

# Black Oak and After

## Voices of the Past

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Ella Aulwurm as a young woman (date unknown).

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Wooden sidewalks, the one-room schoolhouse, blacksmith shops, wagon shops and the general store were all a part of life for early Oak Lawn residents.

Dust storms were a common occurrence on 95th Street, created in the hot, dry summer by horse-drawn wagons and carriages. During rainy periods or after heavy snowfalls, these same vehicles often had to be manually pushed or pulled from the muddy, unpaved street.

Oak Lawn was known as a German community near the turn of the century, due to being settled primarily by people of German origin. Having no gas or electricity, they had to carry a lantern if they went out after dark.

Still, some of the old-timers would have rather had the town as it was in the “good old days.” They spoke with nostalgia of a time when everyone knew everyone else, when there were friendly social gatherings and plenty of fun for all.

The community was quiet, with little noise or confusion. Fruit trees and gardens were everywhere. A night’s fun could be had for 50 cents. Skating parties, with 50 to 75 people on the lake, took place in the winter and afterwards, the group would go to a local home to eat and dance.

Barn dances, which included a big dinner, were held on the farms. There were also hay rides, sleigh rides, quilting parties and socials. Various kinds of wild game such as deer, ducks, prairie chickens, wolves and rabbits abounded. In 1858, the nearest food supply station and post office was at Blue Island, a distance of roughly 10 miles.<sup>1</sup>

Recollections of life in early Oak Lawn have been recorded, and are a part of the Local History Collection of the Oak Lawn Public Library. Historical documents were also used to provide additional data about the lives of Oak Lawn families during this period.

### **ELLA AULWURM**

Ella Aulwurm was three-and-a-half years old when her parents moved to Oak Lawn in 1893. She was one of 287 residents when the village was officially incorporated in 1909. Ella's recollections of her school days in Oak Lawn follow:

“The elementary public school I attended was located at 95th Street and Cicero Avenue; we called it 48th Street. It was a large frame building with wide aisles, a one room school and one teacher taught all the grades. There were 30 and later 45 pupils.

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<sup>1</sup> *Oak Lawn Independent*, Souvenir Edition, August 20, 1959, p. 11

There was a nice yard to play in, surrounded by trees. There was also a well with a pump, and we drank water with our lunch. There were no thermos bottles in those days. I don't think they were even invented then.

I remember very well my first day at school. I had turned six in April, and in September I started school. There was no kindergarten or pre-school, and I could not read or write, but I finished eighth grade at 13 and so did my three brothers.

The youngest of my brothers started at five and finished at 12. No reading problems then. School opened at 9 o'clock every morning except Saturday and Sunday and some holidays. The school was located about three-fourths of a mile from my home, and we walked in the morning and in the afternoon. We left at 8:30 a.m. and school lasted until 3:30 p.m. with two recesses of 15 minutes each, one in the afternoon and one in the fore-noon with an hour for lunch.

We either sang songs or the teacher would read to us. I remember one of the books was an adventure story, "Around the World in 80 Days." Sometimes we played ring-toss in the morning before going to our studies. If school was not open for any days for some reason, like a teacher's meeting, that day was made up at the end of the term.

School was held on Washington's and Lincoln's birthday, and on those days we sang patriotic songs, waved our little flags and had recitations about our country. One year, teacher thought we did so well while rehearsing he told us to invite our parents. My mother, Mrs. Hopkins, Mrs. Schultz and Mrs. Gaddis attended, and Mrs. Toole, the teacher's wife, and one of the school directors, Mr. Fred Behrend. And we did our little stunt. That was the only time we had visitors except now and then the school superintendent, Mr. Bright, and his assistant, Mr. Downey, showed up.

There were no cement sidewalks then; the boys walked in the street, a gravel road, and the girls on a path on the north side of the street. There were wide ditches on both sides of the street, and in the spring they were filled with water. In the winter, the boys could not resist the temptation of throwing a few snowballs at the girls. The girls did not let this pass and told the teacher next morning who did it. The poor boy had to stay after dismissal and walk home with the teacher for a few days.

Our heat in the winter was a large stove in the center of the room near the entrances, and sometimes we sat around the stove until the temperature in the farthest corner of the room showed 68 degrees.

The teacher got there earlier and started the fire. I think he also took care of the ashes and swept the floor and received \$75 a month. There were no strikes in those days.

Many of the fathers of the children and other taxpayers were fortunate to earn \$15 a week every week of the year, and some did not. So, they were not always able to pay the rent or food and fuel bills. But most of them managed to get a home and pay their bills, and I did a lot of economizing and home cooking, baking and canning.

We were very happy when we got our first bookcase. We called it our library and we took turns at being librarian. Before that, there were the children's desks, the teacher's desk, the stove, the blackboards, a few chairs and a long bench in the rear of the room in case we had visitors. And also a table with sand, etc. for the smaller children to mold little lakes, etc. We used to paste rings of colored paper that we strung up near the ceiling of the room. Red, white and blue in the winter; pink and green for spring and brown and yellow in the fall.

Time sure has changed in the last 80 years; that is the time I started school. We had no high school here, no junior college, no library, but somehow we managed to earn a living and get a job somewhere and everyone seemed happy and contented if not more than so today.”<sup>2</sup>

Ella remembered the trains carrying people to the race track at 111th Street and Ridgeland Avenue passing by the church on Sundays, and “the pastor would comment about all those fools spending their money at the races.” “They used to exercise the horses up and down 111th Street, so they gave passes to the track to all the people who lived along there since the horses were going along their front yards. My grandmother had a pass and used to pass it around. My father used it one day to take me and mother to the track. It was the first and last time I was ever at a horse race.” Ella said she was about 14 years old on this occasion.<sup>3</sup>

## **ETHEL PIPER TUCKER**

Ethel Piper Tucker moved to Oak Lawn with her husband, James Tucker, in 1915. Her family had farmed in Worth, where she was born, before 1890. Her grandmother owned the land that is now Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. The whole farm ran from 111th Street to 115th Street and from Ridgeland Avenue to Central Avenue. About 1901, Mrs. Tucker’s grandmother leased the property to a group of men who used the area as a race track.

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<sup>2</sup>Oral Interview with Ella Aulwurm, Oak Lawn Library, October 6, 1975; interviewed by Carol Adams.

<sup>3</sup>Oral Interview with Ella Aulwurm, Oak Lawn Library, October 6, 1975; interviewed by Carol Adams.



The picture above shows a team of horses and wagon passing in front of the Oak Lawn Train Depot sometime near the turn of the century. The identities of the drivers are unknown. Just down the tracks across from Cook Avenue was Brandt's Coal Yard.

Mrs. Tucker had fond memories of the farm. She said her pony was buried at Holy Sepulchre before it became a cemetery, along with her family's horses and pigs. Mrs. Tucker also recalled the following memories: "We had a pond out there for the cows and that's where my husband and I did our courting. Before we were married, he'd come out by train and we'd go to church, and then he would come over to the farm. He always brought me a box of candy. We'd sit there and talk and eat chocolates. We didn't have shows to go to. You had to go into Chicago if you wanted to go to a show.



A medicine man would come to Worth, and that was a big time. We had a lot more fun than kids do today. Real good, honest fun. And because there wasn't much to do, I think we appreciated it more.”<sup>4</sup>

## **GRACE JELLEY O'BRIEN**

Longtime resident Grace Jelley O'Brien recalled “When we were going to school, they still had the wooden sidewalks. We used to take the sticks and put gum on them and reach under there. They'd drop their change, you know. We'd get some change from underneath the boards. I can remember that distinctly.”<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. O'Brien also remembered attending St. Gerald's Church at 95th and Minnick Avenue. “People by the name of Hall had it in their house. That's where we all had our catechism.” Hilgendorf's Ice House, behind the Hilgendorf home, was near the Jelley home at 9530 South 53rd Street. The Hilgendorfs delivered the ice all through the town, Mrs. O'Brien recalled.

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<sup>4</sup>Oral Interview with Ethel Piper Tucker, Oak Lawn Library, March, 1975; interviewed by Carol Adams and Katherine Trimble.

<sup>5</sup>Oral Interview with Grace Jelley O'Brien, Oak Lawn Public Library, September 29, 1975; interviewers Katherine Trimble and Carol Adams.

## **PAULINE PRANGE SCHULTZ**

Pauline Prange Schultz was four years old when her parents brought her to Oak Lawn to make their home. Their house originally was an abandoned building that stood in the block just west of Raymond Avenue. About 1900, Mrs. Schultz's father bought the house and moved it to Raymond Avenue and Dumke Drive where the Oak Lawn Library is now located.

In an interview, Mrs. Schultz states: "We were all farmers. The property on the south side of 95th Street from Cook Avenue to Cicero Avenue was all farms." In response to the question, "Who farmed this area?," Mrs. Schultz replied: "Henry Lang and on the other side of Cicero was Charles Beebe. Then Jorns were across the street, and the area from the school to the tracks also belonged to the Langs. They had a little wheat growing in there and sometimes some oats during the summer to keep the weeds down.

We used to have to walk from where the library is now to the school at 95th and Cicero Avenue, and in the wintertime it was cold. The snow we used to have. On 95th Street, there were big, deep ditches on both sides and they would level with snow. We kids would throw ourselves in there and make our images and come home so wet that you didn't know whether it was safe to go in or not."

Mrs. Schultz's father, Joachim Prange, farmed 40 acres of the land just west of where Advocate Christ Medical Center stands today. The 40 acres that the hospital is on belonged to Mrs. Schultz's aunt, a member of the Jorn family. Mrs. Schultz's mother's maiden name was Jorn.<sup>6</sup>



Harry Phillips  
on his wedding day,  
January 1, 1898.

## **HARRY PHILLIPS**

Harry Phillips, born on a farm at 115th Street and Austin Avenue, moved to Oak Lawn in 1907. He was one of the first building contractors in the area and is credited with having built the first Catholic Church and the first Congregational Church in Oak Lawn.

Phillips is also recognized as the operator of the first community water system in the suburbs. His daughter, Hazel Phillips Bryson, wrote this account of his water system: "My father had three wells dug, one in each of the two subdivisions and one on our home property in the central part of town, and piped the water to the house he built. When neighbors saw his houses enjoying the luxury of piped water, they wanted it, too."

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<sup>6</sup> Oral Interview with Pauline Prange Schlutz, Oak Lawn Public Library, 1976; interviewers Katherine Trimble and Carol Adams.

He obligingly extended the piping and added them to the line until eventually he had about 150 customers. Since this was not a planned system, if a customer didn't pay (it only happened rarely), there was no way to shut off his water without shutting off the rest of the line.<sup>7</sup>

## **OTTO BRANDT**

Otto Brandt, son of William and Wilhelmina Brandt, was born in Oak Lawn in 1893. One of the first jobs he remembered is sorting pickles at the Glaser-Kohn Company on Cook Avenue, south of the Wabash Railroad. Farmers would line up with their buggies and little spring wagons. The pickles were dumped into troughs where they would be hand-sorted into slots according to size. Otto and his young friends each received 10 or 15 cents to help sort the pickles.

Otto also attended the one-room schoolhouse at 95th and Cicero. In a 1978 interview, he recalled: "I figured we learned more from one teacher, from primer to graduation, than what they do today. I only went to school until I was 12 years old. Then I had to go to German School, and when I got through, I had the harness put on me to go to work. The day before my 14th birthday, I took my first load of hay to 22nd and Throop Street."

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<sup>7</sup>Oral Interview with Harry Phillips, Oak Lawn Public Library, June 1, 1959.

In addition to the 54 acres of farmland at 95th Street and 52nd Avenue, Otto's father later acquired 140 acres of land at 95th Street and Ridgeland Avenue. He also had a saloon in the two-story Brandt building at 5137 West 95th Street where dances were held on Saturday nights in the upstairs hall.

When he wasn't working on the farm, Otto worked in his father's wagon shop, the blacksmith shop or in the saloon. He said, "There was no law at that time about a fourteen-year-old guy drawing you a glass of beer."

Otto married Ella Wegner at 22, bought a team of horses and started hauling coal for Consumers Coal Company in Chicago for 50 cents a ton within a three-mile limit, loading it and unloading it. Beyond the three-mile limit, he received 10 cents more per ton. He had also earlier worked in the stockyards around 41st Street and Ashland Avenue for 17 ½ cents an hour.

Otto assumed operation of the family tavern in 1936. "Things always have been pretty quiet in Oak Lawn," Otto said in a 1959 newspaper interview. "We never had too many police nor too much need for them. I could count the trouble I had on one hand in my first ten years in the tavern business. And when there was trouble, it was always the strangers, never the hometown folk. It's a nice, quiet town."

Before he became a full-time tavern keeper, Otto used to have a three-piece orchestra. They played at dances at Emery's hall, and each man was paid \$6 for five hours work.<sup>8</sup>

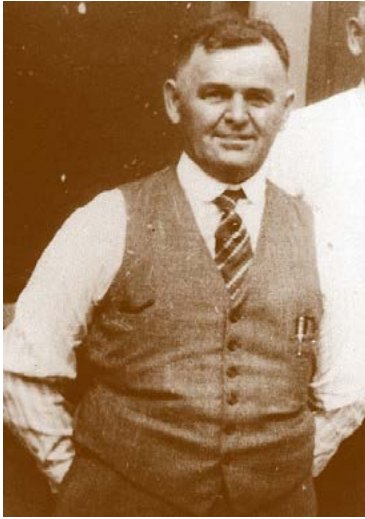
## **AUGUST BEHREND**

Another resident that became a part of Oak Lawn's early history was August Behrend, who was born on his parent's farm in 1876. He attended the village school and worked on the farm with his father. In 1900, he married Elise Schmidt at Trinity Lutheran Church in Oak Lawn, and they began married life on a farm of their own at 90th and Cicero Avenue, now the site of the Airway Mobile Home Park.

Behrend's first business venture in 1905 was a general merchandise and grocery store at Wabash and Cook Avenues, purchased from Daniel Crandall. The store, a wooden structure across from Cook Avenue School, was almost completely destroyed by fire in January of 1912. Later that year, he built a new, much larger, brick store on the corner of 95th and Raymond Avenue, which was known as "Behrend's Hardware."

At the same location, Behrend later installed the first gasoline pump in Oak Lawn. As time went on and the few cars in the village increased in number, he built the first gasoline station at 95th and Cook Avenue.

August Behrend, c. 1932.



He also constructed seven other commercial buildings on 95th Street near this store, one of which was the first bank building in Oak Lawn.

According to his son Fred, August Behrend was also involved in the early development of the Oak Lawn Public Library, along

with Edith Exter, the Rev. Kirk Dewey and Katherine Trimble. Behrend's task was to secure a location for the library. Mrs. Trimble suggested an abandoned pigeon roost (barn) located on the site of the present library. Behrend concurred with her suggestion and he and Rev. Dewey put in a floor, windows, and shelving and painted the building red. Miniature furniture that had been used at the 1933 Century of Progress was secured and books were obtained.

Edith Exter was named the first librarian, and the library, or the 'Little Red Barn,' was opened to the public in 1936.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Oral Interview with Otto Brandt, Oak Lawn Public Library, June 17, 1978; interviewers Gordon Welles and Allan Fletcher.

<sup>9</sup> Oral Interview with Fred Behrend, Oak Lawn Public Library, June 13, 1959; interviewer Winnifred Reynolds.

## **WILLIAM B. GADDIS**

William B. Gaddis was seven years old when his family moved from Chicago to 9632 South Cook Avenue in 1894. He too, attended the one-room schoolhouse at 95th Street and Cicero Avenue and was of four graduates in 1900. Gaddis was elected the third village president in 1917, and was paid \$100 a year for his services. “That was during World War I,” he said in a 1959 interview, “and there wasn’t too much going on here. We couldn’t get any improvements put through, so we devoted ourselves to the war cause by selling Liberty Bonds.”

Except for nine years which he spent in Chicago, Gaddis lived in Oak Lawn, returning in 1934 with his family to 9632 South Cook Avenue, the home built by his parents. At the time, there were five houses on the street.

He said a 25-foot lot could be purchased for \$50 and a 50-foot lot for \$100. A 50-foot lot would cost about \$5,000 in 1959, Gaddis said.

In the mid-1940s, Gaddis and his brother went into the real estate and the insurance business. In addition to his service in village government, he was one of the original members of the Oak Lawn Community Fund and served as board treasurer for 15 years.





William B. Gaddis,  
c. 1959.

He was active in the First Congregational Church, and a charter member of the Garden Methodist Church where his wife served as financial secretary.

Before its closing, an oil painting of William B. Gaddis hung in the school at 9300 South Keeler Avenue which bore his name. The portrait was a gift from the PTA and the Board of Education of School District 123.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Oral Interview with William Gaddis, Oak Lawn Public Library, June 19, 1959; interviewer Winnifred Reynolds.

## **DR. JOHN HOPKINS**

According to Walter Hopkins, his father, Dr. John P. Hopkins, was the first doctor in Oak Lawn. Dr. Hopkins came to Oak Lawn from Orland Park in 1892 and, with his family, settled in a two-story frame home on 53rd Avenue just south of 95th Street. He ministered to patients in an area extending from Beverly to Orland Park and from Blue Island to Summit.

Dr. Hopkins's usual method of transportation was a horse and buggy. On occasions when the roads were impassable, he drove down the Wabash Railroad tracks, after first notifying the dispatcher to hold the train. On other occasions, he found it more practical to abandon the buggy temporarily and ride to his destination across the prairies on horseback.

Dr. Hopkins maintained an office in his home where his wife, the former Bertha Schussler, assisted him. On weekly trips to a department store in downtown Chicago, he purchased his medical supplies, usually traveling on one of the several daily trains available from Oak Lawn to the Loop.

After his death at age 45, Dr. Hopkins' practice was taken over by his 21-year old nephew, Edward Schussler. At that time, Dr. Schussler was one of the youngest practicing doctors in Illinois. Dr. Schussler continued his practice in Oak Lawn for over 50 years.



Portrait of  
Dr. John Hopkins,  
1890s

A member of the Oak Lawn Athletic Association's baseball team, "Doc" Schussler was sometimes asked for professional advice during a game or had to leave in the middle of one to administer to a patient. His charge for a house call was \$1 which usually included a bottle of medicine.

Dr. Percy Hopkins, one of Dr. Hopkins's sons, became a prominent physician and surgeon.

He served as board chairman of the American Medical Association and was a leading member of local and state medical societies. Dr. Percy Hopkins was also chief of staff at Evangelical Hospital in Chicago and Christ Hospital in Oak Lawn (now Advocate Christ Medical Center). His son, Dr. William Hopkins, also became a prominent surgeon and a member of the staff at Christ Hospital.<sup>11</sup>

### **DR. THEODORE GASTEYER**

Dr. Theodore Gasteyer and his family moved to Oak Lawn in 1932. He practiced medicine here for over 50 years, assisted by his wife, Anna, a registered nurse. During World War II, from 1943 until 1946, he served as a doctor in the Pacific Theater of Operations. Dr. Gasteyer died on November 1, 1983 at the age of 84. Two of Dr. Gasteyer's children also became doctors – Dr. Theodore H. Gasteyer II and Dr. Susan Gasteyer.<sup>12</sup>

### **CARL LARSEN**

Another resident with fond memories of early Oak Lawn was Carl Larsen, who served as Village President from 1945 to 1949. Carl was born in a house at 5320 Edison Avenue in 1892, the same year his parents Olaf and Emma Larsen settled here.

The Larsen family moved to 5309 West 95th Street when Carl was a boy. Because dances and other gatherings were common in the downstairs store below their second-story flat, it became known as Larsen's Hall. Village trustees held their first meetings, and the signing of the village charter took place here.

The Oak Lawn Family Shoe Store later occupied the first floor before the structure was demolished. Larsen remembered the first major improvement after Oak Lawn's incorporation was replacing the deteriorating wooden sidewalks throughout the village with cinder sidewalks. "It was through the first Village President, James Montgomery, that a special assessment was levied for this improvement," Larsen said in a 1959 interview.

In 1931, Larsen constructed the first brick bungalow in the village at 97th Street and Cook Avenue. Other building contractors said that this new type of home would not last. Larsen continued building other brick homes and before long, other contractors were building similar homes in their subdivisions, according to Larsen's account of this period in Oak Lawn's development.

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<sup>11</sup> Oral Interview with Walter Hopkins, Oak Lawn Public Library, June 17, 1959; interviewer Winnifred Reynolds.

<sup>12</sup> Family History Form completed by Dr. Theodore Gasteyer, Oak Lawn Public Library, February 20, 1972.

Larsen also recalled that during his presidency, a shortage of water developed and the wells could not maintain the constant pressure required. The village then negotiated with Chicago for water. Because of this initial step, and additional negotiations with Chicago officials by the village presidents who followed him, Oak Lawn maintains an excellent water system. The village also supplies water to a number of neighboring communities whose facilities have become inadequate.<sup>13</sup>

### **PEG JORN KRUEGER**

‘Watching the automobiles go by’ – ‘two of them’ – was one of the few recreational activities in Oak Lawn about the time of the incorporation of the village in 1909.

This was one of the recollections of Peg Jorn Krueger, 9521 South Minnick Avenue, whose grandfather, John Jorn, was one of the first settlers in Oak Lawn. Jorn came here from 87th Street and Western Avenue and built a farm house at 4700 West 95th Street. Mrs. Krueger said that on Sundays, the family would always “have a lot of company.” On Saturday night, her mother would prepare several chickens and bake pies for the Sunday dinner.

“After dinner,” she said, “we would all sit in the front lawn and watch the one or two automobiles go by.

James Montgomery and Harry Phillips were the first in Oak Lawn with cars, and they were quite an attraction.”

One of the big social events each year was the Sunday School picnic sponsored by the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran. Mrs. Krueger’s parents were among the original members of the church.

The Friday night talent shows in the Cook Avenue School were also well attended by area residents, according to Mrs. Krueger. “Everyone would meet at the school and make quite an evening of it,” she said.

Life on the farm after the turn of the century required a good deal of work. As a young girl, Mrs. Krueger’s main chore was to feed the pigs. She said, “On Sunday, I would just despise it. I would return from church, go right to the swill barrel, and give the pigs their food. They would dive into it, and I would have to jump back fast so my nice Sunday dress would not get splattered.”

The Jorns raised timothy hay, cabbage, corn, potatoes and cucumbers which were sold to the local pickle factory. The family cow barn was located on the present site of the Coral Plaza.

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<sup>13</sup> Oral Interview with Carl Larsen, Oak Lawn Public Library, June 24, 1959; interviewer Winnifred Reynolds.

East of the farm, cabbage and corn were grown on the sites of the former Oak Lawn Bowling Alley and Advocate Christ Medical Center.<sup>14</sup>

## **WILEY AND PEARL SIMMONS**

“So far, as I know, it was the first radio operated in Oak Lawn,” said Wiley Simmons in a 1959 interview. Simmons was a ‘teaching principal’ at the four-room Cook Avenue School in 1921. After reading a book on radio and some serious technical study, Simmons obtained parts from downtown Chicago and built a crystal set. “When I got it working, the first station I heard was KDKA of Pittsburgh.

The next morning I put the earphones on our old janitor, Mr. Hardwell, who was 91 at the time, and played it for him. He was an old Civil War veteran who fought in the Battle of Gettysburg. He listened, saw the aerial wire only went to the tree when it should have connected to Pittsburgh. ‘Well, I declare to gracious,’ Hardwell said. I remember his words so well.”

Simmons played his radio for the children and they told their parents. The next night he had to lock the schoolroom door because so many wouldn’t believe the story and pressed him to hear the radio with their own ears.

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<sup>14</sup> *Southwest Suburbanite*, Oak Lawn Golden Jubilee Special Edition, August, 1959, p. 22.



When Simmons came here from Western Springs, he was paid \$175 per month for nine months as principal and teacher in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. There were 90 students and two other teachers using three of the four rooms.

After four years at Cook Avenue School, Simmons transferred to a two-room building in School District 122 at 95th Street near Ridgeland Avenue. Simmons took the four upper grades as teaching principal and his wife Pearl took the four lower grades. He also had janitorial duties in the new position, and used to get up early in the morning, start the fire in the school and then go back home for breakfast and to pick up his wife. They would then both leave together for school.

Simmons stayed at the District 122 School for 22 years. He then resigned to become First Assistant County Superintendent of Schools, a position he held for four years.

In 1942, the student body decided to name the school after Pearl and Wiley Simmons. Numerous additions have been added to Simmons School since that year.

Wiley Simmons retired in 1951, but he continued to hear from many of his students who by this time lived in many different parts of the world. He died in 1974.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Oral Interview with Wiley Simmons, Oak Lawn Public Library, June 19, 1959; interviewer Mrs. Clifford Reynolds.

## **LETTIE KENNEDY HARNEW**

Lettie Kennedy Harnew was five years old when her parents settled at 111th Street and Harlem Avenue in 1893. She recalled attending the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago with her mother as her sixth birthday neared. After graduating from Worth School, she traveled by train to the nearest high school, Englewood, at 62nd Street and Steward Avenue in Chicago.

The Wabash Railroad in 1912 ran four daily trains between Chicago and St. Louis. The two day trains had electric lighted parlor cars, first class chair cars and combination cars. The Banner Limited had a café diner and a private dining room, while the night trains were equipped with electric-lighted observation cars, drawing room sleepers, first class chair cars and coaches. The midnight train had a café car, serving supper and breakfast.

In 1911, Lettie married William Harnew and they moved into their new home on farmland at 9624 South Mason Avenue. After installing electricity, Harnew bought his wife one of the newest home appliances, an electric washing machine. Lettie called it "a little bit of heaven."

After becoming a tax collector for Worth Township, Harnew would collect the taxes in person, traveling by horse and buggy. At night, he and Lettie balanced the books. As time went on, Lettie was supervising a ten-girl office in her home while her husband became active on the local school board.

William Harnew served on the board of School District 122 for over 35 years. He was president of the Republican Club for 25 years, and retired in 1958 after serving 35 successive years as Worth Township Tax Collector.

Harnew, grandson of early resident William Harnew, was proud of his roots. He had documents for two land patents for 320 acres of property. One was issued by President Martin Van Buren in 1839 and the other by President Franklin Pierce in 1853. The price for one 160-acre tract was \$4,800 and the other \$50,000.<sup>16</sup>

Harnew died at the age of 84 in 1961. His wife, Lettie, died in 1979 at age 90. Harnew Street and Harnew Elementary School at 91st Street and Austin Avenue are named after the family.

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<sup>16</sup> Oral Interview with Lettie Kennedy, Oak Lawn Public Library, October 23, 1975; interviewers Katherine Trimble and Carol Adams.



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