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Northwest Chicago Historical Society

Your Neighborhood Historical Society

Newsletter July 2023

Number XXXVIII

Joel Ellis Sand Ridge and Whiskey Point

In this edition of our newsletter, discover the historic Sand Ridge. This elevated piece of land was once the shoreline of Lake Michigan, standing at a higher elevation than most of the land on the Northwest Side. Native American trails follow the Sand Ridge, as it was an effective way to keep dry when navigating the marshy land. Eventually, it would also become an important path for European settlers who were moving about the prairies. In this edition, we suggest you start in the middle, at pages 14 & 15, and read about the Sand Ridge. Examine the map and follow the settlers' names to the indexed pages. There, you will discover how these early pioneers formed a local government, improved roads, created schools, and hosted taverns for travelers to spend the night. These mid-western frontiersmen were not only in the history books; their names are still familiar today as our local streets, schools, and parks.

We are continuing to engage with the community through meetings and lectures; we have had several this year, highlighting local authors and their research. In July, we proudly partnered with Union Ridge Cemetery to tour their beautiful grounds. Union Ridge is the oldest continuously operating cemetery in the city of Chicago, and some of the people noted on these pages are entombed in this cemetery.

More events will be coming in the summer and fall. Follow us on social media get more information about our next event.

Thank you for reading the Northwest Chicago Historical Society Newsletter and hope to see you at a future event. - *Frank Suerth*

Mission Statement:

As the Northwest Chicago Historical Society, our mission is to educate others about the history of the Northwest neighborhoods of Chicago. We will accomplish this through discussion at meetings, public tours and events, and dissemination of historical documents and photos through publications. Additionally, we desire to collaborate with others in the community to continue to maintain and preserve the history of our collective neighborhoods. By linking the past with the present and the future, we will provide awareness and create appreciation for our place in Chicago's and Illinois' history.



Lee Dietz Ford – 2950 W. Lawrence Avenue 1960

Visit our website: <http://nwchicagohistory.org>

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NW Chicago Historical Society

P. O. Box 30067

Chicago, IL 60630

e-mail: nwchicagohistory@sbcglobal.net

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Membership:

\$15.00 per calendar year

\$10.00 for 65 years old and over

Phone: 773-725-5774

Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

Hi,

My whole family has been Chicago residents for about 5 generations (I moved to Madison, WI admittedly). We have never known the origin/history of Karlov Ave. We don't even know of other Karlovs outside of our extended family! Can you shed any light on this please?

Glenn Karlov

Our records show that Karlov Avenue is named after town in Hungary. Most likely the name Karlov originated in this town in Hungary. - NWCHS

Hello,

My family owned a Chinese restaurant, Jade Cafe, at 4027 W. Irving Park from 1924 to 1976. My father was the sole proprietor at the time of its closing.

I'm writing in hopes that the archives of your organization might include a photograph of the Jade Cafe and its neon sign. Unfortunately, though I saved much of the Jade's material culture (some of it now on display in Chinese Cuisine in America, Chinese American Museum of Chicago), I failed to photograph the restaurant's facade and neon sign.

I realize the chances of finding the photo documentation I seek is slim; any assistance or advice you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

Best regards,

Phillip Chen

Hello Phillip,

We do not have any photos of the building. But you may try looking at the Irving Park Historical Society photo collection housed at the Schurz High School library. - NWCHS

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I really enjoy your newsletter. I grew up in Chicago and your newsletter reminds me of places in Chicago from my past, but more often than not, teaches me more about the people and places of Chicago's past that I never know about! Thank you.

Sincerely, Kris Tyler – Des Plaines

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Letters

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In March (2023) I will be 100 years old. In June of 1923, my parents moved into their brand new house in the 5900 block of Leland Ave. At the time, Leland Ave. was not paved as when the moving truck arrived, it had to park on Marmora Ave. and carry furniture on sidewalks to their house. I do not remember when the street was paved but do remember the gas street lights. A man came every evening to turn them on climbing a ladder to do so.

Alleys were muddy. People would sprinkle ashes from the coal burning furnaces to make it easier to drive on. The Lawrence Avenue street car line ended at Austin Avenue. This was a blessing in winter as there was always a street car to board and sit on a seat that was heated to keep warm in winter.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Robledo – Bayport, MN
 NWCHS Member

Thanks Charlotte, for sharing your memories with us. - NWCHS

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Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

Dear Editor,

Thank you for sending me your recent newsletter. Please find an 1885 biography of my great, great, great uncle Joel Ellis, who was a very early settler in Jefferson Park when it was a township. He was a very successful business man, and in the spring of 1871 purchased 20 acres in the town of Jefferson and built a suburban home. He passed away in 1886. The 1880 census has his residence as being dwelling # 782, but does not list a street address. I am very curious as to where this home originally was on today's map of Jefferson Park. Can you possibly provide some information on this or at least some source of research that would be helpful? I would greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Maureen Wilson – Portage Park
NWCHS Member

Joel Ellis appears in the 1886 Town of Jefferson Directory. He is listed as a merchant at the northeast corner of Canal & Jackson in Chicago. He lived on Milwaukee Avenue near Montrose Avenue.

There is a Joel Ellis mentioned in the book, "History of Chicago – (Earliest Period to 1857 – Volume I)" by A. T. Andrea. Published in 1884, the time frame was about 1830. On page 340 it states, "Philo Carpenter – Through the representation of a friend he decided to emigrate to the West. - He started for Buffalo, embarking there for Detroit. From Detroit he came to Chicago, by way of Niles, Michigan down the St. Joseph River to its mouth, and thence to Chicago in a canoe towed round the head of the lake by two Indians hired for that purpose, accompanied by a friend from Niles. They landed in July near the present site of the Douglas monument, and were conveyed to Fort Dearborn by Joel Ellis, whom they found living in a log cabin near the place of their landing.

There is a Joel Ellis who appears in the Chicago Tribune many times starting from 1856. Found him in Jefferson Park in the Tribune in 1875. Joel Ellis was elected Village Treasurer for Jefferson in 1875.

The Will of Joel Ellis is reported in the Chicago Tribune December 10, 1886 as follows:

Letters testamentary were issued yesterday from Probate Court to Hugh A. White, Algernon S. Osgood, and Winifred S. Ellis, under bond of \$20,000, on the Will of Joel Ellis. The testator leaves his personal property to his widow, Susan, and the realty goes in trust to the executors to pay to the widow \$2,500 a year; and the balance of income is to go in equal portions to the three children. The widow is to have the use of the homestead in the town of Jefferson; and a sister of the testator, Sophia Ames, is to have the use of the property at Niles, Michigan. On the death of the widow the trust property is to be divided equally among the three children, Winifred, Josephine, wife of A. S. Osgood, and Lucretia P., wife of George W. Pinney, The estate comprises \$10,000 personalty and \$100,000 realty. - NWCHS

Joel Ellis

From the 1896 Album of Genealogy and Biography, Cook County, Illinois with Portraits

Joel Ellis, for nearly fifty years an active citizen and useful businessman of Chicago, was descended from the old Puritan stock which has done so much in developing the mental, moral and material interests of the United States. The energy, fortitude and stern moral character which characterized the founders of the New England colonies is still observed in many of their descendants, and these attributes were possessed by Joel Ellis in a marked degree.

His first ancestor of whom any records is now to be found was Barzillai Ellis, born June 9, 1747, presumably in Massachusetts, and of English blood. March 6, 1773, he married Sarah Tobey, who was born June 5, 1755, no doubt in the same state and of similar ancestry. They resided in Conway, Franklin County, Massachusetts, whence they moved, about the close of the last century, to Chautauqua County, New York. Here Barzillai Ellis, died in 1827. His youngest son, Samuel Ellis, died in Chicago in 1856. The other children were Barzillai, Asa, Freeman, Benjamin, Joel and Elnathan.

The children of Benjamin Ellis were Parmelia, Eleanor, Jane, Stephen, Mason, Datus, Joel (the subject of this sketch) and Ensign. His wife was Sophia Birth, a native of Connecticut. Benjamin Ellis died in Fredonia, New York, in 1855. He was a farmer, and cleared up land in the primeval forest, which consumed the best years of his life and required the assistance of his children, who had little opportunity to attend school.

Joel Ellis was born in Fredonia, Chautauqua County, New York, May 25, 1818. As above indicated, his early years were devoted to the toil which usually befell farmers' sons in those days, and he attended school but very little. Schools were far apart and held sessions of only three months per year, in winter, when attendance on part of many children was almost impossible. However, Joel Ellis was blessed by nature with a sound mind and body, and his clear judgment and active industry made him successful businessman and good citizen.

When, in 1838, he set out for the West, whither an uncle (Samuel Ellis, before mentioned) had preceded him, he was an energetic and self-reliant young man of twenty years, full of courage and hopefulness and the ardor and ambition of a strong nature. Arriving in Autumn, he found the young city of Chicago suffering from the commercial and industrial stagnation which followed the financial panic of 1837, and his search for employment was a vain one. The only offer which he received was from his uncle, who was engaged in farming some miles from the then city, but on ground now built up with thousands of the finest homes in Chicago, along Ellis, Greenwood and other avenues of the South Side. He continued in farm labor with his uncle for two years, much of which time was occupied in chopping wood from the timber which then covered this region, and which must be cleared away to make room for a tillable farm.

From 1840 to 1858 he was associated with Archibald Clybourn, an active businessman of Chicago, and became thoroughly conversant with the meat business, which was one of Mr. Clybourn's chief enterprises. It was at the house of Mr. Clybourn that he met the lady who became his wife in 1844. This was Miss Susan Galloway, a sister of Mrs. Clybourn and daughter of James and Sally (McClenthan) Galloway, of Pennsylvania birth and Scotch ancestry. Her grandfather, Samuel Galloway, was a native of Scotland, whose wife was of Pennsylvania-German descent. They were among the earliest settlers on the Susquehanna River, and Samuel Galloway was a soldier in the Revolutionary Army. Mrs. Ellis was taken by her parents, when a small child, to Sandusky, Ohio, and thence the family came to Chicago, arriving on the 9th of November, 1826. They left Sandusky on the 1st of October, in a sailing vessel, and were wrecked south of Mackinaw, but were rescued by another vessel, which brought them to Chicago.

James Galloway visited Illinois in the fall of 1824, and was very much charmed with the country around the Grand Rapids of the Illinois River (now known as Marseilles), where he bought a claim. He spent the winter of 1826-27 in Chicago with his family, and settled on this claim in the following spring, and continued to reside there the balance of his life. His wife died in 1830, and he subsequently married Matilda Stipes, of Virginia. In character Mr. Galloway was a fit representative of his sturdy Scotch ancestry, and was well fitted for pioneering in those early days, when means of travel and communication were difficult, and the dwellers in the wilderness were compelled to forego many comforts and social advantages, besides braving the enmity of their savage neighbors.

Of the five children of James and Sally Galloway, Mrs. Clybourn was the eldest. The second child, Jane, wife of Washington Holloway, died in 1894. John died in Missouri. Susan was Mrs. Ellis. George, born April 12, 1828, at Marseilles, is now deceased. Of the second marriage, Archibald and Marshall are the only surviving offspring. The former now shares a part of the original farm at Marseilles with George's widow. The latter resided in Chicago.

On leaving the employ of Mr. Clybourn, Mr. Ellis engaged in the retail meat business on his own account, and furnished supplies to many of the leading hotels and vessels entering Chicago Harbor. In 1865 he formed a partnership with Thomas Armour and began an extensive wholesale business in meats and provisions, which grew beyond his fondest dreams of success. In fifteen years he amassed a comfortable fortune, which was largely invested in improved real estate in the city. As the care of his property absorbed much of his time, he decided to retire from active business, and, in the spring of 1871, he purchased twenty acres in the town of Jefferson on which he built a handsome suburban home, in which he hoped to pass the balance of his days in well-earned rest from the arduous labors which had occupied his earlier years. Scarcely was he settled in his new home when the great fire of October, 1871, robbed him of all his buildings save the home at Jefferson, just completed. Without any repining, he set to work at once to repair his losses. It was his custom to rise at two o'clock in the morning and drive into the city to begin business. There were no rapid-transit systems then to move suburban residents quickly from and to their homes, and he took means which would appall any but such stout natures as his to rebuild his fortunes. In this he was moderately successful, and when cancer caused his death at his home in Jefferson, October 29, 1886, he left his family comfortably provided for.

A quiet, unassuming man, he gave little attention to public affairs, though he took the interest in local and national progress which every true American must feel, and discharged his duty as it appeared to him by supporting the Republican party after it came into existence, having formerly affiliated with the Whigs. He was a member of the Masonic fraternity, and was an active supporter of the Universalist Church, being among the organizers of St. Paul's congregation, whose pastor, Rev. W. E. Manly, performed the ceremony which made him head of a family. Besides his widow, he left three children, namely: Lucretia, the widow of George W. Pinnev, residing in Chicago; Winfiels, of Highland Park, Illinois; and Mary Josephine, Mrs. Algernon S. Osgood, of Chicago.

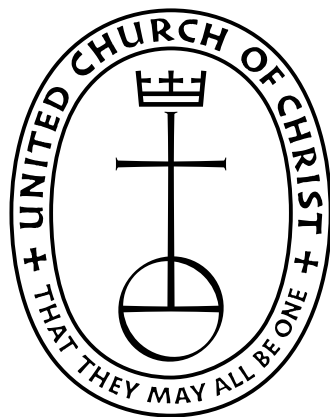


*“Never place a period
where God has placed a comma”*

- Gracie Allen



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Laughlin Falconer

1817 to 1917

It was Laughlin Falconer's brother David Falconer who originally purchased the land in Section 28, the Northeast Quarter in 1838 at \$1.25 per acre. The property included everything south of Belmont, west of Cicero, north of Diversey and east of Laramie. This large track of land, encompassed part of a Native American trail that connected Whiskey Point to what is now Jefferson Park. Laughlin took over the north half of the property and his brother David farmed the south half. Laughlin Falconer and his family were early members at the Congregational Church of Jefferson Park.

Laughlin Falconer was born on April 7, 1817, in Scotland and traveled to what is now Chicago by way of Quebec, Canada, traveling to Chicago all the way by water. His homestead was built around 1848, with an address of 3000 N. Cicero, most likely having a Cicero street address because it was the closest street at the time. It was likely a little bit west of Cicero and said to be a few feet north of Wellington, near the Native American trail.

Laughlin Falconer and his wife Margaret, were born in Scotland, along with their oldest children, Margaret and Mary. Their son William was born in Illinois. Laughlin was listed as a farmer, but his expertise was bee keeping. It is said that in the 1840s, he captured a swarm on the Des Plaines River and hived them in an old barrel. In his lifetime, he had sold more than 150 tons of honey from up to 140 bee colonies. Laughlin Falconer established his district's first school and served on the school board for forty years.

Starting in 1913, his farm was subdivided into city size lots and sold. Laughlin Falconer died on November 10, 1917 at age 100. Two years later, a school was built on property he once owned, at 3020 N. Lamon and was named after him. He is buried in Rosehill Cemetery.



Laughlin Falconer ca, 1915

Photo Courtesy of ancestry.com



Two views of the Falconer family homestead. The building has rain water barrels with old-fashioned green shutters. All trees were planted by Falconer seventy years ago. Between his homestead and the Randolph Street bridge, there was not one tree, it was all prairie.

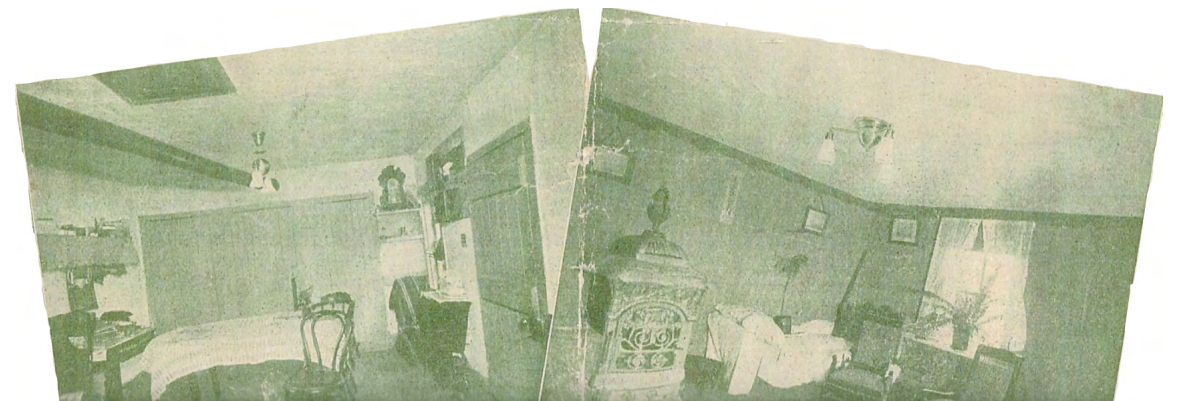
Top Photo Courtesy of ancestry.com

Photo on left 1916, Courtesy of Electric City Magazine

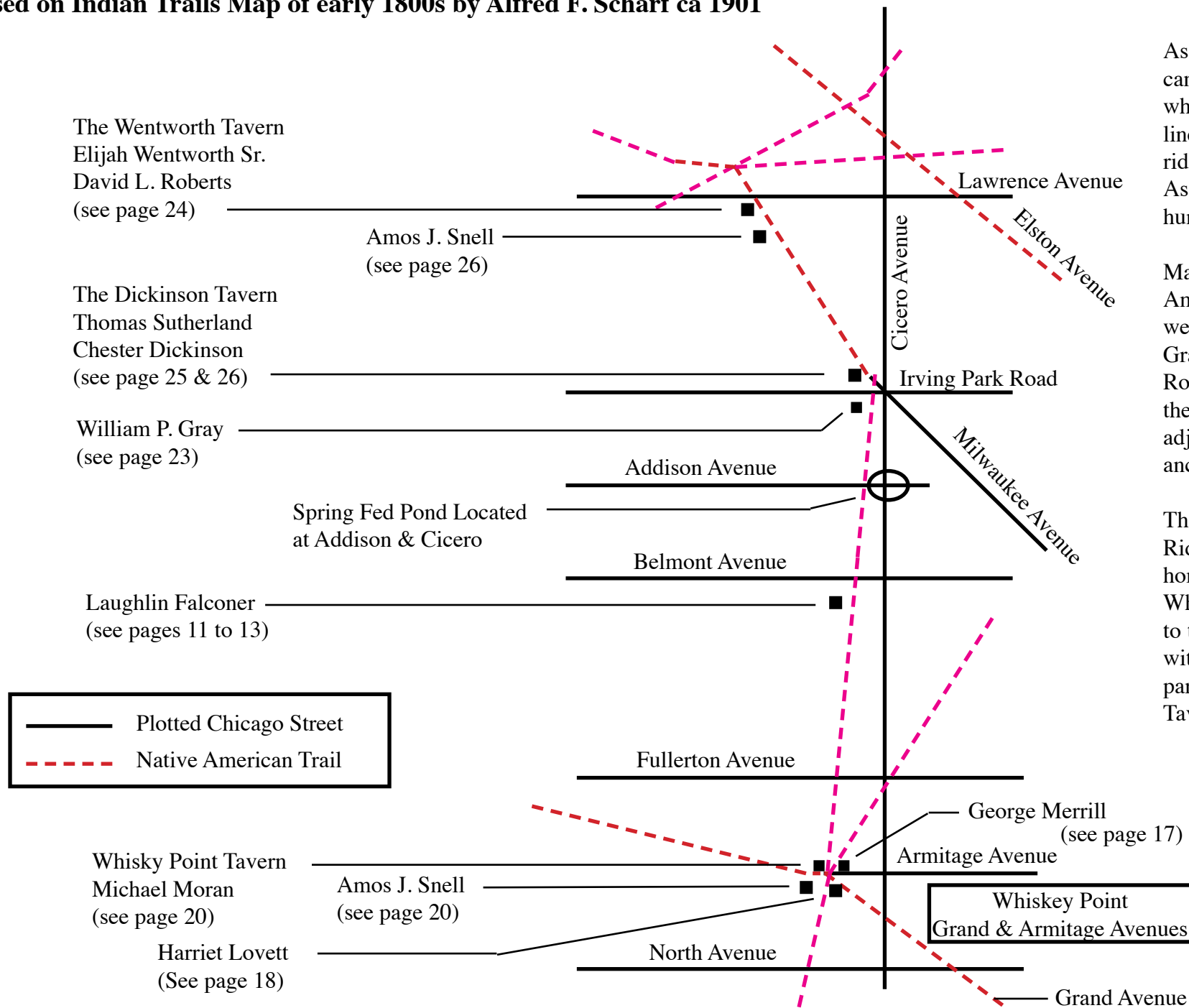


Three photos of the inside of the Falconer family homestead in 1916. Laughlin Falconer is sitting in the glow of his new electric lighting fixture on the left.

Photos 1916, Courtesy of Electric City Magazine



Based on Indian Trails Map of early 1800s by Alfred F. Scharf ca 1901



The Sand Ridge Trail

As early Chicago was mostly a swampy prairie, Native Americans traveled on high ground. They traversed the “ridges,” which were high sandy areas that were once the ancient shore line of Lake Michigan. Unlike the lower level prairies, these ridges were able to support trees and were suitable for walking. As they were easier to traverse, this is where the native residents hunted game and camped out while moving across the territory.

Many of the diagonal streets that exist today are old Native American trails that were created centuries ago by groups who were accessing the Chicago River. Clark Street, Ridge Avenue, Grand Avenue, Waukegan Road, Lake Street and Green Bay Road are a few of these famous pathways. These trails predate the grid pattern created by surveyors, and early settlers often adjusted claims on their land partitions based on these diagonal ancient roadways.

The map on the left is of a Native American trail called “Sand Ridge” by early European settlers who used it and built their homesteads and taverns on it. The trail runs from the south at Whiskey Point (Grand and Armitage Avenues) to Jefferson Park to the north. While the ridge is still there, the trail is long gone with the exception of the northern section. That section is now part of Milwaukee Avenue, between the Sutherland/Dickinson Tavern and Jefferson Park.

Grand Avenue

For the most of its present location, Grand Avenue was a Native American trail that Europeans used to travel to and from Chicago. This trail was first called Whiskey Point Road before being renamed Grand Avenue. The eastern part, east of Western Avenue, has been altered to follow Chicago’s street grid pattern and the original path can no longer be found. At one time, trappers and settlers could take this path all the way to the Fox River.

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George Merrill (1812 to 1901)

George Merrill was born on January 30, 1812 in Quebec, Canada. He married Julia Lovett on November 3, 1834 in Steuban, NY and traveled with his father, Winthrop, and his wife's family to Chicago. The couple gave birth to a daughter, Nancy Merrill in 1835 and Nancy is believed to be the first child of European descent born in Jefferson Township. This child, Nancy would go on to marry Henry Van Natta, and they lived on a farm one mile west of Harlem on Grand Avenue.

On October 23, 1838, George E. Merrill and his father Winthrop Merrill, purchased land in Section 33, the Northeast quarter at Whiskey Point. George taught in the first area school in a room in his house, all the while operating a saloon out of the same house and it was open to nearby farmers and travelers.

The first election for the newly formed Jefferson Township was in April of 1850 at the residence of Chester Dickinson. George Merrill served as moderator; D. L. Roberts, clerk. The first officers elected were as follows: Martin W. Kimbell, supervisor; Robert J. Edbrook, clerk; Russell Morton, assessor; Alexander Clark, collector; George Merrill, overseer of the poor; Daniel Booth and Major Noble, commissioner of highways; John H. Butterfield, constable.

In the 1850 and 1860 census, George E. Merrill was listed as a farmer. George's wife died in 1851 and George died in Riverside, Michigan on September 12, 1901. George and his father are buried in the Van Natta plot in Union Ridge Cemetery.



Photo Courtesy of findagrave.com



Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah and whose trust Jehovah is. Jer. 17:7

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Harriet Lovett Sayre

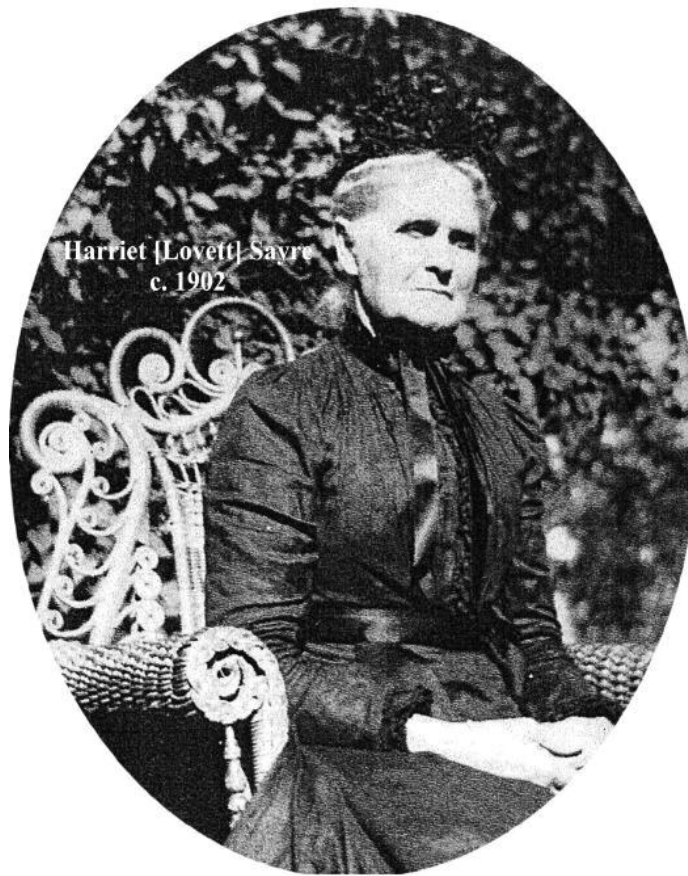
Harriet Lovett's father, Joseph Lovett, was scouting for locations to move his large family out west to the Chicago area in 1834. He returned to Steuben County, N. Y to gather up his family the following spring, along with Winthrop Merrill's family. Winthrop son, George E. Merrill had married Joseph Lovett's daughter, so it was all one big family traveling west to Whiskey Point.

While Joseph Lovett purchased land to farm one mile northwest of Whiskey Point, his daughter Harriet Lovett, purchased the track just south of George E. Merrill's property on November 27, 1838, at Section 33, the southeast quarter. For many years, there was a Lovett's tavern operating at Whiskey Point on this property, but Harriet Lovett's stay was short or not at all on her property, because 20 year old Harriet soon married William E. Sayre on June 3, 1839.

An area school was named in honor of Harriet E. Sayre and is located in the Mont Clare area of Chicago, IL. Harriet's father, Joseph Lovett also has a public school named after him. Another of Harriet's sisters, Eliza married Joseph O. Rutherford. The names Sayre and Rutherford will live on as street names; Rutherford and Sayre being out of place with the "N" street groupings, hence the City of Chicago must have thought it was important to not change the names.

Rutherford Sayre Park pays homage to these families. The park properties were donated by these two families, the Sayres and Rutherfords, who had farmed and later subdivided the surrounding area. The western portions of the parkland had been part of the Sayre homestead, purchased by William E. Sayre. The Sayre and Lovett families can trace their family back to the American Revolution.

Harriet Lovett Sayre died on November 16, 1913 and is buried in Rosehill Cemetery.



The above photo is of Harriet Lovett Sayre ca. 1902. Photo on the right, ca. 1845 is of William and Harriett's home located on the southwest corner of Sayre and Grand Avenues. It was demolished in 1960.

Photos courtesy of ancestry.com



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Michael Moran – Whiskey Point Tavern

Whiskey Point Tavern was owned by Michael Moran, who also made a successful living selling Real Estate in the area. He was also involved in the early Jefferson Township politics, voted in as one of the Board of Trustees 1870 to 1884. He also served as the local postmaster for Whiskey Point.

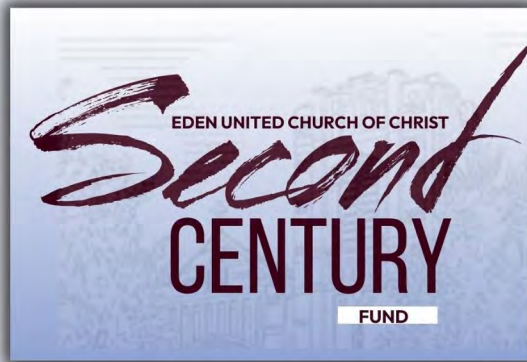
The historic Whiskey Point Tavern was erected about 1858 and destroyed by prairie fire in 1880. This fire also burned down Amos J. Snell's homestead at the southwest corner of Grand and Armitage Avenues.

Snell eventually moved his family to Jefferson. His family's home was on the west side of Milwaukee Avenue, just south of Leland Avenue. This is where he had one of his toll gates. Amos J. Snell placed toll gates along Elston and Milwaukee Avenues, where the road crossed his properties. He maintained the roads so in bad weather they were well patronized by travelers because other roads were virtually impassable. In dry weather, when all roads were good, travelers preferred Grand Avenue. The money they saved on the tolls would buy a pint of whiskey at the Whiskey Point Tavern.



Michael Moran's real estate ad selling property in Whiskey Point.

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William P. Gray

William P. Gray was originally from Fort Covington, NY and, with his wife Catherine, purchased a 200-acre farm at Laramie Avenue near Irving Park Road in 1844. They had seven children, but three died during the diphtheria epidemic of 1872.

Although William was listed as a farmer in the census, he was also very active in local politics. He was one of the original organizers of Jefferson Township in 1850. He served the township as the first President of the Board of Supervisors, Commissioner of Highways, a Drainage Commissioner and Justice of the Peace. When the village of Jefferson was organized in 1870, he served as Trustee and Village President.

The Gray farm was sold in 1888 and William and his second wife Louisa moved to a house on Milwaukee Avenue near Carmen Avenue. William Gray died at the age of 79, on November 11, 1900. The Gray School at 3720 N. Laramie is named after him.



The residence of William P. Gray, located at what is now Six Corners, 4845 W. Irving Park Road. It was said to be the first brick house built in Jefferson Township.

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Elijah Wentworth Sr. and David L. Roberts



Elijah Wentworth Sr.

David L. Roberts was born in Wales around 1800. He immigrated to New York as a young man and married his wife Hannah. Hannah was born in New York and was 4 years his senior. All their children were born in New York before David moved his family to Chicago.

By 1843, David was proprietor of the Chicago Temperance House. The Temperance House was a boarding house/hotel on LaSalle St. just north of Wells. In 1844, David Roberts moved his family to what would become Jefferson Park. He purchased the two-story Wentworth Tavern, which he later renamed "The Jefferson Hotel," and 320 acres of land from Elijah Wentworth. Besides being an innkeeper, David became a farmer.

Mr. Roberts was one of the organizers of Jefferson Township in 1850 and became the township's first Clerk and was later elected a Highway Overseer and a Justice of the Peace. In 1855, David laid out the Town of Jefferson by subdividing some of his land. No doubt much money was made from the selling of his lots but he also donated some of his property.

David or his family donated the 3.5-acre square on Argyle Street known as Roberts Square for a park with the stipulation that the park should be used for ornamental purposes with no buildings constructed on the property. It is said that he donated land across the street from the park for the Jefferson School. He also donated land for the first Jefferson Congregational Church on Milwaukee Avenue.

He and his wife Hannah, with daughter Mary Ann, helped start the first church in Jefferson Park. They must have done a good job because the Jefferson Park Congregational Church is still around after 150 years.

Around 1830, Elijah Wentworth Sr. was the proprietor of a tavern located on Wolf Point, which is on the west side of the Chicago River just north of the forks (near present-day Kinzie Street.)

Elijah traveled eight miles northwest to a place called Sand Ridge, just south of the northern Indian Boundary Line. It is not known which trail he took but it easily could have come up the Grand Avenue trail to Whiskey Point, then north to Jefferson along the Sand Ridge. Elijah constructed a tavern. Apparently, he was looking for a new venue where more space could enable him to cater to many travelers, trappers, and Native Americans. The northern part of Sand Ridge, as it was called back then, was a perfect spot for an inn, located near the junction of some well-traveled Native American Trails. He built a large, 2-story, log tavern, "The Wentworth Tavern." His inn was located on the land near what is now Lawrence and Milwaukee Avenues. Elijah Wentworth became the first resident and business owner in what is now the Jefferson Park neighborhood. Elijah Wentworth continued to operate his Inn until he sold the property, tavern, and farm, to David L. Roberts.



David L. Roberts

*Photo Courtesy of the
Congregational Church of
Jefferson Park*

Thomas Sutherland & Chester Dickinson – The Dickinson Tavern

Thomas Sutherland built his homestead/tavern in 1841 on a 40 acre tract of land on Sand Ridge, the address now would be 4074 N. Milwaukee Avenue (west side of Milwaukee Avenue, just south of Belle Plaine Avenue). It was said to be the first brick building constructed in the area. In 1847, newly married Chester D. Dickinson and his wife Alida Ann, purchased this property.

The Town of Jefferson was organized in this tavern on April 2, 1850. George Merrill, was elected Moderator and Overseer of the Poor; William P. Gray was elected Justice of Peace and Chester Dickinson, Supervisor of the Town.

At one time, it is said, Stephen A. Douglas stopped overnight at the Dickinson Tavern, and members of the Dickinson family take great pride in showing their friends the room in which Mr. Douglas slept that night. Chester Dickinson's daughter, Clara Lowell, took over the tavern until it was demolished to make way for a new development around 1929.



The Dickinson Tavern in winter.

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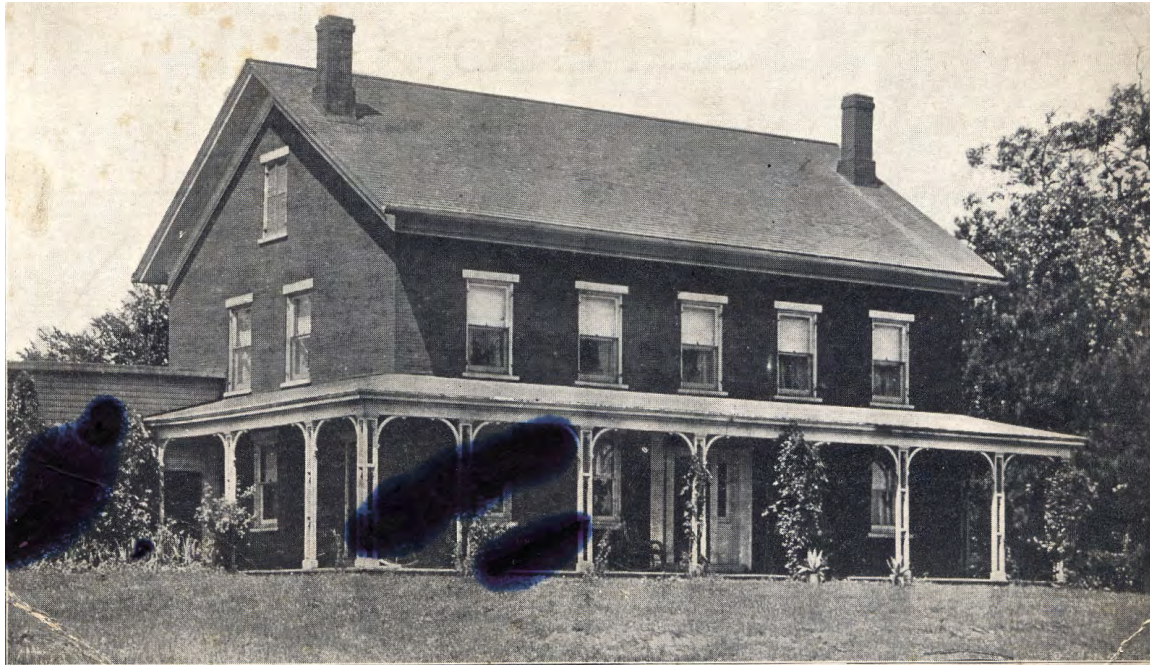
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The Dickinson Tavern - 4074 N. Milwaukee Avenue

Amos J. Snell

Amos Jerome Snell was one of the richest persons in Jefferson Township in the early days. Besides owning a great deal of land possessing large tracts in Jefferson, Park Ridge, Schaumburg and in the State of Iowa, which he sometimes rented out to farmers, he sold timber to fuel the railroads and of course there were all those toll gates. He operated tollgates and collected tolls on both Milwaukee and Elston Avenues where the road crossed his properties. His family moved around a lot, traveling from Little Falls, New York, to Cincinnati, Ohio and after a short stay came to Chicago. After a brief stay in Chicago, went to Milwaukee, where he stayed about a year. With money that he saved, he start a small hotel in Schaumburg, Illinois, before moving to Jefferson, first at Whiskey Point and then on the west side of Milwaukee Avenue, just south of Leland Avenue. This is where he had one of his toll gates.

Amos Snell moved back to Chicago, into a brown-stone residence at the corner of Ada Street and Washington Boulevard. In the early hours of the morning, on February 8, 1888, 65 year old Amos Snell was shot dead in the hallway of his house by burglars. He was buried in Rosehill Cemetery and it was said 2,000 people attended his funeral. His wife, Henrietta, offered a \$20,000 reward and the police offered additional \$2,000. Amos Snell's murder remains officially unsolved to this day.

At the time, his unsolved murder had no affect on the collection of the tolls. Early morning on April 30, 1890, a group of 200 angry toll payers dressed up as Indians and burned the tollgate and gatehouse at Fullerton Avenue to the ground. In the next few days other gates were torn down. May 14, 1890 the Illinois Supreme Court declared that the gates were; illegal and that Amos Snell's heirs could not rebuild the tollgates and collect tolls within Chicago City limits.



While most of Sand Ridge has been flattened down over the years to no more than a few feet tall, there are some places where the ridge is still detectable. One such place is Giddings Street, east of Milwaukee Avenue where the street drops four feet as shown in the photo above.

Photo Courtesy of Frank Suerth

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