

Durand

Probably the first settler in the town was a Mr. Sweet, whose first name cannot be ascertained. He arrived in March 1833, selected a claim on Section 13, and built a log cabin approximately 880 yards off of the Des Plaines River, in which he lived until the following October.

As this was before the ratification of the treaty with the Pottawatomie Indians, with reference to their retirement from these lands, and as they were generally opposed to occupancy by white men, Mr. Sweet must have been on especially friendly terms with them in order to remain there, and yet his desire to remain seems not to have been excessively strong, for in October he sold his claim to Mr. George Strong for \$60.00.

Mr. Strong before finally deciding to buy this claim consulted Colonel Thomas J. V. Owens, Indian Agent at Chicago, as to the possibility of moving onto it, and the probable results. Colonel Owens advised him not to go, as the Indians were hostile and as it would be necessary for him to use the United States troops in defending the rights of the Indians in case he (Mr. Strong) should attempt to occupy the land before the ratification of the treaty. Mr. Strong, however, having set his heart upon this claim, and knowing that the treaty would be ratified in a short time, decided to make the venture and in September 1833, took possession of his claim.

At this time, his nearest neighbor to the north (somewhere in Waukegan) was a Captain Wright and to the south was General Peet who moved onto his claim sometime in December 1833, and later settled in what is now known as Arlington Heights.

Soon after moving into his new claim, it was surrounded by about a dozen Indians, whose intentions were to drive off Mr. Strong. He, however, was not to be driven off easily. Going outside, he had quite a fight with them, knocking one of them down to the ground. He was immediately surrounded by the others, who with uplifted tomahawks and drawn knives, threatened him with instant death. His escape is attributed only to his showing no fear.

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Soon after this, late in 1833 the treaty with the Indians was signed and settlers came in considerable numbers. It was during this time that Mr. Strong claimed additional land which totaled 160 acres, and his son Edward claimed 120 acres. Both George and Edward Strong's claims covered the northern portion of Section 13. The total combined acreage owned by the family was 280.

A few of the early settlers in the Wheeling area during this time were Joseph Filkins, 1834, December. He built his log cabin and moved his family into it in 1835. His claims covered approximately 720 acres on Sections 1, 2 and 3. Timothy Titcomb, 1839, Section 13, William Clay and his two sons John B. and William B., 1834, Section 12, Stephen Salisbury, 1834, Sections 2, 3 and 4, James Macky, 1834, Section 14, Christopher and Daniel Stranger, 1834, Section 13, Christian Styken 1834, Section 13, Ephraim and Charles Morrison, 1835, Section 13; Peter Gebhardt came in January, 1838, remained six years and sold to Henry Miller, Israel Martin, 1835, Section 12.

By 1835 there were about 18 log cabins in the Wheeling area & approximately 200 inhabitants. The largest of these log cabins was the one erected by a Mr. William Hopps, a native of England. Mr. Hopps was involved in the first murder in the Wheeling area.

Mr. Hopps murdered his wife, but was acquitted through the exceptional ruling of Judge McAllister, on the plea of insanity. His freedom was short lived, and Mr. Hopps died in the poor house in Dunning in August 1839.

Others who settled in the Wheeling area between 1835 and 1839 were: William Dunton, Section 13, Daniel Martin, Section 12, Ashor Skinner, Sections 3 and 17, Thomas Hamilton, Sections 2 and 3, Eben Conant, Sections 2 and 10, Frederick Zimmerman, Section 3, Thomas Bradwell, Section 3, Ben Washburn, Section 3, Ben C. Luce, Section 3, Charles Luce Section 9, Benjamin M. Williams, Section 9 and 10, Jesse Henry Leavenworth, Sections 4, 9 and 10, Duncan McNab, Sections 9 and 10, N. I. R. Hays, Section 9, John Foster, Section 4 and 9, Henry Williams, Section 11, John Cooper, Section 10, George Walbridge, Section 4, George Chackfield, Section 4, and Mr. Shepard who started the first blacksmith shop in this area.

In 1837 a survey of the land in this area was made, and as it was known that the boundaries of the various claims already taken would not correspond with the section lines that would be run, the settlers, by mutual consent, selected Stephen M. Salisbury to purchase all the land they had claimed, with the understanding that he should re-deed each persons' individual claim to him, as nearly practicable, being at the same time governed by the section lines as run by the survey. This plan was carried out to the satisfaction of all concerned.

After the ratification of the Indian Treaty, the principal cause of excitement for the first few years white men occupied this territory was claim jumping.

A committee consisting of seven citizens belonging to Wheeling, was appointed to decide the questions of rightful ownership in all cases of claim jumping. This was the Inferior Court. Besides this, a Superior Court, or Court of Appeals was appointed, consisting of three citizens; S. M. Salisbury, George Strong and Joseph Filkins. Any case could be carried to the Superior Court if the decision of the Inferior Court caused dissatisfaction, but the decision of the Superior Court was final.

The most serious difficulty the settlers of Wheeling were connected with was the ejecting of a claim jumper from a claim just north of the present boundary of the town in Lake County, in which case the claimant was assisted by two female members of his family feigning sickness. A physician summoned for the purpose of examining the women, pronounced them in perfect health. On the strength of his report, the Wheeling vigilantes carried the women, in their beds, out of doors and pulled the house down. This was about the last of the difficulties of this kind.

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As the Wheeling area became more densely populated, there became a need for a post office. In 1836 Mr. Filkins built the first post office and became the first postman. Mr. Filkins was the original owner of what is now known as Childerley Park, which is located at 506 McHenry Road and owned by the Wheeling Park District.

As settlers continued to pour into the area the growth of the Village was also apparent. In 1838, two blacksmiths shops were opened. One by Mr. Orestin Shepard and the other by Mr. Ashor Skinner.

Lumber for projects in this area was supplied by a mill owned by a Mr. Kenniscott. This mill was located west of the Des Plaines River, about one mile south of what is now called Half Day.


Milwaukee Avenue was the main road from Chicago to the lands to the north of Wheeling. It was composed of the trails of Indians and paths beaten into the ground by herds of buffalo. In some places, the feet of thousands of buffalo had beaten the trail down to a depth of six feet.

In 1836, a stage route was established on this road. Because of the difficulty of travel in those days, Wheeling was the natural stopping place for the weary traveler to refresh themselves with food and drink. This led to the growth of "Restaurant Row" along Milwaukee Avenue and the fame of those eating places continues until the present day.

The first commercial building was erected in 1837 by Mr. Filkins, a tavern-hotel. In the same year, Russell Wheeler and Charles Daniels opened a general store.

Adding to the industry of the area was a flour mill, located on the West side of the river, directly across from the saw mill.

Other businesses followed in relatively quick succession. James Parker opened Wheeling's second hotel in 1840. By 1842, other additions included a store owned by John Rothschild, another store owned by John M. Schaffer and still another by William Vogt; another blacksmith shop by E. K. Bench and in 1845 a hardware store was introduced by Mr. Albert Fassbender.



Also in 1845, Wheeling's first school was built. Being very small, this building was used only until 1861, when a second and larger school was erected. This second school was destroyed by a fire in 1870. In 1871, a new two story school was completed on the South side of Dundee Road.

This structure served the community until 1925, when a brick school on Willie Avenue was completed.

Politically, the territory known as Wheeling Precinct, encompassed a part of Maine and Northfield Townships as well as the area now known as Wheeling Township. Prior to 1850, when any voting was necessary it was done at Wilcox's Tavern, which was located at the junction of Milwaukee Avenue and the Des Plaines River.

The town of Wheeling was organized in April 1850. A meeting was held in the house kept by James Parker. William H. Dunton was chosen Moderator, Egbert Van Vlack, Clerk, and George Fullager, Assistant Clerk. The election resulted in the choice of the following officers, each receiving the vote appended to his name: Supervisor, S.M. Salisbury, 106; Clerk, Lewis Peet, 96; Assessor, Ira Millard, 100; Collector, D. B. Briggs, 100; Commissioners of Highways, Ira Snow, 100, W. H. Dunton, 171, Andrew Luce, 99; Constables, D. B. Briggs, 122, S.D.W. Miller, 98. A pound was provided for, to be as near the center of the town as practicable, and Myron Thornton was appointed Pound-master. Three hundred dollars was voted to be raised for the support of the poor, for building a pound and for the incidental expenses of the township, but no tax has ever been levied for the support of the poor in Wheeling, nor was a pound provided at that time. Three hundred dollars was raised for road and bridge purposes. Fences were required to be built four feet high. The total number of votes cast at this election was 191, as certified to by Lewis Peet, Town Clerk, indicating a population of about 750. The Commissioners of Highways met April 19, and divided the town into six road districts. Their second action was to vacate a road running north and south from the Rand Road to the Dundee Road, between Sections 7 and 8, and 17 and 18. This



action was taken May 4, on the petition of ten citizens, dated April 19. The board of appointment, consisting of S.M. Salisbury, Supervisor, Lewis Peet, Clerk, William Scoville, Justice of the Peace, and Joel F. Hawks, Justice of Peace, met May 4 at the house of George Strong, and appointed Lysander Miller Overseer of Highways for District No. 1; Richard Adams for No. 2; Ira Know for No. 3; George Strong for No. 4; Stephen Lamb for No. 5, and James Dunton for No. 6. On the 13th of March, 1851, the Commissioners divided the town into nine districts each two miles square. The first highway fund, received by the Commissioners of Highways previously to March 25, 1851 was \$260. At that time it was reported that in five of the road districts there had been performed five hundred and ninety-seven days' work, and in one other district one hundred and one. The elections subsequent to that of 1850 have resulted in filling the offices as follows:

Supervisors:-- Joseph Filkins, 1851; John Filkins, 1852; Joseph Filkins, 1853; William Scoville, 1854-55, Jesse Matteson, 1856-57, George Strong, 1858 to 1865; William H. Dunton, 1866-67; Frederick Tesch, 1868 to 1870; David Peter, 1871; Frederick Tesch, 1873 to 1875; C. Giles, 1876 to 1883, inclusive.

Assessors:-- Ira Millard, 1851; E. Berry, 1852; William Scoville, 1853; F. R. Hamilton, 1854; William R. Dunton, 1855, George Fullagar, 1856; Chauncey Fuller, 1856; Jacob Seewalt, 1858, F. R. Hamilton, 1859-60; Ira Millard, 1861; C. Hegwein, 1862; George Schneider, 1863-64; George Strong, Jr., 1865; George Schneider, 1866 to 1883, inclusive.

Collectors:--D. B. Briggs, 1851; Ira Snow, 1852 to 1854; D. F. Wood, 1855; Robert Hopp, 1856; L.T. Webster, 1857; Henry McKnab, 1858; Jacob Fritch, 1859 to 1861; Hiram Sknow, 1862; Samuel W. Peese, 1863; C. Vogt, 1864; George Schneider, 1865; John Peter, 1866; George Strong, 1867; Charles Taege, 1868-69, Otto Nolte, 1870; Jacob Fritsch, 1861; David Peter, 1873-74; August Waarick, 1875-76; Otto Nolte, 1877-78; Conrad Miller, 1879; Henry Weinrich, 1880-81; Charles W. Lorenzen, 1882-83.




Commissioners of Highways:--Ira Know, George Strong and David Fellows, the latter appointed 1851; Peter Schenck, David Fellows and A.W. Peet, 1852 to 1854,; David Fellows, George Fullagar and John Bromley, 1856; David Fellows, John Bromley and Christian Hegwein, 1857; David Fellows, Christian Hegwein and William Kirkhoff, 1858; A. W. Peet, Alonzo Hawks and Hiram Perry, the latter appointed 1859; A. W. Peet, A. Hawks and M. D. Dean, 1860; Frederick Tesch for one year, L. Arnold for two years, and Phillip Wolf for three years, 1861; E. A. Allen, 1862; Alonzo Hawks, 1863, Henry Russell, 1864; Hiram Snow, 1865; Jacob Hunsinger, 1870; August Waarick, 1861; Harry Engelking, 1873; Philip Harth, 1875; Henry Engelking, 1876; Philip Hart, 1877; Peter Byer, 1878; Henry Engelking, 1879; Philip Hart, 1880; Peter Byer, 1881; Henry Meyer, 1882, Henry Kreft, 1883.

Justices of the Peace:-- William Scoville and I.N. Schafer, 1854; John Rothschild, 1857; John Rothschild and William Scoville, 1858; J.W. Walton and A.W. Peet, 1862; J.W. Walton and Daniel T. Wood, 1866; John D. Beach, 1868; John D. Beach and William Wallace, 1870; Jacob Fritsch and W. H. Dunton, 1873-77-81.

Constables:--Ira Snow and D. B. Briggs, 1851; Daniel Fritsch, 1852; Ira Snow and D.F. Wood, 1855; John Belden, 1856; S.S. Dewey and E. K. Beach, 1862; Charles Wetzel, appointed 1863, elected 1864, E.K. Beach and Hiram S. Rich, 1865; John Peter, Jr. and E. K. Beach, 1866; E. K. Beach and James C. Peter, 1870-73-74; Byron D. Thurber, 1876; E. K. Beach and Luther Whiting, 1877; Henry Weinrich and George Hurst, 1881; J. P. Hansom, 1882.

Trustees of Schools: -- A. G. Skinner, 1869; John Peter, 1870; Joel Burlingame, 1871; Daniel K. Draper, 1873; John Peter and Hiram Know, 1874; Conrad Miller, 1875; Louis Fischer, 1876; Luther Whiting, 1877; Conrad Miller, 1878; Louis Fischer, 1879; Luther Whiting, 1880; David Arnold, 1881; Louis Fischer, 1882, L.W. Whiting, 1883.



Overseers of the Poor:--Garret Lasher, 1851; Peter Filbert, 1852 to 1854; D. F. Wood, 1855; Reuben Bromley, 1856; Hiram Ferry, 1857; Elias Wood, 1859; G. N. Olmsted, 1862.

During the years 1850 through 1890, business and professional people made their appearance. In 1850 a brewery was built by Napoleon Periolat. This business was operated by him and later by his sons, Henry and Robert, until 1905, at which time it was sold to new owners from Chicago. This building was demolished in 1910.

In 1849 Dr. Julius Permann came to Wheeling and practiced medicine until his death in 1856.

Dr. John George Schneider was the area's first Veterinarian, arriving here in 1853. Dr. Schneider served the community in various offices, including that of Township Assessor, in addition to his work as veterinarian surgeon. His services ended upon his death in 1907.

One son, Reinhold Schneider, followed the trade of harness making in a shop which adjoined the first Village Hall. He also served as Village Clerk from 1900 until his death in 1927.

Miss Adeline Schneider, daughter of Reinhold Schneider was elected Village Clerk upon the death of her father in 1927. She was continuously re-elected to this office until her retirement in 1953.

Adeline and her sister, Lucille, presently reside at their home located on Milwaukee Avenue and are still active in the Historical Society.

In 1856 Mr. Jacob Hunsinger opened a hotel, Mr. William Metz opened a Blacksmith shop in 1865, and in the same year, Mr. Samuel Reese opened a wagonshop, which he sold to Boris Fischer three years later.

In 1873, Fred Stryken opened a store, Martin Armbruster another hotel and in 1874 C. Welflin opened a harness shop. This was the same shop that Reinhold Schnedier purchased in 1885.

John Behm's hotel was opened in 1877, and John Schminkie's store was opened in 1878. Henry Bockman, who was Wheeling's first President, started a creamery in 1880. Another store was opened in 1888 by Signalt and Bollenback.

Dr. M. Moffat practiced medicine in Wheeling from 1876 to 1890, in which year Dr. Henry Benz made his appearance.

Wheeling's railroad station was built in 1886, one mile west of the Village. This building was destroyed by fire in 19____.

As the needs of the Village grew, the necessity for a Village Hall became necessary. Land was purchased for \$150.00, and sealed bids were taken for the erection of a building 20'x30'12' high, with two cells which were located on the west end of this building each being 7½'x9'. This building was located at 84 South Milwaukee Avenue.

The contract for the erection of the building was awarded to Mr. H. P. Mentzer of Shermerville (which is now known as Northbrook) Illinois. Mr. Mentzer's business included Ice Box and Hearse Furnishings and House Razing as well as Building and Contracting.

The construction of the Village Hall was completed in January 1875, and the total construction cost was \$553.26.

Various items were purchased by the Village to furnish this building, a gold coin Ventiduct No. 19 store, one dozen chairs, two Rochester lamps, one table and business desk, two jail locks, cell mattresses and cleaning equipment.

In 1965 the Village of Wheeling rented this original structure to the Wheeling Historical Society for \$1.00 per year. The building ¹⁻¹⁵ had been refurbished and made into the headquarters of the Historical Society and a museum for the Village. The Historical Society was solely responsible for the operation of the museum.

