

Village of Clifton History

by *Norma Meier*

Conrad Sorensen in poem Memories of My Old Home Town

Described Clifton's Main Street beginning with far north block – Clifton Garage & Machine Shop selling Goodyear Tires. Next was Lars Jensen, well driller. On the corner of Third Avenue and Main streets was T.C. Brown, implement dealer [John Deere] and furniture. Next is the north block, and on the corner is First National Bank. Next is A.L. Morel's store and next to it is Beardslee, Sanderson's Hardware along with Sanderson's undertaking parlor. Next building is billiard hall of Bill Reid who sold tobacco and candy. Next door is poolroom owned by John DeBreau auctioneer who also sold cigars and tobacco. Next is lunchroom of Charles Rochel who also sold fruit, candy and ice cream. Over all is Henrotin Hall.

In South block [he fails to mention corner tavern] is Vialta Theatre, then Ed's Barber Shop, next is Ole Lauridsen's butcher shop. Next door is Hobson & Lutton's grocery store. C. Jensen & Son own place next door and sell dry goods, groceries, shoes. Next building is Barber Shop run by Meyer. Next is post office. Next is Palace Hotel run by Mrs. Fournier. A. E. Kuhn run pharmacy next door, sold school supplies [Chester Reid bought this drug store from heirs of A. E. Kuhn in November 1944]. Frooninckx ran a hardware shop next door, sold cooking utensils, stoves etc. Next was general store of Smith Brothers. In far South block was Monroe Brothers garage on the corner of 5th and Main.

Clifton Centennial Book – Far north block, about center, was The Clifton House, a village landmark which was destroyed by fire 19 January 1894. It was owned and operated by Fred Hoyland. Later Nels Jensen owned a garage which stood on the spot.

North of the Clifton House, where the vacant Standard Oil Station was located in 1957, was the original site of the Henrotin house. "This house was moved later to the northeast corner of that block and was remodeled and enlarged and became the Henrotin mansion.

The Comet, Clifton, Illinois, 8 November 1901, "George Bilado went to Chicago Monday to purchase fixtures for the new butcher shop which he will soon open up in the old Henrotin building on Third Avenue."

Banks

Farmers' State Bank was organized 20 December 1920 and operated until 4 March 1929 when it was closed under the moratorium. The board of directors met on 8 June and voted not to reopen the bank. Shareholders were Richard R. Meents, Robert L. Lutton, L. E. VanSant, Alma M. Ruckrigel, Willard Meents, Nora Stien, Millie R. VanSant, Durl M. Meents, Harold R. Meents, Donald Lutton, Frank C. Hobson, Marybelle Hobson and George Sanders Jr.

18 January 1952 "After furnishing banking facilities to the Village of Clifton for over fifty years, the Gleason and Morel interest in the First National Bank passed into the hands of twenty-seven new stockholders, all merchants and farmers of Clifton and vicinity. Maurice Morel and Robert Morel retain a 10% interest. At a stockholders meeting January 9, 1951, directors were elected and organized as follows: Chester W. Reid, president; Louis Hansen, vice-president; Maurice L. Morel, cashier; Maurice Laurent, Arthur Speckman and B. J. Wallace, directors. Mrs. Virginia Shirley and Mrs. Ruth Christensen were appointed assistant cashiers."

Doctors

Dr. Guy Just, son of Henry Just, died 2 November 1918, Sheldon, Illinois, age 44 years; he was a Clifton physician ca1900-1910.

Dr. Flavius Lebel was a Clifton physician at the time of his marriage, 22 June 1910, to Leona Dubreucq of L'Erable. They lived on south Main Street in Clifton. His cousin was Dr. Bergeron of Kankakee. Leona was the daughter of Francoise Clemence Lamotte and Benedict Dubreucq.

Elevators

South elevator

R. R. Meents & Sons – Grain, Coal, Lumber (Advocate, Clifton, Illinois, issue of 20 October 1927 carried an ad showing the Meents business office which was a small brick building just to west side of railroad tracks (between Elliot street and the railroad tracks) and fronting on Fifth Street. On 19 October 1921 a fire in R.R. Meents & Sons grain office destroyed much of the interior in the office; the office was built in 1914 to replace an earlier office destroyed by 1914 tornado. Much of the office equipment was also destroyed. At the time Clifford Dutour was night telephone operator; he roused citizens with the fire alarm of five short rings.

Cummings - huge 1800s building torn down 1988

"L. E. Nelson came down from Clifton to attend the Beveridge rally at Watseka. He has about finished the work of superintending on R. F. Cumming's new 70,000 bushel elevator at Clifton (Advocate, issue of 20 October 1900, reprinted from Gilman Star) From same Advocate issue – New corn is being contracted at thirty cents per bushel. Robert Fowler Cummings [Cummings family came to Clifton in 1864] entered the grain business in Clifton in 1877. At the time of his death 31 December 1914 the R. F. Cummings Grain Company conducted grain elevators in Clifton, Chebanse, Martinton, Otto, Irwin, Gilman, Pittwood and Papineau. For years he was a director of the Grain Dealers National Mutual Fire Insurance Company at Indianapolis. He was vice president of Hyde Park State Bank, director of First Trust and Savings Bank of Watseka, director of Martinton State Ban and member of Chicago Board of Trade. His daughter, Irene, died in Iroquois theater fire in Chicago in 1903. His grave is marked by the tall obelisk in Clifton Cemetery.

Clifton Grain Company doubled grain handling capacity in 1946 according to Advocate, Clifton, Illinois, issue of 5 September 1946. (This is north elevators.)

B. J. WALLACE GRAIN LUMBER COAL, this business located on Elliott street about where Rabideau Grain Office now located.

The Advocate, Clifton, Illinois, March 1920 issue ±³ 0 H H Q W V 7 U D Q V I H A big Z Q H U V K L business deal was made Monday, March 1st, when R. R. Meents & Sons became the owners of the grain, coal, lumber and banking business of M. R. Meents & Sons. The firm, since the death of Mr. M. R. Meents, has been composed of Richard, Frank and Arthur Meents. The latter two have sold out and Richard takes into partnership two of his sons, Harold and Durl. Harold managed the Cullom grain business until recently, when it was sold to a farmers company. Durl has been connected with the Clifton office for some time. The Advocate editor has not been able to interview the retiring members and cannot say anything as to their plans. The Meents family ranks high in the business circles of Iroquois County, and the new co-partners have all the qualifications, the experience and the good will that is needed to continue the business on its well H V W D E O L V K H G V X F F H V V I X O E D V L V

S. B. Walton came to Clifton in May 1865, shortly after receiving his discharge from the 124th Pennsylvania volunteers in the Civil War. He built the first elevator and dump in 1871. He sold 20 August

Garages

Advocate, Clifton, Illinois, issue of July 1921 ±³ & H Q W U D Q A* D W D a b e has opened in Clifton under the name of the Central Garage. The firm is composed of Geo. J. GEnotte and Garrett H. Christensen, both of whom are experienced mechanics and gara J H P H Q 7 K H \ K D Y H D Q D G Y H U W L V H P H Q W L Q W K L V L V V X H

H. K. White, Illinois Central station agent, was operating a grain depot and handled lumber and hay during the Civil War. He sold to S. B. Walton about 1865.

Real Estate/Insurance

Advoc D W H & O L I W R Q , O O L Q R L V L V V X H R I) U L G D \ \$ X J X V W and L. G. Rorer have formed a partnership for the purpose of conducting a real estate and insurance business. They have secured agencies from several old line life and fire insurance companies of known and tested reliability. They also have agencies for northern, western, and southern lans in addition to transacting a local real estate agency, so that no matter in what locality an investor may wish to buy a farm, they are prepared to serve his wants. Messrs Hargreaves and Rorer have been residents of Clifton so long that recommencations from us are entirely unnecessary. Suffice to say that they intend to stay and consequently do no propose to have any but fair, courteous, honest dealing with any who may patronize them. Their business office is

