



RLVHA *Review*

Quarterly Newsletter of the Ravenswood Lake View Historical Association

YEAR IN REVIEW

2017 was a busy year. After a long programming hiatus, the decision was made to come out with a strong lineup to reestablish the Association's presence in the community.

In addition to scheduling our programs at our "home port" of Sulzer Regional Library, it was decided to venture out into other locations in the neighborhood. Giants in the Park, parts 1 & 2 were held at the Budlong Woods Branch Library, and The History of Lakeview's Boystown was held at the Ann Sather Restaurant. Both locations were successful and although we saw some familiar faces, many participants told us that this was the first time they had heard about our Association. We wish to continue using various neighborhood locations in 2018.

We highlighted four groups that made Ravenswood & Lakeview their home: the Irish, the Germans, the Japanese, and the Gay communities.

We looked at transportation in Chicago by celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Chicago "L" and the 75th anniversary of the CTA, and the history of Midway Airport.

Art wasn't ignored - we looked at Chicago's fabulous fountains, the portrait statues of Lincoln Park, and the early history of cinema and the Essanay Studio.

We commemorated the

REVIEW *see p. 6*



1937 Lane Tech Prom Dance Card

By *Ronald Roenigk*

May I have the next dance?

During a long overdue basement cleaning in my nearly 100-year old N. Clark St. three-flat, I came across this wonderful metal dance card from the 1937 Lane Tech Prom at the Aragon Ballroom.

Indeed it appears the original owner of the card had a thing for Mike as his name is noted twice ... and no other gentlemen's name is on the card.

Over the years previous tenants in my building have left items stored in the base-

ment that remained after they left. While I can't verify who the young lady was who left this behind, the dance card speaks for itself with its dainty little pencil still attached and accompanying Lane Tech Arrowhead trinket that was apparently also given out to attendees.

Now you too can try to get your name on this dance card by visiting the Lakeview Ravenswood Historical collection at Sulzer Library. But fair warning, you will not be the first person spurned a spot in line on the young lady's dance card.

Ravenswood political dynasty is history, but spirit lives on

The Hoellen Family Foundation

By *Patrick Butler*

Ravenswood's Hoellen political dynasty is history, but the spirit of this remarkable family lives on in the form of the Hoellen Family Foundation which has contributed millions since 1983 to local organizations as diverse as Thresholds' Lauren Juhl school to the Ravenswood/Lakeview Historical Association.

The Juhl School was probably just what John and Mary Jane Hoellen had in mind when they founded the Hoellen Family

Foundation back in 1983.

For the past three years, the Juhl School has received funds to help serve between 20 and 25 young adults between 16 and 21 with complex mental health issues, and for the past three years has been a beneficiary of the Hoellen Foundation.

That support has enabled the school to update its computer lab, urgently needed to keep the students on track with their education, according to Thresholds' Donor Spotlight newsletter.

By all accounts, the Hoellen clan always

HOELLEN *see p. 6*

THE SHERIDAN TRIANGLE GARDEN

Historic triangle garden hidden in plain sight

By Garry Albrecht

I know of this small public garden located on Chicago's North Side hidden in plain sight.

This small triangular garden space is situated adjacent to towering skyscrapers of the 1920's and 1960's on one side and Inner Lake Shore Dr. on the other, mere steps from the lakefront.

Many of you have certainly passed by it yourselves. Thousands of your neighbors do so every day.

This garden is an island oasis within a densely populated residential urban landscape surrounded by three busy roadways used by public and private vehicles. The name of this garden space is called Sheridan Triangle Garden. It is a place where I used to volunteer, much like many other locals who lived nearby. We would rake leaves and/or help set the stage for immediate planting. We would mow the lawn when needed while picking up debris that may have flown in from the surrounding area.

There is a lovely stone structure that the volunteers call the 'shed' that houses the supplies and tools of the trade. The volunteers would decorate this shed for the December holiday season. This shed has a history of sorts. It was constructed by the precursor of the Chicago Transit Authority as a shelter for supervisors who regulated the passing of several different routed public transit vehicles that would make turns on Sheri-



At Grace St. and Inner Lake Shore Dr. a beautiful garden space marks a more significant status of a long-forgotten location that few have explored with only the use of vintage maps and 100-year-old texts: that is the former site of the Hotel Lake View (above) that once sat there on a bluff above Lake Michigan.

dan Rd. to Inner Lake Shore Dr. during the first quarter of the 20th century. This simple triangular space with its small and useful shed was there when Lake Shore Dr. was extended and widened during the late 30's and early 40's. This triangular space may

Once regarded as Sheridan Rd., north of Belmont Ave., that space in fact sat on top of a bluff that overlooked the lake before the roadway's construction.

have been carved out as early as the late 19th century when 180 feet of landfill created the roadway known today as Inner Lake Shore Dr.

Once regarded as Sheridan Rd., north of Belmont Ave., that space in fact sat on top of a bluff that overlooked the lake before the roadway's construction.

This now beautiful and

peaceful garden space marks a more significant status of a long-forgotten location that few have explored with only the use of vintage maps and 100-year-old texts.

A quarter of a block from the garden west on Grace St. and east of Pine Grove Ave. there was a house that became a resort/hotel during the 1850's called the Lake View House/Hotel. This 2-3 story hotel expanded three times its size by 1890 while giving a neighborhood its name. In fact, for almost 30 years Lake View was once a township separate from Chicago... and then it's own city for two more years.

As it does still today, Lake View Township ranged from Fullerton to Devon avenues, and from Western Ave. east to the then existing lakefront. That is until the City of Lake View was absorbed by its neighbor to its south-Chicago in 1889.

The hotel disappeared from the map literally by 1890. By the mid 1890's Sheridan Rd. was established as the roadway along the lakefront with plans of expanding Lake Shore Dr. north of Lincoln Park, the park.

When I worked at Sheridan Triangle Garden collecting those leaves or mowing the lawn gazing east or west, I often thought of a different kind of pleasant view from a window of The Lake View Hotel looking toward the lakefront over that bluff and the hundreds of Chicagoans that traveled there mostly to get away from the dense urban landscape of Chicago of that time just to simply enjoy the unencumbered breezes from the lake and the rural, pre-automobile surroundings that was of old Lake View.

Next time you're in the area I encourage you to step off the

GARDEN *see p. 2*

When Burma-Shave ruled the roads

By Christopher Lynch

The name Burma-Shave makes Americans of a certain generation nostalgic for the roadside signs that dotted the American landscape in the middle of the twentieth century.

From 1925 to 1963, Burma-Shave signs were as common on American roads as fast food signs are today. These signs were found on windy back roads before Super lane Highways. A family, motoring on a Sunday afternoon, might come across the first sign; "Said Juliet," this first sign would read; then at 35 miles an hour, the next sign would appear "To Romeo." The next approaching sign would perhaps be read by one of the children. "If you don't shave," wait 3 seconds for the punch line, "Go Home." Everyone would laugh and the final sign would appear, with its distinctive logo, "Burma-Shave."

Allen told his father about seeing those intriguing signs near Joliet. His father gave his blessing to attempt to sell the product using that format. So Allan bought crude boards, painted them, and then arranged to have them posted on two roads near Minneapolis. The messages on the signs were:



These signs were a fixture on American Roads, but the innovative advertising campaign happened by accident. Allan Odell was driving near Joliet, Illinois in 1925 when he came across a series of signs advertising a gas station. There were several signs in all, and Allan commented later, "Every time I see one of those setups, I read every one of those signs."

Allen's father, Clifton, a lawyer from Minneapolis, dabbled in elixirs, a common product offered up as a cure-all in frontier medicine. Burma-Shave was actually a strong smelling ointment, which Odell mixed in his law office. He first called it "Burma Vita" the name "Burma" because the

ingredients were from Burma, and the word "Vita" the Latin word for "life." People with colds, aches and pains liked this product, but sales were infrequent. A friendly pharmacist told Odell to make a product that could be used everyday. Odell worked with a chemist, and discovered that the product they produced gave a man a nice clean shave without the need of a shaving brush. Odell relaunched the product, yet sales were only fair.

Many of the successful jingles were sent in by fans, which the Odell's encouraged through contests, the first bringing in over fifty thousand applications. The Odell's even hired full-time help just to sift through all of the entries.

The company's board of directors would then pick their favorites to be printed on the next series of signs. Many of the entries were laced with double-entendre, and had to be rejected for matters of taste. However, some of the lines were favorites of the judges, even though they were never used. One such verse was:

***The Other Woman
In His Life
Said 'Go Back Home
And Scratch Your
Wife***

Slogans that were accepted were:

***The Monkey Took
One look at Jim
And threw the Peanuts
Back At Him
He Needed
Burma-Shave***

***Substitutes
Can Let You Down
Quicker
Than A Strapless
Gown
Burma-Shave***

The jingles were a reminder of country life, and GI's reported seeing Burma-Shave signs, with their unique white lettering on the red background in just about every theater of war. From Europe to the Pacific, soldiers even tried to lighten the mood by

placing Burma-Shave signs on the Burma Road itself, a road built by slave labor, mainly Allied P.O.W.s treated brutally by the Japanese army, a road later used by Chiang Kai-Shek to smuggle weapons into China. There were even photos of curious penguins in Antarctica peering at a series of signs, breaking up the monotonous white landscape which read:

***Use Our Cream
And we betcha
Girls won't wait,
They'll come and get cha
Burma-Shave***

By 1947 sales of Burma-Shave totaled six million dollars, the apex of its sales. Yet the construction of Interstate Highways of the 1950s with giant billboards screaming for attention of motorists speeding along was the beginning of the end of these distinctive signs. Another factor was the urbanization of the country, with the development of suburban culture, with farms, which had been where most signs were placed, being sold for development. By 1963, after a decade of declining sales, the Odell's sold the Burma-Vita Company to Phillip Morris, Inc. The thirty-seven year era of Burma-Shave, and some 35,000 signs, was over, a relic of another more simpler time.

***On road-trips
These signs brought
Mirth and joy
Conceived by a drive
Near Joliet Illinois***

Burma-Shave

Oakdale Ave. home was life-sized sales catalog for Northwestern Terra Cotta Company Executive



The Rohkam home, 1048 W. Oakdale, is a house in 'Terra Cotta Row.'



With a sprawling production facility once located at Wrightwood and Clybourn, by the late 1800s, the company was one of three major terra-cotta manufacturing companies located in Chicago.

By Peter von Buol

Lake View is home to one of the city's smallest, but among the most unique, historical districts, Oakdale Avenue's Terra Cotta Row.

Located on the 1000 block of W. Oakdale, the small district consists of four residential buildings clad in terra cotta ornamentation, as well as an ornamental wall. All are associated with the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company.

Founded in 1878 by John R. True, the homes on Oakdale were built to showcase the company's terra-cotta ornamentation and were originally homes of company executives.

According to the web-site of the the city of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development, the buildings and unusual terra-cotta walls were built by company executives to showcase changing taste in architectural styles, from Queen Anne to Viennese Modern.

With a sprawling production facility once located at Wrightwood and Clybourn, by the late 1800s, the company was one of three major terra-cotta manufacturing companies located in Chicago.

The Oakdale historic district was conveniently located a short distance from the company's production facilities. During the heyday of terra cotta production (late 1800s-early 1900s), not only did company executives live nearby, many employees also lived in the surrounding neighborhoods.

"By the beginning of the 20th century, architectural terra cotta was firmly established as America's premier material for detailing commercial structures, especially the new, steel-framed skyscrapers then rising in Chicago and New York City. After the devastating Chicago Fire of 1871, the fireproof qualities of this ancient, baked-clay form propelled its acceptance

as a less expensive and lightweight alternative stone," said Eric Nordstrom, owner of Urban Remains, 1850 W. Grand Ave., a company dedicated exclusively in the reclamation of American architectural artifacts, antiques, and other oddities found among industrial buildings, and commercial or residential structures.

According to Nordstrom, the company's draftsman worked closely with many of the city's most prestigious architects.

"The studio's draftsmen transformed architectural blueprints into comprehensive 'shop drawings' that identified exactly where and how each puzzle-like piece would be secured to its supporting structure. The company's products were favored by international architectural luminaries such as Louis H. Sullivan, Daniel Burnham, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Albert Kahn. The company ultimately contributed to thousands of buildings across

[not just Chicago but also] the country, in a wide array of styles," said Nordstrom.

Nordstrom added that by the late 1890s, the company had employed hundreds of highly-trained craftsmen, many of which it had recruited.

"By the early 1890's, Northwestern Terra Cotta employed approximately 500 men and had annual sales that approached \$600,000. It was during this era that the company successfully recruited European craftsmen to join the firm as sculptors in its modeling shop. These highly-skilled artists could earn three or four times as much as a less-skilled laborer at the same factory," Nordstrom said.

By 1910, added Nordstrom, the production facility at Clybourn and Wrightwood included 24 acres and employed about 1,000 workers. Popularity of terra cotta moldings on building facades peaked in the 1920s. The company later opened facilities in Denver and St. Louis.

Built in 1887, the anchor of the historic district is the Henry Rohkam House at 1048 W. Oakdale Ave. Designed by architect Theodor Karls, the terra cotta clad home was strongly influenced by German and Austrian architecture.

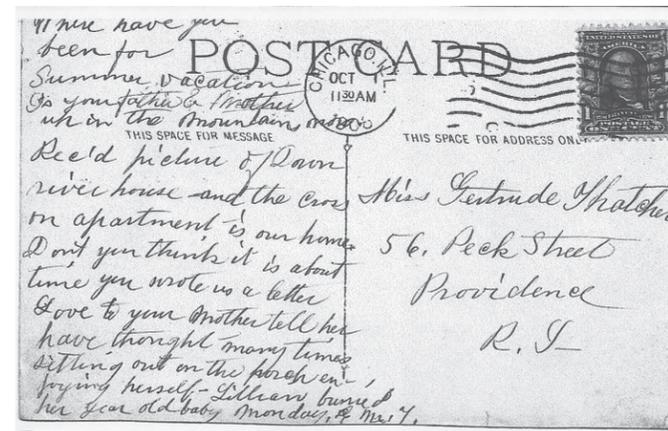
"Rohkam was a company vice-president. [The home] is visually distinct and heavily ornamented. It is bedecked with the company's ornament, from diminutive "stock" pattern blocks to gargantuan

TERRA COTTA see p. 6

Post card from the past



One of our members found this wonderful "neighborhood postcard" with an image of Ravenswood on the front. We are very excited to add it to our collection as it dates from October 1908.



TRUC LAM TEMPLE

By Patrick Butler

Mavrek Development has big plans for the one-time women's club, Masonic Lodge, and Truc Lam Buddhist temple. It will soon be replaced by a 12-unit condo building.

Plans to raze the 135-year-old frame meeting hall at 1521 W. Wilson Ave. were unveiled at several public meetings last year. To go through with the project, Mavrek needs a zoning change from RS-3 to RT-4.

According to a Realtor's brochure, the two-story building was originally built as a private residence in the early 1880s several years before the city of Lake View became part of Chicago.

In 1899, the Ravenswood Women's Club bought the property, then added an annex. According to the Ravenswood/Lake View Historical Association, the building had a reception hall, parlor, dining room and billiard room on the fourth floor; a dance hall on the second floor; and



1521 W. Wilson Ave.

a kitchen and bowling alley in the basement.

In 1920, the women's group sold the building to the Masons, who converted the site into the Paul Revere Lodge and painted the building a distinctive baby blue. It soon became known as the "Silk Stocking Lodge" because the officers wore white gloves and tailcoats at all official meetings and major events.

Eighty-four years later, a Lodge official told a Reader reporter that maintenance costs were getting to the point where the Paul Revere Lodge might not be able so last much

longer.

"Everything's getting old. If you had piles of money you could probably restore (the building), but we don't have that kind of money. This is a wooden building. You've got to paint every three, four, five years. It's a huge amount of work. The roof is always in need of repairs," the lodge leader explained.

By the 1980s, it had gotten to the point where another reporter – this one from the Lerner Newspapers – was invited to join the lodge.

When the newsman said the lodge probably wouldn't

want him because he was a Catholic, the lodge leader smiled. "No problem. I'm one myself."

But even fast-changing times hadn't been enough to save the lodge. As the Mason's numbers continued to plummet, the property was sold to

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the mostly Vietnamese Truc Lam congregation which repurposed the building into two meeting rooms for religious services and classes and seven bedrooms for the monks and priests serving the temple.

The property was finally sold again to Mavrek Development for a reported \$2 million. The developers then hired the Sullivan, Goulette and Wilson architectural firm to design the proposed 50-foot tall red brick condo building.

Spring 2018 Programs

JANUARY 24
The Good Fight:
Life Lessons
from a Chicago Progressive
with Dick Simpson

FEBRUARY 15
1920s Prohibition Wars
and the St. Valentine's Day Massacre
with Richard Lindberg

MARCH 22
The Hidden History of Ravenswood
with Patrick Butler

APRIL 18
James Dunham,
Early Chicago River Advocate
with Thomas Lutz

MAY 3
Wrigleyville Firehouse Engine 78
with Karen Kruse

Programs are scheduled at
 Sulzer Regional Library, 7 p.m.

For further information,
 please check our website at
ravenswoodhistorical.com

PROGRAM *from p. 1*

100th anniversary of America's entrance into WWI and looked at the economic impact of WWII on baseball.

Public health was considered in the program on the creation of the sanitation system and the draining of Chicago.

Working with Julie Lynch, local history librarian at Sulzer Regional, we sponsored what we hope will be the first of many annual open houses of the historical collection. Julie chose materials on the Ravenswood and Lakeview communities to display and spent 3 hours answering patrons' questions during the afternoon. The open house participated in the annual Chicago Open Archives month of October.

In addition, Board Member Garry Albrecht arranged to display part of his extensive neighborhood postcard collection, highlighting scenes of Lincoln Park from about 1880 to 1920. The collection was on display from late September through December.

TERRA COTTA *from p. 4*

plaques, chimney posts, and a fence - all comprised of terra cotta. Rohkam had worked as a modeler for his previous employer, the Chicago Terra Cotta Company and he was a founding executive of Northwestern," said Nordstrom.

The district must have been a successful sales tool as the Civic Opera House, the Chicago Theater, the Wrigley Building (the first skyscraper fully clad in terra cotta) and the Randolph Tower were all built using materials manufactured by Northwestern Terra Cotta.

Nordstrom added the company's success during the early 20th cen-

HOELLEN *from p. 1*

seemed to have leaned on the side of those who needed the most help - not surprising since as alderman, John Hoellen was at times the lone City Council Republican. He served as 47th Ward Alderman for seven terms from 1947 to 1975.

During those 28 aldermanic years, John Hoellen often had only one ally - independent Hyde Park

In later years, after losing his final battle for mayor, Ald. Hoellen agreed "it's tough to be a Republican in Chicago."

Ald. Leon Despres - as he sparred with Mayor Richard Daley I over issues including whether to "deport" the controversial Picasso statue and replace it with a statue of Chicago Cubs superstar Ernie Banks.

Hoellen also found time to make three unsuccessful runs for Congress, ran for mayor in 1975, and served on the CTA board where he continued to make headlines as he blasted the transit system's "waste and inefficiency."

Those who knew the Hoellen clan knew he was his father's son.

In addition to running a shoe shop at 1938 W. Irving Park and serving as Republican Ward Committeeman, John Hoellen Sr. represented Ravenswood in the City Council

also contributed to the development that took place along the north branch of the Chicago River. Similar to many of its peers, however, the company was hurt by the onset of the Great Depression, from which it never fully recovered.

"Northwestern's operations in Chicago declined alongside the construction industry during the Great Depression. [Afterwards], it was eclipsed by modernist curtain walls of glass, exposed steel, and concrete. In 1965, Northwestern Terra Cotta Co.'s only remaining plant in Denver closed," said Nordstrom.

until his death in 1936. The younger Hoellen claimed his father's spot 11 years later, after college and service as a naval officer.

But although the younger Hoellen went through World War II and its aftermath without getting a scratch, he was shot at the very day he filed to run for his father's old seat.

Not surprisingly, nobody was ever arrested.

But the real fireworks would come in his first years as alderman when he challenged Richard the Elder's plans to tear down Little Italy to make room for the University of Illinois.

In later years, after losing his final battle for mayor, Ald. Hoellen agreed "it's tough to be a Republican in Chicago."

But he and the rest of the Hoellen family never stopped fighting for the underdog, especially through the Hoellen Family Foundation, which is today being led by his son Robert, who runs the foundation out of the family office at 1940 W. Irving Park Rd.

GARDEN *from p. 2*

CTA bus, or park your car or bike, and stop by to take a closer look at this historic triangle park and imagine it as that long ago bluff above the shoreline.

HUBBARD'S CALL

Tablet presented to historical society

By Krista August

Happy 200 Years, Illinois!

Illinois' Bicentennial celebration can be launched with the history of one man: Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard, born 1802 in Vermont and buried 1886 in Graceland Cemetery.

Gurdon Hubbard first arrived in Chicago on October 1, 1818; the year Illinois became a state. He was sixteen and newly employed as a clerk for the American Fur Company, owned by John Jacob Astor.

When young Gurdon and the fur company's "brigade" of twelve boats landed at Chicago that fall, he climbed a tree to better view the prairie "through the oak woods." He later wrote, "The waving grass, intermingling with a rich profusion of wild flowers, was the most beautiful sight I have ever gazed upon." A herd of wild deer and a pair of red foxes gave "animation to the scene" and looking north he saw the "whitewashed buildings" of Fort Dearborn.

As a representative in the 1832-33 Illinois General Assembly in Vandalia, Hubbard introduced a bill for the construction of the Illinois Michigan Canal.

At every meeting of the legislature thereafter, he continued to urge passage of the canal bill until it successfully passed in the session of 1835-36. At one point, in the planning of the canal, the location of its northern terminus was debated. Consideration was given to connecting the canal to the Calumet River rather than to the south branch of the Chicago River. On this question, according to Judge Henry W. Blodgett (1821 - 1905), Illinois is indebted to Mr. Hubbard. The judge explained:

ment and frontier to great metropolis and flourishing state.

From our 2018 vantage, it is both difficult and enchanting to imagine Gurdon's many thrilling adventures: viewing the untouched prairie; portaging Mud Lake; visiting the American bottom; trading furs with Indians; forging trails in the wilderness; purveying as pioneer meat packer, plus a variety of other commercial and civic pursuits.

Fairly well known history is his establishment of a trading route from Vincennes, Indiana to Chicago, through Danville that on old maps was named "Hubbard's Trail." Hubbard regularly worked this route in the 1820s and claimed that he once walked seventy-five miles in one day. For this, Indians who knew him called him "Pa-pa-ma-ta-be" which means "The Swift Walker."

Less known, yet particularly consequential to Illinois, is the role Hubbard played in the building of the Illinois Michigan Canal.

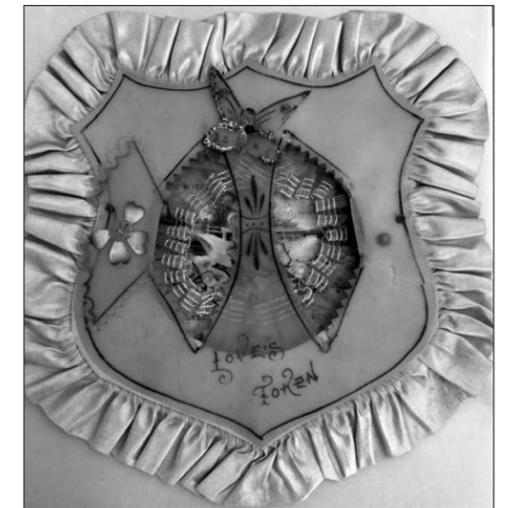
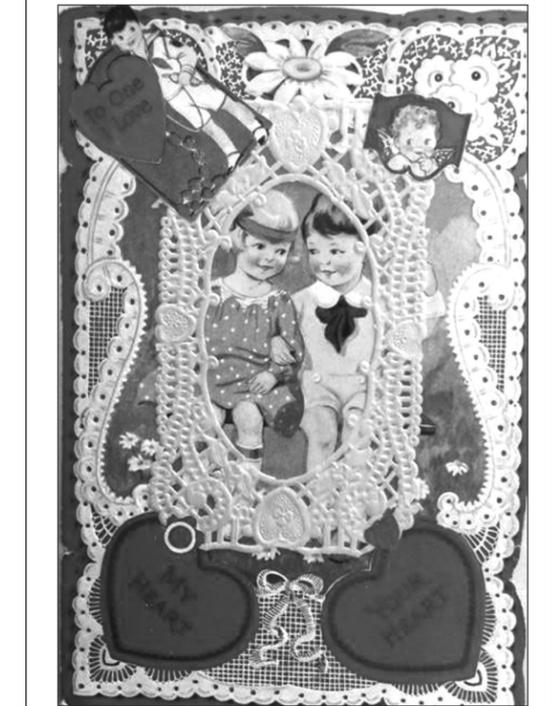
As a representative in the 1832-33 Illinois General Assembly in Vandalia, Hubbard introduced a bill for the construction of the Illinois Michigan Canal, which was ultimately defeated. At every

meeting of the legislature thereafter, he continued to urge passage of the canal bill until it successfully passed in the session of 1835-36.

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"After hearing the arguments upon this point, Mr. Hubbard took a map and called the attention of the members to the fact that the mouth of the Calumet River is within a few hundred yards of the Indiana state line, and suggested that it was expected that wherever the canal terminated a great city would grow up, and pertinently asked whether it was desirable that the coming city, at the terminus of the canal, should be as much of it in the State of Indiana as in Illinois, when the entire expense of constructing the canal would devolve upon Illinois. This practical business view of the question settled it, and the

mouth of the Chicago was made the terminus instead of the mouth of the Calumet. So you will see that the State of Illinois is indebted to the sagacity of Gurdon S. Hubbard for locating this great city where Illinois



Valentines from the Historical Collection

Since Valentine's Day is right around the corner we thought we would like to share some vintage Valentines with you.

mouth of the Chicago was made the terminus instead of the mouth of the Calumet.

So you will see that the State of Illinois is indebted to the sagacity of Gurdon S. Hubbard for locating this great city where Illinois

gets the principal benefit of it."

When digging the canal ceremoniously commenced, July 4, 1836, Gurdon Hubbard spade up one of the first shovelfuls of earth.



Annual membership dues:

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