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DOWNNS

- . Downs had one jewelry store and two barber shops.
- . Mr. William Blue is the largest land owner in the vicinity.
- . Miss Alma Whitcomb has become noted as a pianist.
- . Dr. Young and Sageser are the physicans and are good ones.
- . C.C. Fields and Son are blacksmiths and have more work than they can do.
- . Mr. John a Davis is postmaster and a more accommodating or better liked man is hard to find.
- . Killion and Orendodrf has an up-to-date grocery in the double building erected last spring.
- . William Doyle, who for forty years, from 1848 to 1888, served in the American navy, is one of Downs' interesting citizens.
- . Although Downs can boast no regular hotels, meals are served by Mrs. West, Mrs. Jesse Craig, and Mrs. Frank Horner.
- . There is only one church building in the town but there are three resident ministers - the M.E., Presbyterian and United Brethern
- . Mr. Frank Horner lives here but runs the store and postoffice at Gillum. The operator at Gillum, who is a lady, also lives here.
- . Downs is nine miles from Bloomington, yet does as much business as many towns twice its size that are not close to a large city.
- . Hopewell cemetery lies at the northeastern village limits and is one of the most beautiful and well kept cemeteries in central Illinois.
- . There is but one pair of twins in town - Roy and Ray Horner - and they are pretty, jolly little lads of nine year, always dressed alike.
- . "Union Hall" is owned by a number of citizens and is used for all public entertainments. The Cumberland Presbyterians hold their religious services in it.
- . Downs has two new large elevators. One is owned by R.M. Hall, the other by Dooley, Dillon and Carlisle. The latter owns one of the three groceries in the town.
- . Downs is the home of the "Whitcomb Gates". W.A. Whitcomb is the manufacturer and pantentee. The factory is on Center street and employs four or five men all the time.
- . Downs had a building boom last summer and four fine residences costing from \$1,800 to 2,800 were erected on two adjoining blocks. They belong to Oscar Killion Edward Mikels, Charles Dooley and Mrs. Fox.

- . The Kickapoo Union school building is the pride of the village. It is built of red brick and gray stone and was erected in 1895. It is one of the best schools in the state. Professor McCormick is principal, Miss Tompkins intermediate teacher and Miss Barnard primary.
- . Weaver and Davis are proprietors of the hardware store, occupying half of the large two-story brick building which they own. Buckles Brothers have their stock of groceries and general merchandise in the other half of the building and are the only brothers in business here.

Source: Pantagraph - Feb. 24, 1900

EARLY HISTORY OF DOWNS, ILLINOIS

Kickapoo Indians inhabited the northern part of Downs Township and most of the southern and eastern parts of Old Town Township in 1829 when a trading post was established a short distance west of Kickapoo Creek on what is now known as Route 150, though the principle holdings of the Indians surrounded the head-waters of that creek. A village named Delta was erected at that trading-post by settlers who came from Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina about that time and during the next ten years. It was comprised of a mill, a store, a blacksmith shop and a post-office. The skeleton of the post-office building can now be seen just east of the new home erected and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. C.F. Grove. There were several mills along that creek from time to time, but freshets kept washing out the dams. C.D. Bellville had a store in Delta and John H. Robertson had the blacksmith shop.

Mr. John Price came from Kentucky in 1829 to select a site and plan to move here in 1830 which he did, 1829 being the same year Mr. Lawson Downs came to the Diamond Grove community and settled. Others who came were William Weaver, Sevier Stringfield, Elias Henry Wall, William Bishop, Alexander P. Craig, Samuel Richardson, and John Cusey who became State Senator in 1872.

Delta thrived, but when a railroad was built from Indianapolis to Bloomington in 1869, the village was moved to its present site and named Priceville, in honor of its founder, John Price. He was proprietor of the ground on which Downs stands and platted the village. John Price was Justice of the Peace and for a time had a general store in Downs. Miss Nellie B. Dooley now uses the scales in her home that her great-grandfather, John Price, used in his store. It was named Priceville, but because of the similarity to the name, Princeville, another town in the State which mail clerks complained about getting the names confused, the name was changed to Downs, in honor of Lawson Downs, then a very influential farmer in the southwestern part of the township.

The first school in Downs township was a subscription one built by voluntary labor. In 1842 on the bluff just west of the railroad crossing over Kickapoo Creek was built the Spring School House. In 1856 or 58 a better building was erected. Kickapoo Union School District was formed in 1869. A two-room school was located in Downs village until 1895 when a brick four-room school was built and a high school established. The Downs Community High School was built in 1920. The Grade School building was erected in 1955.

Hopewell Methodist Church was built in 1867 just east of Hopewell Cemetery and moved to the present site of the Methodist Church in Downs in 1878. The new brick building was erected in 1909. The Presbyterian Church in Downs was built in 1900. After the congregation scattered and the church was closed, it became the knights of Pythias Hall. The St. Mary's Catholic Church in Downs was built in 1910.

Dr. Robert Prutny, a relative of the John Price family, was the first doctor in Downs. Dr. James Montgomery followed him and practiced in the community for many years. He built nine or ten small cottages in the village, several of which are still standing. He also built the only drug store Downs has ever had. It stood on the corner now covered by the new Laundromat.

Twelve doctors have been located in Downs. Dr. M.S. Wilson was here for twenty-five years, following Dr. Montgomery and Dr. John Haig. Others Drs. Sageser, Roberts, A.D. Young, and O.M. Thompson. Dr. E.C. Williams came in 1902 and practiced for fifty-five years.

Rev. Z.R. Hatfield, a United Brethren minister, had a photograph gallery at his home in Downs at one time, and his brother Oscar Hatfield, published the only newspaper of Downs which was known as the Downs Salmagundi.

Downs had two hotels in early years and several restaurants. In 1911 the Downs Bank was built but it closed in 1929 and the building is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. William Wells where they have a restaurant.

In about 1885 sixteen men in the Downs community organized the Downs Cornet Band which prospered for seven years. The members were equipped with beautiful suits. Sometimes the band was engaged to play throughout the week of the Grange Fair south of Bloomington, which was often the very hottest period of the summer. The Downs Band also played on many public occasions.

Much of the original town of Downs was platted by Peter B. Price, son of John Price, and brother to Mrs. Polley Gillum Cowden, for whom the village of Gillum was named. The spacious Cowden house was very near the railroad when the railroad was built and members of the Cowden family were well known to the railroad officials and workmen. There was also the Oliver Staten Addition to Downs. In 1896 the J.W. Dooley Addition consisting of thirty-six lots, blocks, streets and alleys, was surveyed out of the Dooley pasture and extended to the cemetery. In 1920 five acres of the adjoining pasture were sold to the school district for the new High School, and in 1955 another five-acre tract of the Dooley property was sold for the new Grade School. In 1953 John R. Ryan Company laid out several other additions, the latest one being the Kickapoo Addition in the west end of Downs.

Source: Nellie B. Dooley - January 31, 1962

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF DOWNS

There were Indians that lived in the north part of Downs Township and the southern part of Old Town Township and they used to wander up and down the creek. Kickapoo Creek was named after this tribe of Indians. They had a little trading post just west of the bridge. They would travel from Champaign to Peoria and they had this trading post where they came in to trade.

People began to come here from other states about 1827. They came from Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina. They established a little community down by the Kickapoo and called it Old Delta. They had a blacksmith shop, post office, mill, and one house. Some of the people that moved in here was Mr. Price, and Mr. Waybright. After they came the Indians lived farther north and east over toward Ellsworth. They made a fort up there so they didn't bother down here too much. Old Delta prospered for quite awhile.

Finally the Railroad decided to put a track through - at that time there wasn't even a railroad here. After the Railroad went through they moved two of the buildings from Old Delta up into town. The frame building that burned was moved up here from Old Delta. There was another building moved up right across the street and it was run by a man named Bellville and later my father (Wes Teter) bought the building and ran a meat market and a small grocery. He ran a grocery store for more than 40 years. He sold more meat than groceries. He had 40 acres of ground up north east of here and raised his own cattle and butchered them. He also had an ice house. The store he owned is where the restaurant is now. It was a frame store and after he bought the store he built a three room house on the south (that's where I was born). There were two frame houses that stood on the west side just south of that store and they were sold and moved away.

A man by the name of Elenberg built a hotel. That time there was no travel back and forth - the salesmen would come in on the train to sell their wares and sometimes they couldn't get away the same day so they would have to stay overnight. On down the street where the Adkinson's live there were two stores in that building - grocery stores. The first bank in Downs was in one corner of the store that was on the alley side. Later the bank bought the corner where the restaurant is now - my father sold that corner to the bank and moved the store farther south. He moved the house across the street from there. The bank was called the Farmer's State Bank (Downs Bank). The store went by the name of Wes Teter's store and it had been moved from Old Delta. When the town was first established there was an elevator on the west side of Seminary and it burned. They built a new elevator there and kept adding on until they had that big one there. Some years after that there was another elevator built across the street, north of the R.R. track where the vacant lot is - down at the end of Seminary.

Page 2 - History of the Town of Downs

The first school (1842) was across the Railroad track on the north side of the bridge. Later when the railroad went through there was another building in this area called the pump house where the trains would come through and stop to take on water - in that day they had to have water to help make steam. The trains ran from Peoria to Champaign. There weren't too many pupils attended that school - this was the first school that my father went to. There was a family by the name of Cowden that lived in Gillum - they also attended there and I never heard my father say anything about any other pupils attending that school but the Cowdens and Teters (my father was a Teter). More people moved into the village and they thought they needed a bigger school so they built a subscription school - where people went together and paid so much money to get the school built (1856). It was just a two room school where the brick school is now. Later when the attendance increased they needed a new building. They moved the old building down to the corner where the Huff's live. It was a two room school - one room down and one room up. The older students went upstairs and lower grade in the lower part (that's where I started to school) - I was five years old. They built the new brick school in January 1895. That school had four rooms, two rooms on the lower level where 1, 2, 3 grades were in one room and 4, 5, 6 grades in the other room. Upstairs was 7th and 8th grades in one room. They started the high school and one teacher taught all subjects to the three different years. Attendance got so they needed a new school. In 1920 the Downs Community High School was built out east on Washington Street. In 1955 the new grade school was built on the south side of Washington Street. Downs and Ellsworth consolidated. Tri Valley later built the new high school (1978).

The first church was in a Log Cabin across the Railroad where Layton's Well Drilling is. The man who owned the ground built the Log Cabin and built a great big room on one end so people could worship there. Finally there was a church built out east of Downs - east of what's now R. 150 (1868). This church was moved into town about where Fred Hood lives. A man by the name of Ingram was the minister. He bought the ground where the present church stands and had the church moved there. That church stood there until 1909. A man by the name of Marcellus bought the old frame church, tore it down and built a house one block east of Seminary which is still standing - I think there is a family by the name of Kissinger lives in it now. The present church was built in 1909. Attendance increased and more children came to Sunday School so they built a new addition onto the church in 1974.

When the Presbyterians came to town they had their church up over the store (Buckles) on the east side of the street. The Presbyterians built a church down next to where Anna Roberts lives now. Later their attendance was so small they couldn't afford to support a pastor so they disbanded. The K.of P. Lodge bought the building and had their lodge meetings there. Finally the lodge disbanded and a man by the name of Thomas (father of man that runs the Body Shop) tore it down to build a new Body Shop. The people who lived around there objected so they went to the town board and requested he not build it there. Jacque Roberts bought the lot and Maude Clark moved her trailer in there.

The Catholics built their church on the corner of Lincoln and Washington.

Mr. Carlisle was the first mayor and he lived where Romines live. Bernice Phillips was the first woman to serve on the town board. She served three years and resigned because her husband had a stroke and she couldn't attend the meetings. Wayne Davis was the first village clerk.

An explanation of the post that stands on the corner - my father's store was moved from the corner after the bank bought it - he owned two lots. When we lived there there was a fence with a big gate and that post is one of the gate posts. It is over a hundred years old - the last mark of my old home.

The bank stood on the corner and operated until Roosevelt closed all the banks and it never opened up after that.

One of the first men that came to Old Delta was Downs and another by the name of Price. They were kin to one another. Mr. Downs bought the land that laid in south and west of what is now the town of Downs. He bought a farm - 640 acres for \$1.25 an acre. The town was first called Priceville. Later it was changed to Downs because there was another village named Princeville and the people in the post offices were always getting the mail mixed up so they decided to change the name. They called it Downs after Mr. Downs who laid out town.

Questions:

What buildings in Downs were torn down that aren't here anymore?

The only one torn down and not replaced was the old lumber yard which was down on Main Street just west of where the Laundromat was.

Oldest homes in Downs?

Bernice Phillips' home, one across the Railroad track (Waybrights) and where Mr. Harrison lives. It was an old school house that set out on the corner of Young's farm and was moved in here as a residence.

Oldest store building?

Where the Hammers are. It was a frame building . It was there when the town was first organized. It burned in 1888 and was rebuilt in 1889 by Weaver and Davis. When it was rebuilt it was built of brick. A man by the name of Buckles was the first man to run the store. Weaver and Davis had half of the building where they ran a hardware. South of the hardware was a lumber shed that ran to the alley where the garage is now.

Source: Taken from a tape made by Bernice Phillips. At the time this tape was made she was the oldest resident of Downs.

HISTORY OF THE DOWNS METHODIST CHURCH
Compiled by Mrs. Lena Adams
(Revised by J.P. Cummins)

Mr. Thomas Hendricks and 'Uncle' John Price invited people to their homes for worship. Mr. Price built a large room annexed to his house to hold the services; this room is still standing in the S.W. part of Downs on the premises of Mr. Phinis Perry. This room was used by Peter Cartwright for evangelistic services when he came this way. The next meeting place was the Spring School house just west of the village of Downs (date not given) which had then only two or three dwellings. Rev. George Schrimger was the first station preacher in 1877; this church has been a student charge.

In 1833 the M.E. Church was organized, they worshipped in the Spring School house till 1841; then the Union Church was built about 3 miles east of Downs, and the C.P. and the Methodists worshipped together, until in 1867 when the Methodists erected a frame church just east of the cemetery and in 1876 the Pastor, Rev. Job Ingram donated the ground where this beautiful church now stands and moved the old church here.

In April 1909 the trustees decided to build a new church and with the help of the Pastor, Rev. C.S. Boyd they built this church. The trustees sold the old church to F.L. Marcellus, and the bell that used to call us to church now rings in the grade school house here. E.L. Weaver and R.J. Davis were the contractors, they with the help of the good people built a church of which this community is justly proud, and with varying fortunes the people have maintained the work until today (1947), with the church in a growing condition.

According to notes left by Bernice Phillips - a church was built east of Downs (east of what's now R.150 in 1868). This church was moved into town about where Fred Hood lives.

HOPEWELL M.E. CHURCH

The "Hopewell" M.E. Church was built about 1867, at where the Hopewell cemetery was and still is. It belonged to Old Town Circuit at that time, and became attached to LeRoy Circuit in 1873. A year later, it became a station. It is about 36 x 50, plain, and cost about \$2,400. Thomas Twining, J. N. Savidge, John Rice, Dr. James Montgomery, J.H. Robertson, P.B. Price and James Brakey, were among others, prominent in building this house of worship.

Revs. S. Middleton, W.C. Lacey, J.G. Bonnell, T.J. Simmons, assisted by George Reed, S.H. Whittock, William Willis, and George Scrimger, have successively served the church at Hopewell.

In 1878, the building was moved to Downs and repaired, at a cost of \$300. Rev. Job Ingram is the present Pastor, under whose earnest ministrations the church and sabbath school are in a flourishing condition. The church member 130, and the school about 100.

Source: History of McLean County - Green Book
Merriman, Charles P. 977.59
M55
1879 copywright

This information doesn't agree with some of the Down's residents knowledge of the church.

Source: Pantagraph, Thursday, June 10, 1976

Booklet Recounts History by Miriam Engelhorn

DOWNS - Oscar Hatfield was a reporter for the Downs Salamagundi. Writing the story of the attempted robbery of the Farmers State Bank on October 10, 1913, made him hungry.

Hatfield took a stroll through downtown Downs, checked with his news sources, and then returned to his office where he dozed off while making corrections in his robbery story.

In his dreams he interviewed early residents of Downs and Old Town Township. Hatfield dreamed he talked to Pemoatam, John Price, Lawson Downs, Polly Gillum Cowden and Mr. and Mrs. William Bishop.

That story and other tidbits have been included in a booklet created by the Tri-Valley Federated Junior Woman's Club. It's called "Memories of Downs and Old Town Township."

The club members are too young to remember what Downs was like in 1913, not to mention when Pemoatam's Kickapoo Indians claimed all the lands between the Wabash and Illinois rivers.

But the members researched McLean County histories and the papers of the late Miss Nellie Dooley.

Mrs. Lloyd Combs, Mrs. Cecile Groves, Mrs. Wilbur Goodlick, Mrs. Minnie Hazlett, Court Lechert, Hobart Price and Mrs. Russell Williams shared pictures and information.

One good source was Mrs. Bernice Phillips, 85, Downs' oldest resident. She has spent all but four years of her life in the village. She shared pictures and memories. Her father, John Teter, ran a butcher shop in Downs and cooled the meat with ice he cut from the pond north of Downs.

Mrs. Phillips still quilts, paints, does needlepoint and is a hospital volunteer.

In fact, Mrs. Phillips has made a quilt from blocks embroidered by her daughter, Jeanette Phillips Colter, in 1929. The patterns, each a different historical scene, were ordered from The Daily Pantagraph. Mrs. Phillips made the quilt about nine years ago.

In their endeavor to capture the past- with and assist from the dreaming reporter - Marilyn Bouhl, Barbara Ely, Marilyn Lechert, Joan Shelton and Jacqueline Tarvin told it as is was in their booklet.

Page 2 - Booklet Recounts History by Miriam Engelhorn

Also included are a map of Old Town Township and a plat map of Downs and essays by Jan Evans and Angela Peel.

Reba Brotherton, president of the Downs American Legion Auxiliary contributed pieces on the Rev. George L. Fox and the Most Reverend Edward W. O'Rourke, bishop of the Peoria diocese.

Mr. Fox, student pastor of Fowns Methodist Church while he attended Illinois Wesleyan University in 1931, was one of the four chaplains who gave up their life jackets on the torpedoed S.S. Dorchester in February 1943. The four chaplains, along with 600 soldiers and sailors went down with the ship. Mrs. Phillips' daughter, Edna, married Mr. Fox's son, Wyatt.

Bishop O'Rourke was born near Downs and installed as bishop on July 15, 1971.

Plaques, with appropriate inscriptions, will be presented to their churches in honor of the two pastors.

The club prepared the booklet in conjunction with the community bicentennial celebration on July 4.

The observance will begin with a community church service at 10:30 a.m. in Dooley Park. A parade is planned, starting at 1 p.m. Games, and exhibition of prairie crafts, square dancing and fireworks display are scheduled.

The booklet cover features a sketch of the old church bell, which was in the belfry of the Hopewell Methodist Church from 1867 to 1909 and later in Kickapoo Union Grade School. John Ryan, who purchased the school when it was sold in 1965, donated the bell to the community and it was placed in Dooley Park. Vandals damaged it a year ago, and it was removed for repairs.

Organizers of the bicentennial hope it will be back in place by July 4.

Copies of the booklet are available from Joyce Jones and Mrs. Shelton.

ELECTION HISTORY VILLAGE OF DOWNS

The following is a history of those persons elected to the Village Board of Downs, Illinois as remembered by Mrs. Nellie Hoover, who served as Village Clerk from April 27, 1949 until her retirement on September 22, 1972.

April 27, 1949

Elected were Ira Kazar, mayor; Nellie Hoover, clerk.
Trustees: Price Downs, Wayne Bitzer, and Melvin Burnett.
Holdovers: Carl Hall, Ed. McManus, Jack Groves.

April 17, 1951

Elected were trustees Byron Linton, Jack Groves and Edward McManus.

April 1953

Elected J.P. Downs, mayor; Nellie Hoover, clerk. Trustees: Glen Layten, Chester Schultz, Wm. Wells. Holdovers: Groves, Linton, McManus.

In November, 1953 Mr. Downs resigned as mayor; senior trustee Ed. McManus assumed interim appointment until next regular election in 1955. Mrs. Marguerite Heidelberg was appointed a trustee to fill McManus' seat - to April 1955.

August 1954 Schultz resigned; in September James Miars was appointed to this vacancy, January 1955 Miars resigned to go to military service - place left vacant until April election.

April 1955

Wm. Wells elected mayor for a 2 year term. He resigned as trustee. Trustees elected: Bernard Sherwood, Byron Linton and Marguerite Heidelberg. Jack Groves elected a 3 year term to complete the Miars term. By motion of the board, next high man in the election was chosen to fill the trustee seat of Wm. Wells, He was Richard Wilson to a 2 year term.
Holdover: Layten.

April 1957

Jack Groves elected mayor; Nellie Hoover, clerk. Trustees: Glen Layten, Jim Gelsthorpe and Carl Hall. Glen Rockholm elected to a 2 year term to complete Sherwood's term.
Holdovers: Linton and Heidelberg.

May 1958 Rockholm resigned - Ned Godsell appointed to fill vacancy to next election.

April 1959

Heidelberg, Linton reelected to 4 year terms. Wells and Ronald Berry tied - they drew lots for the full term - Berry won and will serve 4 years - Wells the 2 year term to finish Gelsthorpe's term to 1961. Holdovers: Hall and Layten.

Page 2 - Election History Village of Downs

April 1861

Groves, elected mayor; Hoover, clerk. Carl Hall, Douglas Blair and Glen Layten elected to 4 year terms. Mrs. Evelyn Searsto 2 year term to replace Byron Linton who resigned on moving out of town. Holdovers: Heidelberg and Berry.

April 1863

Heidelberg, Berry and Wm. Bandy elected to 4 years terms. Holdovers: Hall, Layten, Blair.

November 1863

Carl Hall died. Charles Kimler appointed to finish his term as trustee. June 1864 Charles Kimler died in June. Vacancy until April 1865.

April 1865

Daouglas Blair, elected mayor; N. Hoover, Clerk. Donald Landers, John Neckkash and Melvin Burnett to 4 year terms as trustees. Holdover: Heidelberg, Bandy and Berry.

June 1865 Blair resigned. Ron Berry, senior trustee takes his place - Dick Hamblin appointed to his trustee seat.

January 1866 Bandy resigns - James Dawson appointed to serve out his term to April 1867.

April 1867

D. Landers elected to 2 year term as mayor. Jim Jordine, Ron Stutzman and Dick Hamblin, trustees.

September 1867 - Dawson resigns - Harold Wilcox appointed to the seat.

April 1869

D. Landers elected mayor; N. Hoover, clerk. Trustees: Burnett, Neckkash and Wilcox. Holdovers: Hamblin Stutzman, Jordine.

April 1871

Stutzman and Hamblin reelected trustees. Donal Smith elected to succeed Jordine.

June 1, 1872 Stutzman resigns to accept the load of full time village employee.

September 1872 Hamblin resigns as trustee, effective this month. Mrs. Hoover resigns as clerk effective November 1.

September 22, 1872 Mrs. Billie Jo Hood appointed to serve as clerk until the 1873 election. No trustees found as yet.

Downs, Illinois
July 8, 1969

To the Board Members of the Village Board of Downs:

When I gave the deed to the remaining part of my pasture to Mr. Landers for the Village of Downs, he thanked me in a very nice way. Somedays later Mrs. Hoover, your Secretary, sent me a very nice letter of appreciation of the gift, enclosing a check for one dollar to make the transaction legal. So, I considered myself well thanked.

However, on the afternoon of July 4th, following Mr. Lander's address, I was so completely surprised when he escorted me to the pavilion to receive the beautiful award plaque you had prepared for me, on the spur of the moment I was unable to pull myself together and respond in a proper manner, which I do regret. I do wish somebody had given me an inkling of what I was to receive before that moment.

I do appreciate the award very much and shall treasure it during my remaining days.

The virgin wood, with its variety of wild flowers, has always been very precious to me. When I could first remember, it was a thickly wooded pasture extending from our barn lot to the present Dooley Avenue on the north. My father labored hard to grub out the hazelbrush on part of it. When the farm was owned by my grandfather, Frederick R. Cowden, the northwest corner had been transferred to the Hopewell Cemetery Association.

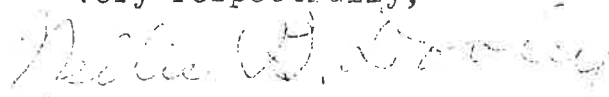
After we were forced to sell five acres for the Downs Community High School, and before the Do-Well Addition was developed, I asked my brother to join me in donating that north pasture to the Village of Downs for a park in memory of our parents, but he declined to do so.

But, I maintained that "bee in my bonnet" as a dream to some day have the south pasture as a park. I was familiar with every foot of the pasture. For more than forty years I went over it several times a summer to grub out thistles, sour dock, wild lettuce, white top, bull nettles, and other weeds. I knew all the trees, two of which are now rather unusual - the ironwood tree, and the sassafras tree.

I decided to donate my remaining part of the pasture to the park because I am no longer physically able to enjoy strolling through the tract, and keep the grass and weeds down, and pick up the brush regularly. Besides, I felt the park needed that addition to it.

Again, I thank you for the lovely plaque.

Very respectfully,



Nellie B. Dooley

September 4, 1969

TO MEMBERS OF THE VILLAGE BOARD OF DOWNS, ILLINOIS:

This is a supplement to the letter I sent to you on July 7th.

In colonial days the land for several miles east of Lincoln Street was owned and operated by the William Weaver family. After the demise of Mr. Weaver, Frederick R. Cowden, my grandfather, became the owner of most of the tract due to mortgage loans previously made to Mr. Weaver. However, one son, Joseph B. Weaver, kept his part, near the center of the tract and purchased some belonging to one or more of his sisters. When he retired from farming and moved into Downs, the farm was sold to Fred Wilcox, and these later years was owned and occupied by Wayne and Vera Davis.

Our thickly wooded pasture extended from our barn lot to the present Dooley Avenue on the north. Wild crabapple trees, red and black haw trees abounded on the northeast side but have been gone for many years. During World War I my father sold to the government one hundred black walnut trees to be made into gun stocks.

In July, 1873, a group of men assembled to discuss the purchase of the northwest corner of this pasture to be used as a cemetery. Accordingly, they met in August following and organized a Board of six members, and purchased the plot from Frederick R. Cowden. That autumn they began laying out the lots.

They named the cemetery Hopswell because John Price, founder of Priceville (first name for the Village of Downs) and father-in-law of Mr. Cowden, had attended Hopswell Church in Kentucky, of which he was very fond, before coming to Illinois, and so the cemetery was named in honor of that church.

Very truly yours,



Nellie B. Dooley

LIST OF DOCTORS OF DOWNS, ILLINOIS

Dr. Robert Prunty, a close relative of John Price, one of the founders of Downs, and Nellie B. Dooley's Great-Grandfather.

Dr. James B. Montgomery, who practiced in Downs for many years and erected about nine residences in the village. His son was married to Anna Minerva Dooley, sister to James W. Dooley, and they had two children: Mary Frances, now Mrs. Gilbert M. Wilson of West Lafayette, Indiana, and Byron Bliss Montgomery, who resides in Miami, Florida.

Dr. Montgomery's daughter, Etta M. married Rev. Arthur Conard, who was pastor of the Downs Methodist Church. Their daughter is Litta.

Dr. John Haig, whose wife was a niece of Dr. Fisher of LeRoy. Mrs. Haig was Miss Nellie B. Dooley's first school teacher, in 1884. The Haigs soon moved to LeRoy where he practiced medicine many years.

Dr. Milton C. Wilson was associated with Dr. Montgomery following Dr. Chapin, until after Dr. Montgomery passed away, then he continued alone and was our Downs Physician for twenty-five years. Mrs. Wilson was a faithful worker in church and community affairs during their residence in Downs. They were the parents of three children - Mabel, Warren and Harland. The family moved to Lafayette, Indiana, in 1896.

Dr. Charles Roberts bought the residence built and owned by one Wilsons, and practiced in Downs a few years. They came in 1896.

Dr. A.D. Young was the next doctor to practice in Downs, He and his wife occupied the Otho Young property, afterward known as the telephone house, and lived in Downs six or eight years. Later they resided in Oklahoma City.

Dr. Joseph Sageser and wife, Belle, were located in Downs a few year, from about 1898 to 1900 or 1902. Then they moved to LeRoy.

Dr. O.M. Thompson, a native of Ellsworth, Illinois, came to practice in Downs while Dr. A.D. Young was located in the town. He married Miss Clara Buckles, a daughter of a Downs merchant. They resided in Downs only a few years.

Dr. Edward C. Williams, of Bloomington, Illinois, came to practice in Downs in April, 1901, and continued for more than fifty-five years. He was the only physician located in the town in about all that time. He married Alma, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Whitcomb, several years after locating in Downs. Alma was an accomplished musician for many years. They were the parents of Dorothy, (now Mrs. Calvin Wampler of Wyanet, Ill.) Howard, and Edward. Dr. Williams died in 1956, then for several years the town was without a physician.

Dr. Eligio S. Hernandez planned to practice in Downs, and after an office was built for him, he did come here for several weeks, but did not move his family here, then decided to locate elsewhere.

Next came Dr. Emmeli Martens from Rochester, New York, in July, 1959, who is practicing here at the present time, 1961.

OLDEST HOUSES IN DOWNS, ILLINOIS

The log house erected by John Price, founder of Priceville, later Downs, the living room of which was very large so that church services could be held there until later when Old Union Church was moved into the Village from an outlying section. The house was moved back to the South and used as a barn or chicken house when the John Baremore two-story residence was erected on the site. In recent years it has been known as the Phinas Perry home.

The house for some years occupied by Chris Kagel and now owned by Gobel Langley and the Mitchells, part of his family. John Price lived in this house at the time of his death.

The Miss Emma Young house, on Franklin Street, which was moved some years ago from where the lumber yard stood. It is now owned and occupied by the Mason family.

The house also on Franklin Street owned and occupied by Hobart Price. It was one of a group of houses built by Dr. James Montgomery in the early days of the village.

The Hannah Miller House on East Main Street just east of the tall brick store. It was Mr. Ed Brown's home when he lived in Downs.

The house now owned and occupied by the James Terven family. For years it was occupied by the Veterinarian, Dr. Lipp and his wife. Later it was the home of Wesley Teter and wife until their demise.

The house on Seminary Avenue facing West occupied by Mrs. Catherine Edwards and her daughter, Verna, and owned by Eddie McManus. It originally faced south on East Main Street, but was moved to make room for the large two-story house erected by the Ralph Davis family who occupied it.

The house on South Seminary street owned and occupied by Mrs. Lucy Terven.

A part of the Methodist Parsonage next door north of the Lucy Terven home.

The house at the corner of Seminary and Washington streets was one of the original James Montgomery houses, now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Postlewait.

The house at the corner of Price street and West Washington street owned and occupied by Mrs. Bernice Phillips. It was built in the early days by Samuel Mitchell, who was a carpenter, and all of his children grew up in that house.

Page 2 - Oldest Houses in Downs, Illinois

The house at the north end of Price Street now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Ben Harrison. In early days it was known as the John Oswalt home and later the Joseph Craig family.

The house just north of the Catholic Church now owned by Eddie McManus, but occupied for many years by Miss Mae McMillin.

The house now quite modernized and owned and occupied by William Wells family was for many years the United Brethren Parsonage.

The house now owned and occupied by the Herschel Reece family was one of the early homes of Downs with a beautiful wooded pasture adjoining.

The house owned and operated by Mrs. Leatha Fulks was for many years the home of the Curtis family.

What has been known as the Durbin house was moved from another part of town by Herbert Mikel many years ago. It is situated at the corner of West Main and Price streets.

The house owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Bernhard Martens was moved from the Wilcox farm by Alvin Mikel many years ago.

Source: Nellie B. Dooley - September 4, 1969

MISCELLANEOUS FACTS ABOUT DOWNS

Business in Downs:

- .4 stores, 2 churches, 2 blacksmiths, 2 doctors 2 hotels
2 barbershops, 2 elevators, restaurant, livery barn,
hardware, lumber yard.
- .Buckles store, Doctor's office, Blacksmith, Drug Store,
Elenberger's Hotel about 1900. Factory, lumber yard
(Davis & Weaver) Bank 1910, livery barn (horse breeding),
churches.
- .First Post Office in Orendorff's store.
- .Schmidt built house 1956 .
- .John Roberts ran a harness shop in Old D. store.
- .Peterson ran elevator - lived in Sieg house.
- .Tom Biddle worked for Buckles.
- .Sherwood ran lumber yard.
- .Allen ran depot - married Ivan Savidge.
- .McMullins worked for Ed. Weaver.

Land Owned:

- .John Baremore owned land south of railroad.
- .The Village of Downs was platted from west edge of Downs
to Price Street. It was incorporated Oct. 28, 1916?
- .Warranty Deed: Mar. 21, 1853 John Price and his wife
Matilda to Peter B. Price for \$50.00.
- .Peter B. Price & Mary his wife to Indianapolis, Bloom-
ington, and Western Railway Company, July 22, 1870.
- .Peter Price and wife to Samuel Mitchell - deed dated
Feb. 10, 1873.
- .Sam Mitchell got deed, Feb. 10, 1873. Towns first name
Priceville - changed to Downs June 7, 1902.
- .Mr. Mitchell died Feb. 25, 1895.
- .Mitchell Heirs to Charles and Bernice Phillips, Jan. 2,
1919.

Families and Relationships:

- .Lucinda Whitcomb Riley
- .Sylvia Whitcomb married Abe Downs.
- .Mae Whitcomb married Millard Adams.
- .Alma Whitcomb married Dr. E. D. Williams.
- .Dorothy Wampler daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Williams.
- .Bill Blue's first wife was a Woods - sister of Ezra Woods.
- .Edna Denning Foster - wife of Willie Foster..
- .Clara Buckles married Dr. Thompson.
- .Adna Maurer was Adna Dooley.
- .Brother & sisters - Bill Kendall, Della Craig, Rose
Granacher.
- .Bill & Rose Kendall's children" Nellie, Wilma, Irene,
Sadie, Kathryn & Margaret.
- .Brothers: Pete Adams, Millard Adams, Joe Adams.
- .Hattie Graff Holmes - no children.
- .Mary Graff Powell - 1 daughter Dorothy Fulks.

Residents:

- .Ed Scott lived in Charlie Young's house. Spellbrings.
- .A.E. Colter lived in house where Ed. Weaver's lumber yard used to be.
- .Ed Weaver bought house from Mrs. Johnson (who bought from the Youngs) and built the lumber yard.
- .People who lived in Emma Young's property: Colter, Greene, Mamie Foley, Forrest Cole & Twinings.

Church Information:

- .Old church was located across from Wasmans.
 - .It was moved near the Hopewell Cemetery.
 - .Later moved to where present church is located.
 - .Old church interior 1871? (picture)
 - .New church built in 1909.
 - .Interior of new church 9-12-09. (picture).
 - This information from Bernice Phillips and Frank Teter.
-
- .J.W. Teter drove a slip scraper when railroad was put in.
 - .Moved the house west of Lipps in 1902. (B. Phillips was 12).
 - .Moved the store down by the little shoe store.
 - .Brown's Garage built by Sam Ferguson.
 - .The Old Hotel built by Milt Eilenberg.
 - .John Luth Hotel and Depot - 1923.
 - .Dillons Store operated by Dillons, McClure, Pierson, Jacobs, Brown. Browning. McClure lived in Maurer M.E. parsonage.

Source: Bernice Phillips

MEMORIES OF DOWNS

- .1829 Indians had a Trading Post a short distance west of Kickapoo Creek on what is now known as R. 150
- .1829 John Price, C.D. Belleville, Lawson Downs, Wm. Bishop, John Robertson (blacksmith) settled at this post and it was called Delta. Delta consisted of a blacksmith shop, store, post office and mill.
- .1842 First school was built west of Downs - Spring School House. This school was called a subscription school - it was built by volunteer labor.
- .1856 A better 2 room school was erected.
- .1869 Railroad went through - the store and blacksmith shop moved to the present site.
- .1869 Kickapoo Union School district was formed.
- .1888 Oldest store building was a frame building and was there when the town was first organized. This was the store in the same location as the one owned by Lois Downs and Melvin Burnett.
- .1888 Store burned.
- .1888 First paper published by Oscar Hatfield - it was known as the Downs Salmagundi.
- .1889 Weaver and Davis rebuilt the store of brick. A man by the name of Buckles was the first person to run the store.
 - . Community meetings were held above this store.
 - . Presbyterians held church services above this store until they built their church.
- .1895 Built four room school and high school was established.
- .1897 Milt Elenberger built hotel south of shoe store.
- .1902 June 7 or 17 - changed name of Priceville to Downs.
 - . The first bank in Downs was in one corner of a grocery store (west side of street & south of the alley)..1903.
- .1903 Rural mail delivery.
- .1909 Bank was built. J.W. Teter who had a meat market & grocery store on the corner and owned this lot sold it to the bank for \$1,000.00 (where restaurant now stands). He moved the store farther south.
- .1910 Lumber yard was built by Ed. Weaver on Main Street.
- .1913 October 10 - attempted to rob the bank.
- .1917 Incorporation order entered April 19, 1917. Incorporated May 5, 1917.
- .1917 Electricity was installed - had 12 electric lights on streets.
- .1920 Built Downs Community High School.
- .1923 Robbers broke into bank.
- .1924 Presbyterian church disbanded - sold to K.of P. Lodge.
- .1929 R. 39 highway was concreted (present 150).
- .1931 Bank closed.

Page 2 - Memories of Downs

- .1935 Village of Downs and Downs Township bought old Bank building for \$900.00
- .1936 J.W. Teter's store burned.
- .1944 Bus came through Downs.
- .1952 Water installed.
- .1952 September 27 - mail was delivered by bus.
- .1955 Built new school south side of Washington Street. Downs and Ellsworth consolidated. and Ellsworth consolidated.
- .1956 Passenger train stopped running.
- .1956 Ed. McManus & Price Downs bought the Town Hall from the Village of Downs & Downs Township, It was then sold to Bill Wells for a restaurant.
- .1956 Doctor's office built.
- .1961 June 17 - Laundromat was built by Griffin and Madsen.
- .1978 Tri-Valley High School was built.

New Post office built.

Fire Station built by town of Downs.

- .1830 First church services were held in a log cabin.
- .1841 First church was built 3 miles east of Downs and north of R. 150 near where Fred Wasman lived.
- .1867 This church was moved into Downs - it stood east of cemetery where Fred Hood lives.
- .1876 Rev. Ingram, the minister, bought the ground where the present church stands and this church was moved to that site.
- .1909 Frank Marcellus bought the frame church.
- .1909 Present brick church was built.
- .1974 New addition was built on the present church.

Schedules of Trains That Ran Through Downs:

West: 4:00 A.m. 8:30 A.M. 12:30 P.M. 5:00 P.M.
East: 9:30 A.M. 1:30 P.M. (no stop) 6:00 P.M. &
10:00 P.M.

Depot Operators: Bill Dillon, Jefferson M. Scod, Minnie Williams, Paul Mandler, Allen & Ivan Savidge, Dimple Davis, Wiggins, John Luth, Evelyn Nace and a man from Leroy.

J.W. Teter hauled mail from the depot to the Post Office. Later Jim Winstead and Bert Downs did this.

Post Office Operators: John A. Davis, Ralph Davis, Wayne Davis, Roy & Catherine Clark, Eddie McManus.

Page 3 - Memories of Downs

Hotel Operators: Forrest Cole, Lena Colaw (1909), Sally Smith, John Luth (1922), John Clark, Emma Stutzman, Dick Blair, Hobart Price, Roy Jones.

- .Old Hotel built by Milt Eilenberg.
- .John Luth Hotel and Depot - 1923.
- .Brown's Garage built by Sam Ferguson.
- .Dillons Store - Dillons, McClure, Pierson, Jacobs, Brown, Broning. McClure lived in Maurer M.E. Parsonage.

Source: Bernice Phillips