriff Foster were sitting and before they could make a move they were surrounded and a demand made for Bush. This was refused and a demand for the keys and this was also refused. Then the mob proceeded to work on the first door leading to the jail proper. ...

It only took a few minutes to get through the grating and get back to the cell and the locks there could not stand the heavy blows of the hammer.

In a moment came the yell, 'they've got him,' and the crowd fell back. Once into the street the crowd took up the yell, 'to the park.' Instead they took him to Keck & Weigand's corner. The rope was ready and the noose was adjusted.

There the poor brute was given time to pray. As he stammered out an incoherent prayer his voice quivered with emotion, 'Oh, Lord grant,' he said, 'that I may meet them in heaven; that I may shake hands with them.' 'Make him shut up,' yelled some one, and another yelled, 'They did not — meaning the women — get a chance to pray.'

Vest talked to the negro and he stoutly protested his innocence. Vest was inclined to argue. The crowd got impatient. Bush was stood on his feet and one man who had climbed a telegraph pole threw the rope over a guy wire. The crowd pulled. Bush went up ten feet and the wire broke. He fell back on the brick paving with an awful thud. His hands and feet had been tied with handkerchiefs, but his hands came untied.

The rope was thrown over the arm of the telegraph pole this time. It was not long enough. A hack was called and the negro thrown on top. He was commanded to stand up. 'I can't gentlemen,' was his answer. Then three or four helped him. The rope was pulled down and fastened to an iron step. The hack drove away and Bush swung into the air. He did not make much of a struggle. His face turned to the pole. 'Turn him the other way,' yelled the crowd and as this was done, 'Good morning,' 'black side,' etc. In fifteen minutes it was all over and Bush had satisfied the vengeance of the mob.

The lynching of Sam Bush attracted wide attention throughout Illinois. Governor Altgeld wrote to the Macon County State's Attorney:

Write me at once the facts in regard to a mob breaking the door of the jail in Decatur last night and taking a negro from the custody of the officers of the law and killing him; also what effort did the jailor make to protect the victim?

Governor Altgeld then met with the State's Attorney, and afterward issued a proclamation:

I hereby denounce this cowardly and diabolical act as not only a murder under our laws, but as a disgrace to our civilization and a blot upon the fair fame of our state. The prisoner was accused of the crime of rape but stoutly protested his innocence. He was already in the custody of the law and no matter with what crime he was charged, and no matter whether he was guilty or innocent, he was entitled to a trial — a fair trial according to law. It must never be said that the laws of our great and proud state do not afford protection to all without regard to color or condition.

I therefore call upon all officers of the law, and especially of Macon county, as well as on all good citizens, who respect law and cherish the honor of this state, to do all in their power to bring the leaders of this great crime to justice.

* * *

No action was ever taken against the members of the lynch mob. Judge Vail, the Decatur Judge, exhorted the grand jury to do their duty, but they refused to act. There remained nothing for him to do but discharge them.

A leading Decatur newspaper could not bring itself to criticize the grand jury members:

They are representative men and were not chosen with a view of suppressing anything. They have evidence of the presence of many men at the time of the hanging and some of those who were active participants. The very fact that they did not indict at first was a notice not that evidence was lacking on which to find the indict-

ments, but that they thought it would be best not to put the county to additional cost for nothing. They knew for their own part that they did not want to find indictments, and they either knew or thought that they knew that nothing would come of the costs if the men were indicted and tried. . . .

If ever mob law could be excusable it would be in a case like that which the Mt. Zion farmers showed us when they hanged Bush.

James Harris, the former Sullivan police officer who had “engineered” the capture of Sam Bush resumed his ordinary life. In August 1906 he was arrested and tried for bootlegging. A year later he was again arrested, this time by the Sullivan Mayor and a policeman who happened to be “strolling in the woods east of town near the old distillery” when they came upon Harris and four colleagues seated upon the ground with a deck of cards and some money spread out before them. Harris et al were arrested and tried for gambling, but the jury showed them mercy and returned a verdict of not guilty.

Mrs. W.H. Vest died in February 1895, a little less than two years after the lynching. The newspaper said:

She is afflicted with brain trouble and the disease is traceable directly to the assault committed on her by the negro Bush. Ever since that time she has been an entirely different woman, and has never been able to efface from her memory the awful ordeal through which she had to pass. She has always since then been gloomy and despondent, and her mental trouble finally brought on a brain disease which now threatens to end her life.

The newspaper did not speculate about what Mrs. Vest’s mental condition might have been in the aftermath of the lynching if Bush had not been guilty of any assault.

Margaret Phoenix Clark

Margaret Phoenix Clark, the wife of W.A.Clark, was briefly — very briefly — a resident of Sullivan. She had previously been married to Albert Phoenix of Decatur, who had a long arrest record of disorderly conduct, assault and vagrancy. One 1894 complaint had been sworn out against Albert by his mother. In September 1894 he was fined for striking his wife, Margaret. By

March 1895 Margaret had had enough; she obtained a divorce from Albert in Decatur on grounds of cruelty and drunkenness. A month later she married W.A. Clark of Sullivan.

In April 1895 there appeared this brief article in a Decatur newspaper (*Republican*, April 11, 1895):

W.A. Clark, aged 36, white, and Margaret Phenix (sic) 46, a negress, were married at Sullivan. They were tendered a reception by citizens who went to the house and knocked out the window lights. The pair have left the town.

It was not reported where they went.

Appendix

A

John R. Eden and the Charleston Riot, March 28, 1864 (Paper delivered in Charleston by the author, March 2014.)

John Rice Eden was my Great-grandfather. The Edens had moved in the early 19th Century from Maryland to Bath County, Kentucky, where John R. was born in 1826. In 1831 the family moved to Rushville, Indiana. His father died in 1835 when he was 9 years old, leaving the family in what a local history referred to as “limited circumstances.” John R. worked on the farm, went to a log school house, and later taught school and studied law. At the age of 26, in 1852 he moved to central Illinois and became a member of the bar soon after. In 1856 he married Roxanna Meeker, daughter of a Sullivan blacksmith and farmer. The details of John R.’s life and political career may be found in a book I edited a couple of years ago, *John R. Eden, 1826-1909*, which can be found on my local history web site for Moultrie County.

The Martins were living near Sullivan when John R. Eden arrived. They had been early settlers of Coles County and had relocated to the Whitley Point area of Moultrie County in the 1830’s.

“John R.” – as most people called him – went on to become a five-term Congressman from Sullivan. He began his political career when he was elected

States Attorney in 1856. Six years later, in 1862, he was elected to his first term in Congress, so he served two years during the Civil War. He was the Democratic Party's candidate for Governor of Illinois in 1868, losing badly to the Republican, General John M. Palmer. John R. was later elected to four other terms in Congress – three in the 1870's and for the last time in 1884. When he was not serving in Congress, he practiced law in Sullivan and, briefly, in Decatur.

When I was growing up, our family didn't talk about John R. Eden or any other ancestors. When I was in college, I read a little about the Copperheads; but about all I remember is thinking that the Copperheads must have been pretty bad folks. After all they were named after poisonous snakes. Lincoln was our greatest President – and these Copperheads were opponents of Lincoln, so they must have been pretty misguided. Their leader, Clement Vallandigham had been found guilty of something awful and exiled to Canada. And, to make things worse, my Great-grandfather Eden was one of these Copperheads.

Then, at some point I read about the Charleston riot. My Great-grandfather was not only there – here – but a speech he was supposed to give might have been one cause for the rioters to assemble. Were the rioters Copperheads? They were fighting with the Union soldiers whose job was to save the Union. Were these rioters therefore bad guys like Vallandigham?

And was Great-grandfather – if not a supporter of riots – at least an encourager of resistance to the military effort to save the Union?

Over the past 30 years or so, I've tried to learn about the history of my several antecedent families – both paternal and maternal. The results are summarized in several books and monographs, most of which appear on my local history web site. The most recent one is a compendium of materials about John R. Eden. The work of preparing that book took me back over his career, his pre-Civil War writings, his speeches in Congress, and his letters. It also took me more deeply into the political history of the period.

My view now is that despite their name, which was given to them by their political opponents, most of the so-called Copperheads – including John R. Eden – were supporters of the Union and the war effort. They were very far from traitors. Article III, Section 3, of the Constitution defines “treason” as “levying War against [the United States], or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.” Conviction would require that they had committed some “overt Act.”

The Copperheads – given that name by the Republicans - were Democrats, political opponents of the Lincoln administration. They did not all agree with each other on everything. But they did write and speak against the Administration on several major points. It's important to be clear about what they supported, as well as what they opposed.

- In the main the Copperheads supported the Union. They opposed the effort by Southern states to break away from the Union, and supported the military effort to put down that effort by force.
- They voted for the expenditure of money and the raising of troops to sustain that military effort.
- They criticized the Administration's management of the War – the failure to win battles, the expenditure of moneys, the corruption incident to many contracts for supply of equipment and other military necessities.
- They attacked the Administration's infringements of civil liberties – the suspension of habeas corpus, the prosecution of civilians in military courts, and the prosecution of political figures and editors for criticism of the President and his policies.
- When in September 1862 the President announced the preliminary emancipation proclamation, based on his asserted "war power," they criticized the policy behind the proclamation and also argued that he lacked constitutional authority to implement that policy.
- Some – but not all – urged that steps be taken to try to achieve an armistice that might lead to an honorable peace between North and South, and to restoration of the union "as it was."
- They did not interfere with the military draft. The biggest Northern incident of opposition to the War effort occurred in New York in July 1863 – only 10 days after the victory at Gettysburg. One source calls it the "largest civil insurrection in American history outside of the Civil War itself." (Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: American's Unfinished Revolution* (1988), at

32.) But the New York draft riots were not the result of any Copperhead efforts to undermine the war effort. They were in part the result of discontent by Irish immigrants and other working-class men who opposed the draft – especially the provision that allowed the wealthy to hire substitutes and thus avoid the draft. As the rioting expanded, it also became a deadly manifestation of racial hatred against black people living in New York. Much smaller anti-enrollment or anti-draft riots occurred in other places – including two in Illinois, one in Lake County, and one in Fulton County.

To sum up – subject to a few exceptions – Democratic or Copperhead opposition to the Lincoln Administration (1) took the form of words – not action, and (2) the criticism was aimed not at the military effort to subdue the Southern rebellion but rather at the Administration’s supposed inefficiency, corruption, interference with Civil liberties, and the expansion of war aims to include emancipation.

For those of us old enough to remember the violent opposition to the Vietnam War by the so-called Weathermen and other domestic terrorists that took place in Chicago in October 1969 as well as other places and times, the most remarkable thing is how little violent or illegal action there was in the North against the Lincoln Administration’s war policies, and how relatively insignificant were any concrete steps to undermine the war effort.

It is well known that Stephen Douglas, the Democratic candidate for President in 1860, became a strong supporter of the Lincoln Administration’s efforts to put down the rebellion. Unfortunately, he died on June 3, 1861, just as the war was beginning.

Clement Vallandigham, the Ohio Democrat most strongly identified with the Copperheads, was a Congressman when the war began. He was a vigorous critic of the Lincoln Administration but, like Douglas, did not initially criticize the effort to subdue the South by force. He was defeated for re-election to Congress in the 1862 elections.

However, in January 1863, his term not yet concluded, Vallandigham delivered a forceful speech in Congress declaring that he did not believe the South could be forced back into the Union, that lives and money were being wasted, and that turning the war into a crusade for abolition was unconstitu-

tional. He urged that the North simply stop fighting, and proposed a unilateral armistice.

As Frank Klement summarized the reaction in his book on *The Copperheads* (at 118), “Most Midwestern Democrats were unwilling to accept Vallandigham’s unrealistic program. ... They were opposed to an armistice.”

General Ambrose Burnside, in charge of the Department of the Ohio in 1863, believed that criticism of the Administration was treasonous. In April he issued his General Orders No. 38, proclaiming that “the habit of declaring sympathy for the enemy” would no longer be tolerated, and that anyone who committed “acts for the benefit of our enemies” would be “tried as spies or traitors.” Democrats responded by criticizing Burnside’s order for infringing on the right of free speech and for declaring that alleged violators would be tried in military rather than civilian courts.

Vallandigham again spoke out – on May 1, 1863 – criticizing the Administration for changing its war objectives to include emancipation, and criticizing the Administration in harsh language. He went so far as to invite his listeners to defy arbitrary orders – to make clear that “they will not submit to such restrictions upon their liberties” (Klement, at 91.)

Burnside then had Vallandigham arrested. A Dayton newspaper called his “kidnapping” a “dastardly outrage.” A liquor-induced riot ensued, and a pro-Administration newspaper building was burned. Burnside then declared martial law throughout the county. Vallandigham was promptly tried and found guilty by a military tribunal. President Lincoln “regretted” Burnside’s action and changed Vallandigham’s sentence to one of banishment to the Confederacy. From there he made his way to Canada.

Vallandigham later returned unbothered from Canada and ran for Governor of Ohio in 1863. He continued to advocate for peace and compromise, but was soundly defeated in October of that year.

Rumors of alleged secret societies – auxiliaries of the Democratic Party, comparable to the Union League auxiliaries of the Republicans – circulated in 1863. One of these alleged groups was called the Knights of the Golden Circle, which was founded by a charlatan named Bickley before the Civil War even began.

Other rumors hovered over an organization called the “Sons of Liberty,” started by an Indiana politician named Harrison Dodd. It was unrelated to the rumored Knights of the Golden Circle. The Sons of Liberty had an Illinois adjunct – on paper at least – and it seems to have attracted recruits; but it’s not clear how much they did other than hold meetings.

A third group was organized in Missouri by a man named Phineas Wright, who called his group the Order of American Knights.

There was even an attempt to merge these latter two groups into a “new” Sons of Liberty. The co-founder, Dodd, tried to interest Vallandigham into assuming the leadership of this organization. As Klement tells the story, one of their supporters, a man named Hunt, told Vallandigham that “he believed it advisable to give aid to the Southern rebels.”

“Vallandigham rudely interrupted. Visibly angry, he gave Hunt a severe castigation. . . . He might be a critic, but he was no traitor!” (Klement, at 175.)

A longer and clearly self-serving version of Vallandigham’s rejection of any assistance to the Confederate cause is set forth in the biography of him written by his brother, *A Life of Clement L. Vallandigham*, by James Vallandigham. (Baltimore, 1872, at 372 et seq.) According to his brother, when Vallandigham became aware in late May 1864 that one of his supporters was “actually in favor of assisting the South,” Vallandigham became “violently excited”:

With flashing eye and clenched fist he denounced the stupidity of the men who were willing to precipitate a revolution and fight for a government which, if successful . . . would consider them aliens and outcasts. ‘I will fight for no cause,’ he exclaimed, ‘wherein victory itself is dishonor. . . . Not a hand shall be offered to assist the Southern people nor a shot fired in their favor if I can control the Sons of Liberty, until it is distinctly understood that the idea of permanent disunion is entirely given up and completely abandoned. If I hear of any further developments, under existing circumstances, of attempts of members of our order to assist the Southern Government, I will myself inform the Lincoln Administration, and see that the authors of a worse than abortive revolution are promptly punished.

Vallandigham’s brother’s biography acknowledged that despite all of

Clement's "efforts and watchfulness, some members of the Sons of Liberty "were induced to join in plans of action which rendered them liable to the charge of treason." He says these plans were "industriously encouraged by" Federal detectives. When Clement was informed of these plans, "his indignation knew no bounds. "What do these men mean," he cried, "by acting against my express orders?" (*Id.*, at 378.)

Because of disagreements among the leaders and also perhaps the effectiveness of government detectives, the Sons of Liberty disintegrated without ever becoming an effective organization. Although he was the supposed leader, according to Klement's account, Vallandigham never issued an order or called a meeting.

So where was John R. Eden on this political spectrum – extending from supporter of the Northern war effort ... to unilateral peacenik ... to traitor?

Clearly he was a supporter of Stephen Douglas before the Senator's death. He did not overlap in Congress with Vallandigham, who was defeated for re-election to Congress in 1862 the same year Eden was elected for the first time.

For the pre-War period, the only source I have for Eden's political views is the columns of the *Sullivan Express*, which are reproduced in my book and appear on my local history web site. Basically he wrote against extremism in both the North and South. He believed that the Abolitionists in the North and the Fire-eaters in the South fed off each other, and that together they jeopardized the Union. His principal objective was to preserve the Union.

Eden received the Democratic nomination for Congress on September 2, 1862, and 8 days later was at the party's state convention in Springfield. He served on the committee on resolutions, so the resolutions adopted by the convention are probably a reflection of his personal political views. Those resolutions may be summarized as follows (*Eden Compendium*, John George, at 421):

- All citizens should "aid in the legal suppression of the rebellion." The convention thanked the "brave men" who had fought in the Union army.
- The convention condemned both Southern extremists who had started the war and the Northern extremists whose methods "will leave to the nation but little hope for the restoration of the Union."

- The convention opposed emancipation of the slaves, unlawful military arrests, the stifling of free speech and free press, and corruption of the administration;
- The convention opposed emancipation as a war aim and called for enforcement of a state law prohibiting the immigration of Negroes.

In late May 1863, Eden was one of several speakers at the Indiana state Democratic convention in Indianapolis. Several arrests were made for carrying concealed weapons. It's not known what Eden said, but the convention adopted a resolution denouncing illegal arrests of those who opposed the war effort and extended sympathy to Clement Vallandigham for his imprisonment by General Burnside. (*Id.*, at 424).

A month later, in June 1863, a convention of Democrats in Springfield, Illinois, passed similar resolutions criticizing arbitrary arrests and declaring (*id.*, at 425):

The further offensive prosecution of this war tends to subvert the Constitution and government and entails on this nation all the disastrous consequences of misrule and anarchy.

Did this “peacenikian” resolution express Eden’s personal views? Perhaps – we don’t know. It expresses opposition to “further offensive prosecution of this war” and was inconsistent with Eden’s earlier support for “legal suppression of the rebellion.”

By the time the 38th Congress, to which Eden had been elected in 1862, met for the first time on December 7, 1863, the complexion of the war had completely changed because of the Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg.

During the 38th Congress, Eden spoke infrequently. His one major address was given on February 27, 1864, in which he responded to Lincoln’s reconstruction proposals. His premise was that “The General Government ... is in duty bound to suppress insurrection.” He then argued that the Administration had no power to emancipate the slaves or otherwise “overthrow the rights and established institutions of any of the States.” (*Eden Compendium* at 256-57.) He pointed out that calls for troops and taxes had been supported “without a

murmur because these contributions to the public Treasury were to be consecrated to the sacred purpose of saving the Union.” (*Id.*)

So – Eden’s theme was not that the Confederacy should not be put down. It was rather a complaint that it had not been put down already.

He said:

Mr. Chairman, I am a friend of the Union; my love for it is so strong that I am not willing to give up a single State. When I see a hand raised to strike down and blot out a single star from the flag of my country, whether the blow be directed by the traitor in arms or by a more insidious enemy seeking to effect the same and by undermining and subverting the Constitution, I will interpose my feeble efforts to ward off the blow. I would save the Union, because the Union is necessary to secure the prosperity, the liberties, and the happiness of the people.

In closing, he added,

The policy of the Democracy embraces conciliation and compromise, along with whatever force may be necessary to the due execution of the laws, and a firm, unfaltering devotion to constitutional liberty, and a determination as immovable as the everlasting hills to maintain it.

Two days after Eden’s big speech in the House, on February 29, 1864, Congressman Long of Ohio introduced an elaborate peace resolution, which declared war to be an improper instrument for the settlement of the issues at stake and urged appointment of a peace commission. Eden voted for it, but it was soundly defeated. (*Id.*, at 429.)

Congressman Schenk of Ohio then introduced several resolutions, one of which called for putting down the rebellion and removing the causes for it. The vote for it was unanimous, and included Congressman Eden. (*Id.*, at 430.)

So – on the same day, Eden voted for declaring war an improper instrument for settling the issues and, at the same time, for putting down the rebellion. It’s hard to reconcile the two votes, but perhaps if one had been there on the floor that day and knew all the details, they would be reconcilable.

Five weeks later, on April 8, 1864, Congressman Long again spoke in favor of peace, saying he could not see “restoration [of the Union] by the power of the bayonet.” Congressman Harris of Maryland gave an agitated speech, declaring himself a “radical peace man,” and “for acquiescence in the doctrine of secession.” A resolution to declare Harris’ remarks treasonable failed, with Eden voting against. Another resolution to censure Harris’ speech passed, with Eden voting against. (*Id.*, at 439.) His vote against censure was clearly a vote in favor of free speech – not in support of secession.

Perhaps just as important, these speeches and votes lay in the arena of speech and politics – not conduct. John R. Eden, though an opponent of the Lincoln Administration, supported the Union and did nothing to undercut the war effort.

What is more, so far as I can tell, neither did Clement Vallandigham or any other prominent Democrat of the period. Attacks on the Copperheads as traitors or supporters of the Confederate rebellion can be understood better as efforts to smear and embarrass the Democrats in the elections of 1862 and 1864 than as objective attempts to describe reality. Politics wasn’t bean-bag then any more than it is now.

Any embarrassment Eden’s descendants may have today stems not from either his speech or conduct with respect to the War, but rather his objections to Emancipation, his vote against the 13th Amendment, and his views on black people.

What then about the Charleston riot? Where did the conduct of the rioters fall on the political spectrum ranging from support for the Administration to treason?

I think the right answer is: nowhere.

Professor Peter Barry’s fine book provides plenty of evidence that the riot stemmed from personal animosities and liquor – rather than an ideologically or politically-motivated assault on the Lincoln Administration. Or as Barry gracefully expressed it, the riot was a “violent, localized fight that was ignited by personal animosities and driven more by alcohol, emotions, and grudges than by political passions and patriotism.” (Barry, at 70).

The animosities had several roots:

One was a dance held in nearby Clark County in February, a month before the Charleston affair. Nelson Wells, a Copperhead, and Oliver Sallee, a Northern soldier, were both there – apparently vying for the attentions of a girl named Daugherty. A free-for-all ensued. (Barry, at 29.) The first violent act of the Charleston Riot a month later occurred when Wells – allegedly – pulled a pistol and attempted to fire at Sallee in response to an insult. Another Copperhead then shot Sallee, who in turn fired at Wells, killing him. (*Id.*, at 45.)

A second root was the practice of Union soldiers of roaming the downtown areas of Charleston and Mattoon, accosting known Democrats, forcing them to their knees, and compelling them to swear to support the Lincoln Administration and all its proclamations. (*Id.*, at 28.) Judge Constable, who was sitting on the bench that day in Charleston, had been subject to this mistreatment in Mattoon only a couple of months before. Several local Copperheads – including James O’Hair, Robert McLain, and Frank Toland – had been involved in fights with soldiers. Who started these altercations can’t be known. What can be known is that these fights – not some distorted political idealism or hostility to the Lincoln Administration — laid the groundwork for the riot.

This practice of Union soldiers looking for evidence of disloyalty on the part of Democrats no doubt extended well beyond Coles County. My grandfather, I.J. Martin, who married John R. Eden’s daughter Rose, wrote a memoir when he was in his 80’s. His family lived in Whitley Township, Moultrie County, just west of Mattoon and the Coles-Moultrie County line. This is what he remembered about the War (*Fragments of Martin Family History*, Chicago, 1990, at 157):

The soldiers stationed at Mattoon occasionally made night raids into the country, and sometimes entered the homes of Democrats, seizing guns or searching for evidence of disloyalty. We were never disturbed, but I remember one night someone tapped on a window and then said the soldiers were out on another raid. Mother was alarmed, but Father said there was no danger. He stepped outside and listened awhile before going back to bed. Later I was told that one night Father [and a neighbor] kept vigil at a point where they could watch both their homes, but I knew nothing about it at the time.

Neither of them belonged to any club or political organization, and neither did any wild talking, so that none of the spies would have had anything to report to the Mattoon camp.

In addition to the personal animosities and the mistreatment by soldiers, there was the liquor – probably consumed in generous quantities on both sides.

In any event, the Sons of Liberty had nothing to do with it. Professor Barry quotes the testimony of James L. Rock, a member of Sons of Liberty, who explained that the rioters were criminals, “that they had brought the matter upon their own heads, and the Sons of Liberty were not responsible for them.” (*Id.*, at 67.) Captain John Eastin wrote his friend President Lincoln a letter explaining that the soldiers had been drinking and that, “It was a small quarrel and conflict between a few soldiers on furlough and their friends on one side and the O’Hairs and their friends on the other side. There was no resistance to military or civil authority...” (*Id.*, at 90.)

Professor Barry’s book points out that when John R. Eden arrived in Charleston about 2 o’clock, he found the situation tense, canceled his speech, and “joined others in advising fellow Democrats to return home or to seek refuge in the courthouse.” (*Id.*, at 43.)

Two weeks after the riot, Congressman Eden – by this time safely back in Washington – wrote his wife Roxa a long letter describing the events of that day. It may be found in *John R. Eden, A Compendium of Materials*, 2012, at 96. In the letter, John R. wrote that “none of the accounts” that he had seen – presumably the newspaper accounts – were “true.” He proposed to tell her what he saw and heard:

I reached Charleston between one and two o’clock and stopped there, no more apprehensive of danger than I now am. When at Mattoon I heard from citizens and soldiers that the soldiers at Charleston were to come to Mattoon on the next train, which would leave Charleston between two and three o’clock. ... When I went up to the Hotel at Charleston I saw that there were a good many people in town and a very considerable number of soldiers, many of whom were drunk. The word there also was that the soldiers were to leave there on the next train going west. As soon as I got my dinner I went over to the court house. On the way I saw that there was a good deal of excitement and heard that a number of citizens had been badly

abused by the soldiers during the day. When I went in to the court house, the court being in session, I told my friends that owing to the excitement I did not deem it prudent to speak. ...

Eden then went out to the south side of the square and walked around to the north side. He continued:

We saw a crowd of soldiers coming up from toward the Depot. They were very noisy but we could not tell what they said. At this point we met a friend coming up from the same direction who remarked to us,

There is going to be trouble, the Colonel has countermanded the order for them to leave on this train, and they are coming up here swearing that they are going to clean out the Copperheads.

We went in to the court house. The west door was fastened on account of the wind blowing very hard from that direction. In about five minutes after we went in, I heard a fierce yell just west of the courthouse, followed almost immediately by a single pistol shot. After an interval of perhaps a half a minute, there was a volley and a great many shots fired in rapid succession. The balls came in at the windows of the court house, rattling against the walls of the house ... like hailstones in a hail storm.... With what light we had on the subject, we deemed it prudent to leave, which we did. We walked out two miles East where we waited ...

After some further time, Eden went on by wagon, and then by horseback to the town of Marshall, where he caught a "hack" for Terre Haute and from there a train back to Washington. He added that he had heard how the fight commenced from four or five gentlemen who saw it from the beginning, and that "their account ... puts the blame almost entirely upon a few drunken soldiers." He added, "I will not vouch for the truth of anything that I did not see."

Great-grandfather Eden may have received his information from four or five gentlemen who were Democrats, and their account may have been slanted. But – again – whatever disagreement there may have been about who started the brawl, there seems to be no evidence that it stemmed from any anti-Administration or anti-War sentiments. The roots of the violence were of a wholly different character than those which led to the Days of Rage we

old- timers remember almost half a century ago.

* * *

So now, after digging a bit more into the politics of the Civil War era, I'm reassured that Great-grandfather was a Union man after all, as were most of the so-called Copperheads.

Family tradition reports that during the last two years of the war, John R. Eden went to the White House to meet with President Lincoln and learn first-hand about the progress of the war effort. Eden had known the President for many years – ever since Lincoln in 1852 had served as one of his bar examiners – and he, like Lincoln, had practiced law in the old Seventeenth Judicial District in central Illinois.

Eden referred to one of his meetings with Lincoln at the White House in a letter to his wife a month before the Charleston Riot.

One of John R.'s granddaughters, Mabel George, many years later wrote a long manuscript about the history of the Eden and Meeker families. Her account of Eden's political career during the War years does not footnote her sources, but it seems generally to be supported by or consistent with published sources. No doubt much of what she wrote was passed down to her by her father, John R.'s son-in-law.

She reported one episode that I have not seen anywhere else, but it seems appropriate to quote it here. (*John R. Eden Compendium*, at 387.) She wrote that, after the Charleston Riot, John R. had been back in the capital city only a few days when he was summoned to appear before the President. Lincoln rebuked him for causing a riot with his speech in Charleston, and when John R. said 'But, Mr. President ...' Lincoln stopped him by saying, 'Wait until I have finished, Mr. Eden. Then I will hear what you have to say.'

He continued to reproach John R. for things he had said in his speech and gave him a lecture on the proper behavior of a congressman and loyal American.

Twice John R. tried to break into the harangue but was told to be quiet. When the President had said all he wanted to say, he ended with, 'Now, Mr. Eden, what do you have to say?'

‘Mr. President, what I have been trying to tell you is that the riot in Charleston could not have been caused by anything I said, because I did not speak. There was no Democratic rally held that afternoon. The meeting was broken up by the gunfire of the drunken soldiers before the program started. And now, Mr. President, may I be excused?’

Lincoln studied a minute, looking straight across into steady, blue eyes on the same level with his own. What he saw there convinced him that John R. was telling the truth. ‘Mr. Eden,’ he said, ‘if I have misjudged you, I am sorry. I will look into the matter and we will discuss it again.’

The two Illinoisans shook hands and John R. left the room.

Did President Lincoln and his former central Illinois neighbor and fellow lawyer have that White House meeting?

It would be nice to think so. But as Casey Stengel once supposedly said – “Whom knows!”

Appendix

B

June 12, 2018

Was Sullivan Really “Pro-South” During the Civil War?

Thoughts on *Captured Moments*, 2018, Co-authored by Pat Cribbet and Janet Roney, Sponsored by the Moultrie County Historical and Genealogical Society.

There are many attractive features of the new *Pictorial History of Moultrie County, Illinois, Captured Moments*, 2018. The pictures are well chosen and laid out. The narrative that accompanies them is gracefully written. The authors have contributed to the understanding of local history in Sullivan in many ways and over many decades. I am grateful to Janet Roney for providing me information and source documents about Sullivan history in general and the Civil War period in particular.

However, in my opinion Chapter 4 of the new history, which deals with the Civil War period, is deeply flawed. Its theme is that although some sections of Moultrie County supported the Union cause, “Sullivan and residents along Asa Creek were pro-South.” (at 41)

The rest of Chapter 4 is devoted to explaining what “pro-South” means. The authors write that during the War hundreds of Sullivan Democrats called “Copperheads” were members of a secret, subversive group called “Knights of the Golden Circle.” Six hundred Copperheads were members of their local militia. They say that the K.G.C. committed “seditious” acts and “promoted insurrection” in an attempt to help the Confederacy win the War. Copperheads “believed the Confederacy was the true government of the United States and Lincoln’s government was illegitimate.” (p. 45.) Though the authors do not use the word “traitor,” by accusing these hundreds of local Democrats of “seditious” acts and promoting “insurrection,” they in effect call them traitors.

There are three fundamental flaws in the picture of Sullivan during the Civil War era drawn in *Captured Moments*:

First, the authors’ claim is largely based on hundred-plus-year-old hearsay, and in important respects is contrary to known facts.

Second, the picture they draw is radically lopsided — focusing on the asserted bad behavior of Democrats and almost entirely ignoring the conduct of soldiers and their Republican allies.

Third, it is radically overstated: the authors (like Republican opponents at the time) treat Democratic criticisms of civil rights abuses and other political differences as treason against the United States.

The Lopsided Picture Drawn by the Authors of *Captured Moments*

The political environment in Sullivan was clearly strained during the War. Hostility and familial bitterness existed on both sides — Republican and Democrat. Insults and name-calling came from both sides. So, occasionally, did violence and intimidation.

The authors buy into the view that the local Democrats were to blame for the hostility and local bitterness. These Democrats were “Copperheads” — poisonous snakes — and “pro-South.” Hundreds of these Moultrie Democrats were allegedly members of the “Knights of the Golden Circle.” Their leaders were not just political opponents. Their purposes and activities were treasonous.

This is history viewed through the distorting prism of Republican Party politics 150 years ago. It was wrong then, and it is wrong now.

History viewed solely through a Democratic prism would be equally wrong. The reality was mixed and complicated; and neither side — at least in and around Sullivan — was composed of traitors.

There did exist in parts of the North an organization of extremist opponents of the Lincoln Administration called the Knights of the Golden Circle (K.G.C.). It apparently morphed into the “Order of American Knights” and then “the Sons of Liberty.” Its founder, one George W.L. Bickley, was in an Ohio prison in 1864. He had served in the Confederate army and was arrested for being a Confederate spy. The secret society had oaths and members. Their objective was victory of the Confederacy over the Union, and they took steps to achieve that objective. Some wanted the southern part of Illinois to be sliced off and made part of a separate Southern country. Others wanted a separate Northwestern Confederacy of states created out of the Union.

The authors assert that the Knights had a “heavy membership” in Moultrie County and were “extremely active.” They supposedly obtained 600 new rifles. Some 800 members gathered to pack cartridges with powder to use in these guns. According to the authors, these hundreds of Moultrie K.G.C. members were a “paramilitary” organization that drilled and trained secretly in the woods, preparing to fight to help the Confederacy win the War. Their activities included burning homes and barns of Union sympathizers, resistance to the military draft and attempting to kill a draft agent, and attacking Methodists.

These claims are presented not as opinion but as facts — not as possibility but as certainty.

A Different Picture

No doubt there was bitterness in Sullivan and Moultrie County between individual Republicans and Democrats, and between some families whose origins were in different sections of the country. Members of the two political parties insulted each other in vile and sometimes violent fashion.

But most local Republicans and Democrats did not differ over whether to support the Union. Only a small fraction of Democrats in Illinois — mostly in the southern part of the state — were members of the Knights of the Golden Circle (K.G.C.). Leaders of both political parties in Illinois and Moultrie County supported the war effort.

Where the parties differed, it was not over support for the Union. It was over what Democrats viewed as civil rights abuses — the closing of critical newspapers, the arrest of civilians without civil trial, the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, the indignities against Democrats committed by Northern soldiers mostly while on leave, the compelled loyalty oaths, the midnight searches of Democratic homes for weapons or evidence of treason. They also disagreed over the President's Emancipation Proclamation, which Democrats viewed as exceeding the President's authority under the Constitution.

The civil rights violations were not imagined. Some of the story was told in *The Era of the Civil War, 1848-1870*, Arthur C. Cole, Volume III of the Centennial History of Illinois, 1919:

In the late summer of 1863 there took place a wide suspension under executive order of the writ of habeas corpus, the one remaining guarantee of personal liberty. ...

Among the victims of arbitrary arrests for disloyal practice were to be found many persons who in the previous decade had taken a prominent part in state politics. ... In the course of time other state prisoners were rounded up, including W.J. Allen, member of congress, Judge John H. Mulkey, Judge Andrew D. Duff, Judge C.H. Constable ... [and others.] (*Id.*, at 301-302.)

Consider the example of Judge Constable, a one-time friend of Lincoln and a circuit judge who held court in Charleston. In a case involving alleged deserters, the Judge had ordered their release on the ground that the soldiers who arrested them could show no authority for the arrest. The Judge was in turn arrested by army officers and held in jail. Eventually, after a hearing in federal court, he was released. The Judge received death threats. Soldiers in Mattoon compelled him to take a loyalty oath. One source said the soldiers violently dragged the Judge off his wagon and forced him to kneel on the ground and swear allegiance to the Administration. The Republican *Mattoon Gazette* justified the mistreatment by accusing Judge Constable of committing "treason."

The authors of *Captured Moments* say that groups of local Copperheads armed themselves, met in the woods to practice drilling, and engaged in other seditious activities.

Did such drilling by some Democrats occur? Unpublished McPheeters

family letters relied on by the authors suggest that it probably did. But how many men were involved? A handful? A dozen? Or several hundred?

And more fundamentally — for what purpose? To protect Democratic meetings and rallies? To prepare to resist the draft — which never happened in Moultrie County? To fight for the Confederacy?

The federal Conscription Act authorizing a military draft was enacted March 3, 1863. There was plenty of reason to criticize the act. It allowed drafted men to avoid service by hiring a substitute to take his place, or by paying \$300. But there is no evidence that local Democrats actively resisted the draft. To the contrary, some local leaders told their followers they must comply with the draft. More to the point, the draft was never implemented in Moultrie County, as volunteers were sufficient to fill the county's quotas.

Moreover, Republican groups did their own organizing and drilling. Groups of local "home guards" — affiliated with larger Union Leagues — were formed by Republicans throughout Illinois. See Thomas Bahde, "*Our Cause is a Common One*": *Home Guards, Union Leagues, and Republican Citizenship in Illinois, 1861-1863*, *Civil War History*, Vol. 56, No. 1, 2010, Kent State Press. Three or four such "home guard" companies were supposedly raised in Moultrie County. The Union League held its own meetings in Sullivan.

In any event, there is no evidence that any such organizing and drilling by Democrats were part of a treasonous plan by the Knights of the Golden Circle. One historian who researched and wrote about the Knights was Frank Klement. In his book, *The Copperheads in the Middle West*, published by the University of Chicago Press, 1960, Klement concluded that the stories about the Knights of the Golden Circle were "myths" — a Republican strategy to rouse their political base. "The Republican-constructed myths about Copperhead secret societies served their purposes well. It was a political apparition which appeared on the eve of elections. It was a figment of Republican imagination." (Klement, at 205.)

Klement totally discredited the theory that the Knights of the Golden Circle were active throughout Illinois. In *Dark Lanterns, Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials in the Civil War*, 1984, he explained how Joseph K.C. Forrest, one of the assistants of Illinois Republican Governor Richard Yates, misused rumors about the Knights of the Golden Circle by composing a false expose of the Knights "to be used as political propaganda." The *Chicago*

Tribune then published “the revelations.” “Forrest’s incredible account relied heavily upon letters (several of them anonymous) that had reached the governor’s desk, four affidavits (each signed with an X by an illiterate), and a report by a Republican serving as a government spy. Forrest’s fertile imagination filled in the gaps.” Klement labelled it “little more than a shameless electioneering document” and described his allegations as “farfetched.” Prominent Democrats denied Forrest’s “fantasies” and called him “a deliberate, studied, and infamous liar” and “foul-mouth calumniator.” *Id.*, at 18-20, 23.

Thomas Bahde, the author of the above-cited work on the pro-Republican “home guards,” agreed with Klement’s “convincing thesis that exaggerated claims of an organized Copperhead threat served Republican political aims during the elections of 1862 and 1864. ... [T]he subversive society bogeyman was a political apparition intended solely to aid Republicans in defeating Democrats at the polls.” Bahde, at 74.

Volume Three of the *Centennial History of Illinois, The Era of the Civil War*, by Arthur Cole, 1919, recites that a commission appointed by the federal district court investigated a number of K.G.C. members in southern Illinois; it confirmed the existence of K.G.C. organization, “but the charge that it was organized along military lines for armed opposition to the government and its policies could not be substantiated.” A state convention was investigated but found “no proof of treasonable intentions.” No participation by Democrats from Moultrie County or Sullivan was reported. (Cole, at 309.)

Evidence Cited by the Authors.

Three principal categories of evidence were cited by the authors for their view that Sullivan was a nest of pro-South K.G.C. secessionists:

First, — hearsay passed on from one generation to another and collected by Carl Crowder of Bethany and Stanley Davis of Sullivan a century after the Civil War. Their two summaries have each been described as one or two pages long.

Second,— a handful of news articles from an openly-partisan Republican newspaper in Mattoon. (Copies of the partisan Democratic *Sullivan Express* newspaper from the war-time era do not survive.)

Third, — a humorous column in the likewise partisan, Republican

Chicago Tribune, July 29, 1864. It described Sullivan as a sort of “Sleepy Hollow place,” and concluded that the local Democratic Congressman, the county judge, the Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Deputy Clerk, the Sheriff, the editor of the local newspaper and other prominent people were “meditating rebellion”, and were ready to raise “the standard of rebellion” if and when the Union army suffered reverses.

The fourth source, not cited, is the collection of unpublished McPheeters family letters. The family was staunchly Republican, and they didn't like Democrats very much.

Let's take the evidence cited by the authors one piece at a time. Then we can look at evidence the authors ignored.

1. In support of their claim that Sullivan was “pro-South” the authors refer to voluntary military enlistments, citing “Adjutant General's Report; 1860 Census.” Yet the *Moultrie County, Illinois Heritage Journal* for April 2011 provides a long list — spread over 5 pages — of dozens of soldiers in Company E of the 21st Illinois Infantry whose residence was “Sullivan, Moultrie Co. Il.” Other Moultrie soldiers served in other companies.

The 1881 *Combined County History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties* reported several long lists of officers and men from Moultrie county who served in the Union armed forces. See pp. 105-121. “Moultrie county probably furnished more men to the 126th than to any other regiment during the late rebellion.” (116) The lists do not identify which townships the men came from.

My grandfather, I.J. Martin, whose family was Democratic and lived in Whitley Township, had five uncles in the Union army. Two of them were taken prisoner and spent time in a Confederate prison camp in Tyler Texas. That's just one family. (He also had another uncle who had gone to Texas before the War and was drafted by Texas into the Confederate army.)

Moreover, if sons in some families did not volunteer, that does not mean their families were traitors. It does not mean they supported the Confederate cause or wanted to break up the Union — any more than declining to volunteer for military service in Afghanistan in the decade following 2001 proves that the families of the non-volunteers supported the Taliban.

2. One section of the Civil War chapter is headlined in bold: **THE**

KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE. Here the authors state that grieving families of Union soldiers were bitter toward pro-South men “who joined the Knights of the Golden Circle, a paramilitary group training secretly in the woods along Asa Creek and the Kaskaskia. . . . During the War, the Knights, nicknamed ‘Copperheads,’ harassed Union families, encouraged draft resistance, and promoted insurrection.” (Emphasis supplied.) Six hundred Copperheads served in their local militia.

As stated above, a group called the Knights did indeed exist. It was prominent in Ohio and Indiana, and existed in parts of Southern Illinois. But I know of no substantial evidence that it had any presence in Sullivan or Moultrie County, let alone a militia of 600 members.

The authors quote Carl Crowder in a Bethany “Future Farmers” 1965 article — a 1-1/2 page set of notes” written about 1956, over a century after the War. He wrote: “The south half of the county had a heavy membership in the Knights of the Golden Circle, and this organization was extremely active in the area . . . Little is known of their membership lists, but their seditious activities and the burning of homes and barns . . . of Union sympathizers during this three-year period left a long trail of memories.” (*Captured Moments*, at 43). (Emphasis supplied.)

Crowder provided no citations or authority for his statement. Crowder wrote that he knew “little” about the Knights’ membership lists. Apparently he knew nothing about such lists. Apparently there were no such lists. If someone had such lists, they would have been published. What were the sources of Crowder’s stories? Apparently century-old hearsay and rumor.

Worse, his statements are nothing more than unsupported generalizations. “Extremely active.” “Seditious activities.” “Burnings” — but whose homes and barns?

Books written about the Knights of the Golden Circle do not mention any members or activities either in Sullivan or Moultrie County. *Treason History of the Order of Sons of Liberty*, Felix G. Stidger, 1903; *Report of the Judge Advocate General on the Order of American Knights, or The Sons of Liberty*, Joseph Holt, 1864.

The main authority is Frank Klement’s book, *The Copperheads in the Middle West*, published by the University of Chicago Press, 1960. He concluded that the stories about the Knights of the Golden Circle were “myths” — a

Republican strategy to rouse their political base. “The Republican-constructed myths about Copperhead secret societies served their purposes well. It was a political apparition which appeared on the eve of elections. It was a figment of Republican imagination.” (Klement, at 205.) In a later work, *Dark Lanterns*, 1984, Klement explained in detail how Joseph K.C. Forrest, one of the assistants of Illinois Governor Richard Yates, misused rumors about the Knights of the Golden Circle by composing a false expose of the Knights “to be used as political propaganda.”

The principal book on the history of Moultrie County and Sullivan is the *Combined History of Shelby & Moultrie Counties*, 1881. It says nothing about supposed K.G.C. activities, Copperheads arming and drilling in the woods, preparing to do battle for the Confederacy.

The authors of the new Moultrie County history brush off the 1881 history on the ground that “wounds were still raw” when that book was prepared. But raw wounds would have been a reason for the authors to report any such treason — not hide it. A simpler and more likely explanation is that there was no such large-scale treason to hide.

So: Were some Moultrie Democrats practicing drilling in and around Sullivan? Probably some of them were.

Were there several hundreds? No evidence.

Were they members of the Knights of the Golden Circle? No evidence.

Were they traitors — supporting the Confederacy and break-up of the Union? No.

3. The authors cite an article in the *Mattoon Gazette* which said: “It has been believed for months past, that the Knights of the Golden Circle have well organized lodges in Moultrie” and other counties. “... has been believed ...”? The *Mattoon* editor did not even say he believed it. But he continued: Two Whitley Point men, William Waggoner and Jos. Trimble, were preparing to move to Mattoon because of threats “by the K.G.C.” They were reportedly told — by some unnamed men — they would be shot “if they were not able to give the sign in two weeks ...”

The *Mattoon Gazette* was a frequently-intemperate pro-Republican

political newspaper — the Fox Network of its time. They weren't alone in being political. The *Sullivan Express* was a frequently-intemperate anti-Republican political newspaper — the MSNBC of its time. Unfortunately, issues of the *Express* survive only from the pre-war period — not the War itself. Both papers, like the parties whose interests they represented, specialized in hurling insults at each other. Republicans and their newspapers accused Democrats of being “Copperheads” — poisonous snakes — and traitors. Democrats and their papers accused Republicans of being “Abolitionists” and n-lovers, using a word that can't (or at least shouldn't) be used today.

At political rallies, political speakers entertained their audiences by insulting their opponents, the more vicious the insults the better. Members of the audiences shouted “hit him again!” Are all such insults and political charges to be treated 150 years later as an adequate factual basis for drawing conclusions about what really happened?

It is certainly possible somebody threatened the two Whitley Point men. But who? And why? What's the evidence that the men making the threats were K.G.C. members? Or that they were part of a wider plot to help the Confederate cause?

If it happened, it was likely a local, individualized incident — but certainly not evidence of a broad-scale attempt by Sullivan Democrats to commit treason or help the South win the War.

Maybe Trimble let his pigs get into his neighbor's yard.

4. The authors cite A. Gammill, another resident of Whitley Point, for the proposition that he received threats of injury if he kept going to Abolitionist meetings. Abolitionist meetings in heavily-Democratic Whitley Township?

Andrew Gammill, a resident of Whitley Township, was a respected man. He had two sons in military service during the War. The family was Republican. *Portrait and Biographical Record of Shelby and Moultrie Counties*, 1891, at 343.

We have no idea what was said to Gammill, or who said it, or what the circumstances were, or how serious it was, or whether it was said in jest in a tavern after a few drinks.

These threats — if that’s what they were — fall extraordinarily far short of evidence that there was a “heavy membership” of “extremely active” K.G.C. members engaged in sedition in Moultrie County, training and working to aid the Confederate cause.

So far as I know, there is no solid publicly-available evidence that *any* Democrat in Moultrie County was a member of the K.G.C. or a supporter of their seditious or treasonous activities.

5. The authors say, “Copperheads began drilling openly and held torchlight parades through Sullivan and Windsor.”

Democrats surely did gather and have political meetings and rallies, just as Republicans did. But the authors are not talking about a meeting or a parade. They speak of an “estimated six hundred Copperhead militia members.” (Emphasis supplied.)

Who? Where? When? Six hundred — all Copperheads — all militia members? “Estimated”? The claim reminds me of Senator Joseph McCarthy’s infamous “list” in 1950 of supposed communists who had infiltrated the United States Government.

And most important — Why? What was the purpose? It’s no surprise that Democrats, like Republicans, held meetings and parades. There are indications that some Democrats drilled. It’s far from clear that hundreds were involved.

But if some number did drill, so what? What was their intent? To help the South win the War? Or to prepare to defend themselves, in more or less the same way the Republican partisans were organizing “home guard” units to defend themselves?

6. In 1862 a Methodist preacher in Sullivan was threatened by “a Copperhead” for being an abolitionist. What did the threat consist of? Who made it? What were the circumstances? Is this more hearsay passed along several times over 150 years? Part of the general animosity between Methodists (then largely Republican) and members of the Christian and Baptist congregations (then largely Democrats)?

7. Also a Methodist named Bridewell saved a Republican “about to be

stabbed with a pitchfork by a Copperhead” Who? Where? When? And why?

Threatening Methodists is evidence of hundreds of K.G.C. members organizing to overthrow the Union?

8. “Copperheads” posted a sign prohibiting soldiers in uniform on the square. This time there is a citation — to Stanley Davis, County Circuit Clerk.

Stanley Davis was not around 150 years ago. He was circuit clerk in the 1960s — a century after the incident involving soldiers on the square. He certainly didn’t witness the posting of any such sign. Who told him about it?

Moreover, it appears that Davis did not write down this accumulated hearsay himself. He passed it along to Leland Glazebrook, who then wrote it down in a short memo.

How did the story originate; who handed it on to whom — orally? How many times was it handed along till it got to Davis? And then Glazebrook? How many opportunities for mistakes or distortions? Or fiction?

Moreover, even if the story is taken at face value, what does it show? Animosity toward on-leave soldiers? Perhaps evidence that some people were mad at some soldiers for pushing civilians around?

“Evidence” of this kind would not get a citizen convicted of a traffic violation today. How can it be enough to charge (as the *Tribune* did) an entire town or several hundred Sullivan citizens — including many of the prominent Sullivan elected office holders — over a century ago with sedition or promoting insurrection?

9. One of the main episodes cited by the authors is the so-called “Charleston riot” that occurred in Coles County on March 28, 1864, in which several people were killed. The riot occurred in Charleston — not Sullivan. The authors say Congressman John R. Eden was in town that day to speak at a rally of “Peace Democrats,” and that soldiers were attacked by “Copperheads.” The authors got this one terribly wrong.

John R. Eden was not a “Peace Democrat” or “Copperhead” as the authors use the terms. He supported the war effort. There was no rally of

Peace Democrats or Copperheads that day in Charleston. John R. Eden did not speak that day and was not the cause of the riot. It was not a riot about politics at all.

John R. Eden, while serving in Congress, voted for appropriations to pay the troops and support the war effort to defeat the Confederacy. Like Senator Douglas, his hero, he supported the Union in his speeches. Democrats criticized the Administration for infringing civil liberties and for inefficient conduct of the War, but they did not promote insurrection or support the Confederate cause. They did not interfere with the military draft.

The Charleston riot was a fight started in a saloon between (a) a small group of soldiers who were not on duty — many were on furlough — and were not citizens of Charleston, and (b) a group of locals, mostly Democrats. Most were apparently under the influence of alcohol.

Peter Barry, a retired U-I Professor and Charleston native, wrote a book about the riot. *Charleston, Illinois Riot*, 2007. He concluded that it was “a violent, localized fight that was ignited by personal animosities and driven more by alcohol, emotions, and grudges than by political passions and patriotism.” (Barry, at 70.) One of the roots of the riot was the practice of Union soldiers, usually on furlough, of roaming the streets of Charleston and Mattoon, accosting known Democrats, forcing them to their knees and compelling them to swear to support the Lincoln Administration and all its proclamations. (*Id.*, at 28.)

No evidence suggests that Democrats from Moultrie County had anything to do with the Charleston riot. No evidence suggests that the rioters were trying to help the Confederacy or to overthrow the Union.

The authors quote a sentence from a letter written by John R. Eden after the riot, saying that the affair was “terrible.” But they do not quote the rest of the letter, in which Eden provided evidence for Barry’s conclusion that the riot was caused by alcohol, emotions and personal grudges rather than any speech of Eden’s (he didn’t speak) or any treasonous activities by K.G.C agents:

I reached Charleston between one and two o’clock and stopped there, no more apprehensive of danger than I now am. When at Mattoon I heard from citizens and soldiers that the soldiers at Charleston were to come to Mattoon on the next train, which would leave Charleston between two and three o’clock. ... When I went up to

the Hotel at Charleston I saw that there were a good many people in town and a very considerable number of soldiers, many of whom were drunk. The word there also was that the soldiers were to leave there on the next train going west. As soon as I got my dinner I went over to the court house. On the way I saw that there was a good deal of excitement and heard that a number of citizens had been badly abused by the soldiers during the day. When I went in to the court house, the court being in session, I told my friends that owing to the excitement I did not deem it prudent to speak. ...

Eden's letter makes it clear that the riot was not a treasonous act of K.G.C. agents intent on undermining the Union.

10. One of the authors' more sensational claims is that in July 1864 —

Moultrie County's Copperheads purchased six hundred Smith and Wesson breech-loading rifles and eight hundred men gathered to pack cartridges with powder furnished by the county judge. (Emphasis supplied.)

Wow! 600 new rifles and 800 Copperheads packing cartridges. And the county judge was Joseph Eden, a brother of John R. Eden, the "Confederate Congressman" and supposed instigator of the Charleston riot.

For this proposition — the 600 rifles and 800 men packing cartridges — the authors rely on the *Tribune* column of July 26, 1864. It said the men did all that cartridge packing "in a room over Banks' store" opposite the square. All those hundreds of Copperheads packing cartridges in a single upstairs room. And the floor didn't collapse.

But the Trib piece they rely on was not a news report. It was a humorous, ironic column written by a *Tribune* correspondent who was having some satirical fun. The authors of the county history misread it as a serious news story.

The Trib columnist entitled his article: "The Village of Sullivan — Sleepy Hollow outdone — Copperheadism in Moultrie." It is "by all odds the dullest and most uninviting place I have yet encountered in my wanderings." "A couple of women standing upon the porch of a dilapidated dwelling, washing, each with a pipe in her mouth and clad in homespun, was the first evidence of animated humanity that greeted my eye ..." The Sullivan main street could

only be called a street “by some sort of poetic license.” Women smoking their pipes indeed.

“Not even the whiskey shops, of which there are at least a dozen, furnished an exception to the general quiet... It seemed as if the entire community was engaged in a sleep to which that of Rip Van Winkle scarcely deserved to be considered a parallel.”

The Trib columnist evidently hoped he might become the next Washington Irving.

Then the Trib columnists moved on to identify the leaders of the Sullivan Copperheads:

“I drove my horse to the ‘tavern,’ kept by Jo. Eden, brother of the Confederate Congressman ... The proprietor of one store was stretched full length upon the counter; the owner of another was playing checkers with his clerk; ...

“The inhabitants of Sullivan ... are mainly Copperheads; not the hybrid, who, professing fealty to the Union in one breath, and uttering treasonable words in the other, flourisheth in the latitude of Chicago, but outspoken and rebellious Copperheads, who cheer for Jeff. Davis as regularly as they take their coffee; who would sooner hang an Abolitionist than say their prayers of a Sunday morning; who openly sport the butternut badge of fealty to the Southern Confederacy; who drill regularly twice a week in a secluded grove in Moultrie, and who are actively and earnestly engaged in preparing for the coming outbreak.” (Emphasis supplied.)

Sleepy, lazy, whiskey-sodden Sullivan rebellious Copperheads drilling regularly — twice a week! — in their secluded grove?

“There were three hundred of them [during the celebrated Coles county riot]; and there are more now. Each man is armed with a breach-loading Smith & Wesson rifle, besides revolvers and knives. These rifles have been recently procured ... Quite recently six hundred improved rifles of the above make have been purchased, and each man belonging to the organization is required to own one. If he can not get it otherwise he sells his last cow.” (Emphasis supplied.)

“In March last the Copperheads to the number of 300 met in this village to make cartridges in a room over Banks’ store, from powder furnished, it is said, by Jo. E. Eden”

Cheering for Jeff Davis ... and sooner hang Abolitionists than pray on Sunday? It’s a work of humor, not investigative reporting! The author had just come to town. Who knows what he’d heard at the tavern, but he surely had not been out in the country observing Knights drilling twice a week in their secluded grove.

Any reader who takes the 300 “rebellious Copperheads” seriously must take equally seriously the bits about cheering for Jeff Davis, and “fealty” to the Confederacy, and hanging Abolitionists, and about being required to buy a rifle or “sell his last cow.” Oh yes, ... and about John R. Eden being a “Confederate Congressman ...”

(By the way, the Trib columnist wrote that 300 Copperheads had made the cartridges with powder. He did not say 800 men were packing the cartridges, as the authors say at p. 44. But then again — if you can make it 300 without evidence, might as well make it 800.)

Then the Trib writer blasts away at the Copperhead leaders. John R. Eden — “self-made ... rude eloquence ...not at heart a bad man ... a good neighbor.” Then A.L. Kellar, a doctor and Christian Church preacher — “formerly Colonel of a Copperhead regiment numbering from four to six hundred ...” Then Joseph E. Eden, brother of the Congressman — Judge, “keeps tavern ... no great shakes.” Then Arnold Thomasson, Clerk of the Circuit Court, John Meeker, Deputy Clerk ... J.H. Snyder, the Sheriff ... and John Perryman, the editor of the Copperhead Express ... a humbug of the first order.”

(The Trib wasn’t nearly as severe on Perryman as the Republican *Mattoon Gazette*, which called him “a third-rate blockhead” who produced “a filthily printed five-column sheet, principally filled with matter calculated — if uttered by men of any influence — to injure the Government.” August 19, 1863.)

All these Sullivan leaders, the Trib says, “are meditating rebellion.” If Northern armies suffer reverses, “I firmly believe the standard of rebellion will be raised in this as well as the adjoining counties.”

Satire? Humor by exaggeration? Sure, ... or at least maybe. To be

taken seriously as news? As the truthful reporting of facts? All these elected Sullivan officials and leaders, including a Christian Church preacher, were traitors, actually plotting rebellion?

The writers of the new Moultrie history treat it as serious news. It was not — any more than Sleepy Hollow and Rip Van Winkle were news. One might as well believe in the “Headless Horseman.”

* * *

A young Democrat who came with his family to Moultrie County in 1861 at the age of 18 was Charles Shuman, later a successful and much-admired Sullivan banker and businessman. Before Moultrie, the Shuman family had lived in nearby Edgar county. Before that they had lived in Kentucky. Hmm. Lived in Kentucky? Age 18 when he came to Moultrie County? That’s military age. And a Democrat? He didn’t volunteer?

Worse: He was selected in 1882 by the Democrats to fill the office of county clerk, which he did until 1890. One of the young men he hired as a deputy was young I.J. Martin, the Whitley Democrat. Later they worked together to produce the Democrat-leaning Sullivan *Progress* newspaper, the descendant from the *Express*. Martin always respected Shuman, his partner and friend.

Q. Could Charles Shuman, a Democrat, have been a secret member of the K.G.C. and a supporter of insurrection during the war?

A. Could have been. But he clearly wasn’t. Just because he was a Democrat and had once lived in Kentucky and did not volunteer for the Union army — those facts fall extraordinarily far short of proving he was a Copperhead or supporter of the Confederacy. There’s no evidence that he was a member of the K.G.C. or a traitor.

Q. True — but there’s no evidence that any other Sullivan Democrat was either!

* * *

11. The writers say that Jacob Hancock murdered George Livers in a tavern on November 14, 1864, because he wanted to kill a draft agent — part of a larger attack by Copperheads on the draft system. Without saying so directly,

they also hint that the burning down of the Sullivan courthouse 11 days after the murder was somehow connected to the killing. All part of the Copperhead or Knights of the Golden Circle treasonous conspiracy?

There are a few little factual problems with this claim:

— There was no evidence that Hancock, the killer, was a draftee.

— There was no evidence that the victim, Livers, was a draft agent; indeed, the trial showed that he was the bartender — not a draft agent;

— There was no evidence that the man Hancock apparently sought to kill was a draft agent either;

— There was no evidence the draft had anything to do with the murder. The draft was apparently never mentioned in the trial record. The trial record said the shooting was accidental: “the gun had a tendency to go off half-cocked.”

— There isn’t even any evidence that a draft was underway in Illinois or Moultrie County in November 1864 — *or at any time during the War*. Illinois and Moultrie County filled all their military quotas through voluntary enrollments. When the War was coming to an end in the spring of 1865, Illinois was considering the possibility of a draft if voluntary enrollments did not fill the quotas; but the War ended before any such draft was necessary.

Hancock, the killer, was apparently drunk at the time of the killing. There’s no dispute about that. So the killing may have been no more than a drunken act of violence — very far from the act of a conspiratorial agent of the K.G.C intent on undermining the Union by disrupting its draft system.

And the burning of the courthouse 11 days later? The authors do not state that Copperheads did it. Yet there’s a hint that the burning was somehow related to the murder. As one of the authors once wrote to me: “It does give one pause to ponder the possibilities, especially since the night-riding Copperheads were burning barns and homes of ‘abolitionists.’ Why not burn down the courthouse where Hancock was being held prisoner awaiting trial? What better way to show opposition to the draft ... one of the main motivations of the Copperheads?”

Evidence Relied on But Not Cited by the Authors

The unpublished McPheeters family letters, though not cited as authority, are clearly part of the basis for the authors' conclusion that Sullivan was full of treasonous Copperheads and K.G.C. members. The letters (a few of which I have read) are part of the basis — albeit hearsay — for the claim that hundreds of Copperheads were drilling in the woods southeast of town. The family no doubt has good reason to keep the letters private. But it is hardly sound historical practice to release selectively those letters which seem to support one's thesis, but withhold others which may not.

In any event, far from supporting the authors' treason thesis, one of the McPheeters letters directly undercuts it. A letter of Addison McPheeters, September 6, 1863, states: "The Copperheads lately had a mass meeting in Sullivan. Ficklin & Anthony Thornton were the speakers. ... Thornton told them that they must submit to the draft, that if they attempted to resist it by force of arms, that the government would overpower them, that they would stand precisely as the rebels in the south do and that it would be impossible for them to cope with the force the government would bring against them ..."

Thornton was one of the main Democrat leaders. Here he is, telling his Democratic audience that they must comply with the federal draft act. He was elected to Congress the following year, 1864. Yet the authors view Sullivan as dominated by traitorous Democrats carrying out the Knights' agenda of destroying the Union?

The McPheeters letters amply illustrate the bitter animus against Democrats which warped the writers' ability to distinguish political opposition from sedition. The local leaders of the Democrats were not traitors. Criticism of the Administration was not sedition.

One example of the McPheeters' animus is the letter of Addison McPheeters Jr., March 13, 1863 — Re Copperheads: "I have no mercy or forbearance with such men, shooting is too good for them. They should die the death of a felon."

Another is the letter of Addison McPheeters, July 9, 1863 — "The union party had a grand celebration at the Camp ground. There was a very large crowd [Little hard to reconcile that with the authors' statement that "Sullivan" was "pro-South."] The Copperheads also had a celebration in Sul-

livan. A large number came armed with their guns, and drilled near the Fair Grounds. . . . Dr. Kellar mounted on a horse, being apparently in command, as he gave the words of command. . . . Eden & Kellar “claimed that under our constitution every man had a right to free speech and a free press, and that all the arrests that had been made by the military were direct violations of the constitution. . . . Now it is true that every person has the right to write and publish what he pleases, and it is equally true that if he slanders his neighbors, that he is liable to punishment, and as neither our constitution nor laws gives the right to be a traitor, if any person becomes such either in time of peace or war, it is not only right but it is the duty of our government to arrest and punish them for it.”

So if the Republicans hold a big celebration and march, it’s “grand.” If the Democrats hold one, it’s criminal. John R. Eden may have the right to speak, but if he “slanders his neighbors,” then he should be arrested and punished.

The McPheeters sons who served in the Union Army provided noble service to their country. Their family was justly proud of them. But bitter animus on the part of some family members led them privately to elevate political disagreements into lies, and political opposition into the promotion of insurrection.

* * *

After the War, I.J. Martin, a Democrat, was a business partner — co-owner of the *Sullivan Progress* — of McPheeters’ son-in-law, Charles Shuman, another Democrat. In his *Notes on the History of Sullivan*, I.J. Martin wholeheartedly endorsed the work of the Citizens’ Party in Sullivan civil life and praised the “active and effective leaders of the party. Capt. Rankin McPheeters was one of the best . . .” Charles Shuman was “equally valuable.” (At 66.)

Evidence the Authors Left Out.

The authors include one brief paragraph about fear going “both ways.” They refer to one story in which Copperheads were beaten in Mattoon, and another in which a young lady was frightened by a “Union foraging party . . .”

But the authors left out the civil rights violations, the night raids by furloughed soldiers on homes of Democrats, and the forced pledges of alle-

giance to the policies of the Lincoln Administration. These were reported by I.J. Martin, a historian of both Moultrie County and Sullivan, and elsewhere. I.J.'s published writings about the Civil War era were not even mentioned by the authors. What he wrote was inconsistent with their theme.

I.J.'s folks were Democrats — but not Confederate sympathizers, and certainly not members of the Knights. He had five uncles who volunteered for service in the Union army.

I.J. Martin acknowledged that there were some “Copperheads” in the county but he wrote that their membership was “not large.” As he (and most people) used the terms, all Democrats were not “Copperheads,” and being a Copperhead did not equate to membership in the “Knights.” I.J. Martin wrote that an investigator (suspected of being a rebel but perhaps a federal government spy) failed “to find any sympathy for a plan of armed resistance.”

In 1863 and the early part of 1864, there was a rather bitter feeling between Democrats and Republicans — both sides suspected the other. What was known as the ‘Copperhead’ organization had *some adherents*, although the membership was *not large* in Moultrie County.

The irritation was increased by a few night raids by the soldiers who visited Democratic homes collecting guns and sometimes taking the men to Mattoon to be questioned. ... These raids were always made about midnight, and were naturally very much resented. No one was ever prosecuted, and no charges were ever made.

In the summer of 1863, there was in central Illinois a man who claimed to be a Copperhead official who called himself ‘Colonel Powderhorn.’ Some of the Democrats suspected him of being a rebel agent and his actions seemed to point that way, especially when he proposed the purchase of a supply of arms. *Failing to find any sympathy for a plan of armed resistance*, he finally went away and it was not until long afterward that it was learned that he was a government spy. (Emphasis supplied.) Martin, *Recollections of the Civil War*.

It is worth pausing over these passages. I.J. Martin was from a Democrat family in the south part of the county, where the authors say the K.G.C. support was concentrated. His family was strongly pro-Union. He wrote extensive notes on the history of both Sullivan and the County — published

notes which the authors did not mention. He wrote that the Copperhead membership was “not large” — and he did not refer to any membership or support for the Knights. Even more to the point, he wrote that a supposed federal agent “failed to find any sympathy for a plan of armed resistance . . .” He also remembered that in the Martin home, “the name of Jeff Davis was anathema.”

The authors of our new history likewise included nothing about the speeches and political career of John R. Eden and other prominent Democrats who made it clear that they supported the Union. As Eden said on the floor of the House of Representatives, February 27, 1864, the government was “duty bound to suppress insurrection.” He said:

I am a friend of the Union; my love for it is so strong that I am not willing to give up a single State. When I see a hand raised to strike down and blot out a single star from the flag of my country, whether the blow be directed by the traitor in arms or by a more insidious enemy seeking to effect the same and by undermining and subverting the Constitution, I will interpose my feeble efforts toward off the blow. I would save the Union

Another local Democratic leader who supported the Union and opposed law-breaking by thugs in either party was Judge Anthony Thornton, a prominent lawyer of Shelbyville. Thornton later succeeded John R. Eden as Congressman from the district that included Shelby and Moultrie Counties. Like Eden, he supported the Union and the military effort to put down the Confederacy. If there was to be a draft in Moultrie County (which there wasn't because of the sufficiency of volunteers), he was opposed to any resistance.

If Sullivan was dominated by the Knights of the Golden Circle, and if hundreds of Sullivan Democrats promoted insurrection against their country, why did Moultrie Democrats nominate and elect men like Eden and Thornton — men who supported the War and opposed law-breaking — to Congress in 1862 and 1864?

To sum up:

Sullivan Democrats as well as Republicans volunteered for military service during the War.

Sullivan's Democratic political leaders and elected officials, including Congressman John R. Eden, supported the Union military effort to suppress the Confederacy.

Some Sullivan Democrats — like their Republican counterparts — may have armed and drilled; but there is zero evidence that hundreds did so to support the Confederacy. Mutual self-defense is a far more likely motive for the preparations of both groups.

Although there were sporadic acts of reported violence and intimidation, they apparently occurred on both sides. There is zero evidence that any such acts by Democrats were part of a broader treasonous K.G.C. plot.

The remarkable thing is that during this period of wartime and political controversy, there were not more incidents in Moultrie County of murder and violence.

Local Democrats did not obstruct the draft. Volunteers filled the quotas for Moultrie County. There was no draft in Moultrie County during the War.

Sullivan Democrats were political opponents of the Republican Administration — not traitors. Their concerns about civil rights violations were legitimate. President Lincoln shared their doubts about the constitutionality of the Emancipation Proclamation. That's why we have the Thirteenth Amendment.

There is zero evidence that hundreds of Sullivan Democrats were members of the Knights of the Golden Circle.

More local injury and damage were likely caused in Sullivan by alcohol and sunburn than by Sullivan K.G.C. agents cavorting in the woods.

The evidence now available strongly supports a conclusion diametrically opposed to that of the authors: Sullivan was not "pro-South" during the Civil War.

Index of References

A

Abstracts of title 8
Air Dome 315
Alumbaugh, J.H. 333
Altgeld, John P. 225, 347, 348
Anderson, Ed 191
Ansbacher, Morris 275
Armstrong, Beverly 199
Atchison, Oliver 64
Asa's Point 12
Ascherman, Lloyd 144
Ashbrook, Flora 299
Ashworth, F.E. 171
Ashworth, Felix 50
Atteberry, Annice Louisa Stoltz 197,
207, 227, 228, 229
Atteberry, Clark M. 197, 230
Atteberry, David 197
Atteberry, David H. "Hint" 198, 199,
208, 212
Atteberry, Earl 231
Atteberry, Edward 197 et seq.
Atteberry, Emma Jane 197
Atteberry, Joseph 198
Atteberry, Myrtle 197
Atteberry, Robert 198
Atteberry, Roxanna Moore 197 et seq.
Atteberry, Ulysses Grant, "Grant" 197
et seq.

B

Baker, Charlotte 103
Baker, John H., "J.H." or "Jack" 234 et
seq., 258, 276, 283
Ballard, W.A. 121
Banks store 69
Barber, E.E. 168, 169
Barber, Harry 169, 171
Barger, R.R. 120, 121

Barns, J.H. 250
Barry, Peter 59, 379
Bartels, Nellie 103
Bastion, N.S. 85, 93
Bastion, Mrs. C.J. 92
Bastion Seminary 91
Bean, J.R. 241, 266
Berger, Louis J. 311
Berry, Rebecca Elder 133
Best, Marion 125
Best, Robert 125, 132
Beveridge, Albert 41, 97, 168, 183 et
seq., 327
Beveridge, Elizabeth 188, 193
Beveridge, Francis 193
Beveridge, Thomas H. 184 et seq.
Bijou 312
Bingman, Virgil 174
Birch, Mack 241
Birch, Ruth 173
Birch, W.H. 305
Bispham, David 318
Blackwell, Charles 303, 303
Bland, Perry 286, 288
Bland, Mrs. Perry 288
Boggs, Franklin W. 144, 145
Bolin, S.T. 138
Booze, Charles 168
Bowers & Harris 205, 206
Brandenburger, Byron 125, 127, 128, 3
129, 130
Brandenburger, Ed 321, 330, 334
Branson 88
Brick school 89
Bridewell, Elijah 21, 27
Bristow, Demosthenes F. 274
Bristow, John 288, 290, 291, 292, 293
Brooks, John 86
Brosam, George 171, 233, 241, 276
Brossard, J. 228

Index of References

- Brown, Julia 171
Brown, Rev. R.D. 341
Bryan, William Jennings 308, 313
Buckner, A. 27
Bupp, City Marshall 218
Burgess, Lew 340
Burgholzer, Tony 144
Burrell 238
Bush, Samuel 345
Bushart, E.E. 258
Bushart, John M. 259
Bushfield, Thomas M. 117
Butler, H.M. 245
Butler, H.S. 321, 324
Butler, Dr. Don 288, 321
Butler, Dr. Malone 241
Butler, Dr. S.J. 241
- C**
- Calhoun, J.B. 154
Cambridge, W.G. 123
Camfield, James 12, 21, 36, 37, 38
Campbell, Alpheus K. 205, 224, 276
Campbell, Judge 215
canary, dead 147
Cannon, Arthur 323
Cantrell, William 10
“Captured Moments” 69, 367 et seq.
Carpenter, Mert 146
Casey, A.L. 294
Cawood, W.C. 264
Cazier, William 30
Central Illinois Power Company (CIPS)
243
Chamber of Commerce 139, 246
Chapin, Ada 106
Chapin, Arlo 124, 129, 130
Chapin, G.B. 125
Chapman, George 100
Chapman, W.A. 123
Charleston riot 59, 351 et seq.
Chase, W.H. 240
Chase, Walter 241
Cheadle, Charles B. 268
Cheever, Nathan 71
Chicago & Eastern Illinois railroad 162
Chicago & Paducah railroad 159, 160
Chicago Tribune 65, 180
Christian Church 29, 38, 84, 89
Cholera 30
Circus 77
Citizens Bank & Trust Co. 138
Citizens Party 236, 241, 253, 274, 276,
279
City Book Store 168
Civil War 55 et seq., 351 et seq.
Clark, C.C. 263, 264
Clark, Horace S. 201
Clark, Margaret Phoenix 349
Clark, W.A. 349
Cochran, A.G. 171
Cochran, Ben 291, 293
Cochran, C.D. “Doug” 204
Cochran, William G. 18, 36, 40, 41, 56,
141, 143, 221, 247, 294, 304,
307
Cohenour, Minnie 286
Cokely, Dennis 87, 88, 92
Colligan Steve 64
Collins, Clarence 144
Conlin 306
Conscription Act 371
Constable, Judge 59, 63, 370
Cooper, Glenn R. 125
Copperhead 56, 58, 60, 66, 368 et seq.
Corbin, Charles 94, 101
Corbin W.P. 137
Corby 37

Index of References

Couch, Richard 116, 117
County seat 12
Covey, William G. 123, 124
Crafts, Clayton 234
Crouch, William 75
Cummins, J.M. 241, 275
Cummins, Matt 220
Cunningham, Marion 306
Custer, Engineer 236

D

Darrow, Clarence 233, 250, 251
Daugherty, Reuben 228
Daum, Geneva 335
David, Davis 38
David, Ed 277
David, J.M. 101
David, Milton 316
Davidson, Dr. W.P. 293
Davis, G.W. 334
Davis, Jeff, cheering for 70
Daddy, Kirk 141
Decatur, Mattoon and Southern 158, 159,
163
Decatur, Sullivan, and Mattoon Railroad
31, 74, 115, 135, 139, 155, 156,
157, 163
Dedman, James E. 241, 276
Dedman, Matt 106
Denslow, Oliver 84
Denton, Nancy Isabel (Mrs. James
Denton) 198, 229
DePauw 191
Dill, Mrs. Hubbard 345, 346
Dolan & Newbould garage 259
Donahue, Michael 122
Donnerslon 91
Dora, J.W. 59, 63
Douglas, Mahlon 76

Douglas, Stephen A. 43, 57
Draft, military 65, 371
Dred Scott decision 89
Duffield, William 30
Dumond, Jacob 238, 240
Duncan, John 134
Dunlap 211
Dunlap, Dr. J.A. 276
Dunscomb, E.J. 177
Dunscomb, E.O. 106
Dunscomb, George 124,
Dunscomb, J.H. 123

E

Eagle House 44
Earp, Joel 23
Earp, Melissa 95
Earp, Samuel 64
Earp, Wyatt 23
Eden House 22, 44, 222
Eden, Erastus Bussell "E.B." ("Bus") 188,
194, 205, 206, 260
Eden, John R. 22, 27, 30, 33, 39, 50,
56, 57, 62, 66, 67, 82, 114, 153,
154, 200, 201, 211, 234, 351 et
seq.
Eden, Joseph Edgar 44, 66, 68, 69, 75,
119, 181
Eden, Rose 92
Eden, Walter 75, 90, 93, 118, 181, 186
Eden, William Wallace (W.W.) 119
Edmonson, Vernon 144
Edwards, G.M. 229
Edwards, Jesse L. 106
Elder Bank 22, 133
Elder, E.D. 144, 145, 249, 250, 252
Elder, James 21, 22, 31, 36, 36, 44, 50,
53, 74, 86, 133, 137, 154, 156,
181, 182, 300

Index of References

Elder, James W. 233, 276
Elder, S.W. 26
Elder, William 74, 133, 134, 137, 138,
139
Electrical Theater 311
Elliott, J.T. 79
Elliott, James T. 229
Ellis, Mayor Nathan 267, 279
Emancipation Proclamation 57
Enslow, David 303
Enslow, E.J. 258
Etheridge, J.I. 90
Everett, Anna 188, 195
Everett, B.B. 30, 122
Everett, C.W. 122
Ewing, R.B. 13, 21
Ewing, R.R. 86

F

fairgrounds 78
“Fake news” 380
Fallow 287
Farlow, N. 88
Farmer, Bob 64
Farmers’ Railroad 154
Fickle, O.B. 154
Ficklin, Col. 48
Fields, Harry 320
Finley, Thomas H. 103
First court house 29, 35, 36, 38, 39
First hotel 30
First jail 177
First National Bank of Sullivan 19, 138,
141, 142
First paved road 33
First post office 181
First school 29, 38, 83
First World War 261, 305
Fleming, Frank 295

Fleming, J.F. 266
Fleming, Peter 181
Fleming, Sheriff Warren M. 283 et seq.
Frantz, D.W. 304
Freeland Academy 84
Freeland, James S. 83, 84, 85, 86, 92
Freeland, John 16, 18, 21, 28, 55, 86,
154, 156, 262
Freeland Grove 51, 307, 329, 332
Fultz, Bert 318
Fultz, Mrs. 289
Friends in Council 306
Funston, W.O. 288

G

Gaddis, John 120, 121
Gambol, Lawrence 144
Gardner, Harry 168
Garett, Grover 331
Garrigus, W.B. 278
Gauger, John 321
Gerkin, Bert 64
Getz, A.t. 144
Gifford, A. 294
Gilliam, Perry B. 56
Ginn, John 50
Glasgow 10, 22
Globe 315, 317
Grand Theater 321
Green, C.W. 123
Greenhill cemetery 299
Greene, A.P. 121
Gregory, Adley N. 56
Griffith, Milton 286

H

Hagerman, Benjamin 56
Hagerman, L.G. 56
Hale, Philo 12, 36

Index of References

- Hall, Ed 95
Hall, S.B. 250
Ham, R.W. 226
Hamilton, Parnell 13
Hamlin, H.J. 200, 201
Hancock, Jacob 383
Hancock, W.L. 293
Hankins, H.S. 268
Harbaugh, Frank M. 141, 143, 233, 240
Harbaugh, Mrs. F.M. 171
Hardin, Coroner 224
Harmon, W.t. 228
Harris, Carleton 31, 220, 257
Harris, James 346, 349
Harris, W.S. 293
Harrison, A.O. 265
Harsh, C.E. 250
Harsh, Perry J. 252, 253
Hawkins, Gregg R. 241
Hayden, Benjamin B. 112
Hayne, Thomas 84
Heacock, Minnie 333
Heatherington, George 177
Henkel, E.V. 119
Henley, F.W. 168
Henry, B.W. 115
Henry, Laura E. 115
Henry, R. W. 87
Henry, W.W. 328
Herman, S.T. 315, 316
Hibbard, Sarah 87
Hiekisch, Paul 256
High school 103
Higgins and Dickerson 311
Hill, Elizabeth 86
Hill, George T. 228
Hill, O. R. 138
Hines, Grover 293
Hitt, J.Y. 30
Hoke, Amanda 228
Hoke, Fountain P. 94
Hoke, Frank 228, 241
Hoke, Fred 228
Hoke, John 64, 228
Hoke, Lewis 94
Hoke, Samuel S. 228
Hoke, Wilford 64
Hollingsworth, Wade 123
Holt report 63
Hook, Sam 68, 69
Hopkins, J.H. 21
Horn, L.C. 266
Horn, Chester 321
Hostetler, Mary 82
House, A.M. 201
Hudson, Isaac 126, 127, 236, 240, 276
Hudson, Kate 127
Huff, Mary 283, 286
Huff, Nimrod (“Nim”) 283, et seq.
Huff, Roger 291, 292
Huff, Rufus 250, 283, et seq.
Huffman, Frank 64
Hughes, J.F. 121
Hughes, Mary 80
Hughes, Thomas G. 101, 297, 298
- ## I
- Illinois Bridge and Iron Company 234
Illinois Central railroad 159
Illinois Theater 320, 322
The Independent 127
Incorporation of Sullivan 28
Inlow, A.P. 249
Ireland, J.H. 318, 320, 321,
Ives, R.O. 106

Index of References

J

Jazz Singer 324
Jefferson Theater 318
Jeffries, W.P. 228
Jenne, Loren 174
Jenkins and Whitfield garage 141, 143
Jenkins, A.T. 138, 141
Jenkins, Ray 140
Jennings, Benjamin S. 273
Jennings, J. Eden 144, 145, 171, 238,
239, 240, 276, 299
Jennings, Lucy 172
Johnson, Dr. W.W. (Stonewall) 247,
250, 252
Johnson, S.W. 307
Johnson, Mrs. S.W. 171
Johnson, Maude 103
Johnson, Thomas 189
Jonathan Creek 79
Jones, Alvin 258, 260

K

Kaskaskia River 20
Keedy & Brown 22
Kellar, A.L. 30, 61, 68, 89, 153, 154
Kellar, H.Y. 27, 84, 89
Kellar, William 15, 30, 33, 61, 86, 90,
272, 299
Kelly, W.C. 201
Kiger, Attorney 252
Kilner drug store 74, 181
Kirk, James L. 265, 266
Kirkwood, William 273, 340
Klement, Frank L. 63
Knight, P.B. 27
Knights of the Golden Circle 58, 61, 63,
69, 368 et seq.
Krows, Jane 85

Krows, Mrs. Paul 174
Ku Klux Klan 308, 327 et seq.
Kuster, Charles 257, 259, 260

L

Lacey Bend 79
Lambrecht, Lucas 275, 276, 304
Landers, Dennis 259, 294
Lane, Cicero 265
Lansden, Charles 205, 241
Lansden, Halac 205
Lansden, Thomas A. 205, 206, 208, 210,
212, 226
Lansden, Sheriff 345
Lawson, Dr. J.F. 173, 293
Lawson, D. 313
Leatherman, Ruth 92
Lee, A.B. 27, 29, 52, 53, 55, 84, 89
Lee, W.R. 84
LeGrand, James 266
Lewis, Charles H. 310
License (liquor) 28
Light, Roy 324
Lilly, America D. 126, 128, 170, 246
Lilly, John P. 126, 168, 170, 182, 214,
218, 226
Lincoln, Abraham 22, 30, 37, 43, 152,
184
Lindsay, A.S. 123
Lindsay, David 241
Lindsay, R.V. 103
Lippincott, Lester 125, 131
Lippincott, Louise 125
Little 26
Little, Guy 321
Little, Mrs. Guy 174
Livers, George 383
Lloyd, W.C. 181
Local Option Law 278

Index of References

- Lovington 9
Lowe, Guy 306
Lowe, Marie 174
Lowe, O.B. 107, 120, 121
Lowe School 100, 104
Lucas, Mrs. Albert 33
Lucas, Mrs. John 316
Lucas, May 320
Lumpkin, I.A. 264
Lux, Peter 228
Lynn Creek Baptist Church 83
Lynn, George 51, 53, 56
- M**
- MacLeod, Rev. 321
Macon County 7
Magruder, Fred T. 123
Maine Liquor Law 25, 271
Manufacturers' and Farmers' bank 134,
140, 141, 146
Martin, Ivory J. passim
Martin, Joel Neely (Bill) 106, 121, 127,
128, 129
Martin, John 24
Martin, John Eden 120, 126, 127, 247
Martin, Joel K. 239, 241, 290
Martin, John Neely 50, 64
Martin, Olive 103
Martin, Philip 3, 45
Martin, Rezin (Reason) 25, 272
Martin, Robert W. 101, 121, 128
Martin, Ruth 85, 203
Martin, William H. 24, 82
Mason, Marshall 345
Mattoon Express 60
Mattoon Telephone Exchange 264
Mattox, M.A. 293
Maxedon, Charles 226
Maxwell, Blaine 320, 321
McCarthy, Anna 101
McClellan, George 202
McClelland, George B. 199
McClure, Charles 303, 304
McClure, Gertrude 335
McClure, John R. 241, 277
McClure, F.S. 303
McClure, W.T. 120, 125
McCune, Marshal A.L. 249, 250
McCune, Jacob 12
McDaniel, Hal 6
McDaniel, Thomas L. 228
McDonald, Murray 235, 275
McDonald, Stella 277
McFerrin, Hewell 335
McGrath, T.L. 123
McIntyre, Tom 250
McLaughlin, J.L. 106, 144, 145, 321
McLaughlin, Mrs. Dean 174
McMahon, Reverend J. F. 329, 332
McPheeters, Addison 56, 86, 385
McPheeters, Addison, Jr. 56, 385
McPheeters, C.R. 293
McPheeters, Rankin 56, 56, 241
Meadowlark (C&E) 164
Meeker, Ambrose 86
Meeker, Gertrude 188, 195
Meeker, Hannah 87
Meeker, Jonathan 68, 87, 89, 137, 156,
225
Meeker, Phoebe Roxanna 87
Meeker, Ray 321
Merchants' and Farmers' Bank 74, 137,
138, 139
Methodist Church 21, 22, 39, 99
Mexican War 47
Miley, Aaron 168, 181, 182
Miley, Columbia 193
Miller, Andrew Denton 276
Miller, Aaron 276
Miller, E.J. 144, 145

Index of References

Miller, J.B. 41
Miller, John 228
Miller, R.H. 314
Miller, Salathiel David 286
Miller, S.R. 265
Miller, Sam T. 259
Milligan, D. 228
Millizen, Verne 171
Minutes, Sullivan Board of Trustees 63
Missouri Pacific railroad 162
Mize, W.J. 118, 263
Monroe, Charles 303
Monroe, G.W. 138
Monroe, Horace 226
Moore, H. 277
Moore, Julina Eden 197
Moore, James 197
Morgan, John W. 25, 272
Moudy, B. 88
Moudy, James D. 31, 89, 112
Moulton, Samuel W. 30, 82, 153
Moultrie County *passim*
Moultrie County Academy 8
Moultrie County Bank 134
Moultrie County Chronicle 122
Moultrie County News 123, 131
Moultrie County Union Banner 121
Moultrie, William 15
Movies 309 et seq.
Munch, Leona 174
Mundy, William 286
Munson, Jelo 229
Murphy Movement 190, 272
Myers, Mrs. Scott 324

N

Nazworthy, Charles 125
Nazworthy, Richard 83
Nazworthy, Thomas 83
Neeves, Chinney 286

Neeves, Robert 286
Neeves, Nimrod 286
Nelson 12, 20, 22, 36, 37, 133, 157
Newbold, A. 277
Night raids 60
Norfolk & Western railroad 161
North side school 96
Noyes, Ebenezer 62

O

Odum 26
Oglesby, Richard J. 30
Okaw Republican 121

P

Palmer, Charles G. 333
Palmer, Art 320
Palmer, S. M. 101
Paris & Decatur Railroad 158
Patterson's Point 12
Pattersons 13, 68
Paterson, Abe 138
Patterson, A.L. 64
Patterson, B.W. 228, 298
Patterson, Mayor C.R. 144, 323
Patterson, David 38
Patterson, Dan 64
Patterson, Herman 316
Patterson, Mayor 321
Patterson, Roy 250
Patterson, W.R. 41
Patterson, William 300
Peadro, R.M. 267
Pearson, J.H. 321
Peckham, William "Billy" 135
Peoples Party 252
Peoria, Decatur and Evansville Railroad
155
Perry, David 228

Index of References

Perryman building 112
Perryman, Ann 116
Perryman, John 16, 20, 28, 31, 68, 74,
86, 116, 153, 154, 181
Perryman, James 116
Perryman, George 116
Perryman, Tobey 116
Phoenix, Albert 349
Pifer, A.R. 265
Pifer, David L. 99, 100
Pifer, Dan 75
Pifer, Hattie 178, 203, 288, 289
Pifer, James R. 169
Pifer, Finley 100, 203, 250, 261, 288,
293, 302, 341
Pifer, Uriah Israel 64, 100
Pifer's Park 75
Pogue, J.R. 101, 265
Poor farm 75
Porter, Frank 84
Portwood, James M. 268
Pound, Joseph 3
Powers, Mary 96, 97, 107
Powers, Sarah 96, 97, 107
Powers school 105
Preston, P.D. 228
Price, William 5
Pugh Stores 319
Purvis, Enoch 314, 315
Purvis, Wm. 21

Q

R

railroads 149
Ramson, Emmett 226
Ranson, N.W. 89
Ray, F.M. 303
Redmond, W.T. 144

Reedy, Ananias 56
Reese, F.A. 293
Reese, John 86
Republican depredations *passim*
Rice, Asa Spencer 12
Richardson, E.A. 201
Riot, Sullivan, 1858 43
Rob, F.M. 250
Roberts, Tom 226
Robertson, Maxine 335
Robinson, W.R. 106
Roby, Orville 144
Rohr, J.W. 123
Roney, Janet 3, 21, 39, 367
Rose, Polk 97, 187
Ross, J.W. 16, 28
Roughton, Van D. 120, 121, 250
Roy, F.M. 303
Ryan, J.J. 144

S

Sabin, J.A. 101
Saffe, I.N. 228
Sampsell, M.E. 243
Sanborn map 22, 98, 102, 168, 172,
178, 209, 310, 317
Sanders, John F. 79
Sand Creek 83
Saturday Herald 125
Savoy Hotel 75
Scarborough, Coroner W.E. 294
Scoville, Rev. Charles 279
Scroggin, L.B. 120, 138
Seass family 299
Sedgwick, James R. 123
Sedgwick, Joseph F. 79
Selby, Judge George W. 103, 228, 321
Sentel, George 324
Shelby County 7
Sherburn, Wm. 38

Index of References

- Sherburn, William 266
Shinn, William Hollins 80, 275
Shirey, Homer 321
Shirey, George 228
Shoaff, Tom 330
Shoalmax, Charles 63
Short, Arthur 144
Shortess, Andy 84
Shuman, Charles 119, 120, 138, 171, 241, 383
Shuman, Irving 120, 245, 246, 248, 258, 266, 299, 300, 302, 318
Shutt, Philip L. 117, 118
Sidewalks 32
Silver, E.A. 138
Sipe, Ada 288, 289, 295
Sipe, Flora 288
Sipe, Jacob 288
Slover, Vera 96
Smith, Rev. E.U 330
Smith, J. C. 154
Smith, T.O. 156
Smith, W. 88, 92
Smyser, Alfred 56, 89, 115, 156
Smyser, S.M. 92
Smyser, W. Henry 117, 118, 263
Snodgrass, Wm. C. 169
Snyders 13
Snyder, J.H. 68
Snyder, W.F. 94
Sod Corn Row 23, 25, 32, 271
Sona, Crella 316
Sona, Fred 41
Sons of Liberty 63
South Side School 100
Sparks, "Peanut" 306
Spaugh, Ray 169
Spitler, L. M. 138
Spore, L.S. 30
Spright, Roy L. 120
Stanley, J.C. 123
Stanley, W.M. 121, 123
Stanley, W.W. 181
Star 313
State Bank of Sullivan 138
Stedman, Dr. 260
Stedman, Mrs. Elia 171
Stearns, Superintendent of Schools 82, 96
Steele, Charles B. 55, 56, 138, 140, 142, 144
Steele, James 84
Steele, James A. 141, 142
Steele, William A. 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 171, 173, 233, 239, 299, 300, 301, 302
Stevens, Ed 63
Stone, Paul 3, 41, 45
street lamps 80
Sullivan passim
Sullivan Auto Company 259
Sullivan Community Club 321
Sullivan Democrat 117, 126
Sullivan Electric Company 235, 244
Sullivan Express 26, 27, 31, 44, 111, 153
Sullivan Herald 129, 130, 131
Sullivan High School 109
Sullivan Home Telephone Company 268
Sullivan Journal 123
Sullivan Literary Association 89
Sullivan Mutual Telephone Company 266
Sullivan News 123
Sullivan Plaindealer 122
Sullivan Plow Company 234
Sullivan Progress 117
Sullivan Public Library 171
Sullivan Telephone Company 265
Sullivan's Island 15
Sullivan, John 16, 17
Sweeney, Stephen 274
Swisher, Charles J. 188, 228, 276

Index of References

T

Tabor, J.B. 321
Tanner, Charles 338 et seq.
Tanner map 6
Taylor, Beverly 30
Taylor, James T. 31, 32, 156, 178, 274
Taylor, John 291, 292
Thomason, Arnold 68, 83, 84
Thomason, Joseph 37, 44, 71
Thomsen, Mrs. George 20
Thompson, Victor 72, 134, 273
Thornton, Anthony 40, 50, 52, 58, 62,
153, 201, 202, 385
Thuneman, William 275
Tipton 26
Titus, Elizabeth 74, 174
Titus, Joseph B. 41, 74, 103, 234, 235,
299, 304
Titus, George 74, 174
Titus opera house 22, 30, 73, 118, 309
Tolley, John 290, 291, 294
Tolono and Pana Railroad 153
Tolstoy, Lev 192
Treat, Judge Samuel 37, 38
Treat, W.E. 229
Tree, Colonel 59
Tremble, Joseph 61
Trower, Thomas B. 134
Trower, Xavier B. 134, 135, 136, 137,
273
Trumbell, Lyman 46
Tryon, Taylor 342
Tubbs, F.H. 234
Tucker, B.F. 249

U

Uhrich, B.D. 314
Uhrich, Guy W. 169, 311, 312
Underwood, Mose 64

V

Vadakin 36
Vail, Judge E.P. 225, 229, 348
Vallandigham, Clement 58
VanDeren, D.J. 61, 62
Van Gundy 290
Van Gundy, D.W. 258
Vaughn farm 77
Vaughn, A.W. 119
Vause, James 248, 249, 250, 251
Vest, Mrs. William 345, 346, 349
Vineyard, Ettie Layman 342
Vineyard, Nelson 343, 344
Voegel, John 83

W

Wabash railroad 159, 160, 161
Wacaser, George 144
Waggoner family 6, 8
Waggoner, Amos 21, 24, 113, 115
Waggoner, A.J. 82
Waggoner, E.E. (Ned) 27, 44, 113
Waggoner, Elsie 114
Waggoner, Emily Cuthbert 313
Waggoner, F.M. 114
Waggoner, Gilbert 82
Waggoner, Isaac V. 5, 113
Waggoner, Joseph H. 21, 44, 90, 112,
278
Waggoner, Mary 82
Waggoner, Narcissi Jay 114
Waggoner Store 24, 25, 115
Waggoner, W.A. 169
Waggoner, William 61
Waldo, Edward 246
Walker, Earl 125, 132
Walker, Sam T. 124
Walls, Cicero V. 122
Warren, A.F. 228

Index of References

Watkins, E.N. 249
Weakley, William 177
Webb, John R. "Johnny" 146, 147
Webster, Charlotte 97, 187, 293
Wehmhoff, Merle 143, 144, 145
Welch, Dr. 136
Wheeler, R.B. 21
Wheat, John W. 84
Wheat, T.J. 41
Wheat, Rev. 277
Whiskey 24
White, Mrs. R.F. 174
White, William 228
Whitfield, J.B. "Zack" 101, 138, 140,
142, 143, 144, 145, 248
Whitfield, W.K. 126, 142, 250
Whitley, John 5
Whitley Point 5, 8, 11, 23, 24, 82, 83
Whitley Point Record Book 24
Whitley Township 9
Widick, W.F. 228
Wiley, Thomas Lee 276
Wily, J.B. 228
Wolfe, Tobe 241, 277
Wood, James 64
Woodruff, A.N. 293
Woods, Joe 250
Woods, Wm. 228
Woodson, T.P. 89
Wren, Othor
Wright, H.W. 141
Wright, Homer 321
Wright, Sheriff 41
Wright, S.W. 250
Wyatt, Lillian D. 103
Wyman, Albert 136, 297 et seq
Wyman Park 297 et seq.

X

Y

Younger, Azel 52
Younger, Levi 56

Z

Zinkler, Melvin 144

