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## HISTORY OF WHEELING.

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The town of Wheeling lies in the north part of Cook County, and is bounded on the north by Lake County, on the east by Northfield, on the south by Maine and Elk Grove, and on the west by Palatine. The highest land in the township is in the western portion, there being a gradual slope to the Desplaines River, which flows southward through the eastern tier of sections. The soil is a rich prairie loam. Originally the timber along the Desplaines River consisted of a belt about three-fourths of a mile in width, and was, perhaps, equally divided between Wheeling and Northfield.

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 cabin, 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 their occupancy by white men, Mr. Sweet must have been on especially friendly relations 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 George Strong for \$60. Mr. Strong, before finally deciding to buy this claim, consulted Colonel Thomas J. V. Owen, Indian Agent at Chicago, as to the propriety of moving onto it, and as to the probable results. Colonel Owen advised him not to go, as the Indians were

hostile, and as, in addition, it would be necessary for him to use the United States troops in defending the rights of the Indians in case 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 on Monday, September 2, took possession of his claim. At this time his nearest neighbor to the northward was Captain Wright, who was said to be the only one between him and Waukegan; and to the southward his nearest neighbor was either General Peet or Captain Talcott—probably the former, who moved onto the claim where his son, A. W. Peet, now resides, in December of the same year. Soon after moving into the Sweet shanty, it was surrounded by about a dozen Indians, whose intention was 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 flat upon the ground. He was immediately surrounded by the others, who with uplifted tomahawks and drawn knives threatened him with instant death. His escape is attributable only to his showing no signs of fear. The treaty was soon afterward ratified, and settlers came on in considerable numbers. Timothy Titcomb almost immediately afterward settled just north of Mr. Strong, on Section 13, but soon sold out to Myron Dimmick, who staid, however, only three or four years. William B. Clay, and his two sons, John B. and D. H. Clay, settled

on Section 12, S. M. Salisbury on Section 2, James Mackey and his brother on Section 24, Christopher and Daniel Stanger on Section 13, and Christian Stryker on Section 12. These, among others, came in 1834, the last in December. Peter Gebhardt came in January, 1835, remained about six years, and sold out to Henry Miller. Israel Martin also came about this time, but after a short residence moved to Palatine. Joseph Filkins, who had made his claim in 1824, built his cabin and moved his family into it in 1835. Matthew Chivel came in February, 1835, during which year eighteen log houses at least were raised. In March, 1836, William H. Dunton moved into the town and has ever since been a continuous resident. In 1837 Ephraim and Charles Morrison settled on Section 11 or 12; Russell Wheeler and Charles Daniels opened a store where the village of Wheeling is located, which they kept four or five years, and sold to Joel L. McDuffy. In 1838 a Mr. Shepard, or Shepherd, started a blacksmith shop, and Asher G. Skinner arrived and settled on Section 12. Daniel Martin came in 1839. By this time there were about two hundred inhabitants in the town. 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, and if no one was killed for this crime, it was probably because the rightful possessors were so thoroughly united and organized as to be fully conscious of their strength and fully assured of success in the defense of their rights, as claim-jumpers usually had to fight single-handed. A committee consisting of seven citizens, belonging to Wheeling, was appointed to decide on questions of rightful ownership in all cases of claim-jumping. This was the Inferior Court. Besides this, a Superior Court, or Court of Appeal, was appointed, consisting of three citizens, S. M. Salisbury, George Strong, and Joseph Filkins, before which any case might be carried 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 their 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, examined the "sick" women and pronounced them in perfect health, and on the strength of his report the women were carried out of doors on their beds by the Wheeling vigilantes, and the house pulled down. This was about the last of the difficulties of this kind.

In 1837 a survey of the lands in this town was made, and as it was known that the boundaries of the various claims already taken could not correspond with the section lines that would be run, the settlers, by mutual consent, selected S. M. Salisbury to purchase all the land they had claimed, with the understanding that he should re-deed each one's individual claim to him, as nearly as 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.

From the time elections became necessary to 1850, when the town was organized, the territory embraced within its limits, together with a part of Maine and Northfield, was known as Wheeling Precinct. The place of voting was at Wilcox's tavern, situated on the Milwaukee road near where it crosses the Desplaines River. After the organization of the town elections were held at the village of Wheeling.

This town was organized, as were the others in the county, April 2, 1850. The meeting was held "at the house lately kept by James Parker in the town of Wheeling." William H. Dunton was chosen Moderator, Egbert Van Vlack, Clerk, and George Fullagar, 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 the 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 Snow 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.

*Clerks.*—John Filkins, 1851; E. K. Beach, 1852 to 1856; Charles Vogt, 1857 to 1859; F. A. Razein, 1860; William H. Dunton, 1861 to 1865; J. H. Fellows, 1866; Ira Millard, 1867; William H. Dunton, 1868 to 1871; Albert G. Kennicott, 1873; A. P. Tewksbury, 1874 to 1876; August Waarick, 1877; E. M. Thomas, 1878 to 1880; Fred R. Pfeifer, 1881 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, 1857; 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 Snow, 1862; Samuel W. Peese, 1863; C. Vogt, 1864; George Schneider, 1865; John Peter, 1866; George Strong, 1867; Charles Taeye, 1868-69; Otto Nolte, 1870; Jacob Fritsch, 1871; 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 Snow, 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 E. A. Allen, 1855; 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 Schmahl, 1866; Jacob Hunsinger, 1867; Luther Whiting, 1868; Ludwig Volberding, 1869; Jacob Hunsinger, 1870; August Waarick, 1871; Harry Engelking, 1873; Philip Harth, 1875; Henry Engelking, 1876; Philip Harth, 1877; Peter Byer, 1878; Henry Engelking, 1879; Philip Harth, 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 Wetzell, 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.

*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.

*Trustees of Schools.*—A. G. Skinner, 1869; John Peter, 1870; Joel Burlingame, 1871; Daniel K. Draper, 1873; John Peter and Hiram Snow, 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.

*The Schools of Wheeling.*—There are no records connected with the schools of this township of an earlier date than April 6, 1857. At that time there were ten districts. W. H. Dunton, A. W. Peet and E. K. Beach were the school trustees, and William Scoville was treasurer of the school fund. W. H. Dunton became treasurer of this fund in 1862 and has held the office ever since. In 1857 the school fund was \$3,800. At the present time it is \$3,890.02. There appears to have been no census of the school children taken in early days, but the census of 1883 shows the following numbers in the respective districts: District No. 1,

187; No. 3, 144; No. 5, 87; No. 6, 67; No. 7, 84; No. 8, 237; No. 10, 567; total number, 1,313. The population of the township of Wheeling in 1880 was 2,296. In 1883 it was probably about 2,500.