



*The History of the
Winnebago County
Sheriff's Office*

Winnebago County, Illinois





Dedicated to the men and woman who have served the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office in the Past, are Presently serving and those who will serve in the Future.

*Special dedication: to Joann DiMario and;
In Memory of Captain Elwyne "Gene" Coots both of whom spent many hours researching and collecting history of the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office.*

The History of the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office

The Office of Sheriff is one of the oldest known to the common law and the name itself signifies "keeper of the Shire or County." The office is said to have been created by Alfred when he divided England into Shires, but there is evidence that the office may date as far back as ancient Rome.

In England the Sheriff was the immediate officer of the King within the Shire, the keeper of the peace, the warden of the county jail, commander of the posse and served and enforced the processes of the state. In the United States his functions are similar.

Over one hundred and seventy-five years ago a group of local citizens, numbering one hundred and twenty, used a voice vote to conduct the first election of Winnebago County officials. On August 1, 1836, Daniel S. Haight and Henry Hicks ran for sheriff, Daniel S. Haight winning with an 83-31 vote. On Wednesday, the third, the second day after their election, the commissioners met at the house of Daniel S. Haight, on the east side of the river, and, there being no Justice of the Peace nearer than Galena, Ottawa, Joliet or Chicago, proceeded to administer the oath of office to each other. It was on this day that Daniel S. Haight, a New Yorker, took his place in area history as the first Sheriff of Winnebago County. The newly formed county included parts of Stephenson County and all of Boone County.

In the summer of 1839 county commissioners selected the site for a public square and plans were made to construct a courthouse on the eastside of the river. A large quantity of brick and lumber was donated by the civic-minded area people; but the construction of the building had to wait for further finances. A special session selected the southeast corner of block 9 for a county jail; however, it would never be built in that location.



DANIEL S. HAIGHT'S RESIDENCE

Built in 1837, on the northeast corner of State and Madison streets; now standing on the northeast corner of Second and Walnut streets. The first session of the circuit court was held in this house



On September 9, 1841, a proposal was made to county commissioners to furnish temporary county offices in West Rockford until a permanent location could be established. Later in the year a frame structure was erected at the southwest corner of Main and Chestnut streets and was occupied until the first courthouse could be built.

The first Winnebago County Jail was completed in the spring of 1842. Located east of the first courthouse, the log structure was about twelve feet square and had a heavy plank door to secure the entrance. The jail's window was barred with irons set into logs. The jail would have looked similar to the one pictured here. Whenever a dangerous person was lodged in the jail, it was necessary to post a guard. This new jail must have made things much easier for the sheriff, since the nearest jail had been in Galena. This new jail would only serve the community for a few short years. A brick jail was completed and occupied January 1, 1844 and the court house was finished in July of the same year. The new courthouse was the pride of the county.

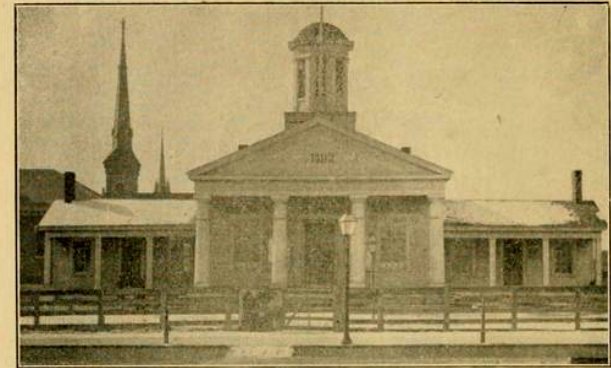
The main building was a court room, with two rooms in the rear for jury, and a wing on either side, occupied respectively by the county clerk, recorder, sheriff, circuit clerk, and probate justice of the peace. The last office was held by Selden M. Church, who occupied the west wing. The court room served for public gatherings and lectures. It was then the only public hall in town. The new brick jail was considered the best in the country, and considered very secure. Samuel C. Fuller, the jailer, was a man well fitted for the time; he was ready for any emergency, and perfectly fearless. He had the Mulford robbers and several desperate horse-thieves in charge at one time. A special guard was kept at night for a time during their confinement awaiting trial; also to convey them across the country to the penitentiary after their conviction. The new public square, jail and court house were furnished by the citizens of West Rockford at no cost to the county.

Very prominent in the early history of the area was Daniel Shaw Haight. He came to Illinois from Bolton, Warren Co., New York and lived near Geneva a year or two before coming to Rockford April 9, 1835. He was the first settler at Rockford on the East side of the river. After selecting a claim which included the present four blocks bounded by East state, Madison, Jefferson and North Second street, he went back to Geneva for his family and in May returned with his wife and child, Miss Carey who was Mrs. Haight's sister and a hired man. Mrs. Haight and her sister were the first white women in Rockford.

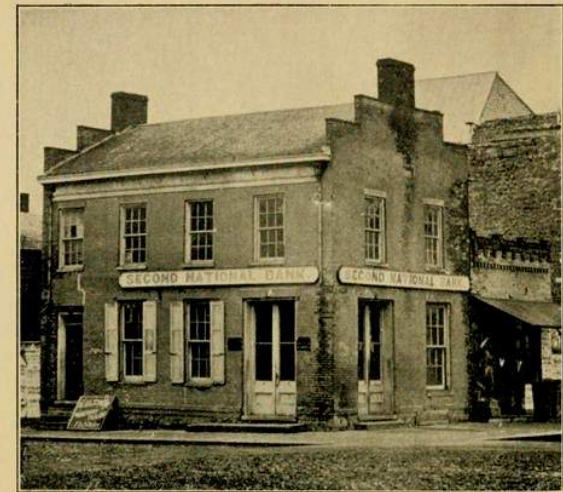
Haight's cabin was the first structure on the East side and stood on the eastern part of the lot at the northeast corner of State and Madison Streets. It had two windows and a door. Besides a residence, it served as the first hotel, town meeting hall, post office and circuit court room. In 1837, Mr. Haight built a frame house on the same lot.

Daniel Haight was not only our first sheriff and first post master, but a rugged pioneer and a shrewd businessman. Mr. Haight decided not to remain in the Rock River area, but moved during the winter of 1847-48 to an area in Texas near Shreveport, Louisiana. He is said to have revisited Rockford sometime in 1857. He later served in the Confederate army and probably died in Texas not long after the close of the Civil War.

Isaac Newton Cunningham was the first of four brothers to come to Winnebago County. He was born in Peterboro, New Hampshire July 14, 1806 and arrived in Winnebago County in 1836. Isaac Cunningham was Winnebago County's second sheriff and served two terms 1838-1840 and 1840-1842. While he was sheriff, he owned a substantially built house a short distance from town, and his brother William once prevented a prisoner from escaping at night by fastening one end of a chain to his ankle and the other to the ankle of the prisoner, and both were secured to the strong puncheon floor. Before Isaac Cunningham was Sheriff, he served on the first jury on October 6, 1837. Because he was such an important figure in his time, Cunningham Street was named for him.



SECOND COURT HOUSE
Built in 1844, on the Court House Square



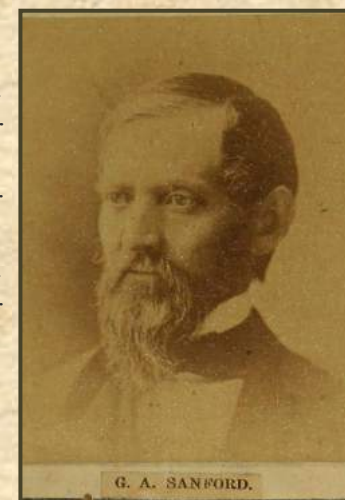
SECOND NATIONAL BANK BLOCK
Built about 1843 by Nathaniel Loomis, on the south-east corner of State and Main streets



Goodyear Asa Sanford

The third sheriff of Winnebago County was Goodyear Asa Sanford. He held the job for a two year period beginning in 1842. G. A. Sanford was able to trace his ancestry to the early settlers in America; they arrived from England in the 1630's. Mr. Sanford farmed in New York before coming to Alton, Illinois in December, 1836 and arrived in the Winnebago County area in 1837. Accompanying him on his trip west was Thomas Johnson, the first cabinet maker in Rockford. The Connecticut born Sanford was appointed as a deputy sheriff in 1838 and served in that position until he was elected sheriff. One of his duties as sheriff was to collect taxes from the entire county.

Most of the men that held the Office of Sheriff in Winnebago County in the early years were businessmen that were concerned for their local government. Although G.A. Sanford served as our sheriff for two years, his capacity for public service extended far past the office. After retiring from the position of sheriff in 1844, Goodyear Sanford became involved in general merchandising at his store located at the intersection of State and Main streets. He served as President of the Second National Bank starting in 1855 and was a trustee at Rockford Seminary, which eventually became Rockford College. His public life included terms as an alderman and as the school commissioner (1845-1847). He was on the building committee for the first bridge at State Street, was a charter member of the Second Congregation Church and served as a member of the Rockford Society of Early Settlers. In 1877 G.A. Sanford served on the Coroner's jury following the "Collapse of the Courthouse".



At Cherry Valley G.A. Sanford helped load the first rail car of grain shipped from the county.

Anson Barnum was born 1809 in Connecticut. He served as sheriff from 1844-1846. He also served terms as county clerk, probate judge, postmaster and as New Milford town clerk and justice. On March 27, 1838 was a trustee of the First Congregational Society of Rockford. He was single in 1850, however in her will which was made March 9, 1868, his mother, Deborah, stated that he was of the town Dement, Ogle County and she left property in trust for Anson's son, Charles.

When one of the earliest settlers, Benjamin Kilburn, returned from a trip to Massachusetts he brought with him his wife's brother, Hiram R. Maynard. Hiram R. Maynard served two terms as sheriff, 1846-1848 and then 1848-1850. On May 1, 1852 he was appointed treasurer following the first city election held April 19, 1852. He then went on to serve as the Mayor of Rockford from 1853-1854.

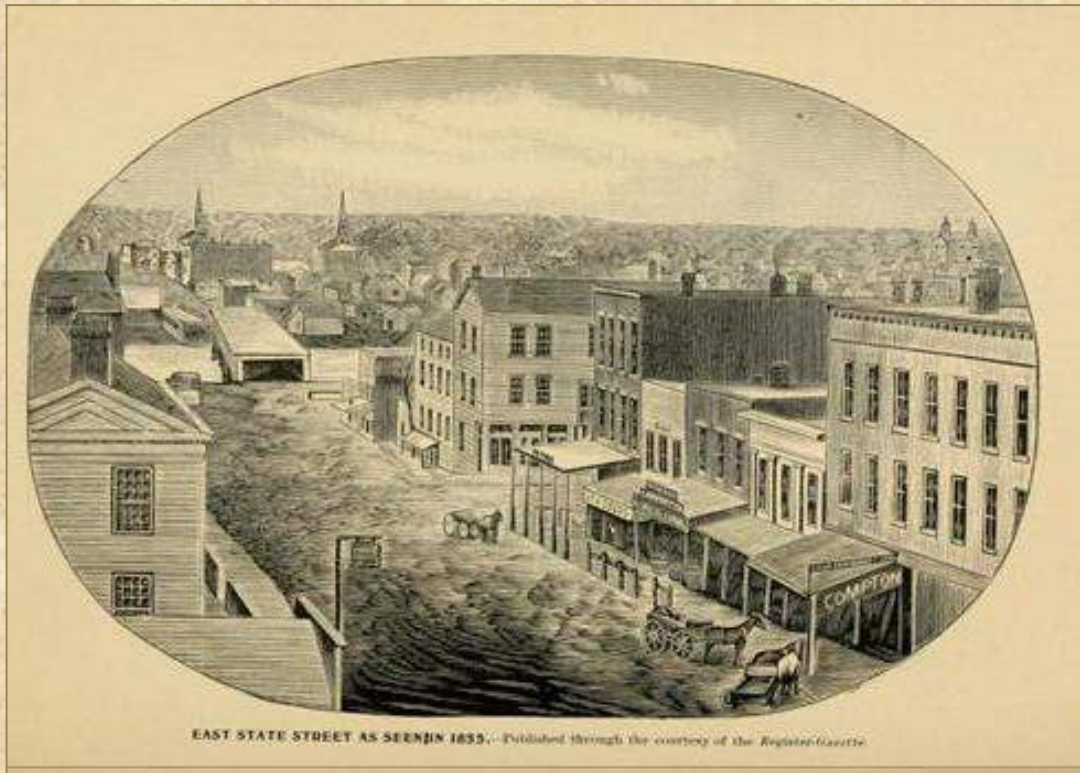



Hiram R. Maynard

Peter B. Johnson was the sixth sheriff of Winnebago County serving his term of 1850-1852. He and his twin brother, James B. Johnson, were born 1808 in Sturbridge, Massachusetts and they came to Butler Township in 1837 where they bought several parcels of land October 26, 1839 and settled on adjoining farms. Peter Johnson married three times: Sophronia Lamb, who died

1844; Susan M. Works in 1845 who died 1849 at age 37; and Orpha Dunning in 1851.

From 1852-1854 King H. Milliken served as sheriff and then again from 1858-1860. In the 1858 election Milliken ran against nine other candidates one of which was the future sheriff Morris J. Upright. K. H. Milliken also served as collector and a constable for the City of Rockford.



 BILL MOORE left his quarters in the jail here, on Monday of last week, in company with sheriff Milliken, for his destination at Alton.—According to habit, the young murderer was breathing forth his threats of blood and vengeance against a certain witness in the case, and left the promise, to be remembered, that he would pay his respects to him on his return at the close of his imprisonment, in December next.

—The Democrat, Tuesday, Dec. 6, 1853

In 1850, John F. Taylor was elected a Monitor of Mental Arithmetic by the Teacher's Institute of which he was a member and a scholar. He then was elected to the office of Sheriff in 1854.

Sheriff Taylor was fatally shot on November 11, 1856, while chasing Alfred Countryman.


AC Countryman and his brother, John, had come into town from Ogle County and were selling cattle for a price far below their market value. Payment for the cattle was withheld from the brothers until Sheriff Taylor and Constable Thompson could arrive. The Countryman brothers were arrested on suspicion. During a search for a weapon, several pistol balls were found in

Alfred's pocket. When asked for his revolver, he said that he did not have one.

Just as the lawmen and their prisoners reached the jail steps, Alfred Countryman leaped over a fence and ran down Elm Street. The sheriff was in close pursuit. At the next corner near Hall and Reynolds Livery Stable, Sheriff Taylor had almost caught up to his prisoner. Desperately, Countryman pulled a hidden revolver and turned, firing once. The bullet struck the thirty-one year old sheriff in the chest. One account states that witnesses later said that the sheriff's last words were, "I'm shot, catch him!" The other account is that he died instantly.

Alfred Countryman ran into the woods north of Kent's Creek where hundreds of enraged citizens cornered him. Amid shouts of an immediate lynching, he was taken into custody.

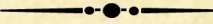
In those earlier days, it was the sheriff's job to carry out any court orders for an execution. Winnebago County Sheriff Samuel Church did just that on March 27, 1857 when Alfred Countryman was hanged on Church's farm just outside the city. There are reports that indicate eight thousand citizens witnessed the county's

 The examination of the counterfeiters we mentioned last week as having been arrested was had on Monday before Justices Manlove and Lyon, and resulted in holding them to bail in \$1,000 each to answer to the charge. After several days consultation with a number of their friends who came on they declined giving bail and are yet in custody of Sheriff Taylor. It is supposed they are abundantly able to give the requisite security, but for some reason, not exactly apparent, prefer not doing so.

-Rockford Register, Saturday, Nov. 10, 1855

WENT TO JAIL OUT OF PRINCIPLE – Among Sheriff Taylor's boarders lately was one man who went to jail out of pure principal. He was accused of being drunk, but stoutly averred that he was not. He prayed nearly all night in his room, the substance of his prayer being that he might be set at liberty, insisting upon it that he was there because he had "too much principle" to resist the officers. Hope his principal won't lead him into any more difficulty.

-Rockford Register, Saturday, Jan. 26, 1856

 *CONVICTS.*—Sheriff Taylor started yesterday morning for Alton, with two prisoners, both of which were sentenced at the last term of the Circuit Court in this city. Their names were Austin and Morgan. The first was sent for five years for shooting a man through the arm in a drunken broil, and the latter for two years for stealing a horse.

-The Rockford Republican, Mar. 19, 1856

A GOOD IMPROVEMENT – We saw Sheriff Taylor the other day setting out a line of trees—maples, elms and locusts—along the front of the Court House Square. We presume the Supervisors will make no objection to "John's" doing so commendable a work.

-Rockford Register, Saturday, April 10, 1856

first execution. Sheriff Taylor, who left a wife and baby, had many friends and had been highly respected. Samuel I. Church succeeded as sheriff after the murder of John Taylor in 1856, serving one term until 1858.

A transcript of the trial can be found on page 73. Countryman's speech can be found on page 84.

Execution of Countryman

Countryman was indicted and tried for the murder of Sheriff Taylor at the February term of the circuit court in 1857. The prosecution was conducted by U.D. Meacham, the state's attorney, assisted by William Brown. The council for the defense was Orrin Miller and T.J. Turner. The following gentlemen constituted the jury: Levi Trunks, Phil C. Watson, Anthony M. Felmy, Silas G. Tyler, Jacob B Place, G.R. Ames, Allen Rice, Charles Works, J.E. Jenks, Edward Peppers, J.W. Knapp, S.P. Collier.

The trial began on Monday, February 23rd. The case was given to the jury on Thursday, and Friday morning they returned a verdict of guilty. Judge Sheldon pronounce the sentence of death upon Countryman. One of his counsel, Mr. Miller, tried to obtain a stay of proceedings, so as to bring the case before the supreme court. But Judge Caton refused to grant a writ of error.

On Friday, March 27th, Countryman was executed on the farm of Sheriff Church, a short distance from the city. The execution was witnessed by eight thousand people. In the absence of a military company, the two fire companies, armed with sabres and carbines, formed a hollow square at the jail, into the center of which the carriages which were to form the procession, were driven, and as the procession moved to the place of execution the fire companies formed a strong guard.

Upon arriving at the scaffold, Rev. Hooper Crews offered an earnest prayer. The prisoner made a short speech and professed repentance and forgiveness for his crime. At seventeen minutes past two the bolt was withdrawn, and Countryman was swung into eternity. His father, sister and one brother witness the execution.

Before the body was taken down, Sheriff Church address the crowd as follows: "These painful proceedings being now concluded, and the sword of justice about to be returned to its sheath, I hope never again to be drawn into so much severity. I would thank you all for the good order you have maintained. Your conduct does credit to the city, and I hope you will observe the same decorum in retiring."



Morris J. Upright served as sheriff from 1860-1862. In 1859 M. J. Upright was appointed Police Marshall for the City of Rockford and then again in 1863.

From 1862-1864 Hiram J. Sawyer served as sheriff. His son Willis "Kit" E. Sawyer would later take after his father and become sheriff.

James E. Dennis served as sheriff from 1864-1866. Prior to his becoming sheriff, he served as a deputy.

Sheriff Dennis had the misfortune of a jail break in April of 1866 when four of his five prisoners escaped. They manufactured a saw out of a case knife and sawed off one of the heavy hinges on the door to the hall, then "springing" the door partially open with sticks found room to get through. Two of the four escapees had only ten days left of their sentence.

William Courtright became the next sheriff and served from 1866-1868. Mr. Courtright was a member of the Odd Fellows and in 1870 he went into the fire insurance business entering into the partnership of Squire & Courtright. He died in 1875 at only 55 years old.



Patrick Flynn

Following his service from 1861 through March 15, 1865 (promoted to Major on March 6, 1863 through November 26, 1863) in the 90th Illinois Infantry during the Civil War, Patrick Flynn served two terms as sheriff from 1868-1870 and 1870-1872.

In 1869 the Winnebago County jail was condemned. The following is the resolution submitted by the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings and Grand Jury.

Official Condemnation

November 30, 1869

The Report of the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings, with the report of the Grand Jury, as follows:

To the Board of Supervisors of Winnebago County:

Your Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings, believing it to be our duty as a committee of this Board to bring before you what we consider the views and wishes of the people of the county, as expressed in a series of resolutions passed by the last sitting grand

ENTERED UPON HIS DUTIES.—Our friend Upright has entered upon his official duties as Sheriff of this County. He performs them already as if with a practiced hand, and everything goes on swimmingly.

He has removed with his family to the jailhouse.

—Rockford Republican, Dec. 13, 1860

Sheriff Courtright, on Wednesday, arrested a man on suspicion of having a stolen horse in his possession. The prisoner is now in jail, and the horse in charge of the Sheriff.

—Rockford Register, October 19, 1867

Police Record.—John Robinson paid the city three dollars and costs for getting drunk.

Neil Galbreath, for insulting ladies on the street, while under the influence of liquor, was forced to leave twenty-five dollars with Justice Manlove.

Sheriff Courtright, on Saturday last, brought a young man before Justice Manlove, who fined him \$200 and cost for attempting improper liberties with a young lady. We learn the case has been appealed.

On Monday, Frank Russell was bound over by Esquire Manlove, to answer at the next term of the Circuit Court, upon the charge of stealing an overcoat at the Railroad Eating House, and in default of bail in the sum of \$250, was committed to jail. He was arrested in Harvard on Saturday last.

—The Rockford Register, Saturday, December 14, 1867

jury, as regards the present condition of our county jail, which resolutions we herewith submit, and most heartily endorse.

Whereas: The proper care and custody of persons held upon criminal charges is one of the first duties of any government, general or local, and

Whereas: Such care should extend no less to the preservation of the health than to the security of the persons held in confinement and any long continued neglect of reasonable sanitary precautions is in itself criminal, and

Whereas: It is incumbent upon the grand jury of Winnebago county to visit its jail and make report upon its condition, therefore

Resolved: 1) That our growth, our resources and our coveted position, that we hold as a county representing pre-eminently the varied industries of a great state, that the philanthropy, intelligence and Christianity of a progressive age demand of us penal and charitable structures built after the most improved plans, which in their several arrangements for heating, ventilation and sewerage shall have nothing omitted that can in any degree contribute to the cleanliness, health and comfort of their inmates.

Resolved: 2) That our county jail, having been repeatedly examined and as often adjudged as an indecent and unwholesome place of confinement, that we, the grand jurors, after visiting and inspecting the same with all its recent repairs, find it so defective in its construction, so dilapidated and so incommodious for the purposes intended, that we condemn it as a loathsome prison pen, a standing disgrace to the voters and citizens of Winnebago county and a foul plague-spot upon the loveliness and beauty of our pleasant city.

Resolved: 3) That in the examination of the jail, it is our candid opinion that all money voted by the board of supervisors to patch up or otherwise repair this building is a contribution to perpetuate an intolerable nuisance among us, deserving the execration of all humane persons, and that we further adjudge such action on their part cannot be prompted by any proper motive of public good or economy.

Resolved: 4) That in our sober judgment it is the duty of Winnebago county, acting through its proper officers, at once to demolish the infamous man-trap, known as our county jail, and not leave one brick standing upon another.

Resolved: 5) That in the inspection of the interior of the county jail, we, the grand jury, find that our sheriff has done all in his power to insure cleanliness, ventilation and comfort to its inmates. That he is entitled to great credit for accomplishing as much for the hygiene of the establishment, in the face of so many inconveniences and with such defective and adverse surroundings.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

G.H. Mariner, Foreman.

J.R. Bartlett, Clerk.

Filed October 9, 1869.

Evans Blake, Clerk.

We would therefore most respectfully call your attention to this matter; we can but say to you what has been repeatedly expressed to the board of supervisors hereto-fore: That the present jail is unfit, as a place of security, for the safe keeping of prisoners. It is also unfit for a jail from a humanitarian point of view, it being impossible to drain and ventilate it, making it beyond the power of possibility to keep it in a clean and healthy condition; we believe that justice and humanity demand the safe keeping and protection of prisoners, and this demand is second to no other consideration; humanity requires that all necessary means should be used for the preservation of their health, whilst justice imperatively demands the safe keeping of the person for the purpose of producing him at the bar of this county's tribunal. Our civilization and polity point to a system of justice and humanity to be extended to every citizen under all circumstances; there are frequent instances of persons being under arrest and confined in the county jail, that, on their final trial, are proven innocent of any crime; it would seem to be but right to make their place of confinement decently comfortable. Our present jail possesses none of the qualities requisite for a building to be used for such purposes; it has neither ventilation nor a single sanitary necessity.

From these facts, which must be evident to anyone that has visited the jail, we deem it our duty to bring before you the immediate necessity for a new jail. And we do this, not from any local prejudice or for the purpose of gratifying any sectional feeling that may exist in any portion of the county, but for the reason that we believe that we are in the possession of all the facts as to the unfitness of the present structure for a jail. Also the wants and wishes, and even the immediate demands of the citizens and tax payers of

all portions of this county. We believe that this board will be guilty of a culpable violation of their duties as supervisors and representatives of the tax payers' wishes and wants in this matter, if they do not give it their immediate attention.

We respectfully offer the above suggestions and recommendations, and ask for the same your candid and prompt attention.

John Lake, Chairman of Committee.

Rockford, November 29, 1869

Public Grounds and Buildings Committee

John Lake, chairman committee, J. Nettleton, A. Haines, W.C. Whitney and A.W. Weldon.

Grand Jury

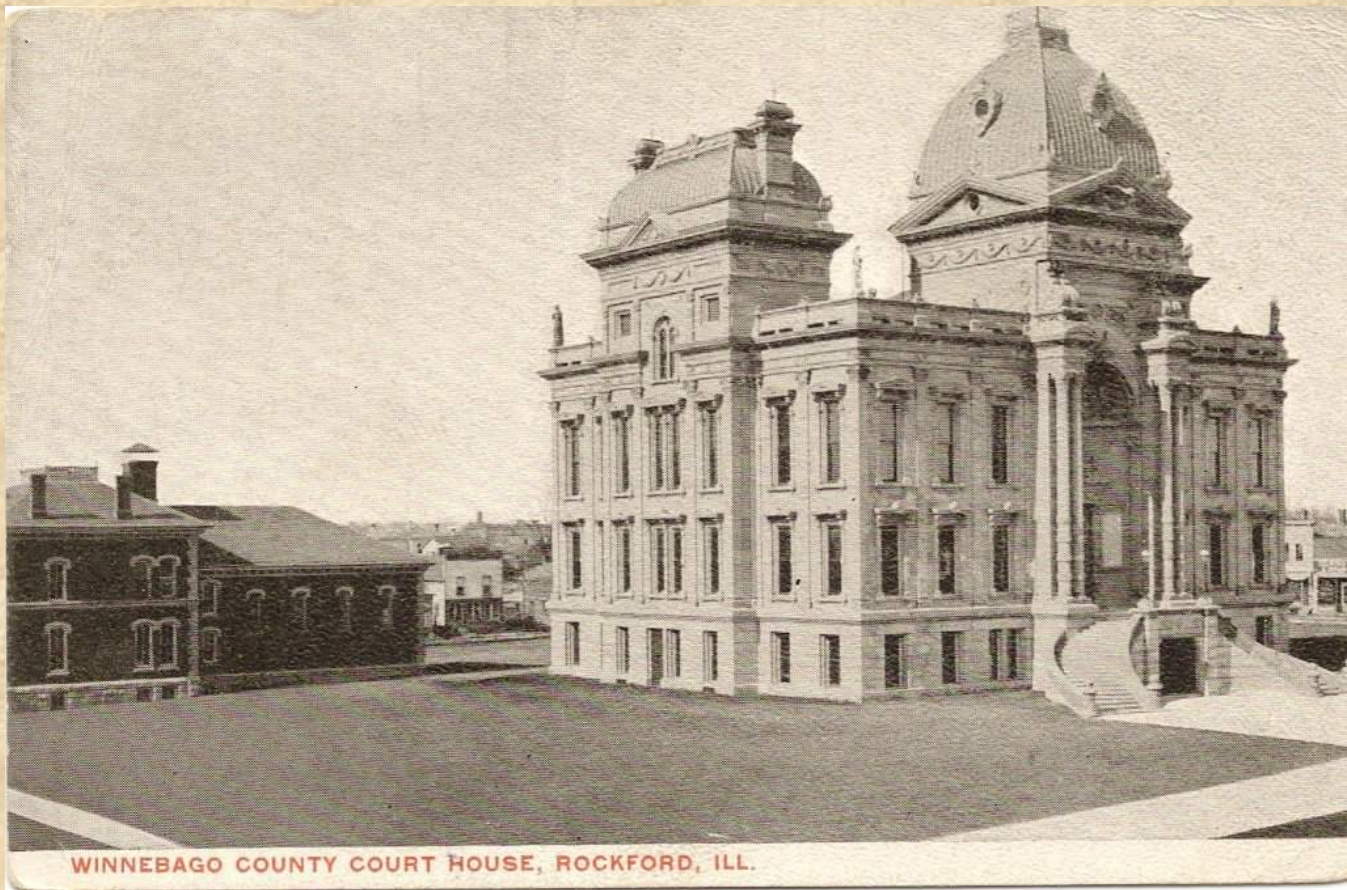
G.H. Mariner, foreman, James R. Bartlett, William H. Wilcox, C. Vincent, Robert Smith, James Hunter, John Sovereign, John N. Saylor, Henry P. Kimball, Sidney Martin, W.W. Burson, William McDonald, B.F. Fletcher, Isaac Cole, Stephen Thompson, E.W. Steele, Josiah Shepardson, John Nettleton, Adam Keith, Elnathan F. Tracy, H.B. Goucher, Harry VanValkenburg, Martin Franklin, Abijah Morey.

A new County jail was built around 1875 however, the four iron cells which the old jail contained were thrown onto a dump heap, but were later removed to the East side and made a part of what was known as the City jail.

Though the collapse of the Winnebago County Courthouse did not severely impact the sheriff's office it should be mentioned here to remember those who lost their lives. On May 11, 1877 at 11:30 in the morning the final keystone was being placed when the large masonry dome that rose 119 feet from the ground, collapsed killing nine and wounding ten persons. This devastating accident stunned the community. It was later found that the dome had been placed on insubstantial supports and they could not hold the weight of such a dome.



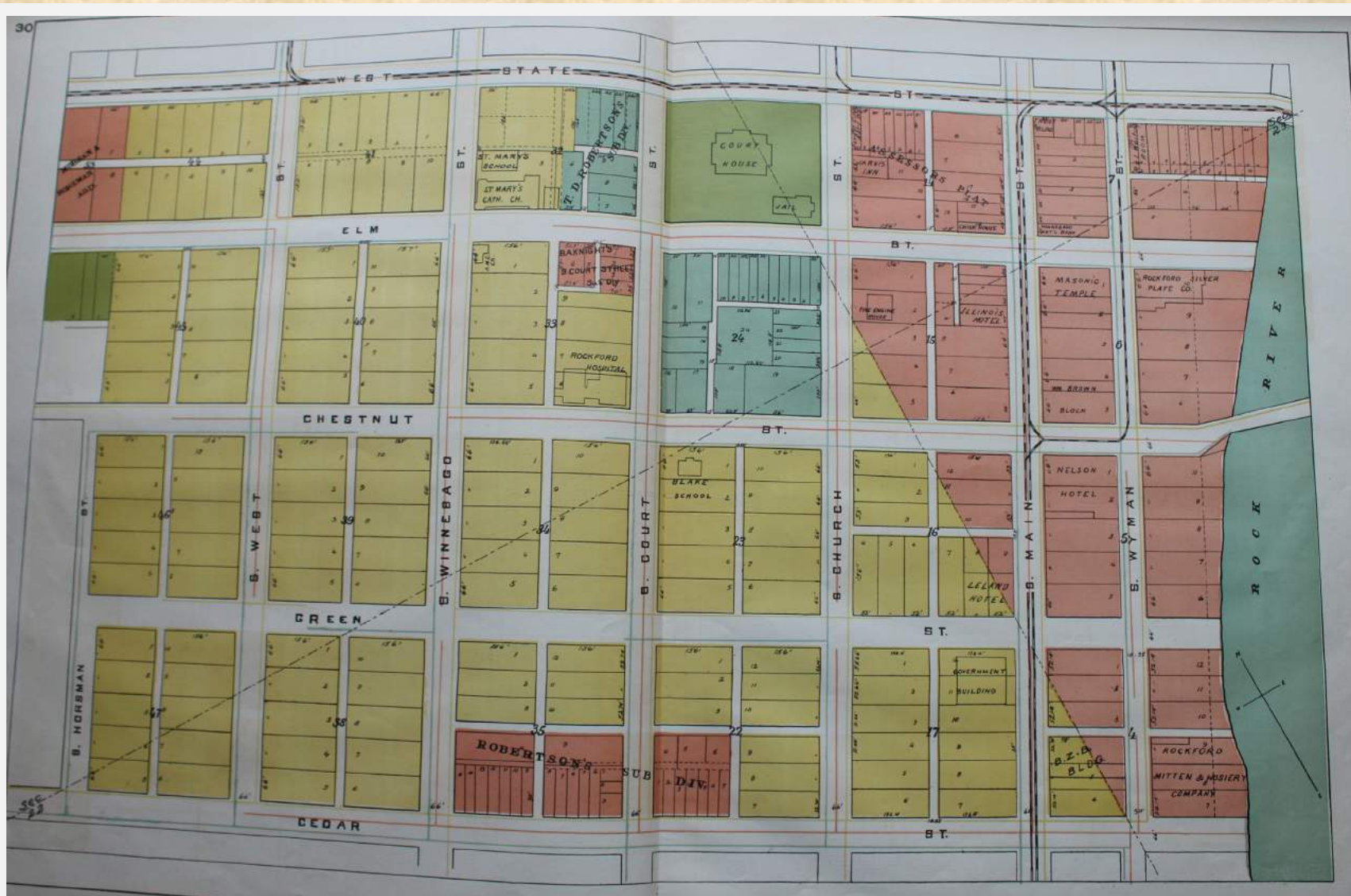
1877 photo taken of the courthouse after the collapse of the dome.



The Winnebago county courthouse facing State Street built in 1877-1878; the county jail built around 1875 is the building on the left and faced Elm Street.



Charity
This statue is one of four sandstone statues that were placed at each corner of the roof on the old Winnebago County Courthouse.



West Rockford downtown area plat map date unknown

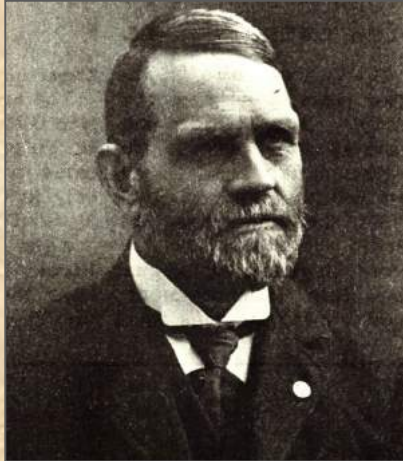
Frank F. Peats, who served as sheriff for four terms beginning in 1872, was a veteran of the Civil War. Born in New York City on February 9, 1834 and settling in Rockford in 1855, Peats served in the Seventeenth Illinois Volunteer Infantry and was promoted from captain to major in April of 1862. After the war he returned to Rockford and resumed his trade of sign writing, painting and decorating.



Frank F. Peats

Sheriff Peats left the office in 1880, but returned to law enforcement in 1890 when he became Rockford's Chief of Police. Serving briefly, Frank Peats resigned the same year for a position at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Quincy, Illinois. In his retirement he returned to Rockford.

Amasa Hutchins was the next sheriff and he too served two terms. The first a two year term, 1880-1882 as had been the custom and then was the first sheriff to serve a four year term, 1882-1886, which has become the standard term for the position of sheriff. Sheriff Hutchins had previously served in the Civil War as a corporal for the Union in the 74th Infantry. After his terms as Sheriff he would later serve as the Mayor of Rockford, 1893-1895, and then again 1901-1903.



Amasa Hutchins

Amasa Hutchins would continue to contribute to the area when he and his partner John Buker purchased the steamboat the Arrow in 1890 at Beloit. This steamboat ferried citizens up the river to Harlem Park and back. When the Arrow sank in 1900 the partners then built the famous steamboat the Illinois.

John M. Atkinson was born in Burritt, Winnebago County in 1845. He served in the Civil War. He had been the superintendent of the poor farm for ten years when he made the decision to run for the position of sheriff. Atkinson ran for sheriff in 1886 against a deputy of 6 years, Joseph W. Hale, a deputy of 4 years, Joel Burbank and a Mr. Hart. John Atkinson served as sheriff from 1886-1890.

The friends of John M. Atkinson announce their intention of springing him upon the public as a candidate for county sheriff. John's treatment of paupers might insure the vote of all who have any intention of taking berths in the jail, for it ought to assure them of kind and liberal treatment from his hands if he got there on the election.

-Rockford Register, Thursday, February 18, 1886

Joel Burbank served as collector for Harrison Township, and as a constable for fifteen years. He was later named deputy sheriff, serving under Sheriff Amasa Hutchins for a time. In 1890 he was elected sheriff on the independent ticket and served one term, 1890-1894.

GOBBLE! GOBBLE!! GOBBLE!!!

An Interesting Turkey Case at Harrison---Hatched in the Wrong Henner--The Constable's Comical Chase

Everybody talks turkey in Harrison Township, at present, and it all came about through the roving disposition manifested by a certain turkey of the gentler gender, belonging to J. S. Drake. The latter alleges that during the early part of last summer he owned a turkey that wanted to "set" in the worst way. He could not cure the desire, and before he furnished the fowl the necessary spheroids, Mr. Drake states that the turkey disappeared. Adjoining Mr. Drake's farm is the farm of B. W. Morey, and the former claims that his turkey repaired to Mr. Morey's farm, and in the course of events was strutting about with seven little turkeys under her care. Having been hatched upon Morey's place they refused to leave the premises, and as Mr. Drake saw the little gobblers growing larger, day by day, with no promise of their return to his turkey-coop, his wrath knew no bounds. He would surely have those turkeys

OR DIE IN THE ATTEMPT.

He sued Morey for \$9, the value of the fowls, and secured a writ of replevin for seven turkeys. The writ was handed to Constable Joel Burbank to serve, and that official repaired to Morey's reservation to secure the goods he was after. The turkeys were tearing about the barn and outbuildings, and as the writ did not specify which turkeys should be taken, the constable proceeded to pick out seven sleek and fat looking fowls. This was more easily planned than accomplished, as Joel found out to his sorrow. The frightened fowls evidently knew what was in store for them, and ran under the barn for shelter, but nothing daunted, the constable peeled his coat, and started dog fashion after them. There was a lively scramble for a few hours, but Burbank is noted for taking whatever he starts in search of, whether it is

THIEF, THUG, OR TURKEY,

and finally bagged the game and placed them under lock and key.

The case is set for Saturday last, before Justice Josiah Shepherson, of Harrison, and Mr. Morey secured Attorney G. O. Williams to defend him, and then occurred another interesting and amusing incident in connection with the case. Williams and Morey each understood that the suit was set for Monday, and accordingly put in an appearance yesterday morning to see the matter come to a settlement, only to be informed that the case went by default on Saturday, and was decided in favor of Drake.

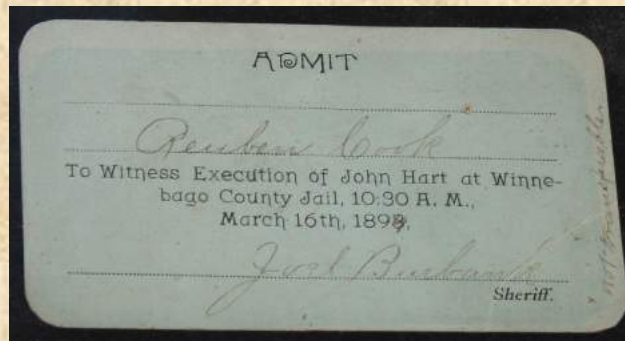
The case has been appealed to the circuit court.

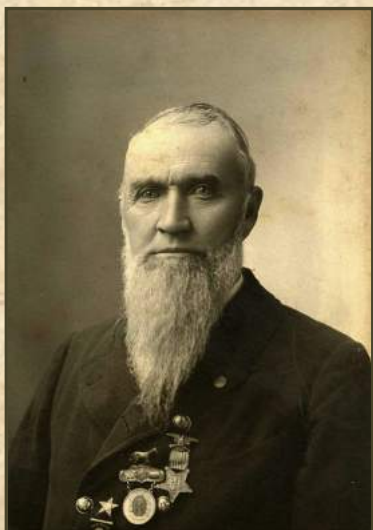
-Rockford Daily Gazette, Tuesday Evening, Dec. 23, 1884

On September 5, 1893, John Hart killed his two sisters, Mary and Nellie. He was executed by hanging on jail property by Sheriff Joel Burbank on March 16, 1894.



Photos Clockwise:
Last Rights being given
to John Hart, preparing
John Hart for execution,
Admission Ticket to the
hanging.





Robert Oliver

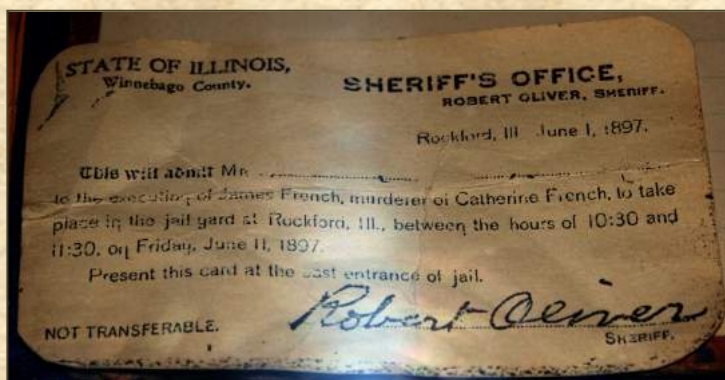
Robert Oliver, elected as the sheriff in 1894, was another Civil War veteran. He began his military service as a corporal, but rose swiftly through the ranks to sergeant, master sergeant, lieutenant, and finally, as he mustered out of the military, captain. During the war, he was wounded twice; one of the wounds came at Shiloh. When he returned from the war, he began farming in Harrison Township and eventually owned much of the land in that area. Oliver served as Harrison Township Supervisor for four years and as Township Assessor for eleven years before being elected Sheriff. He finally retired to what was described as a beautiful and fancy home at 603 North Avon.

On July 19, 1896, James French killed his wife during a family dispute. He was sentenced to be hanged, and on June 11, 1897, Sheriff Robert Oliver carried out the court's decision.

WIFE MURDERER WILL RECOVER

James French to be tried in Rockford in October

Rockford, Ill. July 20 – Special Telegram –
James French, who yesterday killed his wife and shot himself after which he jumped in the river, will recover. He is now in the county jail. When told that his wife was dead, he said he was glad of it and was now ready to die at any time. He also told a friend that he intended to shoot eight or ten others, including several officers, and that was the reason he had three revolvers and a stiletto. He planned the murder several months ago. He will be tried in October. The funeral of the murdered woman today was one of the largest ever held in Rockford.





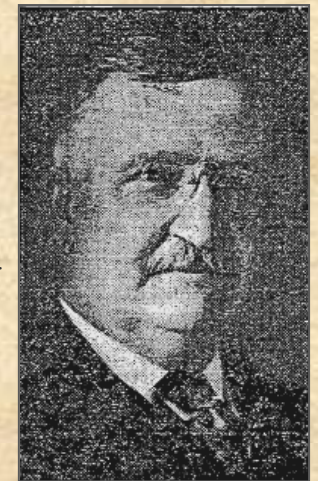
Willis "Kit" E. Sawyer

In 1898 another man that had been involved in the War Between the States was elected as the Winnebago County Sheriff. Willis E. Sawyer was born in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin on February 9, 1846 and enlisted in the Sixty-Seventh Regiment of the Illinois Infantry at the age of fifteen. Sawyer led a colorful life and soon after the war went on the road selling "Hamlin's Wizard oil". His travels took him to the west where he began a livery business in Santa Barbara, California. He spent some time in San Francisco before returning to Winnebago County to farm in an area near Durand before venturing into politics as the sheriff. W. E. Sawyer became a prominent horse dealer in this area and eventually erected a livery stable at Chestnut and Court streets.



Alexander Collier

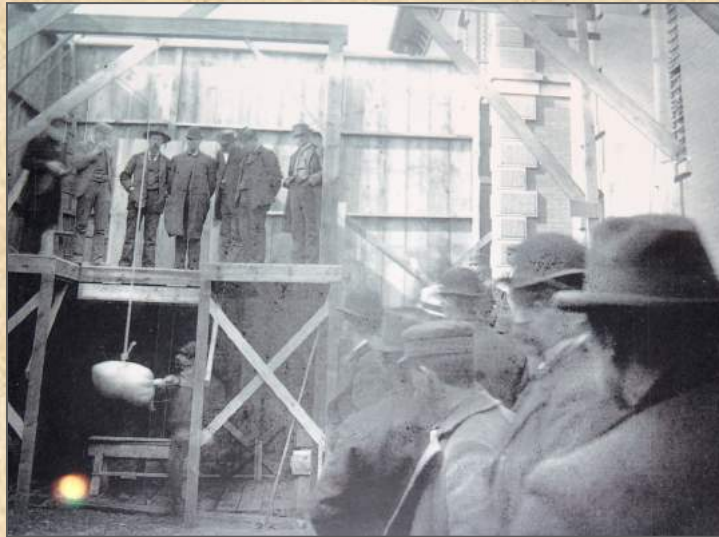
Alex Collier came west from Chenango County, New York and settled in Roscoe in 1869. There he ran a successful business, became head miller for Rockton and Beloit Milling companies and later farmed for six years. He represented the town of Harlem, where his farm was located, on the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors for three years. He moved to Rockford in 1881 shortly after he became the supervisor of the Winnebago County Poor Farm for eleven years. He was elected sheriff in 1902 serving one term, and then was elected representative to the general assembly in Springfield where he served two years. Alex Collier's daughter would become the wife of future sheriff, Ross J. Atkinson.



Alexander Collier
-Rockford Republic
Monday, August 11, 1924

Alex Collier was succeeded as sheriff by his son Charles in 1906. Charles Collier lived in Rochelle and was the proprietor of the Collier Inn at Rochelle.

The last execution in Winnebago County was done under the supervision of Sheriff Charles Collier. On January 20, 1910, an aging widow was brutally murdered during a robbery attempt. The widow's murderer, Clinton St. Clair, was hung in the courthouse square on April 15, 1910.



Law enforcement testing the gallows in preparation of an execution.

CLINT ST. CLAIR HANGED AT 8:30

Condemned Murderer was executed This Morning Promptly at Appointed Time and Without Mishap. Neck Broken at Seventh Vertebra by Fall—Sheriff Collier Performed Entire Duty Personally—Drop Fell at 8:30 and Body Was Out Cut Down at 8:42—Went to His Death Like a Man.

Clinton St. Clair, confessed murderer of aged Mrs. Mary McIntosh, expiated his crime on the gallows this morning at 8:30. Within three minutes of the time he stepped from the jail his inanimate body swing at the end of the rope, life having departed almost simultaneously with the drop.

At 8:28 o'clock the death march began and St. Clair ascended the scaffold in the company of Father Whalen, Sheriff Charles S. Collier, Deputy Alex Collier, Deputy Ross Atkinson and Dr. E. C. Dunn. Jailor Davies and Carpenter Johnson from the Cook county jail were awaiting their arrival on the scaffold platform. St. Clair stepped forward to the trap and knelt with Father Whalen, repeating after the priest the simple prayer offered. Before he arose and kissed the crucifix tendered by Father Whalen and then stood like a soldier at attention.

St. Clair never moved a muscle as Sheriff Charles Collier tied his limbs, adjusted the noose and pulled it tight with a jerk. The white shroud was placed around his shoulders by Jailor Davies and Charles Collier adjusted the white cap instantly. The eyes of the condemned murderer maintained a steady glance of the heads of the small audience, save for an instant when they rested upon the face of Sheriff Collier.

The prayer and the last preparation took but two minutes and those present were not prepared when Sheriff Collier stepped back and pulled the knob opening the trap and sending St. Clair to his death. Not a sound came from the spectators and an attitude of respectful silence was observed from first to last.

St. Clair wore the same suit in which he appeared at the trial, with a new white shirt, low turn down collar, black tie and no vest. His scapular, showing affiliation with the church was suspended about his shoulders and tucked into his shirt front.

The physicians present, Drs. Gill, Howard and Goembel, found no pulse at their first examination, death having been instantaneous. At 8:43, when the body was lowered to the coffin provided by Bradley and Cavanaugh, the three physicians pronounced him officially dead and announced that the neck had been broken at the seventh vertebra.



The noose shown here is believed to be the noose used in the hanging of Clinton St. Clair. It was given to Delbert Peterson when he became Chief of Police in 1965 by Secretary of Police Eric Ekeborn who had been told by his predecessor, Sergeant Herbert Reinert that it was used in the execution of Clinton St. Clair.

Around 1967, Chief Peterson gave permission to Captain Bill Lundberg to donate the noose which had been hanging in a standup locker at the Old Police Department at 126 S. 1st Street to be displayed at the Carlson family's Western Town Museum, in Rockford.

In 2013, Ed Carlson, Jr. generously donated it to the Winnebago County Police Museum where it is currently on display.

The execution of St. Clair was remarkable for the expedition and absence of mistakes with which it was conducted. Sheriff Collier assumed every detail of the disagreeable duty himself from strapping the condemned man's legs and arms, adjusting the hood and placing the noose, to pulling the knob which opened the trap. He did this work, not only because it was his duty, but because St. Clair insisted that no other hand should touch him at the final moment. It was particularly painful on account of the affection of the condemned man for the sheriff, but Mr. Collier has to his credit one of the most expert and humane executions in the history of the state.

Each member of the jury announced yesterday was present and certified to Circuit Clerk Lake that St. Clair was executed as ordered by the court. Aside from those required by law there were but few spectators and those present dignified the occasion by showing proper respect. There was no excitement, no exclamations, no levity; a painful duty was discharged with proper solemnity.

Whatever St. Clair did in life he died like a man and in the Catholic faith, having received extreme unction just previous to the march to the gallows. Previous to the fatal minute he showed signs of weakening but mastered himself and made good his promise to the only friend he knew, Sheriff Collier, to make as little trouble as possible.

St. Clair stepped upon the scaffold between Father Whalen and Sheriff Collier at 8:28, requiring no support and apparently resigned.

"Have you anything to say, Clinton St. Clair?" asked the sheriff.

"Nothing," said the condemned man in a low voice.

Within a moment he knelt with Father Whalen and kissed the cross, and adjusted his feet for the straps. He showed neither excitement, fear, nor bravado, but in every way conducted himself like a man who realizes his crime and admits the necessity for expiation.

Previous to the death march he had but one request to make, that Sheriff Collier personally discharge every detail of the execution, and this last wish was honored. He ate his last breakfast and received the priest without a change from his usual demeanor.

A large crowd had gathered about the jail at 7 o'clock this morning and at the time of the execution men, women and children were solidly grouped on Court Street and Elm Street, blocking the corner, all listening for the fall of the trap. It is estimated that at least 3,000 people were outside the stockade that the drop should be sprung exactly on the appointed minute came in the nature of a surprise and is greatly to the credit of the sheriff's office.

Mrs. St. Clair took final farewell of her husband last evening and the only representative of the family present was St. Clair's brother-in-law from Freeport. Mrs. St. Clair will leave that city soon for an unannounced destination.

St. Clair accepted the Catholic faith and will be buried in consecrated ground. The gallows were torn down this afternoon and the work of demolishing the stockade was begun within an hour of the execution. The entire affair was conducted with as little of the spectacular as is possible under the laws of Illinois.

Clinton St. Clair paid with his life for the murder of Mrs. Mary McIntosh at her home on West State Street Jan. 20th. The motive was robbery and St. Clair was defended by three able attorneys at his trial, the defense being insanity. The jury sentenced him to death and the supreme court dismissed the appeal which was made on technical grounds. He leaves a wife, two small boys, and several brothers and sisters, besides a father who resides at Hagerstown, Md. This is the fourth hanging in Winnebago County.

-The Rockford Republic, Friday Evening, April 15, 1910



Hiram Young

In 1905 Hiram Young announced his candidacy to succeed Alex Collier. Mr. Young had served as first deputy under Sheriff "Kit" Sawyer and as a deputy under Sheriff Alex Collier. Mr. Young was serving as the assistant poormaster at the time he was running for the sheriff position.

It wasn't until 1910 when Mr. Young was now the poormaster that he would be elected as sheriff. He would serve only one term.

THE ANTI-SALOON LEAGUE CHOOSES A SHERIFF

At a Meeting This Morning They Declare in Favor of Hiram W. Young.

Officers and members of the Winnebago County Anti-Saloon League met in executive session this morning, and passed the following resolutions:

Whereas, Hiram W. Young of the City of Rockford, has announced himself as a candidate at the Republican Primaries, September 15th, for Sheriff

And for That, Whereas, The said Hiram W. Young has always been a worker for and a contributor to the cause of the Local Option League, and has stood at all times for law enforcement, for temperance and the highest citizenship, that we do, by the adoption of this resolution, endorse the candidacy of Hiram W. Young for the position which he seeks, the office of Sheriff of Winnebago County.

Be it Further Resolved, That we believe that it is a good principle to endorse those men who stand for the cause to which this Organization is pledged, and that in endorsing Mr. Young, we but pledge the same support that has already been given by the Rockford Law Enforcement League, the Swedish Temperance Union and the Good Templars.

We appreciate also, in Mr. Young, the desire on his part to stand for and abide by the dictates of highest citizenship and good morals.

To these friends of temperance, who admire a clean, straightforward life and an avowed determination to do what is right from principle and not trimming the political sails to every wind that blows, we commend the candidacy of Hiram W. Young, for the nomination of Sheriff at the Republican Primaries, September 15.

Chas. W. Ferguson, Pres.

(Attested): Geo. P. Gallaher, Secy.

-Rockford Republic,
Friday Evening, August 12, 1910

NEW SHERIFF IN CHARGE AT JAIL

ALEX COLLIER AND FAMILY, AFTER EIGHT YEARS RESIDENCE AT THE COUNTY JAIL, LEAVE TODAY—SHERIFF H. W. YOUNG, COUNTY TREASURER FRANK CARSON AND THE RE-ELECTED COUNTY OFFICIALS TOOK OFFICE TODAY—SHERIFF YOUNG HAS NOT DECIDED ON ALL HIS DEPUTIES—FAY YOUNG WILL BE DEPUTY.

There was bustle and hustle today at the county jail where Alex Collier and family, including his son, Charles Collier, the retiring sheriff, were moving out and Hiram W. Young, the new sheriff-elect, moved in to make his home for the next four years.

The Collier family have moved to

their new home at 1010 Franklin Place, and had to hustle to have the jail quarters ready for the incoming sheriff and his family. Today many of their friends visited them and wished them good luck in their new home. Mr. Collier, who has been elected to the legislature, will leave for Springfield after the holidays, and his retirement from the sheriff's office does not in any sense mean his retirement from public life.

Sheriff Young moved into the jail building late this afternoon and sleeps there tonight. He declined to make public his deputies, but states that one of the deputies will surely be his son, Fay Young, who for a number of years has been an assistant to the county surveyor. The other deputies will probably be announced tomorrow morning.

It is generally understood that Sheriff Young will chop the heads off all the deputies that served under the Colliers. None of the Collier deputies supported Mr. Young and all will undoubtedly have to walk the plank, including Gust Johnson, who for sixteen years has served as deputy sheriff. Sheriff Young will not be officially the sheriff until the supervisors approve his bond tomorrow.

This being the first Monday in December all the recently elected county officials took office. Their bonds will be approved this afternoon.

At the county treasurer's office, Frank Carson succeeded Oscar Holmquist, and his deputy will be James Carson, who was county treasurer before Mr. Holmquist. Frank Carson, the new county treasurer, is an able young man who has had eight years of experience in the office, and understands his duties thoroughly.

County Clerk Norton, County Judge Reckhow and County Supt. of Schools Kern, all entered another term in their offices.

Sheriff Young's resignation from the poormastership leaves that place vacant, and the supervisors will have a big time in naming a successor for Mr. Young. There are a dozen candidates and each has a friend or two on the board. It will probably take the board several days before the place will be filled.

The December meeting of the board of supervisors commences today. They will approve Sheriff Young's bonds and name a poormaster.

-Rockford Republic, Monday
Evening, December 5, 1910

COUNTY OFFICERS TAKE OVER JOBS FIRST OF WEEK

Sheriff Hiram Young and Corps of Assistants Ready to Turn Office Over to Guy Ginders Monday Morning—N. E. Swenson Appointed Special Court Bailiff.

When Sheriff-elect Guy Ginders appears at the county jail Monday morning, the keys of the City-House will be turned over to him by Sheriff Hiram Young.

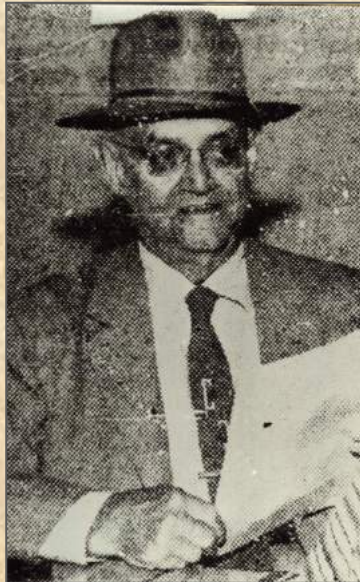
December 7th is the date set for the change in county offices and an entire new corps of workers will inhabit the jail for the next four years. The new uniforms for Sheriff Ginders and his deputies, Messrs. Frank Burbank, Harry H. Baldwin, Gleason and Swenson have arrived and will be worn for the first time next week.

N. E. Gleason, who has served as special court bailiff for the past four years, was reappointed to that office today by Sheriff-elect Ginders, upon the request of Judge Frost and members of the bar association. Mr. Swenson has proved to be a faithful officer and his offer came as a merit for his good service.

County Treasurer Frank Carson will surrender the reins of his office to Charles Kjellquist but it is probable that Mr. Carson will remain for some time to assist the new treasurer. Sheriff Young will take a much needed rest this winter and may decide to remove to his old home at Rockton next spring. Fay Young, chief deputy, will take a trip in the northern woods this winter before taking up active work and Deputy John Dreyer expects to re-enter the concrete business.

County Judge L. M. Reckhow, County Clerk M. A. Norton and Supt. of Schools Abbie J. Craig will begin their next terms Monday, all of them having succeeded themselves. County Surveyor Sabin will officially enter upon his duties Monday.

-Rockford Republic, Saturday
Evening, December 5, 1914



Guy W. Ginders

Guy Ginders became sheriff in 1914.



Rockford's Rotarian Sheriff and His Flying Rescue Boat.

Rockford, Ill., is located on the beautiful Rock River; a few miles away are two other rivers. There are many dangerous spots in Winnebago county and people frequently are drowned. When Rotarian Guy Ginders was elected sheriff of the county one of his first acts was to provide the efficient outfit shown above, to supply quick facilities to rescue the drowning in remote sections of the county. The relief boat is always kept ready to be hooked to the sheriff's car and whizzed to the place of the drowning. Ginders is the largest man in the picture. The other five are his uniformed deputy sheriffs.

150 Men Parade to Jail

At Rockford, Illinois, 150 men of military age, members of the Socialist Party and the I.W.W., decided that they would not register on June 5. They held a picnic on Registration Day, and next day (June 6) they marched to the jail, and gave themselves up. The Rockford "Morning Star" describes the event as follows:

"Marching two abreast behind a banner which defied registration laws of the United States of America, one hundred and thirty-six Rockford men last night invaded the county jail and were lodged behind bars to await Federal trial.

"At the stroke of 9 o'clock East State street woke to the strangest demonstration in the history of Rockford. Silently, almost stealthily, a procession headed by young men and closed by women and children made its way into the street from the east side near Sixth avenue and began its march into the heart of the business district. Less than two hundred strong at the starting point, the strange parade gained numbers with each block until when it flowed on to the State street bridge not less than five hundred people were in line, each asking his neighbor where the march was to end.

"Streets in the business district cleared as if by magic, and before the procession came to rest thousands of people filled the jail yard and streets, banking closely about the marchers. The procession moved up the jail steps and halted at the door. It was then that the canvas banner, attached to a long stick, was flashed to the crowd's view. It read: 'All For One; One For All-Peace-Not War!'

"So unexpected had been the demonstration that forces at the sheriff's office were taken completely by surprise. A telephone message from the police department as the procession was crossing the river, brought Sheriff Guy Ginders from bed, and with Deputies Baldwin, Barrett, Bubser, Marsales, he unshipped the big office rifle rack and stood ready to defend the jail against mob rule.

"Leaders of the demonstration met five armed men when they reached the door, and made quick explanation of their errand.

"'We refused to register,' said the leader. 'We have come to surrender and stand trial.'

"'Come right in,' said Sheriff Ginders and opened the door wide.

"While the crowd watched amazed, one hundred and thirty-six of the marchers were ushered through the jail door. They were received in dozen lots, searched, relieved of valuables, and assigned to cells. Before the first man had acquainted himself with the public cell in which he was lodged, the last of the procession had been admitted, and the heavy jail door clanged shut against the thousands outside.

"Coroner McAllister, arriving at the sheriff's office after the men had been locked up, declared that he came in official capacity, expecting that his services would be needed.

"'Go as far as you like in handling this sort of men,' said he, 'and be assured that the coroner's office will back you up if there are any casualties.'"

Friends and relations of the prisoners have not been allowed to see them. District Attorney Charles F. Clyde and Federal officials stated that the men would be 'dealt with to the limit.'"



During Sheriff Ginders' term in 1916, the addition to the courthouse was built housing a new jail within the top three floors. This new jail contained roughly 58 cells that were 5 foot wide, 7 foot deep and 7 foot tall, a visiting area and state-of-the-art kitchen, and living quarters for the sheriff and his family. This new jail would house prisoners until 1977 when the Public Safety Building was erected.



In 1916 an addition was added to the courthouse facing Elm Street. The red building on the right is the Winnebago County Jail built around 1875.



View of the Courthouse and addition from Elm Street and Church Street after the removal of the old jail. The top three floors of the addition housed a new jail.

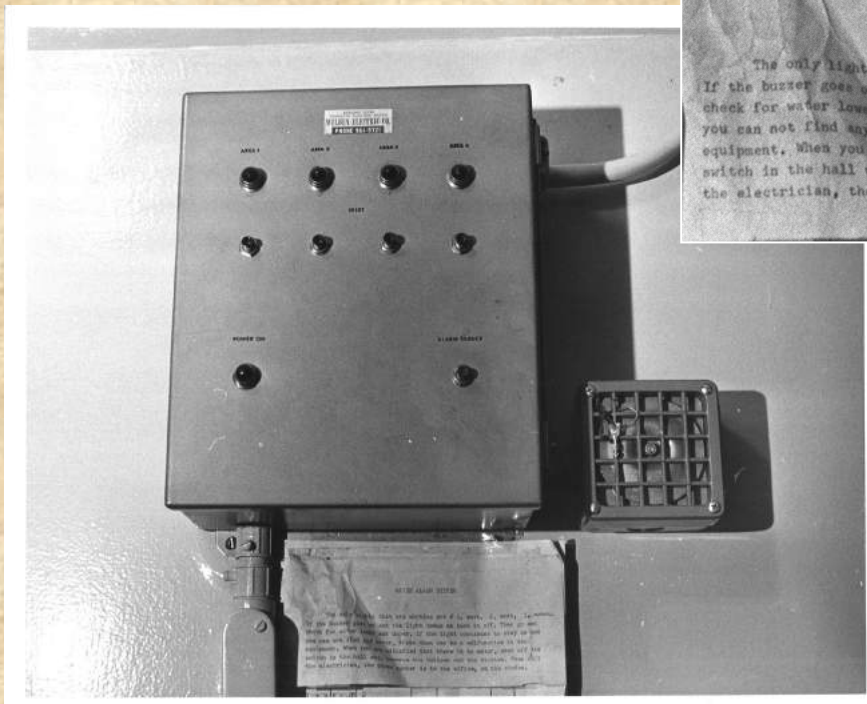


Keys used at the new jail.

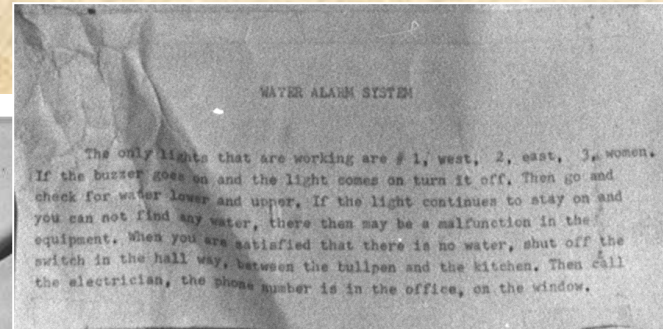
Collection of undated photos taken at the jail located in the Elm Street addition with newer modifications.



Back of photo reads: Visiting cage where fourteen (14) prisoners can communicate with visitors.



Back of photo reads: The alarm system for any water leakage in any jail tier.



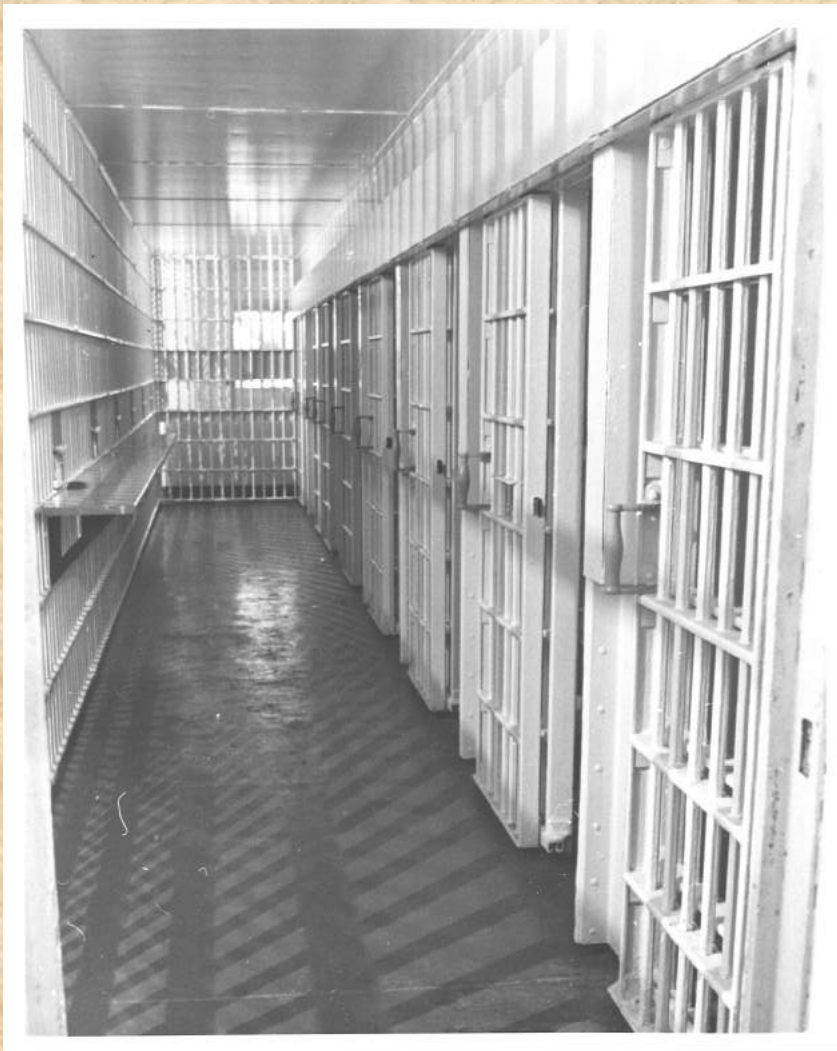
Back of photo reads: Phone jack that is located outside at the end of the cell-block. This is for security purposes due to the fact that it is not necessary to remove the prisoner from the cell-block when making a call.



At left – Back of photo reads: A monitor at the left which can be used to monitor any cell-block in the jail. To the right, unit that operates electronically the control of the opening and closing of the three (3) main jail doors.

Below – Back of photo reads: Piped music to all the tiers.





Back of photo reads: A typical cell-block.



Back of photo reads: Door going from the jail to the I.D. Bureau which has a plexo-glass shield. There is also a similar door leading to the kitchen, which is plexo-glass.



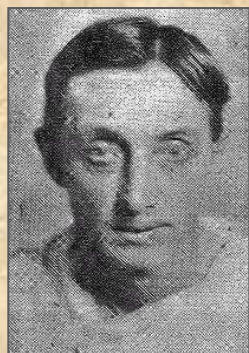
Harry Baldwin

Harry Baldwin won his bid for sheriff and served from 1918-1922, then again from 1926-1930

Ross Atkinson became sheriff in 1922 serving one term.



Ross Atkinson



Frank Litts

Sheriff Atkinson and Sheriff Baldwin were both involved in a controversial case surrounding the slaughter of horses. In 1921 Phillip Chappel established his company Ken-L-Ration in a Rockford canning factory. This factory would process horse meat for dog food. The idea of this did not sit well with one man, Frank Litts. Litts claimed to have witnessed the mistreatment of the horses brought in by boxcar, but it was when American wild mustangs started being shipped in for slaughter to be used for dogfood Litts became incited. Litts made four attempts to burn down the factory between October and December of 1925. The following are excerpts from an article titled "The People vs. Frank Litts, The true story of the first man to wage war against horse slaughter" published in Horse Connection Magazine: After fire officials determined that the Chappel plant had been "touched off" in October, armed guards were placed on duty at the packing factory. About 3 o'clock yesterday morning, one of the guards came upon a huddled figure, working desperately over a black suitcase. The guard ordered the prowler to throw up his hands. A shot broke the stillness of the morning and the prowler fled in the darkness. The guard fired his shotgun twice. Other guards hastened to the scene and more shots were fired at the fleeing figure. The man was not found anywhere within the 10 feet high fence built around the plant since the place was gutted by fire.



Phillip Chappel

Sheriffs and detectives hurried to the scene and a search was started. One of the guards found a suitcase and, upon opening it, discovered that it was filled with 150 half-pound sticks of dynamite. A fuse, about nine feet long had been attached to the explosives and it was all ready to be touched off.

Several school children, walking through a field nearly two miles southwest of the packing plant shortly before 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon came upon the prostrate form of a man on the ground. He was semi-conscious, his clothing soaked with blood. The boys hurried to a nearby house and telephoned authorities.

Sheriff Ross Atkinson jumped into his automobile and was at the scene within minutes. Seeing that the man was in a critical condition from gunshot wounds, the sheriff carried the man to the car and hurried him to Rockford hospital. He regained consciousness and was questioned briefly by the sheriff and Mr. Chappel. He said his name was Frank Litts and his love for horses prompted him to make attempts to destroy the plant so that slaughtering would cease. Suffering greatly

from his wounds, shock and exposure, Litts was hardly able to talk above a whisper when first questioned. It was found that his back, hands, thighs and legs were punctured by birdshot. After his wounds had been dressed, an ambulance was called and Litts was removed to the hospital ward of the county jail. His condition grew worse, his pulse and respiration were weaker and he was running a temperature. Litts suffered several hemorrhages, and at midnight, when his condition was regarded as critical, physicians expressed doubts whether he would recover.

From his cot in the jail, Litts gave the police a statement telling of four previous attempts to burn the plant: "I was in Miles City, Montana, when I first heard about shipping range horses east to be killed for food purposes. I believe that the killing and corralling of wild horses is wrong. I would rather see my body or my mother's body ground up and used as a fertilizer than to have horses killed like they are here."

Litts was indicted on December 12th, 1925 on charges of procuring dynamite with intent to damage property and arson. The 41-year-old Litts pleaded guilty but demanded a jury trial.

During his arraignment, on December 15th, the court was thrown into disorder when Litts tried to escape, twice. The first attempt carried the pursuit into the corridors of the courthouse. The second attempt was frustrated when court staff fell upon him in the courtroom as he started another dash for the door. Deputies overtook the fleeing prisoner, who said he had one chance in a million to escape but it was worth taking.

Litts' trial took place on February 23rd, 1926. His attorney, Rudolph Leger, made a strong insanity case. Litts himself was furious, claiming that he was as sane as anyone. Unfortunately for Litts, the evidence of Dr. Ralph Hinton, of the Elgin State Hospital, proved the strongest point in Leger's efforts to establish an insanity case.

"He's throwing me down, trying to make me out that I'm crazy when I'm not", Litts exclaimed.

But an insanity verdict was the only possible outcome for Philip Chappel. If Litts was judged insane, then Chappel's factory could deny everything Litts said, and there was less chance for sympathy of the horse-lover and repugnance for the meatpacking plant.

After almost 12 hours' deliberation, the jury announced their verdict. "We the jury find the defendant not guilty. We find that he committed the acts as charged but that at the time he was an insane person and that he has not permanently recovered," jury foreman, Walter Ullmark, told the court.

As Sheriff Atkinson led him away, Litts said, "How could a jury bring in a verdict like that? I was as sane when I fired the plant as I am now, and I'm not insane."

The insanity defense made by Litts' attorney is believed to have been the first successful one in the history of Winnebago County.

The judge pronounced sentence. "The defendant is acquitted of the crime of arson on the grounds of insanity. He is to be taken by the sheriff to the Illinois Asylum for Insane Criminals, where the superintendent is hereby commanded to confine him until he be adjudged a fit subject to be discharged."

Litts, however, took only a week to escape from prison! Officials at the jail said they believed Litts had hidden in the prison yard while the prisoners were being exercised. When they were marched into their quarters and counted, Litts was missing. A posse of guards immediately started in pursuit and it is believed that Litts followed them out of the grounds.



Laura James

Litts vanished for twenty-one months, and was almost forgotten. In November, 1927 he was back in Rockford, preparing to blow up the Chappel plant – again! He checked into a local hotel and rented a room using a false name. Unfortunately Mrs. Laura James, the manager of the hotel, was also a former jail matron who had met Litts many times during his confinement in the county jail. Recognizing the similarity between the hotel guest and her former prisoner, she telephoned Deputy Chester Pence whom she knew would recognize the man.

Pence drove to the hotel immediately and recognized Litts, who told him that he must be mistaken, as his name was Nichols. Pence told him that he would have to go with him and they started out of the hotel. When they reached the sidewalk, Litts made another one of his famous dashes for liberty. Pence had kept a close watch on him, however, and Litts was quickly subdued and taken to the county jail.

When questioned by Sheriff Baldwin, he insisted that his name was Nichols and not Litts. The sheriff ordered Litts' shirt removed and scars from shotgun wounds received when he was shot the night he attempted to dynamite the plant in 1925 were plainly discernible. The scars resulted in his positive identification by authorities. So Litts was sent back to jail.

In May 1931 – three and a half years later – Litts led an escape attempt from the Illinois state hospital for the criminally insane. There were 175 inmates in the exercise yard when a dozen men made a sudden rush for the walls. The guard in the tower outside the exercise yard shouted commands to halt, but was not obeyed. Then he fired several shots over the heads of the prisoners. Still they came, and he was forced to fire directly at them. One man was on top of the wall at the time – predictably it was Litts, who was shot through the left lung.

Frank Litts died of pulmonary tuberculosis on March 21, 1938 at the Psychiatric Division of State Penitentiary at Menard, Randolph Co., Illinois.



The Unsolved Murder of Thomas Perra a.k.a. Reda

Sheriff Baldwin would be involved in another case that would become the first unsolved murder in Winnebago County (since the election of the first sheriff).

Driving to the blacksmith shop at New Milford at 9:30 in the morning on February 6, 1928, Ben Olson, a Cherry Valley farmer, glanced down into the thicket in an area about a quarter mile north of the Camp Grant rifle range pits, one mile east of New Milford, saw a dark object lying on the ground about fifty yards from the dirt road and stopped to investigate.

"I thought at first it was a dog," Olson said, "When I got closer, I saw it was a man's body, and that the entire face was smeared with blood."

Olson went immediately to New Milford, where Sheriff Baldwin was notified.

When the sheriff and Deputy Chet Pence arrived, they found the body lying on its left side, with the arms extended in front and the fists clenched tight, as if the man had "squared off" in a fighting posture before he was struck down from behind.

Across the legs lay a short length of gray rope, less than a yard in length and knitted on one end. Apparently the victim had been stunned, then bound and dragged down the wagon trail, which winds through trees to the southwest.

One bullet had struck just behind the right ear and had emerged above the left eye, the course of the missile indicating that the murderer had stood directly over the helpless man as he pulled the trigger of the death gun.

Thirty-five feet to the southeast, on a pile of leaves, F.H. Carlson found a blue Colt .32 caliber revolver. All five shots had been fired and the empty shells were still in the chamber. The short barrel of the weapon was somewhat rusted.

Searching around in the blood-stained ground where the body lay, Sheriff Baldwin found five bullets, four of them of .32 caliber, and the fifth apparently fired from an automatic. Two of the leaden pellets were blood-stained.

Assisted by a volunteer posse, Sheriff Baldwin scoured the woods for some trace of the dead man's cap or hat, and finally found it more than 100 yards away in a pile of brush just off the edge of the road where it had been tossed by the slayers as they drove away from the scene of the murder.

The cap, of a gray mixture, had a black fur lining to be pulled down over the ears, but there was no trade mark to indicate where it had been purchased.

Beside the body, the sheriff found a dental plate which may serve in identifying the slain man. A soiled package of cigarettes, some matches and a dirty handkerchief were found in the coat pockets.

"It is a clear case of murder," Sheriff Baldwin declared, "This lad must have been first attacked farther up the hill, and then dragged down here where he was shot to death after he had been knocked to the ground."

The dead man wore an old green overcoat, blue trousers, a blue shirt open at the throat and rough working shoes. Robbery did not appear to be the motive of the slayer or slayers was indicated by the fact that seven dollars in currency, one \$5 and two \$1 bills, with 87 cents in change, and a Rockford car slug were found in the dead man's trouser pockets.

A stag hunting knife, closed, was also found in his pocket, but there was no mark of identification which served to give the officers a clue as to who the murdered youth was.

Chief of Police A.E. Bargren and Asst. Chief Homer Read identified the body of Thomas Perra, or Reda as the name is sometimes spelled, at Coroner Fred C. Olson's morgue as their former liquor investigator and then all city and county officials launched an exhaustive search for the killers.

Hasty investigation revealed reports that Perra formerly lived at 726 S. Winnebago St. and was engaged in the liquor traffic. A month before his equipment was taken away and a few days later Perra sought a job as a "stool pigeon" for the police. He was assigned to work with a Freeport man as a spotter. After visits to two or three places the

Freeport man claimed that Perra was "afraid and weakened" in the business just at the point of making formal charges.

Perra had not been around the police station for days. The Tuesday before he moved his wife now ill in bed, and his four children to 810 Houghton St. His children said that Tuesday morning he left for Freeport to search for work and they had not seen or heard from him since that time.

Reconstructing the murder story police expressed the belief that Perra may have been lured to Freeport and kept some place all week and murdered some time Saturday or Sunday when his keepers decided he was guilty of their charge of spying on them and refused to yield to their demands.

Later, police began working on a theory that Perra was slugged in Rockford and then taken in an automobile to the lonely spot where bound and helpless, he was shot to death.

His wife, Rose, gave birth on Sunday morning to their fifth child near the same time the father was murdered, and her condition was such that she could not be informed of her husband's fate.

Mrs. Lucy Adrignon, 1214 Morgan St., who said her husband was Perra's best man at his wedding, identified the body.

"I knew they would! I knew they would!" Sobbing convulsively when told by friends the next night of the murder of her husband Mrs. Rose Perra pressed

her day old baby to her breast and gathered her four other infants about her bed in an outburst of fear that harm might come to them.

Friends and neighbors sought to quiet and comfort her. Evidently the mother and widow was aware of the reported threats received by her husband during the last few weeks but she was not able to furnish any clue identity of the senders. If they were in form of letters she had not seen any. If they were given by word she had not seen any strangers in conversation with her husband.

"Daddy'll be back soon," explained Tom Jr., 6, eldest of the older quartet of children. They were unable to realize the extent of the tragedy to them.

Friends reported that the widow became extremely worried when her husband failed to return home Saturday night. He had gone away on Wednesday to seek work at Freeport and was to return Saturday. Police believed the "work" was a lure put out by bootleggers who kept him secreted until early Sunday and then murdered him.

Nurses of the Visiting Nurse association and representatives of Public Welfare association were caring for the family today. Nurses were called to the home on Monday. Previously charitable societies were without record of the family, it was said.

The mother and babe have a comfortable bed but the remainder of the house looked desolate. However, the family had moved in only last week and day before the father disappeared. Owing to the

condition of the mother little effort had been made to adjust furnishings.

Despite the fact that they are without a clue to the identity of the slayers of Tom Perra alias, Reda, police booze spotter, investigating officials sought to weave from the tangled mass of fact and rumor a coherent story of the crime.

The killers left no trace of their identity and all clues were so intangible as to be practically worthless, but authorities expressed the belief that they would be able to break through gangland's unwritten law of secrecy and sphinxlike silence.

The body of the murdered man was at T.E. Cavanagh's parlors awaiting funeral arrangements. The dead man was said to have had two brothers but they had not been located.

Sheriff Harry H. Baldwin and Assistant Police Chief Homer Reed went to Freeport Monday afternoon to find some trace of a liquor investigator said to have chummed with Reda here. This man is said to have disappeared from his usual haunts after receiving threats.

February 7, 1928 Failure of Asst. Chief Read and Sheriff Baldwin in a visit to Freeport to locate the companion "stool pigeon" of the murdered man during their work in Rockford started rumors that possibly the body of the Freeport spotter may be found riddled with bullets near Rockford within a few days.

The Freeporter was reported as disappearing from that city a month ago and soon after his dismissal as a liquor investigator by Rockford Police. His wife removed to Chicago. Days later the former private investigator was said to have visited Freeport with a load of alcohol.

Here developed the theory that the local man may have been double-crossed by his Freeport pal in the liquor business. Rockford police said that Perra was discharged as a spotter because the Freeport man claimed he "weakened" at the work and the imported investigator was fired because he was discovered associating with convicted bootleggers.

"Was the Freeport man an envoy of organized liquor traffickers sent to Rockford to ascertain identity of spotters causing arrests of many local bootleggers?" was the next question confronting officials.

This theory seemed to be strengthened by the apparent ease with which the Freeporter gained the confidence of a certain faction of local liquor dealers and his association with them, it was said, his work never causing arrest of any persons alleged to belong to this "ring" of the rum industry.

Police scouted rumors that Sunday's murder had any connection with the killing of Policeman Arthur Bassett last September but thought possible that the same association of men might be involved in the slaying of Lawrence McGill here a week ago last Sunday night.

Trails of murderers in both cases led to Freeport and apparently to the same liquor combination. However, the murder of McGill is considered an "impromptu" affair while the slaying of Perra was a carefully planned job.

Officials of the "overhead" organization trying to control supplying of booze to Rockford dealers and bootleggers operating in Freeport and towns north and west of that city are said to have several "agents" who are quick at the trigger and experienced in all the arts of safe and final disposal of a dangerous enemy and rival.

Police and Sheriff Baldwin today questioned a number of private liquor investigators in hopes of obtaining information on possible suspects in Sunday's murder. Nothing definite was learned. Also, they redoubled their efforts to locate the missing Freeport "stool pigeon" to try to determine whether he is dead or alive and his present occupation and what information he may possess on the slaying.

Murders of Perra and McGill, coupled with reports that a number of federal prohibition agents came to Rockford on Monday to procure evidence for a "mop-up" raid similar to the one staged in Freeport last week, caused local bootleggers to use extra precautions today, police spotters reported. No chances were being taken and customers were being turned away if there were strangers in sight, the investigators were reported to have said. There were other rumors that federal men have been operating in Rockford since the middle of last week

and that there may be a wholesale raid on local liquor traffickers within a few days. The federal men were reported operating independently of local officials.

Authorities of Winnebago County were uneasy today, fearful of a prolonged gang warfare between rival bootleggers as a result of the brutal murder of Thomas Reda.

Reda is said to have had many friends here and at Freeport who, while they did not approve of his contemplated betrayal of the operative bootleggers and rum runners, feel that murder was "too strong." It is feared they might seize upon the Reda episode as an excuse to let loose their own fury because of jealousy and suspicion harbored for many months.

Funeral arrangements have been completed, pending the arrival of a brother and sister from Madison, Wis. The body is at the Cavanaugh Undertaking parlors.

February 8, 1928 Several automobiles containing Wisconsin friends of Thomas Reda, driving toward Rockford this morning as Sheriff Harry Baldwin and Deputy Harry Rose were on their way to Beloit tracing a clue in the brutal murder of Monday, increased the apprehension of warfare breaking out as a result of the slaying.

Attempts were being made today at Beloit and South Beloit to identify the gun found with Reda's bullet-ridden body. Up to press time the effort had not been successful.

Hoping to trace ownership of the gun and thereby solve Reda's murder, the serial number on the weapon has been sent to the manufacturer in Massachusetts.

Having been informed that a South Beloit woman employed in a Beloit shoe factory thought she could identify the weapon, the sheriff and his deputy went to the Wisconsin city.

According to the young woman, however, ownership of the weapon in the sheriff's possession was not known to her.

Although Reda had lived practically all his life in Rockford, he formed many friendships in Wisconsin during a brief residence at Milwaukee and also Madison.

Mrs. Reda is being cared for at St. Antony's hospital. The children are being looked after by friends and the house on Houghton street is locked.

February 13, 1928 Whether Tom Reda, alias Perra, was murdered in an old-time feud or by enemies in the illicit liquor business was not determined at an inquest held this morning by Coroner Fred C. Olson.

Sheriff Harry Baldwin testifying at the inquest said that many reports and rumors received indicated that the first husband of the slain police spotter's widow was probably murdered in Cleveland, Ohio, eight years ago but nothing definite could be determined. These rumors caused reports that the mystery slaying may have been the work of

"personal avengers" instead of employees of organized liquor traffickers. Coroner Olson's jurors returned a verdict that Reda came to his death by revolver bullet wounds inflicted by unknown persons.

Information obtained by investigating officials indicates that Tom Reda lived in Cleveland, Ohio, or a suburb eight years ago. One morning the husband of Reda's widow disappeared from home. He was found dead. Reda married the widow. They lived in various cities and first came to Rockford four or five years ago. A daughter by Mrs. Reda's first marriage went to live with her maternal grandmother in California.

Late last summer Reda became engaged in the illicit liquor business. In November his equipment was taken away from him. He became angry and sought employment as a private liquor investigator for the police. Reda seemed always to fear retaliatory measures and weakened in the "stool pigeon" liquor game and was discharged by police soon before the Christmas holidays.

Fears from some unknown source of harm constantly haunted him, it is reported. The week before his murder he moved his family from 726 S. Winnebago street to 810 Houghton street and the next day he left home with a farewell that he had been promised work at Freeport. He was never seen again until his body was found near New Milford.

Mrs. Reda is reported as talking freely but is

indefinite on many details connected with the death of her first husband.

April 5, 1934 An unsolved murder mystery today occupied the attention of Rockford police following discovery of a rusty .32 caliber revolver in a wooded area one mile east of new Milford near the spot where the bullet-riddled body of Tom Reda, reported still tender for alcohol manufacturers and at one time a police spotter, was found on the morning of February 6, 1928.

Hoping to find new clues which may lead to the solution of what police termed "one of the outrages of bootleg warfare: which flared in Rockford during the prohibition era, authorities have forwarded the numbers on the broken weapon to manufacturers.

Police Detectives Ralph Johnson and Paul Phelan have been assigned to the case. The condition of the rust-covered gun which was found Wednesday indicated that it had lain for several years near the spot where Reda met his death.

J.J. Larrigan, 3304 Westgate Parkway, a CWA worker reported the finding of the gun to police. He said that empty revolver was first uncovered by "a Wells boy" living near the woods where Reda was shot to death after having been slugged and "taken for a ride".

Following investigation of the slaying, police reported that they believed Reda had been slugged in Rockford and later taken in an auto to the lonely spot south of Rockford where, bound and helpless,

he was shot to death. His skull was crushed and his head riddled with five bullets.

Thirty-five feet from where Reda's blood-covered body lay, authorities found a blue Colt .32 caliber revolver. Five shots had been fired from it and the chamber was empty. Former Sheriff Harry Baldwin, who directed the investigation, found four .32 caliber bullets near Reda's battered form. Two were blood-soaked.

Possibility that the first bullet which had been fired into Reda's head might have come from the rust-covered, single-action revolver found yesterday spurred authorities to an intensive investigation of the murder. An attempt will be made to trace the ownership of the gun through factory numbers.

Reda, believed to have been murdered because "he talked too much" was reported to have been a former still tender for Rockford alcohol manufacturers and later to have been employed as a "spotter" for the police department.

April 17, 1934 Hope of solving the six-year old Tom Reda murder with the discovery of a rusty pistol at the scene of the crime faded today when police Detectives Paul Phelan and Ralph Johnson learned that the weapon would not be traced.

The pistol, a .32 caliber gun, was about ten years old and unregistered, the detectives were informed.

June 30, 1946 Gaetano DiSalvo was hungry that September night in 1928. While he parked his sporty roadster, he was thinking he'd join some friends in

the Milano café, 216 Morgan Street, and talk and eat spaghetti. He never expected to stop bullets when the man on the sidewalk hailed him.

It was shortly after 9 p.m., September 3rd. There were few people on the streets. Down on South Main street, less than a block away, Police Officer Joseph C. Lapinski was patrolling his beat. It was a quiet Monday day until a fusillade of shots shattered the silence. At first Lapinski couldn't determine the source of the sharp reports, but dashing east on Morgan street from Main, he found the roadster, with DiSalvo slumped over the wheel. Blood was pouring from two wounds in the dead man's head, one just under his cheek and the other in back of his right ear.

Two revolvers lay in the car beside the slain man. One, still hot, was on the seat beside him. The other was thrust, muzzle first, into his hand.

DiSalvo, sometimes known as Tom DiCaro, was the popular proprietor of an Italian restaurant at 1301 Seminary street.

Nine bullets had torn into DiSalvo's body, and only cursory examination was needed for proof that he had died instantly.

Murder with robbery as the motive was dismissed immediately. DiSalvo had \$63.82 in his pockets. The diamond ring and diamond stickpin he wore were untouched, and a check book showed that two months before he'd deposited \$4,000, and two days before he had made another deposit of \$460.

No one had seen the actual shooting, although at least two persons reported they'd seen two swarthy men fleeing south from the vicinity within moments after the revolver shots broke the quiet.

Police advanced the theory that DiSalvo's murder was the work of a gang of alcohol racketeers, somehow connected with the torture-murder several months before of Tom Reda, whose bullet riddled body was found one morning in a lonely woods near New Milford.

DiSalvo, according to the reconstruction of the crime, was shot to death by two men soon after he stopped his auto on Morgan street, the gunmen tossing their revolvers into the machine. A third revolver, apparently recently fired, was found in the rear of the café.

The duet of killers was expert and imported, it was believed. The men were waiting for him when he drove up to the curb. One man, police theorized, stood on the sidewalk and engaged DiSalvo in conversation. While he talked, his companion approached from the street side and fired a bullet from the rear through the unsuspecting man's head. Then both gunmen opened fire, sending nine bullets into the body. The first shot from the back, an autopsy disclosed, caused death, but any of four other bullets would have done the job.

The theory that one man stood on the sidewalk and the other on the street side was borne out by the discovery that six of the bullets entered from the

right side while others slammed into DiSalvo from the left.

Satisfied that their gunplay had produced death, one of the gunmen poked his weapon into the hand of the victim and the other tossed his into the car. Both weapons were of .38 caliber.

There was a minor mystery in connection with the case, aside from the major conundrum of who killed DiSalvo. When slain, DiSalvo was driving a LaSalle automobile, but he usually drove his Buick. However, there were indications that he had sold the Buick and bought the other machine within a few days before he was slain. But that enigma, like his murder, was never solved.

Miss Lillian Tinnoni, a girl employed at DiSalvo's café, denied reports that she was his sweetheart, although she admitted that DiSalvo took her home about three hours before his slumped, bullet-punctured body was found.

Police found that DiSalvo's past life was vague. He had come to Rockford about a year before he was slain, presumably from Cleveland, Ohio. The slain man never had been arrested, although police claimed he was a member of a local alcohol ring. The place where his café was located at the time of his slaying was raided three months earlier. But that occurred before he became of the business.

What police felt about the murder was summed up by former Capt. Charles Manson this way: "We've

been expecting someone in this gang to be taken for a ride since the Reda shooting. Reda belonged to the 'hill gang' of bootleggers, and probably was taken out and killed by members of the gang to which DiSalvo belonged. We've feared that Reda's murder would be avenged."

Police checked DiSalvo's associates here, and tried to trace his actions for the few hours between the time he left Miss Tinnoni and was found dead. They asked his business associates if he had received any mysterious telephone calls, whether any threats had been made—but what happened in the time between 6 and 9 p.m. remained a mystery.

Then, with the rival gang there still percolating, police pointed out that the slain man had a wife in Italy, and investigated the possibility that he may have been murdered because he deserted his wife.

But the gang theory was too strong, especially when several men known to be either friends or rivals of the slain man suddenly disappeared from their homes and their usual haunts. The friends, police believed, left town because they figured they might be next, while the enemies fled in fear of retaliation for DiSalvo's death.

While police searched in vain for those connected with DiSalvo, the sheriff's department came up with information which strengthened the theory that DiSalvo had been "bumped off" in a bootleg gang war.

Competitors had warned DiSalvo several times to use different labels on his bottles of illicit liquor, but he consistently refused, the sheriff's office learned.

The day a coroner's jury returned a verdict of "murder by persons unknown", police found another gun hidden under a pile of boards in an alley near the scene of the shooting. The pistol apparently had been "cached" by one of the gunmen fleeing from the crime scene for fear he might be picked up with the weapon on him.

But investigation into DiSalvo's death gradually died out, and, the first shock of the murder over, Rockford bootleggers began to straggle back.

Police were met with expressive shrugs and "don't knows". Some of those questions may have known, but they didn't talk.

No one has talked to this day.



Sheriff Baldwin and Special Deputy Atkinson were quite the crime-fighting team and were involved in yet another exciting case. On June 23, 1919 the Rockford Republic reports a murder. The headline reads,

**"BELOIT BAD MAN RIDDLES NEGRESS WITH FIVE BULLETS.
Caught Hour Later by Sheriff and Held for Murder."**

Buck Wilson, saddle-colored Beloit negro, shot and fatally wounded Mrs. Inez Taylor, also of Beloit, on the west side Beloit road about eight miles north of Rockford last evening. The woman passed away at Rockford hospital at 10:30 o'clock last night after making a dying confession in which she accused Wilson.

Within an hour after being notified, Sheriff Harry Baldwin and Special Deputy Ross Atkinson had Wilson locked up in the county jail. Assistant State's Attorney S. L. Large was immediately notified and secured a full confession, it was stated this morning. This is in stenographic form and will be transcribed at once.

The accused was arraigned before Magistrate Norton in police court this morning. He waived preliminary examination and was held without bond to await the session of the October grand jury.

"I believe we will hang this man," declared Mr.

Large today. "This is a case of cold-blooded, deliberate murder!"

The shooting climaxed an automobile trip to Rockford. The party was on the return trip to Beloit when it occurred. According to Ossie Tucker, Jackson seven-passenger taxicab owner residing at 546 Race street, Beloit, he was hired by the party to motor to Colvin Park, southeast of Rockford, to witness a baseball game between two Line City teams. The party consisted of Wilson and Tucker, Fred Dent, 456 Race street, Beloit, Miss Pearl Barr, aged 19, 526 Race street, and Miss May Ella McCord, 21, 662 Pleasant street, Beloit. They are all colored.

According to Tucker, he had a blowout, and deciding to cancel the visit to the ball game, started back to Beloit, first, however, stopping at the Douglas café, 510 Elm street, for a lunch. They started for the Line City about 5:15 o'clock. About forty minutes out of Rockford another tire blew out. Tucker stopped to fix it. The shooting occurred about ten minutes later.

Fires Five Bullets in Body. *Mrs. Taylor said before she died that Wilson wanted her to get out of the car and "take a walk" with him while Tucker was making his repairs. She says she refused and that Wilson drew his revolver and emptied it into her body. Three bullets entered the right leg about six inches below the hip. They are about two inches apart. Another bullet entered the abdomen and still another struck the woman's right wrist. The shots in the leg caused a compound fracture of*

the hip bone. The bullet in the abdomen caused death. One shot missed the woman. Wilson had a .38 caliber, six shooter revolver.

Holds Up His Friend. *Turning to Dent after reloading his revolver, Wilson said, according to Dent: "I'm in this trouble now, and you've got to give me what money you have with you."*

"I'll Finish Her." *Dent took out two five-dollar bills and some change and started to hand it to Wilson. Wilson ordered him to lay it on the ground, which he did. Wilson then picked it up, Dent told the authorities, and backing off said: "If she ain't dead, I'm going back and finish her."*

He then disappeared.

Sheriff Works Fast. *Tucker made for a farm house nearby and had the sheriff notified. Deputy Oscar Sandberg was on duty and received the call. Sheriff Baldwin was having dinner with friends on Furman street. Deputy Sandberg got him on the wire at once and the sheriff raced to his office. He started out the North Main road and met Special Deputy Ross Atkinson, just returning home after an auto spin. Ross jumped into the sheriff's car. Chief Deputy George Bubser and Deputies Oscar Nelson, Elliott and Charles Kalb, in the meantime, started out the North second road on the man hunt. Sheriff Baldwin left orders at his office to notify authorities in surrounding towns. Chief Qualman, of Beloit, sent two cars out on Wilson's trail, one taking each side of the river. Farmers throughout the section were also notified. They*

armed themselves with every weapon on hand and took up the chase.

Headed off on North. Sheriff Baldwin and Deputy Atkinson made straight for the scene of the shooting. Learning the direction Wilson headed for after robbing Dent, the sheriff made for Latham. Inquiries here disclosed the fact that Wilson was seen going through Latham on the railroad tracks. The sheriff detoured, coming back to the tracks about two miles north of Latham. Leaving the car at McCall's crossing, the two officers started down the track. Sheriff Baldwin plunged into some deep undergrowth at the side of the track, making a hurried survey of the place and then ran through a hedge along the side of the track. Both spots would have made excellent hiding places for a fugitive. Returning to the track, the sheriff hurried to catch up to Atkinson, who was several rods ahead of him by this time.

Atkinson First Spies Him. The top of a bush moved and Atkinson drew his revolver. A revolver shot rang, then another and another. Wilson leaped into sight and fired twice more, Atkinson returning shots. The bullets from Wilson's revolver flew within a few inches of the heads of both officers, as they were directly in line of Wilson's fire. Wilson fired point blank at Atkinson, and the sheriff today said he was certain at the time that the deputy must have been hit. Atkinson's gun was empty. The sheriff fired one shot at Wilson, who then leaped off an embankment into a ditch.

Atkinson, ran and leaped after him, sprawling over the negro. Before he could fire the last shot into him, Atkinson struck Wilson on the head with the butt of his revolver, laying him out. He was searched and handcuffed, brought back to Rockford and locked up in the county jail.

Says She Wanted Money. Coroner McAllister was notified that a woman had been murdered. Learning of the scene of the shooting, he drove out at once. Mrs. Taylor still sat in the machine. She was rushed to Rockford hospital, where her dying statement was made. When Wilson was questioned about the affair, he denied that he asked Mrs. Taylor to get out of the machine with him. He says the woman demanded money of him and that he refused to give it to her. The money, he explained, was to be used in paying the driver of the car, the woman having engaged Tucker. Witnesses to the shooting said today they could not say what the quarrel was about, but that Mrs. Taylor was seen clinging to Wilson's coat and apparently begging for mercy.

Tells How He Shot Her. Wilson, according to the authorities, described in detail just who the shooting occurred. He and the Taylor woman were in the back seat of the car. He says she begged for money.

"I told her to let loose or I'd hurt her," Wilson says he told her, according to Mr. Large. He said she would not let go, so he pulled his revolver and emptied it, only one of the bullets missing its mark.

He raised the gun after each shot, taking aim again before lowering it and pulling the trigger.

Sheriff Praises Atkinson. "We parked our car at McCall's crossing," said Sheriff Baldwin today. "When I jumped into the weeds to look around at the side of the track, I found a man's hat. I thought sure we had him, but I guess it was some hat lost off a train. Ross was only about three rods from Wilson when the negro opened fire. I thought sure he was hit. In the exchange of shots fired between Wilson and Atkinson, a number whistled pretty close, so I thought I'd drop Wilson before he killed Ross. I fired one shot and Wilson jumped. Ross jumped nearly on top of him—and with an empty gun. It takes nerve to do a stunt like that, but Nerve is Ross' middle name."

Fast Work of Sheriff. Sheriff Baldwin was the target for much praise by the authorities on the speedy apprehension of Wilson when he appeared with his prisoner in police court that morning. The shooting occurred, it is believed, about 7 o'clock. By 8 o'clock Wilson was safely behind the bars. Prompt action, autos in the best mechanical condition and hundred percent cooperation of deputies makes it extremely difficult for a fugitive of justice to elude the Winnebago county officers, as was demonstrated last night.

Beloit's "Bad ***."** Beloit, Wis. Authorities interviewed by the Republic today disclosed the fact that Buck Wilson is widely known as a "bad *****." It is said revolvers have been taken away

from him on several occasions when he threatened to hurt somebody. He is twenty-four old and married, but his wife has left him. She is now in Mississippi. They have been married four years, Buck said today, but have no children. Buck can neither read nor write. He has been employed as a molder at the Fairbanks-Morse plant in Beloit. He says he has no given name but Buck, and by this he is known generally in Beloit. He says his address in Beloit is 1200 Bluff street, while Beloit authorities says he lives at 644 Pleasant street. He has lived in Beloit several years.

Mrs. Taylor was twenty-eight years old and weighed in the neighborhood of two hundred pounds. She came to Beloit about eighteen months ago, and made her home on South Race street.

(*edited for content)



**No Arrests But
New Sheriff Has
Busy First Day**



ROSS J. ATKINSON
No arrests were made yesterday at the sheriff's office, the first day of duty for Ross Atkinson passing peacefully but not without working. Both Sheriff Atkinson and Chief Deputy Harry Baldwin spent a busy day getting reports ready and details straightened out.

Sheriff Atkinson took over his duties at noon yesterday with four county officials. Up until midnight last night, no arrests were reported. Ex-sheriff Baldwin and Sheriff Atkinson worked until late last night, moving and removing their records and equipment.

Practically all the same men that served under Sheriff Harry Baldwin for the last four years, will be kept by Sheriff Atkinson on his force. Sheriff Baldwin will have his report ready for the board of supervisors within a week. He had handled about \$900 prisoners during his four year term.

Ross J. Atkinson began his career in the Sheriff's Office during Harry Baldwin's first term when he was appointed Chief Deputy. In between Harry Baldwin's terms as sheriff, the other half of the dynamic duo, was elected sheriff serving one term and naming the former sheriff as his Chief Deputy.

When Harry Baldwin resumed his position as sheriff, Ross Atkinson would once again be appointed to the position of Chief Deputy. However, Ross Atkinson's career in the Sheriff's Office would be a brief one of only seven years. He resigned just days into Sheriff Baldwin's term in 1926.

Atkinson would throw his hat in the ring again in 1929 for the 1930 election. One could imagine that Atkinson and Baldwin had a falling out as it was rumored that Sheriff Baldwin planned on throwing his support behind Deputy Harry Rose. In addition to Rose, Atkinson would go up against five other candidates; M. P. Scriber, an auctioneer, William Schafer and Gerald Johnson both plumbers, Millard Stockburger and William C. Bell, former investigator for the State's Attorney's Office.

William C. Bell would win out as the people's choice.

For Sheriff



Deputy Sheriff Harry Rose
(above) today announced himself as a candidate for sheriff, subject to the Republican primaries next April.



*William C. Bell, who was elected in 1930 and again in 1938, apparently considered himself to be quite a horseman. He rode his horse up the courthouse steps, into the building, and down the long corridors in an attempt to disprove an Elm Street businessman's claim that the sheriff was a lousy horseman. Sheriff Bell may well be remembered for that one act, but, in fact, he was a leader in the right to limit gangland activity in Winnebago County. He had been elected on a platform of cleaning out the county's bootleggers, and as C. Hal Nelson, the author of a chapter in *Sinnissippi Saga* entitled "Cops and Politicians," writes; "He personally led his deputies on raids against speakeasies and moonshine stills several times a week."*



William C. Bell's uniform hat on display at the Police Museum located at Midway Village



1930's Deputy Badge



Sheriff Bell hanging a John Dillinger "Wanted" poster dated June 25, 1934



—Register-Republic photos.

Winnebago county's new county judge and probate judge are shown in the photo above as they sat beside Circuit Judge Arthur E. Fisher during induction ceremonies conducted this morning in the Circuit courtroom of the county building. The county's three judges are (left to right) Probate Judge Morris Hinchcliff, Circuit Judge Fisher and County Judge Fred J. Kuliberg. In the photo at the right, Carl A. Palmgren, retiring chief deputy sheriff, is shown turning the keys to the county jail over to Sheriff William C. Bell. Palmgren acted in the absence of Paul F. Johnson, retiring sheriff, who is returning a prisoner from Philadelphia.

Females in the Sheriff's Office

Though the date of the first female to work in the Sheriff's office has not been confirmed, matrons worked in the jail in the 1920's. Up until the first female secretary hired in November 1930, the matron was the only position held by a female. In 1979, a female sheriff's deputy fought for equal pay and the ability to be a patrol officer. Deputy Jessie Heisler started her career in the civil process division in 1969 and became a merited deputy soon after. However, in 1973 she was assigned a lower paying title of deputy secretary. Deputy Heisler was the first female deputy to be assigned to patrol rather than a desk job and would eventually be awarded her proper title and wages.



Deputy Jessie Heisler

Today, there are many female employees that work for both patrol and corrections in addition to the large number of women that work as support staff.

Feminine Touch Invades Office

Of Sheriff Here

Clean shirts and tidy desks are slated to be the order of the day on Dec. 1 when William C. Bell takes office as Winnebago county sheriff and installs Miss Elsie Wanfalt, 716 Kishwaukee st., as the first woman secretary ever known to the sheriff's suite of office rooms at the south door on the Elm st., side of the courthouse.

With the addition of a woman secretary to the sheriff's staff, the prerogative of the county jail matron as the only woman appointed named by the sheriff has been abolished. Miss Clara Handel, local nurse, has been named as matron of the jail.

Whether Miss Handel will have more trouble instilling habits of orderliness among the more than 100 prisoners in the jail than Miss Wanfalt will have in maintaining system in the clerical work connected with the sheriff's office remains to be seen.

With Miss Wanfalt's entrance into the affairs of the sheriff's office for the first time in history, there will be someone to keep the legal papers in their proper places and protect against cigar ashes on the floor.

-Rockford Morning Star
Sunday, Nov. 23, 1930

The "Feminine Touch"



Above, Sheriff-elect Bell and
Miss Elsie Wanfalt, secretary



Miss Clara Handel.

Harry H. Baldwin announced his candidacy for Sheriff once more. In his announcement as published in the Rockford Register Republic, Friday, February 2, 1934 he is quoted as saying, "The duties of a sheriff in a county the size of Winnebago are many. A man occupying this office must possess an understanding of human nature and its many defects. He must be kind and sympathetic, yet firm and exacting. He must be ever ready to do a distasteful task and must, when circumstances arise, act with force, regardless of who it effects."

"If I am nominated and elected, I will earnestly devote my entire time to the duties of this office and will have the interests of everyone of the 118,000 people of the county in mind during my time of service."

He was defeated by Paul F. Johnson.

Recalls Hectic Days of War I

Baldwin Had Hat Shot Off in Gun Battle

By DOUG ADAMS

Register–Republic Staff Writer

Harry H. Baldwin, 65 year-old automobile salesman for the Humphrey Cadillac and Olds company, was sheriff of Winnebago County twice, his first term running from 1918 to 1922, and his second from 1926 to 1930.

A Republican, Baldwin tried for a third term, but lost in that try in 1934 to another able citizen; Paul F. Johnson, a Democrat.

Baldwin would probably be, if the true facts were known, one of the few sheriffs in U.S. history who actually had holes shot in his hat in the line of duty.

It happened on a Sunday afternoon in midsummer. A man named Buck Wilson, subsequently convicted and sent to prison as a killer, shot Baldwin's hat off during a gun battle with Baldwin and Ross Atkinson, his chief deputy.

Several Close Shaves

There were many other close shaves during both of Baldwin's hectic terms, he recalls now, but the details have become hazy with the passing of the years.

During the first term, there was a jam-packed world war I Camp Grant, and its attendant troubles. There were shootings from time to time on the fringes of the camp. A woman was shot to death one afternoon in the area that is now Kilbuck forest preserve. Soldiers away from the camp without leave presented other problems. Several Camp Grant men were drown in the Kishwaukee river.

There were no sheriff's office patrols in those days. The sheriff and his deputies went out only in answer to specific calls, since a manpower shortage existed then, too. The office had two automobiles and two motorcycles.

Lived in County Building

In addition, Baldwin had two cars of his own that he pressed in service often, at his own expense. There was no radio. The sheriff lived in an apartment in the then-new south section of the county courthouse.

Between his first and second terms, during the four-year period that the Illinois constitution requires must exist before a man can become sheriff for the second time, Baldwin served as chief deputy for former Sheriff Ross Atkinson, who died several years ago.

Baldwin got his start as a law officer as chief deputy for Guy W. Ginders, who was sheriff from 1914 to 1918.

Battled Bootleggers

His second term was almost as lively as his first, Baldwin says. But the attention then, in the closing years of the “roaring 20’s” was focused not on the county’s huge military camp, but on a new breed of men – the bootleggers.

“They gave us plenty of trouble,” Baldwin said. “Bootlegging at its very worst kept our county jail pretty well filled up, and gave us many 24-hour working days trying to help maintain the law.”

The big Rockford tornado of Sept. 14, 1928 came in the middle of Baldwin’s second term, and Baldwin, his regular deputies and hundreds of special deputies assisted police and other officials in handling the countless emergency details of that disaster.

Jail Break Victim

Sheriff Baldwin had a jail break when he was the head man of the county jail, as seems to happen at least once during every sheriff’s time in office. But it was a bloodless break. A jailer who was servicing a ventilating fan on the roof left a door to the fan cupola open while he went to get a tool.

Two men, convicted previously on robbery charges, sneaked out onto the jail roof, made their way to the roof of the old section of the county building, and went through a roof door and made their way down the maze of stairways and left the building through the main entrance.

The men were caught the same day by one of the squads of officers Baldwin sent out immediately to cover every highway, road and railroad leading from the city.

Farm Tract Sold

After his second term as sheriff, Baldwin farmed for a time on property owned by his father, W. H. Baldwin on Kishwaukee st., a short distance south of the city. The property, between Kishwaukee and 11th st., just north of former Camp Grant property, was sold recently as a high-priced industrial tract.

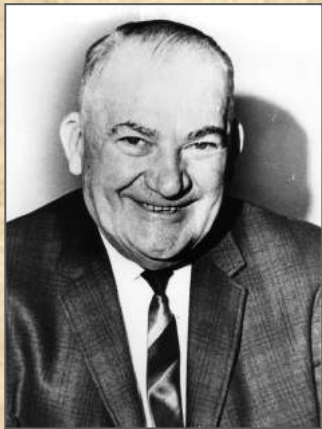
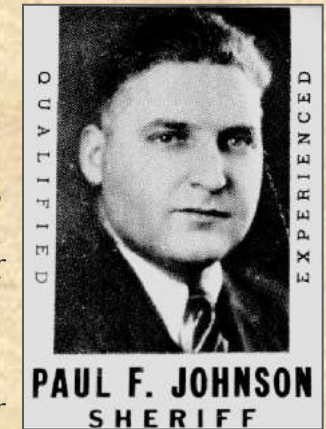
Baldwin later became a Chevrolet salesman, and when world war II started, he became chief guard at Ebaloy foundries. There, he stayed through the war, employing his former chief deputy and boss, Ross Atkinson.

Baldwin married the former Vera Vivian in 1917. The couple now resides at 1711 Camp Ave. “No more politics for me.” is Baldwin’s creed these days. And it must be a sound one because the man looks a good 10 years younger than he is.

-The Rockford Register-Republic, Sat., Aug. 18, 1951

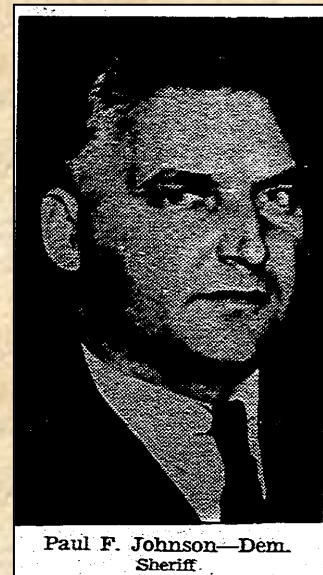
In between the two terms served by William C. Bell, Paul Johnson was elected sheriff (1934-1938). He was born in 1893, graduated from Rockford high school and was a guard at the National Lock company. Before becoming sheriff, Johnson served 11 years as a deputy. He was the first Democratic sheriff to be elected in Winnebago County.

In February of 1936 the sheriff's office consisted of only 14 persons: Sheriff Johnson, Carl A. Palmgren, chief deputy sheriff; Claude Johnson, Harvey Crandall, Carl Lofstedt, Sam Rotolo, Leo Conley, and Elsie Wanfalt, deputies; Sam Gottfred, county court bailiff, and Rollie Pardee, circuit court bailiff; Ernest Miller, August Plattikow and Clarence Wollan, jailers; and Edith Jamison, matron of the jail. (There were 65 "special deputies".) Sheriff Johnson petitioned the county board for 13 additional deputies: 1 chief deputy, 6 deputy sheriffs, 2 court bailiffs, 3 jailers; and 1 jail matron.



Kirk S. King was elected in 1942 for one term, then again in 1950 for another term, and finally in 1962 for his third non-consecutive term. In an article written for the Rockford Register Star dated July 15, 2009, titled "Trask Bridge Picnic Revisited, Pulls Heart, Memory Strings", the following quote was found, "Colorful Winnebago County Sheriff Kirk S. King made badges that said "Winnebago County Grange – SHERIFF," and issued them to grange members he had deputized as parking wardens."

King was a deputy state fire marshal, in charge of nine northern Illinois counties, was associated with his brother for 17 years in the operation of the King Farm dairy and was a precinct committeeman for 12 years. He was defeated by William C. Bell in the 1938 election, but won out over Paul Johnson in the 1942 election.



1942 Campaign

BIG PROTEST TO OPA

ROCKFORD, ILL. - SHERIFF KIRK S. KING, 6 FEET TWO INCHES TALL AND WEIGHING 300 POUNDS WAS ATTIRED IN TIE, HAT, SHOES, SOX AND A STAR-ADORNED HOGS-HEAD WHEN HE PICKETED THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY PRICE AND RATIONING BOARD IN PROTEST AGAINST OPA REGULATIONS UNDER WHICH MEN'S CLOTHING STORES REPORT THEY CAN'T OUTFIT HIM WITH A SUMMER SUIT. TAKING NOTES ON THE SITUATION IS EDWIN KOTCHE, CHIEF CLERK OF ROCKFORD'S OPA BOARD.

7/3/45





JAIL BECOMES HONEYMOON HOUSE

ROCKFORD, ILL.—THE BULL PEN HAS BECOME THE TRYSTING SPOT FOR TWO YOUNG ROCKFORD COUPLES JAILED FOR FIBBING ABOUT THEIR AGES IN MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICATIONS. THE BRIDES ARE 16 YEARS OLD; THE BOYS 17. THEY WERE WED IN A COUPLE CEREMONY BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO MARRY BEFORE THE BOYS ENTERED THE ARMY. SERVING 10-DAY SENTENCES IN SEPARATE CELLS, THEY MEET ONLY DURING EXERCISE TIME. HERE MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM KRAMER (LEFT) AND MR. AND MRS. JAMES BERG EXCHANGE VALENTINES.

2/14/44

Deputy Raiders Nab 29 Persons

Gambling Disorderly Charges Filed

Deputy sheriffs arrested 29 persons late last night and early today in two raids on establishments on the fringes of the city.

Raided by a squad of deputy sheriffs were the Merchants club at 2423 S. Main St., and another place known as the 20th Century club, or the “Rock,” at 321 Peoples Ave.

In the Main St. raid the doors were kicked open and John (Doc) Thomas, 49, 510 N. Court St., and Clifton H. Smith, 42, 709 E. Grand ave., Loves Park, were charged with keeping a gambling house.

Hiding in Furnace

Eleven other men were charged with disorderly conduct as patrons of a gambling house, Officers said they found one of the patrons trying to hide in the furnace.

Playing cards and some loose change, tables and chairs indicated poker was being played at the club. Furniture, a case of beer, a corporation charter and other records were seized.

In the Peoples Ave., raid, Lloyd Hilton, 25, 1015 Loomis st., was charged with selling liquor without a license. Fifteen other persons, including six women were charged with disorderly conduct. Confiscated were club records, 10 cases of beer, several cases of liquor and wines, and glasses and other bar equipment.

The Peoples ave., club had been operating more or less openly for several years, but there have been numerous fights and other complaints involving the club.

Warrants Issued

Loves Park Police Magistrate Paul E. Margason issued warrants for the arrests and accompanied deputy sheriffs on both raids.

He set bond at \$500 for Thomas, Smith and Hilton and at \$35 for the persons charged with disorderly conduct.

Thomas and Smith posted \$500 bonds each for themselves and furnished bonds for the men arrested with them.

Hilton was freed on a \$500 bond, but didn't post bonds for the persons arrested with him in the Peoples ave., place. Of the 15 charged with disorderly conduct in his case, seven posted bonds for themselves and eight remained in the county jail.

Hearings in both cases were set for 10 a.m. Monday.

-Rockford Register Republic, Sat., Aug. 18, 1951



Before becoming sheriff, Emil Heideman was the Chief of Police for South Beloit and was a deputy coroner. He then was appointed a deputy sheriff under William C. Bell and was a third class radio operator for the county's short wave radio station. As a deputy, Heideman was presented with many tasks from confiscating illegal pinball machines used for gambling to cutting a man out of a wrecked and overturned car on New Year's Day.

Under Sheriff Kirk S. King, Heideman was appointed Chief Deputy. As Sheriff King's term was coming to an end and he was not seeking to be re-elected, Heideman was asked to endorse a certain candidate and when he refused on the grounds he would be attempting to win that office, Sheriff King placed him on an "extended leave of absence". Chief Deputy Heideman decided to resign instead with seven years' of service and would end up winning the sheriff position. From 1946-1950 Emil Heideman served as sheriff.

Apparently, Kirk King was not satisfied with the voters' choice for sheriff, and threatened to run again in the 1950 election. It was reported that he said with a grin, "I'll be around four years from now. They'll have me to beat then." King did indeed win that election.

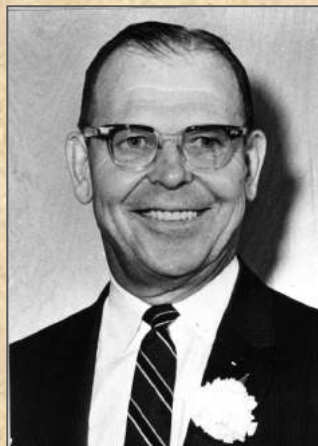


Leonard A. Friberg served as sheriff from 1954-1958. Friberg was formerly a colonel and combat infantryman with Merrill's Marauders in Burma during World War II. After serving five years in the military, he spent the next couple of years as a field supervisor for veteran's training division of the State of Illinois board for vocational education.

Kirk King and Leonard Friberg played football on the same Rockford Central high school team from 1923-1925; King was a guard and Friberg was a tackle. King named Friberg his chief deputy when he took office in December, 1950.

It was during this term in office that Sheriff King and Deputy Ray Banks were shot. The shooting took place in the jail office June 26, 1951 when the two men were preparing Ben Kubat, 29, for transport to the Elgin State Hospital as a voluntary patient. Kubat grabbed Banks' gun from the holster and proceeded to shoot King in the right knee and Banks in the left arm.

Iver W. Johnson served one term as sheriff from 1958-1962.



Iver W. Johnson

Spokane Daily Chronicle, Saturday, April 4, 1959. 11

Two Illinois Rivers Rising; 1700 Flee From Homes

ROCKFORD, Ill., April 4. (AP)—The Rock and Pecatonica rivers, turbulent with the run-off from melting snow and recent rains, churned through flooded communities in northern Illinois today and mounted toward record levels.

The Rock river rose past the 5-foot level at Rockford's Fordham dam last night, hurling thick logs and broken trees over the structure. The weather bureau river forecaster at Moline, Ill., advised Rockford to expect a crest of 5 feet, 5 inches tomorrow. The old unofficial record is 5 feet, 3 inches.

Freeport, 30 miles west, was told to expect a crest of 17.5 feet on the Pecatonica late today. That would break Freeport's all-time record of 17 feet, recorded in 1937.

Winnebago County Sheriff Iver Johnson ordered flooded areas near Rockford off-limits last night as the civil defense organization began printing permits for authorized persons to visit the inundated section.

About 1700 persons are refugees from their flooded homes.

The surface of Blackhawk Island, a community south of Rockford, was covered entirely by water. The island has been deserted by its 650 residents, most of whom are being housed

in two Rockford hotels during the emergency.

Fifteen more homes were flooded late yesterday at Saybrook, another river community south of Rockford.

About 900 persons were homeless in the Loves Park-North Park area north of Rockford, and 200 have abandoned flooded homes in Riverdale, a residential section near Roscoe, 14 miles north of Rockford.

Bridges Safe

All bridges across the Rock north of the city were in full use and the main roads between Rockford and Beloit, Wis., were not endangered by the swelling stream.

There was no official count of the number of homeless at Freeport. About 50 persons have been housed this week at the national guard armory. Others have moved into relatives' homes.

The community of McConnell, about 15 miles northwest of Freeport, was flooded to a greater depth than last week end. The water on Main street last night was nearly two feet deep.

LOCAL NEWS

E. S. Collalti Surrenders In Illinois

He'll Face Charge In South Daytona Bogus Ticket Case

Edward S. Collalti, an ex-Police Chief of South Daytona wanted here in connection with issuance of phony traffic violation citations and pocketing bond money, turned himself in to the Winnebago County, Ill., Sheriff's Office yesterday, Jack Lynady, special investigator for State Atty. Judge, said.

He signed a waiver of extradition, and Sheriff Iver W. Johnson said Florida officials are expected to return him to Volusia County today or tomorrow, the Associated Press reported.

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office in Rockford, Ill., contacted Lynady yesterday and said Collalti had turned himself in. Lynady said they told him Collalti said he had heard lawmen here were looking for him.

"He just turned himself in to the wrong Sheriff's Office. He was supposed to turn himself in to me last Friday," Lynady said.

Collalti said he drove to Freeport, 28 miles west of Rockford, to visit his sick father, and heard there that a warrant had been issued for his arrest.

Warrants for Collalti and C. H. Futch, another South Daytona ex-Police Chief, were issued last Friday after an investigation uncovered the alleged bogus ticket racket. Futch was arrested, booked at County Jail and released on \$5,000 bond. When Collalti failed to turn himself in, a pickup bulletin was issued for him Saturday.

Lynady has said his investigation showed bogus tickets were issued while Futch was South Daytona Police Chief from 1956 until last May. Collalti, who was on the two man force for eight months, was Chief briefly in May and resigned in June.

The bogus tickets reportedly were printed by a job printer in Daytona Beach for Futch.

-Daytona Beach Sunday
News-Journal,
November 6, 1959



Iver Johnson during campaign

Lost in the Line of Duty



Deputy Samuel Rotofo was directing traffic when he was struck by a vehicle and killed on September 27, 1936.

Deputy John Germano died April 17, 1938 while he and another deputy were attempting to serve a disorderly conduct warrant at the home of an ex-convict.



Deputy Howard Smith died on September 16, 1946 when he was investigating a possible burglary. Deputy Smith climbed through a window he believed led to a room on the first floor, but instead it was actually a stairwell to the basement. Deputy Smith was found by two other deputies who went looking for him when they no longer heard him and he was found unconscious having hit his head on a sharp corner of the foundation. His fellow deputies carried him out of the

basement, but he never regained consciousness. Deputy Smith served the department for four years. He was survived by his wife and 10 year old daughter.

Deputy William Goldy died April 15, 1965 from a heart attack while arresting a subject and placing him in his squad car. Deputy Goldy served the department for three years.



While on duty -
Howard Luen

Sept 14, 1946

Pub: Oct 9, 1946

may 34 years of age

King
Howard Luen
Sept 14, 1946
may 34 years of age



Dean Arthur
Howard Smith
Kirk S. King
Peter
Cicero
Bloss
Banks
Albright
Mary Buck
Glenn Boyd
Gust Lindstrom
Nick Parnello
Winslow
Wilcox
Marvin Brown

PERSONNEL OF THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Although the sheriff has authority to deputize any number of men in an emergency, he relies chiefly on a compact, well-trained organization. Such an organization is the one pictured above.

Kneeling, left to right: Deputies F. F. McGuire, Peter Cicero, LaVern Bloss, Gust Johnson, Glenn Clark, Howard Smith and Gerald Pratt.

Standing, left to right: Sheriff Kirk S. King, Deputies Harry Cave, Ray Banks, William Wallingford, Sheldon Rumler, Beatriss Davison, William Albright, Mary Buck, Glenn Boyd, Gust Lindstrom, Nick Parnello, Winslow Wilcox and Marvin Brown.

In addition to his permanent staff, Sheriff King also receives valuable assistance from part-time deputies who represent every township in the county.

The Murder of Michael Mayborne



Born April 27th, 1945 in Rockford, IL. Attended Rockford Public Schools and graduated in 1963 from East High School. 1963 to 1967 served in the US Navy as a TMSN Torpedoman aboard the SS346, USS Corporal, a Balio GuppyIII Class Diesel Submarine.

Honorably discharged from the Navy in the spring of 1967.

In the summer of 1967, 22 year old Mayborne applied and was accepted as a Deputy Sheriff with the Winnebago County, IL Sheriff's Department. He soon established himself as an outstanding young officer receiving several commendations for excellence, service and valor. He helped establish the County's Water Rescue & Recovery Dive Team along with the Department's Bomb Squad. He even had to purchase his own diving equipment early on due to lack of funding for these new units. Perfect example of his commitment to duty and service to the community. But this was typical of Mike, dedicated servant to the public and a loyal officer to his department.

In September 1967 he married his High School sweetheart Terry Lynn Anderson. They soon started a family with the birth of Kimberly in 1970 and then Jennifer in 1972. They settled into a small two-story home on Bennett Street in Loves Park, IL. Some would say, the typical, young American family.

In 1973 Mike was selected to become the youngest Sheriff's Deputy to make Detective in Winnebago County history. He was just 27 years old. The one's who knew him well, were not surprised. He loved his job and his work in the County. His fellow officers knew his career was bright and he could one day become Sheriff.

A perfect example of Mike's commitment to his community can be defined in just one story. During his off-duty hours, he conducted swimming classes for troubled youth at the Durand Boys Farm. There are many more examples like this one of Mike's sacrifice for others.

People like Mike are rare and we are gifted with these special souls maybe once in a lifetime. But he was the real deal. Take it from one who he helped greatly. Mike had no concern for himself but only helping others. Everyone he came in contact with felt he was special. He honored all of us with his friendship and guidance. I truly believe my life was touched by a real American Hero and one of God's brilliant creations.

March 15, 1974

This early spring day was overcast and chilly. The day started like most with Mike heading out the door for work and Terry home with the girls. He is dressed like many plain clothes Detectives of the time in dress slacks, turtle neck shirt and sport jacket. His department issued Colt 357 firearm in a holster on his belt with his handcuffs dangling through his belt in the back. He carries his Detectives badge in his breast pocket of his sport coat.

He jumps into his department unmarked Chevy Impala patrol car and heads into Rockford and his

office. There he meets up with partner Detective Burgess and they receive their daily assignments. Both are dispatched to investigate a homicide in South Beloit and collect evidence.

Early afternoon while heading back into the Rockford area on Highway 251 they receive an "All Points Bulletin" over their police radio. "All units be on the lookout for a late model, Dodge and two armed bank robbery suspects". The Poplar Grove State Bank had just been robbed at gun point by two men and they have taken the Bank President hostage. Suspect vehicle was last seen headed west into Winnebago County.

Mike and his partner decide to go into Loves Park thinking the suspects may be heading back into the Rockford area. As they enter Loves Park they notice a car fitting the description of the suspect vehicle. It is parked near a bar that's a known hangout for local criminals. They radio in the information, call for backup and decide to investigate.

Both Detectives plan to cover the exits of the establishment until backup arrives. Detective Burgess covering the front entrance and Detective Mayborne the rear. Little did either officer know, one suspect Theodore Bacino is not in the bar but holdup next door in a small barbershop. He is holding the barber and customers hostage at gun point. Other police units begin to arrive at the scene and the level of police activity begin to spook Bacino.

Bacino decides to make a break for it out the rear of the barbershop. He attempts to take the barber with him with his gun at the man's head. But the barber makes a break for safety out the front of the

business. With gun in hand, Bacino bolts out the back of the shop and heads for the nearby neighborhood. He needs to pass through a small, narrow alley between two metal buildings and away from officers arriving at the front. The problem for Bacino is, Detective Mayborne is blocking his only escape. Mike warns Bacino to drop his weapon. Bacino fires the round hitting Mayborne in the chest through his badge. Detective Mayborne, seriously wounded, drops to his knees and fires one round hitting Bacino in the abdomen. Bacino stunned but continues towards Mayborne. Now standing over the wounded Detective, Mayborne's left hand out stretched in an attempt to halt Bacino. Bacino fires a second .38 caliber round into the Detective's hand and a third final round into Mayborne's head killing the Detective instantly. Bacino aware other officers are approaching, falls to the ground alongside Mayborne.

Theodore Bacino's account is very different then eyewitness accounts and evidence. He tries to explain his act of murder by saying it was an accident. He claims, Mike and him wrestled and during the struggle and his gun happened to discharge. He claims Detective Mayborne was not dressed like a Police Officer yet he says in his own words, "he knew Mike was Law Enforcement". In a final sickening account, murderer Bacino claims Detective Mayborne's kindness got him killed. "He was too kind" and didn't shoot first.

Eyewitness testimony in court detailed the final shot fired that afternoon. While Detective Mayborne is wounded and on his knees, Bacino fires a final round into the officers head while

standing over the downed Mayborne. The shot was in a downward direction and in execution style ending the officers life. Evidence in court also discredit Bacino's story that the two men wrestled. In seconds other officers arrive and secure the scene. They cuff suspect Bacino while Mike lay bleeding and possibly dead.

Efforts to save Mike Mayborne's life fail as he is rushed to the hospital along with the wounded Bacino. As doctors work on the suspect's gunshot wound, in the adjoining room, 27 year old Detective Mike Mayborne is pronounced dead.

Terry is home with her two girls as marked police cars pull into her driveway. She sees the cars but doesn't see Mike. Thoughts quickly pass through her mind and turn into concern. She opens the front door and seeing the officer's in tears, she knows. They only tell her, Mike has been shot and they need to take her to the hospital. They have orders not to tell her Mike is gone. But passion and concern overcome these fine young men. For they too have families and carry the same fear that they also may not return home safe someday. They tell her to prepare for the worst and to be strong.

Terry arrives at Rockford Memorial Hospital and in clear view of suspect Bacino in the room next to Mike's. As she weeps, she says her final goodbye to her husband.

Bacino survives his wound and is charged with first-degree murder, Federal bank robbery and kidnapping. He remains in the hospital delaying his release to jail by reinjuring his wound several times. His trial is set for the fall of 1974.

Bacino had a history of crime prior to 1974. In the 1960's he had been released from prison on

parole after serving several years for armed robbery and kidnapping. He robbed his own neighbor and held this person at gunpoint for several hours before giving up to police.

Bacino decided to rob this small bank at gunpoint to pay off old gambling debts. He took the Bank President hostage for protection (his words). When asked, protection from who? He always responds, "from the police of course". Mr. Bacino expected a confrontation with police and was prepared to use his .38 handgun, we now painfully know. In a clear act of greed and crime, this crook took the life of a decorated serviceman, family man, outstanding Law Enforcement Officer and true American Hero. This career criminal devastated families, a police department and weakened an entire community.

A Community Mourns

A few painful days after the March 15th incident the Family, the Sheriff's Department and the Community honored Officer Mayborne and he was laid to rest. The memorial service unbelievably moving and somber. Mike's family still in shock and his fellow officers weep at the loss of their friend. Over 100 Police agencies attended the funeral. 300 vehicle funeral procession, hundreds of police officers, Government officials and hundreds of regular citizens pay their respects to Fallen Officer Michael Mayborne in a respectful ceremony. One of the darkest days in our family's history and also in the history of our great community. Mike had so much to live for and achieve, after all, he was just 28 years old. His whole life was ahead of him with many ambitions left uncompleted. The family will never know the years of warm memories missed, lost forever on the

that fateful March day. All because of the act of one man, many dreams and hopes dashed forever. Our family received wonderful support from the Sheriff's Department, the Police Union, the media and the local community. There was a celebrity basketball game, special community events and countless letters of sympathy.

In an incredible unselfish act and guided by her powerful faith, Terry sends a small amount of money to Theodore Bacino's family. For they too are victims of Mr. Bacino's criminal act.

Mike received the highest honor given to a Police Officer, "The Medal of Valor".

For months the support unending and greatly appreciated. But eventually life moves on and the event fades from minds and into history. But Mike's young family is now without a leader, a Husband, a Daddy. Their pain and suffering continues without end.

Terry must now lead her two little girls, Kimberly-4, and Jennifer-2 through these dark times and into a brighter future. All the while, watching as Mr. Bacino, who murdered their loving father and husband, receives 75-124 years for his death and the chance for parole in 7 years.

Story, Diagram & Commentary by: Ken Anderson
Mike Mayborne, WCSO Detective, EOW 3.15.74
by gunfire. The family of Detective Mayborne fights parole of his killer each and every year.

-From www.supportforhomicidesurvivors.com



Update

For the 29th and final time Theodore Bacino was denied parole on June 27, 2013. He will no longer be considered for parole. Bacino is set to be released June 4, 2015 having spent 40 years in prison.

Corrections

Kimberly was born in 1969 and Jennifer was born in 1971.



1974



2016

Theodore Bacino

Sheriff King Plans Gradual Transition

Kirk S. King will begin his third term as Winnebago County Sheriff Monday morning with a plan of "gradual transition" to replace some deputies and add to the force "without disrupting the current operations of the sheriff's department."

Gerald R. (Gus) Pratt, chief deputy under Sheriff Iver W. Johnson, will be retained with the title administrative assistant.

Outgoing Sheriff Iver W. Johnson will remain on the staff temporarily to maintain continuity, assisting current investigations and office record keeping. A majority of the present deputies also will be on the job Monday.

King announced appointment of Ray Banks, head jailer under former Sheriff Leonard A. Friberg, to replace Head Jailer Lester Krug, being transferred to squad patrol duty.

Also returning to the staff after four-year absences will be Michael Iasparro and Joseph Mandell. They will replace Detectives Eugene Ehens and D. Eugene Graham, also transferred to squad duty.

Iasparro and Mandell served both under Friberg and King from 1950 to 1958. They have been on the secretary of state's driver's license examination staff here.



Ernest Meyers, who resigned two weeks ago as assistant police chief of South Beloit and also was a deputy under King and Friberg, will return as a patrol officer.

C. Dwight Miller, a deputy under former Sheriff Harry Baldwin, has been hired for an office assignment. King said he hasn't given the job a title as yet, but Miller will "handle a great deal of my public relations through the office, and back up Pratt."

King said he has not yet selected men to fill three new positions as shift captains with the department, or six additional deputy posts approved by the board of supervisors finance committee.

King said present deputies slated to remain on the force are Earl Cuppini, Elmer G. Estes, LaVerne Fuhrer. William

Kissack, Ehner McKenzie, Earnest Seaton, Cecil Tompkins, Carl F. Thunberg, Clayton Wenstrom, Edwin White, John Williams, Duane Wise, Loretta DiRaimondo, Bernard Krowczyk, Donald Milne, Willaim Taft, Grant Baer, E. W. Randerson and Donald Williams.

"We want to make as quiet and orderly a transition as possible so it doesn't disrupt the sheriff's department," King said. "Meanwhile, we'll carry on a program of sifting applications so as to select the best men possible to fill jobs that open up."

King said he has receive 168 applications for deputy positions., including those from the present staff.

He and a committee will continue to review applications, making gradual changes in the staff, he said.

"I've been amazed and gratified," King said, "at the high quality of applicants looking for jobs with the sheriff's department. Many of them are young, capable men who would be a credit to the department."

King Saturday informed four staff members they will not be re-hired. They are Detective Eugene Furth, Deputies Robert Earl and Peter Mackay, and office clerk Beulah Heim.

King said Sheriff Johnson has agreed to remain on the staff to assist Furth's partner, Detective David Hamm, with current investigations. King said Johnson probably would remain on the job several months.

"It would be poor police work and unfair to the people of the county to stop all the valuable detective work that's now under way on a number of unsolved crimes," King said.

Weekend special deputies also will come under screening by King and his application committee.

Besides completing a four-page application, current and prospective deputies will have to undergo a rigid physical examination to conform with a set of newly established medical requirements.

King also is requiring his deputies to sign non-Communist affidavits.

Rockford Chief of Police Thomas P. Boustead and other area law enforcement officials have volunteered to assist King in what the new sheriff said will be a through training program in all phases of police work.

12/02/62

Merit Commission

Deputy Sheriffs Will Take Anti-Communist Oaths Here

Sheriff-elect Kirk S. King said Wednesday he will require all deputy sheriffs to take an anti-Communist oath.

King, who takes office Dec. 3, said he had to take such an oath.

"If elected officials have to take the oath then the people who work for them should take the same oath," said King.

"I can't see why anyone who will carry a star and gun shouldn't take the oath.

Sheriff Iver W. Johnson termed the oath "a good idea".

The oath:

"I, (name), do swear that I am a citizen of the United States and of the State of Illinois; that I am not affiliated directly with any

organization or any Communist front organization or any foreign political agency, party, organization or government which advocates the overthrow of constitutional government by force or other means not permitted under the Constitution of the United States or Constitution of this state; that I do not directly or indirectly teach or advocate the overthrow of the government of the United States or this state or any unlawful change in the form of government thereof by force or any unlawful means."

11/22/62

One of the most important events to take place during Sheriff Kirk King's third and final term was the formation of the Merit Commission in 1965. Deputies and sworn command staff were no longer "at will" employees subject to the whims of election tides and could now consider a lifelong career in law enforcement.

The Merit Commission began as a three-person committee appointed by the county board of supervisors to oversee the hiring, firing, discipline and promotions of sworn employees. The first merit commission affected 80 employees.

Today there are five members appointed by the Sheriff with the approval of the County Board. The duties are the same, however today they oversee almost double the full-time, sworn employees they did in 1965.



Herbert D. Brown served as sheriff from 1966 until he was appointed the Illinois State Director of Public Safety, February 13, 1969.



*1966 Campaign
matchbook*



Sheriff Herbert Brown (right) and Chief Deputy Gerald Pratt (center) escorted John W. Williams Jr. to court March 8, 1967, for a preliminary hearing on double murder charges. William, who was convicted and sentenced for killing Ronald "Chuck" Johnson and Wayne Mullendore, served only five years in prison, where guards found him hanged in his cell in July 1972. (It should be noted that Williams was later exonerated.)



Patrol Division, K-9 Corps



Police Dog For Sheriff Is Approved

Addition of a police dog to the Winnebago County sheriff's department was approved Thursday by the County Board of Supervisors.

Deputy Gary Bailey will sell his German Shepard to the Sheriff's Department for \$1. The dog and Bailey will be trained at Vandalia by the Illinois State Police Canine Patrol.

The county will pay room and board for Bailey at Vandalia. There are no training costs. Care of the dog is expected to cost \$50 per month.

The dog could be used for riot control and in making burglary checks, the board was told.

Purchase of a patrol car to replace a station wagon which will be used for transporting the police dog also was approved by the board.

-Rockford Register Star 8/11/67

Winnebago County Sheriff's Office Police Dogs*

K-9 Timber	1972
K-9 King Dutch	1972
K-9 Red	1972
K-9 Raika	1993 – 1999
K-9 Brix	1993 – 1997
K-9 Wasco	1993 – 1998
K-9 Bayou	1997 – 2001
K-9 Szindi	2000 – 2006
K-9 Marko	2003 – 2006
K-9 Eddy	2003 – 2004
K-9 Rex	2004 – 2005
K-9 Hoss	2005 – 2008
K-9 Duke	2005 – 2014
K-9 Brando/Tex	2006 – 2014
K-9 Chico	2015
K-9 Cliff	2015
K-9 Ares	2016
K-9 Bullet	2016
K-9 Bico	2016
K-9 Diego	2016

*Does not include all K-9s that served for Winnebago County.



R-File 3-18-94, 4C
 Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputy Dan Griswold pulls Brix off of Deputy Mike Schneider during a training session. Brix and two other dogs have been with the department for one year.



Senior Deputy Paul Lipinski and Marko



Senior Deputy Paul Lipinski and Brando



Bayou



Deputy Dennis Hill and Hoss



Deputy Eric Pearson and Tex (formally Brando)



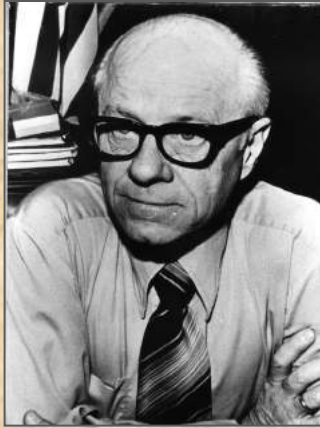
Officer Matt Stacy and Duke



Szindi

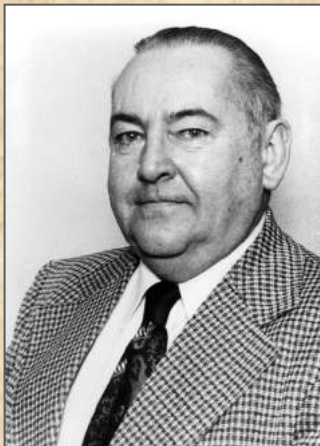
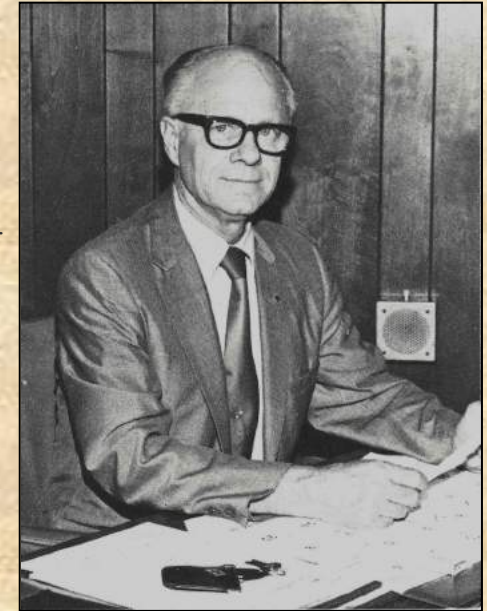


Deputy Stan Metzler and Cliff; and Deputy Eric Pearson and Chico, 2015



Gerald Pratt

Gerald "Gus" R. Pratt was appointed a Deputy Sheriff on November 13, 1945, after being discharged from the United States Army at the close of World War II. He served the department as a patrolman, bailiff, jailer, process server and criminal investigator. He was appointed Chief Deputy in February, 1962 and served in that capacity until he was appointed Sheriff to fill the vacancy left by Herbert D. Brown on February 13, 1969. He was then elected sheriff on November 10, 1970.



Paul J. Bengston

1974-1978 the sheriff position was occupied by Paul J. Bengston after retiring from the Rockford City Police Department where he served for 27 years. Sheriff Bengston was re-elected in 1978 and served until December of 1980 appointing Donald Gasparini as sheriff.

Sheriff joins deputies in wage dispute

By EILEEN LUCAS

Angry Winnebago County deputies were joined this morning by an angry sheriff in their dispute with the County Board over its proposed 1979 wage package. **RR 9-12-78**

"I am very indignant over the way the sheriff's department employees are being treated by the County Board, and also over the fact that at no time have I been consulted as to my opinion on what should be done," Sheriff Paul Bengston said today of the controversy heating up over a state salary study for Winnebago County employees.



Bengston

"Last year the Budget and Finance Committee of the board met and passed the sheriff's department budget without consulting me or having any of my staff present," Bengston said.

"In 26 years working for the City of Rockford Police Department, at no time did I see such a total disregard for employees' rights," he said of this year's wage proposals for his employees. "But," he added, "it appears that the attitude of certain county board members is if they don't like it they can lump it."

Bengston said at the present time, the recommendation is for a possible 3 percent raise which he maintains would mean most deputies would be taking home less pay than they did last year, considering the cost of living increase.

Bengston claims last year promises were made that the small raises given would be rectified by waiting for the state study.

"Now," he said, "the board knows that my employees will not strike due to their loyalty to their jobs. It appears very strongly to me they are being taken advantage of."

Detective Billy Burgess, chairman of the sheriff's advisory committee and spokesman for members of the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 50, appeared before the county board's Court Services and Law Enforcement Committee Monday to present the employees' wage proposals which request a 15 percent across the board pay increase.

"We got stuck with 3 to 5 percent this year with the understanding that any inequities would be made up after the state study came in," Burgess said today. "Now we have some people scheduled to get less than a half percent."

Burgess said some employees were frozen in their step grade last year and some of those same people will be ones getting less than one-half percent in 1979. A blanket raise of \$8,608 was given employees last year.

Burgess said he hopes to be contacted by the Court Services and Law Enforcement Committee before a County Board meeting Thursday night.

Included in the package presented to that committee Monday, in addition to the 15 percent pay increase plus merit steps, were requests for paid medical insurance for employees, dependents, a uniform cleaning and weapons allowances and a decrease in time required on vacation schedules. The cost implementation factor for the wage and benefit requests is \$375,832.

The total sheriff's department budget, also presented at Monday's session, is \$3,579,734, up \$99,481 from last year and without the pay package. The budget figure is for supplies, contractual services and capital outlay for the jail, sheriff's department, merit commission, the department's junior deputy and jail work release programs, and for seven additional employees requested.

County Board Chairman Frank St. Angel said today he could not comment on the fiscal impact of the sheriff's advisory committee recommendations and that the matter could not come before the full board for consideration this Thursday night.



Public Safety Building erected 1977 with the 1916 courthouse addition in the background.

Gasparini to take oath as sheriff this morning

By ELIZABETH HOPP
Staff writer

Donald Gasparini will step into the job of Winnebago County sheriff this morning, the County Board voted unanimously Thursday night.

Paul Bengston, who had served as sheriff for the past six years, resigned from the position, effective at 5 p.m. Thursday, because of his failing health. County Board Chairman Laurence Ralston read Bengston's letter of resignation to the board at its regular meeting Thursay.



Gasparini

Gasparini will be sworn in at 10:30 a.m. today in Chief Circuit Judge Robert Gill's courtroom. County Coroner John Seward became sheriff, under a provision of Illinois law, for 17½ hours between the time Bengston resigned and Gasparini formally took office.

Concerning his health, Bengston, a former Rockford Police Department captain, wrote, "Upon the advice of my physician I submit my resignation. It grieves me deeply . . . I have no alternatives. R Star 10-10-80

"I will say for the record that I am proud of the goals and records we have established in providing the citizens of Winnebago County with first-rate protection during the six years that I have served as sheriff. Further, we have moved the sheriff's department into the elitest of professionalism," Bengston wrote.

"Without the help of my able Executive Chief Donald Gasparini, this excellent record would not have been accomplished," Bengston's letter con-

tinued, adding a recommendation that Gasparini be appointed to fill out the last two years of his term.

Gasparini on Tuesday sent a letter to Ralston expressing his interest in the sheriff's position and citing his experience as executive chief for the past six years. Gasparini said he will consider in the next couple weeks reorganizing the department, and will appoint an executive chief in the "near future."

Bengston retired from the police department in 1969 after 27 years.

By taking the sheriff's job, Gasparini will take a \$1,000-per-year cut in pay from \$28,500 to \$27,500. Although it had been thought that Gasparini's pay could be raised by adding the job of supervisor of public safety to his duties as sheriff, the County Board was told Tuesday night that was not possible.

The County Board created the executive chief position that Gasparini has held for the past six years specifically for him.

Prior to Bengston's election, the second-in-command of the sheriff's department held the title of chief deputy. According to the rules of the sheriff's department merit commission, however, the chief deputy was required to be selected from within the department.

Gasparini, 37, was a regional supervisor for the Illinois Secretary of State's office before he became Bengston's executive chief in 1974. He also managed Bengston's 1974 campaign for sheriff.

There was little doubt that Gasparini would be named to replace Bengston. Winnebago County Democrats caucused earlier in the week and came out in unanimous support of him. County Republicans didn't caucus because the consensus was that they supported him.



Donald Gasparini

Donald Gasparini completed Paul Bengston's term, then was elected four consecutive terms beginning in 1982 and served until 1997. When Sheriff Gasparini retired in June 1997, he appointed his Chief Deputy, Richard A. Meyers as sheriff.

Richard "Dick" Meyers came from a family very accustomed with law enforcement. His father Ernest Meyers was an assistant chief and chief at the South Beloit Police Department. His mother Rena Meyers worked as a corrections officer at the Winnebago County Jail.

Richard Meyers served in the United States Navy. After he was discharged in August, 1967 one of the first things he did was to go to the Sheriff's Office to inquire about a job. There he met former sheriff, Kirk King. King was working as a probation officer, but was filling in for Sheriff Herb Brown while he was away attending the FBI Academy. King asked Meyers, "You just get out of the Navy?" Meyers answered "Yes, Sir." King asked "So, I guess you're looking for a damn job?" Meyers replied "Yes, Sir." King said, "Be here on Monday." Richard Meyers came to work for the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office September 16, 1967 as a corrections officer in the old jail on Elm Street. He proceeded to advance ranks from patrolman, detective, sergeant, lieutenant and eventually he was promoted to administrative captain by Sheriff Paul Bengston.

On March 15, 1974, then Detective Richard Meyers' friend and co-worker Detective Michael Mayborne was killed in the line of duty while chasing a bank robbery suspect. Ted Bacino was convicted and sentenced to 199 years in prison for the murder of Detective Mayborne. Each time Ted Bacino came up for parole, Richard Meyers would champion his slain friend and fellow law enforcement officer by sending letters and petitions to the parole board and personally addressing the parole board in opposition of granting parole. Ted Bacino, due in part to Richard Meyers' efforts, has been denied parole 29 times.



Richard Meyers as a deputy

As sheriff, Richard Meyers prompted the building of the Winnebago County Justice Center as the staff and number of inmates housed was rapidly increasing making it obvious that the Public Safety Building would soon be outgrown. Construction of the Winnebago County Justice Center began in 2006 and it was opened in 2007.

Before the building of the Winnebago County Justice Center, Sheriff Meyers also recognized the need for a second emergency dispatch center. Built in 2006 and opened in October of that year, the Winnebago County 911 Center serves as the dispatch center for all of Winnebago County outside the city limits of Rockford. The Winnebago County 911 Center is located off of North Main Street, built on county property where River Bluff Nursing Home and Winnebago County Animal Services are also located. The county 911 center and the city 911 center serve as backup dispatch centers for each other should one fail so that there is no disruption in service to the citizens of Winnebago County.



Richard A. Meyers

At his retirement on November 30, 2014, Sheriff Richard Meyers concluded his 47 year career with the Sheriff's Office and was the longest serving sheriff in Winnebago County history.



*Winnebago County Emergency Communications Center
erected 2006.*



*Winnebago County Justice Center
erected 2006-2007*



Gary Caruana

With no incumbent running, seven individuals entered the race for Sheriff: Winnebago County Sheriff's Sergeant Glenn Heidenreich, former Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputy Gary Caruana, retired Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputy Chief Robert Springer, retired Rockford Police Detective Sergeant Bob Redmond, former County Board member Randy Olson, retired Winnebago County Sheriff's Sergeant Jeffrey Schroeder and Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputy Frank Pobjecky. Post primary results left candidates Gary Caruana and Robert Springer to compete for Winnebago County residents' votes. On November 4, 2014 Gary Caruana was the first Republican in 40 years to be elected Sheriff became the 38th person to hold the position in Winnebago County.



Several historical items have been incorporated in the new Winnebago County Justice Center. The star that hangs in the Winnebago County Justice Center lobby came from the sheriff's office that was once located on Elm Street where it had hung outside above the entrance. There is also an original wood door with unique brass hardware that once hung in the old courthouse, then hung in the hallway leading to the sheriff's office in the Public Safety Building and now is on display in the sheriff's administration office. Lastly, there is a special memorial located on the first floor in the main hall honoring those that were lost in the line of duty.



The original photos of the past sheriffs were generously donated to the Midway Village and Museum Center and are on display in the Winnebago County Police Museum there. Other items on display in this exhibit include a sheriff's deputy uniform worn by Deputy Sheriff Gene Coots circa 1957 and a bomb suit.



In conclusion:

In less than one-hundred years, what started as the wilds of Illinois became well developed communities of towns, villages and a city. The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office has had a long and colorful history. The sheriff and his deputies have been assigned many different roles over the past one-hundred, seventy-five plus years and have performed many assorted duties which have included such things as policing admittance to the county fair, animal control, civil defense and emergency management, arresting horse thieves and bootleggers, capturing fugitives and even the most terrible task of taking someone's life for the sake of another and many other duties necessary in keeping order in the community and enforcing the laws of the land.

As the communities' populations grew, naturally so did the need for law enforcement. The Rockford Police Department was established with the appointment of their first chief in 1852, and the Loves Park Police Department formed in 1947. The Illinois State Police firmly anchored their agency in the Winnebago County area when they established a substation in Rockford in March of 1958. In addition to the unincorporated areas of Winnebago County, the Villages of Machesney Park and New Milford are covered under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff's Office. Other police departments that are now working for a better Winnebago County include Cherry Valley, Durand, Pecatonica, Rockton, Roscoe, South Beloit and Winnebago.

Additional Interesting Anecdotes:

We may also mention here, by way of suggestion to the newly elected Board of Supervisors, that some improvements are greatly needed about the Court House and Square upon which it is located. The steps are out of repair, and the fence dilapidated—in some places broken down—and the gates “out of kilter.” We saw Sheriff Taylor the other day stoning cattle out of the yard and presume it is no uncommon thing. This should not be; and we hope our Supervisors at their first meeting will order these matters put to rights. A comparatively small expenditure would suffice to beautify the grounds, construct a new fence, and make such other improvements as are advisable, and would, without doubt, meet the hearty concurrence of the taxpayers of Winnebago County. It will not be many years before the County will need new public buildings altogether, but in the mean time let the present ones be made as comfortable as possible by patching up, and in their external appearance and surroundings rendered all that good taste would dictate.

-Rockford Register, Saturday, April 14, 1855

Trial of Alfred Countryman for the Murder of John F. Taylor, Sheriff of Winnebago County.

BEFORE JUDGE SHELDON

REPORTED EXPRESSLY FOR THE REGISTER

The case of Alfred Countryman, indicted for the murder of Sheriff Taylor in November last, came up for trial in the Circuit Court on Monday last, when the whole afternoon was occupied in obtaining a jury; this was accomplished in a much shorter time than was anticipated, as it was generally believed that it would be almost impossible to impanel a Jury of citizens of the County who had not either expressed an opinion on the merits of the case, or made up their minds as to what

disposition they would make of it. As it is, however, we do not think a more intelligent or impartial body of men could be got together on a greater delay than was made in their selection. The following are their names and residences:

Levi Tunks, Howard; Philo C. Watson, Rockford; Anthony M. Folmly, Owen; Silas G. Tyler, Rockford; Jacob B. Place, Howard; G. R. Ames, Harrison; Allen Rice, Harrison; Charles Works, Guilford; J. W. Jenks, Roscoe; Edward Peppers, Howard; J. W. Knapp, Roscoe; S. P. Collier, Burritt.

After the Jury were sworn in, they were cautioned by the court not to hold any conversations during the evening or night, and the Court was adjourned to nine o'clock on Tuesday morning.

TUESDAY. —Long before the hour to which the Court was adjourned, there was a very large crowd assembled at and around the Court House, all eagerly waiting for admission, and when the doors were opened the rush made for admittance was tremendous, and the shouting, pushing, jostling and scrambling was perfectly unapproachable. It would have been idle for any one who wished to reach the Clerk's desk to attempt to do so by entering the front door, so our Reporter was obliged to creep through a back window, a proceeding of which under most circumstances he would have felt ashamed, but in this case he was held in countenance by his Honor the Judge, who politely led the way, and with such an example he felt tolerably easy during the day. When the crowd, or rather a portion of them had got seats, and order was restored the trial of the case was commenced. — The prosecution was conducted by U. D. Meacham, Esq., the States' Attorney, assisted by

Wm. Brown, Esq.; the Prisoner was defended by Orrin Miller and T. J. Turner, Esqs. —

The first witness called for the prosecution was Elisha Thompson: who on being sworn deposed as follows: I do not know the prisoner; I have seen him before; the first time I saw him was in my market, in this city; he wanted to sell some cattle; my business is that of a butcher; it was about seven o'clock in the morning when he was in the market; he said he had some cattle to sell, and asked me if I wished to buy them; I asked him how many he had; he said he had seven; I told him I was going to breakfast; when I came back from breakfast he said he had sold three of them to Mr. Upton; I told him I supposed he had sold three of the best, and I did not want the other four; I said I did not care about looking at them; he then went out, and that was the last I saw of him in the market; I afterwards met him in Church street, with the four head of cattle; I got out of my wagon, and asked him what he wanted for the cattle; I think he asked \$80 or \$85 for them; I said the cattle were thin, and I guessed we'd give him \$65 for them; he said he wanted to take them to Chicago, but he supposed the train had gone, and he thought he could not do any better with them, and I might have them; I then told him to drive the cattle up to the slaughter yard, and I would be up there; I went on up ahead of him, and waited there until he came up; he put the cattle in the yard, and came back down the street, and I came down to the market; I told him I would go down to the Bank, and get some money, and pay him for the cattle. I went back to the market, and Mr. Taylor was there when I got there.

Question — State whether you spoke to Mr. Taylor

about the cattle: [Objected to, Mr. Meacham said the object of the question was to show the Mr. Thompson had suspicions that the cattle were stolen, and told Mr. Taylor so, after a few remarks by Mr. Turner, the objection was overruled by the Court.]

Answer —When I first spoke to Mr. Taylor, Countryman was not present; Mr. Taylor wanted to know where that man was who had offered the cattle for sale; he said Upton had bought three cattle from him, and had bought them so cheap he thought they were stolen; I asked Mr. Taylor where the cattle were; he said they had driven them up to the slaughter yard; he proposed that we should go up and look at the cattle, and see whether I thought they were bought for less than what they were worth; he wanted me to try to buy the other four at a very low figure. We met the cattle up in Church street, there were two men with them; the prisoner was one of the men; they said they were brothers; I stopped the horses as soon as we met them, and Mr. Taylor held the horses while I got out of the wagon, and looked at the cattle; I asked them what they wanted for them, and they said \$85; I don't recollect whether Mr. Taylor said anything or not; I bought the cattle for \$65. I got into the wagon and drove over into Main street, and Mr. Taylor said he thought the suspicion was strong enough to make prisoners of them; he got out opposite Mr. Coleman's house, and said he would go down and get a warrant for them; he wanted me to be as long as I could, so that he would have time to get the warrant. We parted then, and I did not see him until some time afterward, down by the Young America Saloon; he wanted to know where the men were, and I told him they were up to the market;

he said he was going up there; I told him I was going to the Bank, and then I would be up there. When I got up to the market Taylor was up there; he walked up to the market; he did not say whether he got the warrant; we went in to pay these men for the cattle; I went in, and John F. Taylor was with me. Mr. Taylor said, "where we buy cattle of strangers we always require a bill of sale." I then got some paper, and a pen and ink, and we drew up a little bill, stating how many cattle there were, and what they cost. Before we drew it, Mr. Taylor said he wanted to get their signatures; we then drew up the bill of sale, and they signed it. Taylor said he did not like to pay money to strangers without knowing who they were: they did not tell Mr. Taylor what their names were.

Question by a Juror —Who drew the bill? A. I did

Direct resumed —The real value of the cattle was \$120 or \$125; there was one pair of 4 or 5 year old cattle, and a pair of steers; 2 or 3 year old steers; they were in fair condition—common beef; during the interview Mr. Taylor asked the men where they lived; they said about two miles from Milford; they meant Milford on the Kishwaukee, about 6 miles from Rockford; this conversation was after the bill of sale was made; nothing was said as to where they stopped the night before. I first saw them about seven o'clock in the morning; I bought the cattle about eight o'clock. They did not say where they drove the cattle from; they said they lived about two miles East of Milford, near the Horton settlement. It was Mr. Taylor who asked them where they lived. They said they raised the cattle themselves; I don't know which of the men said so; they were both together. Mr. Taylor asked them the

names of their neighbors, where they lived; they told the neighbors' names and which side of the road they lived on; and I think they told what kind of houses they lived in, whether log houses or frames; he asked them if they could tell what kind of a team such a neighbor drove—what kind of horses he drove. I was not acquainted in that neighborhood, and knew none of the parities; Mr. Taylor asked them if they knew Charles Grant; the defendant said he did; Mr. Taylor then said if they would come over to the Court House he would call in Mr. Grant and if he said it was all right he would pay them the money. This was soon after the bill was signed. We then came over to the Court House—Constable Thompson, myself, Mr. Taylor, and a man who worked for Mr. Taylor, and the two men who sold the cattle, (the defendant and his brother.) My meat market is just across the street from the Court House. This conversation was all in the market. I forgot whether the questions about the neighbors were asked in the court House or in the market. I think the conversation about the teams and the neighbors was held in the Court House. Mr. Taylor went out and brought Mr. Grant in.

Question.—What was said by the parities when Mr. Grant was in the Court House? [Objected to by the defence. The Court overruled the objection.]

Answer.—Mr. Taylor asked Mr. Grant if he knew these men. Grant looked at the men and hesitated a minute or two; the prisoner then said to him, "you know me; I got your horse and buggy once;" I think he said he got them to go to a dance. Mr. Grant then said he believed he did know them. Mr. Taylor asked Grant about these neighbors, and Grant said there were no

such neighbors as the defendant described, and also said that the houses were not situated as they said they were. I believe Mr. Taylor asked some questions after that, but I don't remember what they were.—The questions were asked the defendant and his brother. All I remember is that Mr. Taylor told them that he was the Sheriff of Winnebago County, and would have to make prisoners of them. He told them he would take his team and go down to the neighborhood where they said they resided, and make inquiry about them, and if he found everything all right they could go clear, and if not they would have to stand trial. I can not say whether the defendant made any reply to this. We then went out of the Court House; I think I went out a little ahead; a boy stepped up to me and handed me a telegraphic dispatch. The dispatch had nothing to do with this case. The two prisoners, Mr. Taylor, Constable Thompson, the man that worked for Taylor, and Mr. Grant started round towards the jail. I went around the Court House and stood by the wing. I heard some one halloo towards the City Hotel, to help catch the man who had run away from the Sheriff; I was standing between the wing and the Jail. I saw Mr. Taylor and the prisoner running down Elm street; they were running East; when I saw them they were running pretty fast; Countryman was ahead, but Mr. Taylor appeared to be gaining on him; as they got down near the cross-walk I think Countryman was five or six feet ahead of Taylor; Mr. Taylor was to the right of the defendant; not directly opposite, but at the right and about five or six feet behind. I saw Mr. Countryman throw his arm back, and I think he turned his head—I am not certain whether he turned his head—and the pistol went off; he

turned his arm to the right. This was on the crossing of Elm and Church streets, on Elm street. Taylor threw his hand up on his left side; he hallooed “stop that man; I'm shot.” The defendant kept on running; I could not see him; he ran down Elm street towards the river; that was the last I saw of him till he was brought back. I got out on the street, and then Mr. Millard had hold of Mr. Taylor; they took him up and carried him into the Livery stable. I did not get close enough to him to hear anything he said while in the stable; there was such a crowd I did not get very close to him; I did not see him breathe after he was in the stable. This took place in Rockford, in Winnebago County, State of Illinois. I can not recollect the day of the month; it was in November. He was shot about ten o'clock in the morning. He only lived a few minutes after he was shot.

The witness here identified Mr. Grant as the man called into the Court House by Mr. Taylor. The examination was then resumed.

There were three other cattle that Mr. Taylor said Mr. Upton had bought for \$45; they were, two muley cows and I think on steer; they were worth in the market I should think \$65. I do not know what they were sold for. These cattle were taken away by Mr. Herrington on the day Mr. Taylor was buried—three days after they were sold. They were the same cattle that I bought that Mr. Herrington claimed.—Mr. Taylor did not say he was going before a Justice of the Peace, or Mr. Brown to get information; Mr. Taylor was Sheriff of this County at the time he made the arrest. He went off to get a warrant; he was gone about a half an hour. I saw him hitch a horse up opposite Spafford, Clark &

Ellis' Bank; I think it was his horse; it had a saddle on it. It was while I was at the Bank after money. I saw Countryman (the defendant,) sign the bill of sale; I think he signed the name of Smith.

Question.—What did you say he signed it? Objected to—objection sustained by the court. Examination resumed.

It was about ten or twelve rods from the Jail to where Taylor was shot—perhaps more.

Cross Examined.—After we got to the Court House Mr. Grant was called in. I do not remember Countryman asking Taylor by what authority he was arrested and searched. Constable Thompson was present, and also Mr. Grant. I saw Countryman run, and Mr. Taylor after him; they were not over six feet apart when I heard the report of the pistol. I do not know whether Countryman turned his head or not when he fired; it was done so quick I could not see the pistol. He threw his arm back sideways.

The witness here stood up and showed the Jury in what way Countryman threw his arm back, and the relative positions occupied by him and Mr. Taylor.

Examination resumed.—I could not swear whether Countryman turned his head or not when he fired. I did not think he slacked his run at all at the time he fired the pistol. Don't think Mr. Taylor had his hands out towards the prisoner at the time the pistol was fired.

Direct Examination resumed.—I stood out here by the wing of the Court House; I was about fourteen rods from them when the pistol was fired.

To a Juror.—Mr. Taylor did not run so fast after he was shot; he walked a few steps, and fell.

CHARLES O. UPTON, sworn—I think I have seen the defendant before—I know I have; first saw him on the 11th day of last November; saw him in my market, on Main street. I follow the butchering business; my market is on Main street, opposite the Holland House, on the West side of the river, in this city. At about seven o'clock in the morning, Countryman and another man came into my market, and the prisoner asked me if I wanted to buy some cattle; I told him I did; he told me he had seven head to sell; they were in the street in front of the market; I went with him and looked at the cattle; I asked him his price for them; he wanted to know what I would give him; I told him I wanted his price, before I made him an offer; he urged me to make an offer, but I did not; I picked out three which I thought were the best, and asked him price; he said \$55; I offered him \$47 for them, and he said I could take them; he then urged me to buy the others after buying these; told him I would rather not. He asked me if the freight train had gone to Chicago that morning, and I told him I thought it had; he said he intended to take the cattle to Chicago. I asked him where the cattle came from; he said from down South. I asked him why he drove them up, they not being of a very good quality of beef; he said they were so unruly he could not keep them at home. I told him the cattle did not look as if they had been driven a great ways; he said he stopped with them the night before about three miles down the river, on the other side; I asked him where, and he said at the place where the road turns off to the left; he then urged me to buy the remaining cattle again, and I told him I would not, and that he must drive those I bought to the slaughter house; he objected to it; I told him I

would send a man with him, I did so and he went with the cattle. The slaughter yard is up the river about a mile, at the same place as Mr. Thompson's. He did not return to the market: I saw him again about noon, after he had been arrested. The cattle were worth about \$75. I went to Mr. Taylor immediately after they started to the slaughter house; I found Mr. Taylor back of the jail; he was talking to Mr. Edson when I found him; I told him two men had sold me some cattle very low, and that I did not like their appearance; I wanted him to see the men; I described the men; I don't remember what I told him as to their appearance; I told him they had gone to the Slaughter house with my man and the number of cattle; I told him they had seven cattle with them; I told him I would like to have him look into it a little if he would. He said he would go up to the slaughter yard and see the men; we parted here, and he stared up there immediately; he went up to the slaughter yard and I went back to the market. Mr. Taylor came to the market immediately after he had seen men; I think he was gone about a half or three quarters of an hour; and told me I had better not pay the men for he thought they had stolen the cattle; he told me not to pay them until he came back; he said he was going to get out a warrant and arrest them; I think he said he was going over the river after a warrant; I do not know whether he went or not; after that I did not see him alive; I think I saw him about ten o'clock; he was then dead. Defendant did not come back to my shop again at all; I think I saw him run down the alley back of our shop; think it was he; but cannot swear it was. Defendant did not give any description of the place where they came from; I did not pay them for the

cattle, and did not ask their names. The cattle were left at the slaughter yard, and on the Thursday following, the owner came and swore to the cattle and took them away; his name is Herrington. (Witness identified Mr. Herrington.) There were two cows and a steer; one and I don't know but both were muley cows. I saw the other cattle; they were four steers. This occurred in this city, in the county of Winnebago, State of Illinois, on the 11th of November. I next saw Mr. Taylor at the Livery Stable, at about ten o'clock, as near as I can judge; next saw the defendant after he was arrested; after I saw Mr. Taylor in the Livery Stable.

This witness was not cross examined.

SIDNEY P. HERRINGTON, sworn—I heard the testimony of the two former witnesses in regard to the cattle; these cattle were mine; I reside in the town of Franklin, De Kalb county, in this State; about twenty miles from the city of Rockford: Mr. Soloman Countryman, on Thursday, the 12th of November last, came to my house quite early in the morning—about sunrise—and asked me if I knew whether all my cattle were at home; I told him I did not know, that my cattle were running about among some straw piles in the field where we had been thrashing grain; he said he was at Rockford, and his boys told they got the cattle out of my field; I sent two of my little boys over to see if they were gone, and they were gone; I found them in a slaughter house about a mile from Rockford up the river, on the same day; they were in the possession of a man calling himself Thompson, (witness identified Mr. Thompson.) I have never seen him since. The cattle were a pair of steers, 4 years old last spring; a pair of 3 yrs old last spring; one steer 2 years old, and a pair of

muley cows. I never sold these cattle to the defendant; I sold a pair of them to a neighbor some time ago, but I got them back from him; they belonged to me always, except thro' one "breaking time," when this neighbor had them, and I got them back from him. I never gave any consent to any one to drive them off, nor did I know of their being driven away; I saw them almost every day; saw them on Sunday, 9th November, before they were driven away, I think. I think I saw them on Monday, but am certain I saw them Sunday; they were in the field on that day. I have known the defendant for from 10 to 14 years; ever since they came to the country; they live in Ogle Co. now; they lived in Monroe, about three miles from me, when the cattle were stolen; it may be four miles to where Alfred Countryman lives; they have lived in the neighborhood from 10 to 14 years; and in Ogle County 3 or 4 years. The defendant's name is Alfred Countryman; his brother's name is John H. Countryman. My residence is about 20 miles from this city; defendant lives about 15 or 16 miles from this city, Milford is on the Kishwaukee, about 3 miles Southeast from its mouth; it is six or more miles from here; defendant lived about six or seven miles from New Milford. I drove the cattle home.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Court met pursuant to adjournment.

MRS. WM. BROWN, sworn.—I knew John F. Taylor in his lifetime; knew him on the 11th of November last; saw him on that day at our house, in this city, at about nine o'clock in the morning.

Question.—What business had Mr. Taylor at your house that morning? Objected to, by Mr. Turner, unless

defendant was present.

Mr. Meacham said that the object of the question was to prove that Mr. Taylor used all the diligence to procure a warrant which he was required to use in a case of this kind.

The Court.—I hardly think the evidence is admissible. Objection sustained.

Witness.—Mr. Taylor came to our house on horseback.

WILLIAM C. GRANT, sworn.—Know Mr. Brow; know him on the 11th day of last November he was acting States Attorney, on that day. I know the defendant slightly; first saw him 9 or 10 years ago; he claimed to be from the town of New Milford in this County; he said he knew me; and he brought the circumstance to my mind; he had claimed that he knew me, and I was brought in to identify him; I asked him where he lived, and he said he lived two miles from our place, on the south side of the river; up the river; I then asked him whereabouts he lived; he told me he lived on a place formerly owned by Mr. Harris Barnum; I think he said he bought it of Mr. Barnum some three years before; I then asked him who was his nearest neighbor East; he answered, correctly, John Leko; I then asked him who was his nearest neighbor West; he hesitated a moment, and said he forgot his name; I asked him what kind of crops he raised on the place last season; he gave a ready answer in regard to the crops, but I have forgotten what kind of crops he said he raised, but I know his answer was not correct; I knew the place, and what kind of crops were raised on it last season; I asked him what kind of horses Leko drove; he gave a ready answer, but it was incorrect; I knew Leko's teams. He gave me a

like incorrect answer in regard to the horses of his nearest neighbor East; I then told Mr. Taylor that he had given me but one correct answer to all the questions I had asked him. Mr. Taylor then said to the defendant, "I am Sheriff of Winnebago County, and I shall have to arrest you." Mr. Taylor, at that time said if defendant had any one he wished to have brought here to identify him, and say it was all right, he (Taylor) would take his team and go after them and bring them here; he also said that if he should prove himself clear of the charge he would pay him well for his time and trouble and any damages he might sustain; Taylor asked him if he (defendant) had any person he wanted to send for; he said he had not. Taylor then said he would have to search him; he searched him in the usual manner of searching prisoners. I think he searched defendant's brother first; when he came to search defendant he searched him pretty thoroughly; I was standing pretty close to him; he searched in all the pockets of his coat, vest and pantaloons, in the waistband of his pants, and in his boots; he found a bullet in his vest pocket; he then asked him for his revolver; defendant said he had not got any. After Taylor found the bullet, he commenced to search the prisoner again, and I thought he searched him very thoroughly; when asked how he came by the bullet, prisoner said he had been out deer hunting a day or two before, and had the bullet in his pocket; when Taylor got through searching the second time, he said, "now we will go to the jail."—We all went out of the Court House door together; I went into the supervisor's room, and the others went to the Jail I supposed; I saw them through the window, called the attention of the

Supervisors to the fact; I saw nothing except what I saw from the window; I stood about five minutes, when I saw the flash of a pistol, on the corner below; I did not hear the report; saw a man staggering, but did not know who it was. I saw the crowd run, and ran myself; I ran out of the room, over to the Jail door, and saw that Mr. Thompson had his prisoner by the collar; I then ran over to the Barn; my horse was put up in that barn; I saw Mr. Taylor lying there; I jumped past him, and picked up a bridle and put it on my horse, and started after the man; I followed the direction I thought the man had taken; I went along Main street, and turned towards the river; I saw a crowd running in that direction; I shortly after heard the crowd halloo "here he is." I turned my horse down where there is a new road made, and saw him crossing the road; I jumped my horse across the fence, and ran him around toward the brush; the prisoner then turned back the way he came, and ran into the brush; I jumped off my horse, and gave the bridle to a boy and told him to hold him; I then picked up a short stick, and went in thro' the brush; I told the persons that he must be about here, and soon after he was found; it was about a mile, or perhaps less in a straight line from where Taylor was shot to the place where the prisoner was caught. A man named Henth lived on the Barnum place; I knew the defendant did not live there.

Cross Examined.—Defendant made no inquiry as to Taylor's authority to arrest him; I do not recollect that he did; I supposed the defendant was arrested before I saw him. Defendant made no reply to the remark, "now we will go to the jail;" he did not object. I said I saw Constable Thompson hold John H. Countryman at

the jail doors not in the jail; the last I saw of them they were taking the defendant his brother to jail; that was the last I saw of John F. Taylor that day.

JOHN PLATT, sworn—Have seen the defendant before; assisted in arresting him on the 11th of November, about one mile from here; he was caught on the 11th; he was searched when arrested; there was a pistol found on him; I have the pistol here.

Witness produced the pistol which was found on the prisoner. It was a long barreled rifle bore—what is generally known as a dueling pistol; with two sights.

Examination Resumed.—Found the pistol in a pocket made down the centre of his pants; the pistol is just as it was found; it is loaded I believe; I have had possession of the pistol since; there was no other pistol found in his possession; he had on one pair of pants; had no other clothes but those he had on while running—we arrested him about a mile south of the town; he was out of my sight a very short time; he did nothing but run; he jumped into Mr. Cospers' yard, and acted there as though he was loading his pistol; he had it out; I was about eight rods from him; I saw he was putting something into the pistol; I saw it at that time; he ran into the brush, and when he was pretty well surrounded he lay down beside an old log or chunk; I was the first person that took hold of him; another man rode up at the time; I had left my horse a short distance from the brush.

Cross Examined.—I saw the shooting, (witness here described to the jury the relative positions of the parties, and showed in what way he saw Countryman throw his hand back to shoot.) I was standing in State Street near the corner and saw them going towards the

jail, and the sheriff turning up to go into the jail; Countryman started and ran, and jumped over the fence; the Sheriff ran after him; they ran down at right angles to this corner; I saw the defendant throw his hand back and shoot his pistol and the Sheriff stopped immediately; I think Taylor was about ten feet from Countryman; I was across the square, they were running as fast as they could; don't think Countryman slaked his pace any when he fired; I do not think he turned his head round; he turned his head round a little before that, and I suppose he then pulled his pistol out. Saw them start; Countryman had a start of about two rods; he jumped the fence and Mr. Taylor climbed over it; Mr. Taylor gained on him; Taylor was on the right hand side of him, and behind; some ten feet behind and six or eight feet to the right; he was making across the street; defendant was 10 feet from the jail door when he started; Taylor turned up to open the door, and as he did so the prisoner started and jumped the fence.

DANIEL W. TICKNOR, sworn—Reside in the city of Rockford; resided in Rockford on the 11th of November last; saw the defendant on the 11th of November in this city; first saw him in Elm Street, back of the jail; knew John F. Taylor; saw him on the 11th of November on the same street back of the jail; when I first saw them I was about fifteen rods from them; did not know either of the men when I first saw them; they were running very fast; the person behind ballooned to stop that man; I ran towards them myself; they were coming towards me; saw it was Mr. Taylor, the sheriff; did not know the defendant then; the man in the advance was the defendant; Taylor was gaining on the defendant; defendant made for the Southwest corner of Church

street; he turned to the South as he got near that corner; Mr. Day was coming up North on that street so as to intercept him at that point, so they nearly met; he turned again toward me; he took an angle to the Southwest corner of Elm and Church streets and then took another so as to bring him down Elm street again; he looked over his shoulder to see how near Taylor was to him; as he was turning the angle going down to Elm street again, Taylor was very near him, and reached out his hand; don't think Taylor touched him; defendant whirled round, drew his pistol and fired; in turning the angle, Taylor's back was to the Southwest; Taylor evidently saw the pistol, for he scinged back a little; Countryman was about six feet from Taylor when he fired; I was about five rods from Taylor at the time; when he fired Countryman was facing Taylor; they were going East turning the angle; Countryman turned around facing him; Mr. Taylor was at his right; Taylor put his hand up to his breast, and said, "I'm shot; stop him." Think nothing further was said by Taylor; Countryman was at a partial halt when he fired; am quite confident of that fact; Countryman passed on toward me; he ran East about two rods; as he passed me he presented his pistol at me; thought it was a revolver and thought it was safest to let him pass; he presented his pistol at me and shook his head; was not in the centre of the street, rather opposite the Livery Stable; saw the pistol, and heard the report and saw the flash at the time; as soon as he passed me I followed on after him; kept at about three or four rods behind him; he passed down the alley to Chestnut street, and got over the fence into a lot owned by Mr. Cosper; I did not pass through the lot; went round by the street; he had his

pistol in his hand all the time; he met two or three persons on the sidewalk; as he got down by the railroad bridge he commenced loading his pistol; judged so from his actions; saw nothing more of Taylor that day.

Cross Examined.—The first time I saw Taylor and defendant running, they were about three rods from the gate; it is about twelve rods from the gate to the centre of the street; had got nearly to the Livery stable when I first saw them; they had got nearly half way from the gate to the centre of the street; they were both running pretty fast; Taylor was gaining; the man in front was about a rod ahead; the man ahead was making for the north east corner of Rood's block; when I first saw them they were in the centre of the street; the person behind was directly behind; soon after he varied his course to the right; from the way he ran, he would nearly strike the corner; would vary a little to the left of the corner; Taylor kept very nearly behind all the way; he only varied his course as the prisoner did; both appeared to run as hard as they could; can swear hat at the time he fired, Countryman whirled around. (The witness here described to the Jury the relative positions of the parties at the time the shot was fired. His description corroborated that of the other witnesses.) There might have been a little motion of the body, but there was not running at the time the shot was fired; Countryman slackened his pace for an instant; he turned and fired, and then turned again and ran; Countryman and Taylor were then distant about 4 or 6 feet; did not see any person but Mr. Day, Countryman and Taylor; Countryman was from 12 to 16 feet from the corner of Rood's block; Day was 10 or 12 feet from the Countryman; I was on the opposite side of the street;

was about opposite the stable door on the south side; the door is about 10 feet from the southwest corner of the building; Countryman and Taylor had not got past the centre of Church street when he fired; they were about a rod west of the corner; the street is about 4 rods wide; Countryman made the angle at the point of the north-east corner of Rood's block, at the sidewalk; did not see Silas Millard; saw no one but Mr. Day; stopped when I heard the firing; was standing there when Countryman passed me; Mr. Taylor still kept moving towards Countryman; Countryman was on the right; don't think I said anything to him when he passed me; he had not got to the alley before I stared after him; kept in sight of him until he into the grove. When Countryman fired there might have been a little motion of the body, but he stopped running; thought he took pretty good aim; so that I made up my mind that Taylor was a dead man. When I first saw the men running, I did not know them; the shooting agitated me a little; was more agitated after the shot was fired; never saw but one man shoot another; was not so agitated that I could not tell what was going on; when Countryman passed me I thought it was best to stand still; I thought he had a revolver; had nothing in my hands at the time; had some stones in them soon after.

EDGAR G. DAY, sworn—Reside in Rockford; resided here on the 11th of Nov. last; saw the transaction spoken of by the last witness; have seen the defendant before; on the 11th of November, was about in the center of the four corners of Elm and Church sts; heard someone halloo, "stop him," or "catch him," don't know which; turned to the right and ran to the corner of Rood's block, the block south of the Court House block; when

I started to run that way defendant was running towards that corner; as he saw me coming towards him, he turned to the northeast, and ran in that direction a few rods, and then turned east, after I turned and followed him; I followed after Mr. Taylor; they then ran across the walk on the east side of Church st; pretty soon Countryman turned and fired; [witness here described the position, in the same manner as the other witnesses] Countryman was looking at Mr. Taylor when he fired; they were about six feet apart; I was some 10 or 15 feet from them in a direction about southwest; was to the left of Mr. Taylor about fifteen feet from him; saw Countryman face Taylor when he fired, Countryman then turned and ran; pursued him; first ran to Mr. Taylor, and he told me he was shot, and to catch the man; Countryman was about 20 feet from the walk on Church st., and fifteen from the fence; and the Sheriff was 6 or 8 feet behind him; heard the report of the pistol and saw the flash; saw the pistol pointed at the Sheriff; next saw him a corpse in his own house, the same evening, or the next; think it was the same evening—Pursued the defendant as soon as Mr. Taylor told me; only pursued him two blocks, but went down to the bushes shortly after that; left Mr. Taylor on the street; when the shooting took place they had passed entirely over Church street; am positive they had passed some 15 or 20 feet beyond Church street, nearly opposite the door of the stable; I was a little beyond the crossing, on Elm street; Taylor was on the south side of Elm st., and about 15 feet from the south fence; I supposed at the time, that he was shot somewhere in the left breast.

Cross Examined—Was going east; was going down from the first corner across to the other; was going down Elm street; heard someone cry out “stop him;” Countryman was making for Church st.; he passed me after I got to the Corner; he made an angle to the north, and then passed me; the shooting took place after that; they were from 6 to 10 feet from me when they passed me; did not see Taylor make any motion to catch Countryman; I had got nearly to the corner; Countryman was four feet from me when he made the angle; they were both running at the top of their speed; Countryman slacked up; think he stopped almost entirely still: at least as still as he could; it was done instantly; he turned a little more than half round when he fired; saw him take aim; don’t know how deliberate the aim was; Taylor was running to the right about 6 feet behind and four feet to the right.

WM. R. HAZARD, sworn—Have seen the defendant before; saw him on the 11th of November last, at about ten o’clock in the morning; about half way between Chestnut st., and the Railroad bridge, about two blocks south of the Holland House; saw him running, and Mr. Ticknor and Mr. Day after him, Mr. Ticknor hallooed at me to stop defendant; he had a “shooting iron” in his hand; he presented it at me, and I thought the safest way was to let him pass; saw the pistol, and saw him make signs of loading it.

SILAS MILLARD, sworn—Have seen defendant before; first saw him on the 11th of November last; I was standing opposite the Court House yard; a man said to me, “Mr. Taylor has got a couple more birds;” was standing opposite the City Hotel, on the Court House yard side of the street; turned around and

watched them going up to the jail; Mr. Taylor stepped up to open the door of the jail, when Countryman stepped behind the man that Mr. Thompson had charge of, and gave his coat tail a pull, and jumped over the fence; Mr. Taylor jumped over after him; they ran down Elm street; Mr. Taylor commenced hallooing “stop him; stop thief;” started then, and ran after them; when I got within about four rods of them, Countryman turned part way round, and Mr. Taylor came up nearly to the side of him. Countryman seemed to be fumbling in his trousers; they were about four to six feet apart when he fired; Taylor was a little behind and to the right of defendant; they first ran over towards Rood’s block, and then turned towards Church street, and they were then about fifteen or twenty feet from the sidewalk on Church street, in the four corners; had my presence of mind that day. (Witness here described the positions of movements of the parties at the time the pistol was fired. His description was similar to the others.) As he came up, Mr. Taylor fetched back a little; Countryman turned partly round and looked directly at him; as Mr. Taylor slacked up his speed, Countryman shot him. Went to Mr. Taylor; he said he was shot, and a dead man and told me to go after the man; made me promise to catch him; told I would if I could; followed Countryman a few rods, and then thought he might have a revolver, and turned back, and took Mr. Taylor up. I then called for a horse and followed after Countryman; don’t think Mr. Taylor lived more than a couple of minutes; next saw Mr. Taylor in jail; this was on the 11th day of November last; saw Mr. Taylor about three hours afterwards; he was dead then; the bullet entered near the left arm; was

not present when the bullet was taken out of Mr. Taylor; I caught Countryman; the prisoner is the man; caught him southwest from here, in a thicket about three quarters of a mile from the city; Taylor advanced toward the defendant after he was shot; walked about three rods; he was still walking when I got back to him and took hold of him.

WM. THOMPSON, sworn—Live in this city; have lived here three years and six months; have been a police officer for the past year; knew Mr. Taylor; he held the office of sheriff of Winnebago Co.; saw the defendant on the 11th of Nov. 1856; first saw him in the wagon with my nephew at his market; was going over the bridge about nine o'clock in the morning; Taylor overtook me on horseback; he was going to the other side of the river; next saw him in my nephew's market; saw Mr. Taylor, the defendant and his brother in the Court House the same day; Mr. Grant, my nephew, Countryman and his brother were in the Court House; Mr. Taylor requested my nephew and me to stay with those two men, while he went for Mr. Grant; we did so; directly Mr. Grant came in, and Taylor said, "Mr. Grant, do you know these two men?" Mr. Grant began to ask them questions, and Alfred Countryman asked Grant if he did not recollect him; Grant said he did not then; he then referred Grant to borrowing a horse from him to go somewhere, and Grant said he remembered the circumstance, but said he did not know that he was the man; Mr. Grant then asked them where they lived; they told him about two miles northeast of Milford; Grant then asked them who their neighbors were, and what kind of houses they drove; after asking them several questions, Grant told Mr. Taylor they had

answered only one question correctly; Mr. Taylor then told them that he was sheriff of Winnebago Co., and that he should have to arrest them on suspicion stealing those cattle; he told them if they had any one they wished to have brought here to disprove the crime, he would take his team and go and get them, and if they proved themselves innocent, he would pay them well for any false imprisonment or damages they might sustain; they did not say a word. He then commenced to search them; he began with John; and when he had searched him, he commenced to search Alfred—the prisoner; he searched him all over; in his vest pocket he found a lead bullet; the bullet would fit the pistol on the table; Taylor said, "Here's a bullet you have got in your pocket; you've got a revolver, and I want you to give it up." Countryman said he had not got any; Taylor then searched him all over again, I thought pretty thoroughly; he put the bullet back in his pocket again; he found no revolver or pistol; Countryman said he had that bullet in his pocket a few days before, when he was out hunting; when he got through searching them, Taylor said, "We'll take them over to the jail now." I took charge of John and Taylor was beside Alfred; we had the prisoners between us; just as we got to the jail, Mr. Taylor turned to the right to open the door, and Alfred jumped behind in a minute; I grabbed my man by the collar, and Alfred jumped the fence; Mr. Taylor told me to hold my prisoner; I said I'll hold my man, catch him; by this time Countryman had gained the middle of the street, and Mr. Taylor had jumped the fence, and followed him; Taylor gained on Countryman; I watched them run down the street, till they made the angle in the street; saw a man coming up,

and they then took an angle towards the Livery Stable, the last I saw of them, Mr. Taylor was not over six or eight feet from Countryman; I was not looking at them when I heard the report of the pistol; as soon as I heard the report I looked; there appeared to be a halt; Countryman only kept on running, I then put my man in prison; next saw Mr. Taylor in his house the following morning, a corpse.

Cross Examined,--Did not hear the defendant ask what authority Taylor had for arresting him.

LUKE THOMPSON, sworn—Reside in this city; last Fall I was in partnership with my brother in the meat market; knew John F. Taylor; he was Sheriff of this Co.; first saw defendant on the morning of the 11th of November last, in the market; he asked if we wanted some cattle; talked with him about cattle; saw him and his brother with Mr. Taylor at the market; heard no conversation, except about a bill of sale; understood my brother had bought the cattle; after the bill of sale was signed they came over to the Court House; Countryman, his brother, Mr. Taylor, Constable Thompson and Elisha Tompson; next saw them as they came out of the Court House; when they got to the Jail I saw Countryman bound over the fence and Mr. Taylor after him; they ran down Elm street; I saw the flash of the pistol; and saw Mr. Taylor stumble along a few steps. I saw the cattle at the slaughter yard, up the river; Mr. Herrington went up and swore to them, and took them away; that was the last I saw of them; there were a pair of 4 year old steers and a pair of 3 year old steers; the others were two cows and a steer. I saw the flash of the pistol, and ran down the street, and gave the alarm that the Sheriff was shot.

Cross Examined.—Saw the parties running and saw the flash; they were running as fast as they had been at the time of the report of the gun.

Direct Examination resumed—From where I was standing I thought that Countryman threw his hand back and his head also.

The Counsel for the prosecution here called Mr. Woodruff, foreman of the grand jury, Mr. Steves, the clerk, U. D. Meacham, Esq., States Attorney, and Morris B. Derrick, Esq., Circuit Clerk, and examined them as to whether they knew anything of the whereabouts of the bill of sale given by the defendant to Mr. Taylor at the time the cattle were sold, but none of them could say where it was. The Counsel then submitted to the Court that the bill of sale had been lost, and asked to be allowed to introduce parole evidence as to the contents of the bill, but the Court ruled it inadmissible.

The examination of witnesses was then proceeded with.

DR. WM. LYMAN, sworn.—Have been acquainted with John F. Taylor in his lifetime; saw him on the 11th of November; am a physician and surgeon—have been for 25 years; have practiced surgery during that period; assisted in a Post Mortem examination of the body of John F. Taylor, on the 11th of November; saw him alive early in the morning of that day; saw him dead between 11 and 12 o'clock; his death was caused by what is called a gun shot wound; the ball entered the chest or left side between the third and fourth ribs, toughing the fourth rib; passed through the left lung; thro' the descending aorta—a large artery—about two inches below the arch; slightly grazed the spine; fractured the

eighth rib, on the right side, and lodged against the skin; the wound was about 15 or 16 inches in length. (The Doctor showed the Jury the direction the ball took.) The wound was half an inch in diameter at its entrance; the same through the lung; the artery was torn to the size of an inch; the wound was mortal; the wound could be produced by a ball from a pistol like that shown; the ball that was cut out was about the size of this pistol bore; blood to the amount of 3 or 4 quarts was found in the chest; death must have ensued in three or four minutes. The examination was made at 3 o'clock.

Question—From the direction of that wound what must have been the position of the parties? Objected to. Objection sustained.

Question.—What sized man was Mr. Taylor? *A.* He was a short man.

Drs. C.H. Richings, H. C. Mesler and Blount were examined as to the nature of the wound, but their testimony only corroborated that of Dr. Lyman, and it is unnecessary to give it in detail. This closed the testimony for the Prosecution, and it being now the hour of adjournment, the Court adjourned to 9 o'clock on Wednesday morning.

WEDNESDAY—FORENOON SESSION.

At the opening of the Court this morning, the arguments on the case were commenced by Mr. Brown, in an able, learned and forcible address, during which he reviewed all the facts of the case as elicited by the testimony. We have full notes of all the speeches, but find it utterly impossible to publish them this week, but will try to do so in our next issue.

When Mr. Brown had concluded, Mr. O. Miller made a strong and earnest plea for the prisoner, followed by T. J. Tuner on the same side. Mr. T's address was made for the purpose of proving that the prisoner was only guilty of, at the most, manslaughter, on the ground that the Sheriff was transcending his authority in arresting the prisoner without a warrant, and that even if he had authority to arrest, he had none to commit him to jail. Mr. Turner sustained his position by reading from a great number of law text books, and commented upon them at considerable length. At half past six Mr. Turner had not concluded, and the Court adjourned.

THURSDAY.

On the opening of Court, Mr. Turner resumed his argument, occupying the entire forenoon session.

In the afternoon, Mr. Meacham closed the argument. His address was confined chiefly to replying to Mr. Turner. He closed at a little before six o'clock.

Previous to giving the case to the Jury, the Court read a number of instructions to them at the request of the Counsel for the Prosecution and the Defence. Those submitted by the State's Attorney were to the effect that Sheriffs are authorized to arrest felons without warrant, and detain them for examination. These were all given. The points submitted by the Defence were principally counter statements to the former. Some of them were refused; a few modified, and, with those remaining, were given to the Jury, who then retired to deliberate upon their verdict.

FRIDAY—THE VERDICT.

On Friday morning, shortly after opening of Court, and the assembling of the Counsel, the Prisoner was brought into Court. In a few moments the Jury came into their box.

The Court asked—Gentlemen, have you agreed?

Forman—We have.

Court—You will hand your verdict to the Clerk.

The Clerk then read the verdict, as follows;

We, the Jurors appointed to try the defendant on this indictment, do find that he is GUILTY OF MURDER.

Mr. Brown moved a poll of the Jury.

The Clerk then called their names, and as each one stood up, he asked him, “Was that and is it now your verdict?” each one answered, “Yes.”

Mr. Turner then made a motion in arrest of judgment, and for a new trial, and asked that the argument on the motion be appointed for this morning, which was agreed to.

The prisoner was then remanded to prison. We could not see that he manifested any emotion, and we do not believe that he fully realized the awful position in which he was placed.

The argument on the motion, and the speeches on the trial will be found in our issue of next week.

We cannot close this report without returning our hearty thanks to M. B. Derrick, Esq., Circuit Clerk, and to his gentlemanly Deputy, for many acts of courtesy and assistance received at their hands during the progress of the trial.

-Rockford Register, Saturday, Feb. 28, 1857



We were in error last week in stating that the execution of Countryman would take place on the Fair Grounds. Sheriff Church was unable to obtain them for the purpose, and he now intends, as we understand, to execute the sentence of the law upon grounds of his farm, some two miles west of the city, if the state of the weather and the roads on Friday shall be such as to warrant it.

- Rock River Democrat, March 24, 1857

PROTESTS.—Countryman, the murderer, in the last *Republican*, under his signature, states that he has furnished Deputy Sheriff Upright with “A complete and accurate account of his life, which he is authorized to publish under his (Countryman’s) affidavit, “ and protests against any other than this being received as a correct history of his life.

- Rock River Democrat, March 24, 1857

BROUGHT BACK.—We understand Dep. Sheriff Upright has recovered a prisoner known as “Big Jack,” who left his “bed and board,” at the County Jail, on last New Year’s night.—The Prisoner had been arrested for some minor offence, and managing to gain the confidence of the deputy sheriff by his seeming faithfulness he was allowed to go loose in the yard and do chores about the jail; but a favorable opportunity offering, he improved it, and made his way into Wisconsin. He was retaken about 15 miles N. E. of Madison, at the Norwegian settlement.

It cost some \$150 to search him out, and bring him back.

- Rock River Democrat, March 24, 1857

ATTEMPT TO BREAK JAIL.—The *Register* of Saturday gives the following account of an attempt of Countryman, the murderer of Sheriff Taylor, to break jail:

“The suspicions of Deputy Sheriff Upright who has charge of the jail, were aroused by various circumstances as to a plan being concocted by the prisoners, and kept strict watch of their proceedings. The smell of smoke was discovered at various times, and Countryman, at last seen by one of the female members of the family in the act of burning the floor with a heated iron, which some outsider had furnished him through the window. It seems during a portion of the day time he had been let out into the hall where the stove is, to warm, and had taken advantage of these occasions to heat the iron, and had succeeded in burning through one plank and nearly through another, the holes being concealed by the zinc under the stove. At other times he is confined in his cell and chained to the floor. It was doubtless the intention to burn across the planks so as to take out a section large enough for egress, and then dig out underneath. There is also little doubt the other prisoners were associated with him in the undertaking. The iron used was a piece of steel about two feet in length, with a sort of blade at one end and the other cut down in the shape of a handle—evidently prepared for the purpose.

It also seems as part of the same plan, or of another, nitric acid was to be used in eating off the irons and window gratings, a young prisoner whose time was about to expire being assigned the duty of furnishing the material upon his liberation. Mr. Upright also learned of this, and gave notice to the Drug Stores. The article was subsequently purchased at the store of Fraley & Potter, by the character described, and they immediately notified the Deputy Sheriff of the fact. He was accordingly “spotted,” and after making various feints to leave town arrested several days afterwards upon another charge and the identical acid still found upon him. He is now in jail.”

- Rock River Democrat, January 20, 1857

Alfred Countryman's last speech

"Gentlemen and Ladies, I don't know as I shall be able to address you very much. I am not able to make a speech. I thank the Lord there is one above me to whom I can look. I should like all who hear me, especially the young, to take warning and learn to fear God. You do not know when you will be called. My time is very short when I shall depart, it is near at hand, but I can die happy, and hope to enter into a better world. I have had great trouble to make peace, and I thank God I have had a friend on earth to direct me, and pray for me. I can go to Heaven with this crime of murder charged against me with a quiet heart; and when we all meet there, we shall find who is right and who is wrong. May God have mercy on the one I have left behind me, and have mercy on my two little children. May He have mercy on my dear father, and poor mother; may He have mercy on my brothers, and sister, too, and bless them. May He have mercy on each of you, and on them; and may we all meet where sorrow be no more. I bid you all farewell. I am going home." His feet and arms were then pinioned, when he again said:

"Thanks be to God, that I ain't afraid to die. No! No! Glory be to God! Farewell friends, once more, I hope to meet you in a heavenly land, where sorrows be no more. I am going home. Glory be to God! I am going home, Farewell."

The Sheriff then stepped forward and said.—"Agreeably to the order of the court, I shall now proceed to execute Alfred Countryman as announced." After which the prisoner again rose and remarked:

"Gentlemen and ladies, I have given a correct history of my life, which will be published here in Rockford, in charge of Mr. Upright."

The cap was then drawn over his face, the noose was placed about his neck, and at seventeen minutes past two the drop fell, and Alfred Countryman was no more.

-Excerpt from *Execution of Alfred Countryman*,

published in the Democrat, Tuesday, March 31st, 1857.



HARD LUCK.—Deputy Sheriff Upright informs us that since the first of June he has had four horses die on his hands, the loss of which in ordinary times might be considered bad enough, but in times like these such misfortunes fall with a double weight. In June last he paid \$200 for a good horse, which died in six days. He afterwards purchased a span for \$875, and one of them died in nine days after. Subsequently he had occasion to go to Rockton, and for this purpose borrowed a horse of W. P. Dennis, this one died while at Rockton, valued at about \$60. He then purchased another for \$130 and this died a few days ago. This makes a loss of \$877.50 to Mr. Upright during the past six months. He is a good and efficient officer, faithful and vigilant, and has the sympathy of many friends in his misfortune

- Rock River Democrat, March 24, 1857

Presentation,

We are pleased to learn that our popular Sheriff, Wm. Courtright, received a well deserved caning at the hands of our citizens, on Saturday last. The cane is a handsome gold-headed affair, and beautifully engraved. The names of the donors as given on the cane, are, Tip, Tom, Hank, Tope, Eli and Charley. Upon the top of the head is a representation of a turkey gobbler, saying "peep," whether a suggestion to the Sheriff that he "keep shady," or not, we are unable to say.

- Rockford Gazette, January 9, 1868

Arrest.—On Thursday last, Mrs. Acheab E. Follett *alias* Sargeant, was arrested at the residence of her father, Luke Knapp, in the town of Burritt, by Sheriff Courtright, on a warrant issued by Governor Oglesby in compliance with a requisition from the Governor of Wisconsin. She was delivered to officer E. J. Smith, of Janesville, who took his prisoner to that city by the afternoon train. Mrs. Follett is under indictment in Rock County for perjury committed in connection with the marriage between herself and H. J. Allen, *alias* J. H. Sargeant. Allen, also under indictment for the same offence, was arrested a few weeks since at Des Moines, Iowa, and is now in jail at Janesville, awaiting his trial. It will be remembered by our readers that Mrs. Sargeant brought a suit in the Circuit court of this county at its September session, to recover \$3,000 on an accident policy issued by the Travelers Insurance Company of Hartford, on the life of John H. Sargeant, her alleged husband, who, it was claimed was drowned in an air hole, while skating on the Pecatonica River. The defence objected to this theory, and insisted that Mrs. Follett was really married at the time stated to a man named Henry J. Allen, resident of Pecatonica, acting under the assumed name of Sargeant; that Allen procured the insurance policy under such assumed name, the same day of the marriage; that the reported drowning of Sargeant was a mere pretence, no such person being known; and consequently, that it was a conspiracy on the part of Mrs. Follett and Allen to defraud the Insurance Company. The marriage was proven to have taken place, but the clergyman who performed the service, and a witness who was present, both claimed to identify Allen as the man who was married.

The testimony introduced was so strongly confirmatory of the defence theory, that the suit was withdrawn by the prosecution after nearly six days' trial. We understand that the perjury with which Allen and Mrs. Follett stand charged, consists in their having taken an oath at the time of their marriage, that there was no legal obstacle thereto, which was false, as Allen was already a married man.

- Rockford Register, March 16th, 1867

A Letter from W. W. Wood to the Sheriff.

Major Flynn arrived home from Jacksonville on Saturday night, and on searching the cell lately occupied by the prisoners found the following note from W. W. Wood:

WINNEBAGO COUNTY JAIL, ROCKFORD, Sept. 29, 1870— 6 p.m.

MAJOR P. FLYNN, Sheriff— *Dear Sir*,--

Four of the upright bars in the door of the iron-clad are now cut, and the horizontal bars will be bent at 7 o'clock, and at 8, five of your prisoners, including myself, will possibly be beyond your reach. I had not hand in cutting the bars, and do not escape to avoid the prosecution of those indictments, as I am very anxious they should be settled up, and if I was tonight positively certain that they would be settled at this term of court, I would not have gone away.

God knows that I have tried to get bail, and it is not my fault, but my misfortune, that I have not succeeded in obtaining it. I think I have had about as much punishment as any unconvicted prisoner deserves. I wake up twenty times a night almost suffocated by the stench from the vault. The door will be open soon, and I will get at least one night of pure air to breathe, and I would be willing to go over a house top every night to obtain that.

If I could have had a special deputy, and my freedom only denied me, to go about and take exercise every day with the deputy, I would never have left. Before I came here, I was accustomed to walk six or eight miles per day. How much do I get now? None, and no fresh air either.

There are two ways of treating this matter, so far as I am concerned. One is to offer a large reward, spend a great deal of the county's funds in trying to effect my capture, and then run the risk of succeeding. The other way is to accept my proposition, which is as follows: I am willing to appear at court Oct. 17th, or thereabouts, and stand trial, and if all charges are not settled then, to appear till they are, and this I promise most solemnly before God and man to do.

Before sundown to-morrow you must place a written agreement in the hands of my attorney, in which you

agree to accept my recognizance as ample bail, and all the bail that you will require on any charges against me that have been made or will hereafter be made in this county in connection with my past affairs. You will also obtain the written consent of Dr. R. P. Lane to allow you to accept this proposition, and if not inconsistent, you will also obtain the written consent of the Judge of the Circuit Court. You will also agree in writing, and have the consent of above parties, that if any unforeseen or untoward circumstances should lead to my incarceration notwithstanding these agreements, then that I shall be provided, free of expense to myself, with a special deputy, who will be willing and capable to walk with me not to exceed twelve miles each day during the time I may be placed in his charge and further, that I shall be provided with board, without expense to me, in either Rockford, Freeport, Dixon, Ottawa or Chicago, the place of my own choosing, and board for me not to exceed twelve dollars a week.

In case of acceptance, it will be entirely unnecessary to advertise a reward for me.

In case you should not return from Belvidere or Jacksonville to-night, the time of giving the agreement to my attorney will be extended 24 hours.

The prisoners had nearly all of the bars cut before I came up here, and you know enough about this jail business to perceive that I am no participant in helping them to escape, and had I informed you of their designs, my life would not have been worth a moment's purchase. I have put one copy of this letter where you will find it, and one will be placed in the hands of my attorney soon.

Respectfully yours,

Wm. W. Wood.

The sheriff has evidence that Wood was conveyed in a close carriage to Freeport early Friday morning, and engaged a prominent attorney of that city to assist his counsel in this place. No trace of the others has yet been secured, although rewards are offered by Maj. Flynn for their apprehension.

-Rockford Register, Saturday, October 8, 1870

As will be seen by the changes in the advertisement of the Mammoth Fire Insurance Agency of Jno. F. Squier, in another column, our well known and highly esteemed fellow townsman, William Courtright, Esq., has entered into partnership with Major. Squier in the Insurance business, under the firm name and style of SQUIER & COURTRIGHT. Mr. Courtright was formerly Sheriff of this county, and is well and favorably known as an energetic, thorough business man, possessing the confidence of our citizens throughout the entire county. He made an excellent Sheriff, and we feel safe in predicting for him a successful course as an Underwriter. The long experience of Major Squier as an underwriter, and the pains-taking, accurate manner in which he has heretofore conducted the business of his splendid agency, are too well known among our business men, who have been his patrons, to need comments from us.

This popular and largely patronized Agency, under the management of two such men as Squier & Courtright, who give their entire time and attention to Fire Insurance, will retain and increase its reputation as one of the first class institutions of our growing city. They this week add to their list of *first class* Fire Insurance Companies, the REAPER CITY, of Rockford, and the LAMAR, of Chicago, making, already, the largest and finest line of Fire Insurance Companies represented by any Agency west of Chicago. We take pleasure in cordially commending this new firm to the confidence and patronage of our citizens.

- Rockford Register, Saturday, March 5th, 1870



Death of William Courtright

Saturday last William Courtright expired at his residence in the third ward. For several years Mr. Courtright has been a terrible sufferer from a cancer in the right eye and cheek which has been gradually eating out his life. The best medical skill was tried but no relief could be obtained, and the terrible disease eat away until on Saturday last the long suffering ended in death.

Mr. Courtright was Sheriff of Winnebago County from 1866 to 1868. He was a faithful officer, a genial gentleman and an exemplary citizen.

- Rockford Journal, Saturday, June 12th, 1875

First Sheriff a Dem.

Paul Johnson, nominated for sheriff Tuesday on the Democratic ticket, is written of as the first Democrat ever elected sheriff of Winnebago county. That was in 1934. Daniel S. Haight, the county's first sheriff (1836-1838), was a Democrat. It is possible that party lines were not drawn in that first election as only 120 voters participated. Haight defeated Henry Hicks 83 to 31.

Isaac N. Cunningham, the second sheriff, was a Whig and from that time on until Paul Johnson was elected, the sheriffs were Whigs and Republicans.

- Rockford Register-Republic, April 16, 1942

Asks First Wife To Furnish Bond On Bigamy Case

One for the book was chalked up in the office of State's Attorney William D. Knight today.

Without even a show of hesitation, Bert Sanderson, arrested late Monday by Deputy Sheriff Earl Rhodes on a charge of bigamy, telephoned his first wife in Chicago and asked her to furnish bond for him on the bigamy charge, which was preferred Monday by wife No. 2. The later, in tears, sat in the next room and listened to the telephone conversation.

Sanderson, or Sven Stjernbreg, the name he sometimes uses, is said to have deserted the first Mrs. Sanderson and their three children in Chicago and married Leone Bucholz, 23-year-old Janesville girl, in Belvidere Oct. 11, 1929.

A few days ago the second Mrs. Sanderson learned of hte other wife and three children, she told authorities, and immediately swore out a warrant before Justice Rohlen charging her questionable husband with bigamy.

The comely bride No. 2 sat sobbing hysterically in an ante-room while Sanderson carried on his telephone conversation with the indignant first Mrs. Sanderson. The disillusioned bride was comforted by her mother. Sanderson was guarded by two husky deputy sheriffs.

The words that the first Mrs. Sanderson told her fugitive husband must not have been very reassuring, for he went back to his jail cell a dejected figure.

-Rockford Daily Republic,
Tuesday, January 28, 1930

Chicken Theft First Case for New Deputies

Sheriff William C. Bell and his staff were given some sleuthing to do immediately after they took office this morning.

Reports of chicken thefts in the vicinity of Durand sent Deputy Sheriffs Emil Heideman and Lynn Cate to the scene a few minutes after they had reported to the sheriff's office to begin their new duties.

Take Office at 9 A. M.

Bell and his staff of deputies took over the sheriff's office at 9 a. m. During the morning Carl A. Palmgren, retiring chief deputy sheriff, and other members of the staff of former Sheriff Paul F. Johnson assisted the members of Bell's staff in familiarizing themselves with their new duties.

Former Sheriff Johnson will not turn in his sheriff's star until Wednesday, when he is scheduled to return from Philadelphia, Pa., with Florence Shavers, wanted here for violation of parole. Accompanied by Mrs. Johnson, the former sheriff left for Philadelphia last week after he had been notified that the Shavers woman had been arrested in that city.

Smith Is Chief Deputy

Ernest L. Smith, former state highway police officer, became chief deputy sheriff when Bell took office this morning.

-Rockford Register-Republic,
Monday, December 3, 1938

SHERIFF OPENS WET OFFENSIVE; STARTS RAIDS

**Bell Leads Squads To
Four Places Here,
Three in Loop**

MAKES ARRESTS

**Tear Out Fixtures In
Lunch Rooms Raided;
Find Little Liquor**

Deputies under the personal direction of Sheriff William C. Bell, last night opened what is expected to be a heavy offensive against establishments alleged to be selling illicit liquor in Winnebago county. Four places, including three lunchrooms, were raided and three men arrested on charges of violating the state liquor law.

Three of the raids were within the city limits, and two were near the downtown loop district. In only one place, however, did the raiding squad secure any liquor, although in two of the other places indications were that the supplies on hand had been dumped at the approach of the raiders.

Places Raided

The places raided were:

Kin's Place, 424 Elm St. across the street from the sheriff's office, where the deputies confiscated three quarters of a quart of alcohol, and arrested C. F. Kinkuski.

Jiffy Lunch, 110 N. Court st. where H. H. Schultz is alleged to have brushed a glass of liquor to the floor as the deputies entered. Schultz was arrested and charged with sale.

The G-G Lunch, 323 Cedar st., where no liquor was found. George C. Schroeder, proprietor, was arrested and charged with sale.

The Billy Boy Inn, Eleventh st. road, where no liquor was found. A coffee pot in the kitchen is said to have smelled strongly of alcohol, which deputies claim was dumped out. As the deputies had no sale charges against the proprietor no arrests were made.

The first three raids were carried out simultaneously, and were said to have been based on information secured from intoxicated persons arrested by the sheriff's force.

In addition to search and seizure warrants the deputies were also armed with warrants for Kinkuski, Schultz and Schroeder on sale charges.

Continuing a precedent established by former Sheriff Harry Baldwin several months ago, deputies last night were engaged in tearing out the \$5,000 soda fixtures in Kin's place, in accordance with orders from Sheriff Bell and State's Atty. William D. Knight.

In this place, a malted milk shaker full of alcohol was found on the soda fountain.

Last night's raids are seen as the beginnings of Sheriff Bell's promised clean-up of liquor selling resorts throughout the county. Evidence is being secured through drunks who are held in jail and through the work of liquor spotters.

-Rockford Morning Star, Sunday, Dec. 21, 1930



—Register-Republic photo
Two deputy Winnebago county sheriffs look over portion of arsenal of stolen guns taken from three suspects who were arraigned Monday in connection with the \$2,000 burglary of Mortenson's Sporting Goods and Gun Shop a week ago. Stolen guns and ammunition were found in homes of three suspects.

-Rockford Register-Republic, Tuesday, July 17, 1951



Former Winnebago County Sheriff's detective remembered

WINNEBAGO – If former Winnebago County Sheriff's Capt. Gene Coots had one pet peeve that bugged him to no end it was people carelessly leaving the arm up on the office paper cutter.

One day upon seeing the arm in the upright position, "he decided to put on a show," said Coot's brother, Lynn. Gene voiced his anger, slammed the arm down and accidentally sliced off a piece of his sports coat.

"The gals in the office were turning blue," Lynn said. "He told them to go ahead and laugh, and they busted out laughing. And he laughed right along with them."

Gene could laugh at himself, and he could also solve homicide cases.

Leafing through several old pictures of his big brother on the family dining room table Friday night, Lynn recalled that story and others about the veteran sheriff's detective who so many in law enforcement still look up to today.

Gene Coots, 80, of Winnebago, died Wednesday in River Bluff Nursing Home after a lengthy illness.

Coots, a Korean War veteran, served more than 30 years with the sheriff's department before retiring in 1993 as a captain and head of the detective bureau.

Sheriff Dick Meyers and state Rep. Jim Sacia, R-Pecatonica, a former FBI agent, eulogized Coots Monday at his funeral in Winnebago and later spoke

of the man nicknamed by friends as "Cooter" and "Columbo."

"People called him Columbo (a fictional L.A. homicide detective portrayed by Peter Falk in the TV series "Columbo") because he always had that disheveled look about him," Meyers said. "If you wanted to know what he had for breakfast, you could just look at his tie."

"But I called him Columbo because he was very intuitive, intelligent and excellent at getting information from people. He had a slow methodical and inquisitive mind."

Meyers recalled the Aug. 29, 1987, execution-style deaths of Karen Hall, 39, a clerk at SwedishAmerican Hospital, her daughter, Stacy, 15, and son, Jason, 12. All three had their hands and feet tied with rope and were shot in the head inside their Old River Road home.

"The mother watched her kids," Meyers said.

It was Gene Coots, who in the wee hours of the morning, persuaded a then Rockford-based crime lab to process various pieces of evidence, including a box of shells with finger prints on them. Within hours of the homicide, lab technicians got a positive match for Danny Ray Johnson. "We had a bunch of veteran detectives, and you could hear the cheers go up," Meyers said.

Johnson, Hall's former boyfriend who was served with an order of protection a month earlier, was found six months later in a wooded area in west Rockford deceased from an apparent suicide.

Sacia called Coots, his close friend of 44 years, "an icon" and "one in a million."

"He was an unbelievably confident investigator, yet he gave such a disheveled appearance. We worked together on numerous bank robberies. He had a unique sense of humor and was unbelievable with people."

Former Winnebago County State's Attorney Paul Logli also remembered Coots for his unassuming appearance and sharp mind.

"He had a really good mind for detective work," he said. "He ran a good detective bureau."

Upon retirement, Coots worked several years for Sacia at Northern Illinois Tractor & Equipment in Pecatonica. The history buff served on the Midway Village Museum board, assisted the Burritt Museum and served on the board that revived the Trask Bridge Picnic.

-Written by Chris Green, Rockford Register Star
June 9, 2014



Notes to readers:

The purpose of this document was to bring the past back to life; to not just recite names and dates but also to showcase the personal side of this sampling of people which are the type of people who have always been a part of the Sheriff's Office. The few stories here are a tiny presentation of the many funny, heartfelt, tragic and miraculous tales to be told either from memories or documented about the people involved in this most respectable profession.

The news articles that were copied into this document were written exactly as they originally appeared.

Acknowledgments:

Sheriff Richard Meyers, Photos and stories

Susan Sheppard Nuss, Photo of Goodyear Asa Sanford.

Joanne DiMario, Gene Coots, Dina Getty – Contributors

Tim Speer, Photos of the neon star, antique door and antique sheriff star

Jennifer (Mayborne) Sutkay, the Murder of Michael Mayborne

Tom Gibbons-President, Winnebago County Police Museum Association

Midway Village and Museum Center – “Charity” statue

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Rockford Register, Rockford, IL., Published March 16, 1867
Rockford Register, Published October 19, 1867
Rockford Register, Published Saturday, December 14, 1867
Rockford Gazette, Published January 9, 1868
Rockford Register, Published Saturday, March 5, 1870
Rockford Register, Published Saturday, October 8, 1870
The Rockford Times, Rockford, IL., Published Wednesday, June 9, 1875
Rockford Journal, Published Saturday, June 12, 1875
Rockford Daily Gazette, Published Tuesday Evening, December 23, 1884
Rockford Register, Published Thursday, February 18, 1886
Rockford Daily Gazette, Published Friday Evening, June 25, 1886
The Rockford Republic, Rockford, IL., Published Friday Evening, April 15, 1910
Rockford Republic, Rockford, IL., Published Friday Evening, August 12, 1910
Rockford Republic, Published Monday Evening, December 5, 1910
Rockford Republic, Published Saturday Evening, December 5, 1914
Rockford Republic, Rockford, IL., Published Monday Evening, June 23, 1919
The Rockford Morning Star, Published Tuesday, December 5, 1922
Rockford Republic, Monday, Published August 11, 1924
Rockford Republic, Published Tuesday, December 7, 1926
Rockford Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois, Published Wednesday, October 30, 1929
The Rockford Register Gazette, Published Saturday, February 1, 1930
Rockford Daily Republic, Rockford, IL, Published Thursday, January 2, 1930

Rockford Daily Republic, Rockford, IL, Published Tuesday, January 28, 1930
Rockford Morning Star, Rockford, IL., Published Sunday, November 23, 1930
Rockford Morning Star, Rockford, IL., Published Sunday, December 21, 1930
Rockford Republic, Published Sunday Morning, July 20, 1930
Rockford Morning Star, Rockford, IL., Published Saturday, December 5, 1936
Rockford Register Republic, Rockford, IL., Published Monday, December 3, 1938
The Morning Star, Published March 20, 1938
Rockford Register Republic, Published April 16, 1942
Rockford Register Republic, Rockford, IL., Published Friday, November 8, 1946
Rockford Register-Republic, Published Tuesday, July 17, 1951
Rockford Register-Republic, Published Saturday, August 18, 1951
Sokane Daily Chronicle, Published Saturday, April 4, 1959
Daytona Beach Sunday News-Journal, Published November 6, 1959
Rockford Register, Published August 11, 1967
Rockford Register Star, Published September 12, 1978
Rockford Register Star, Published Thursday, March 8, 1979
Rockford Register Star, Published October 10, 1980
Rockford Register Star, Published March 19, 1994
Rockford Register Star, Published January 12, 2014
Rockford Register Star, Published June 7, 2014
Rockford Register Star, Published June 9, 2014

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