

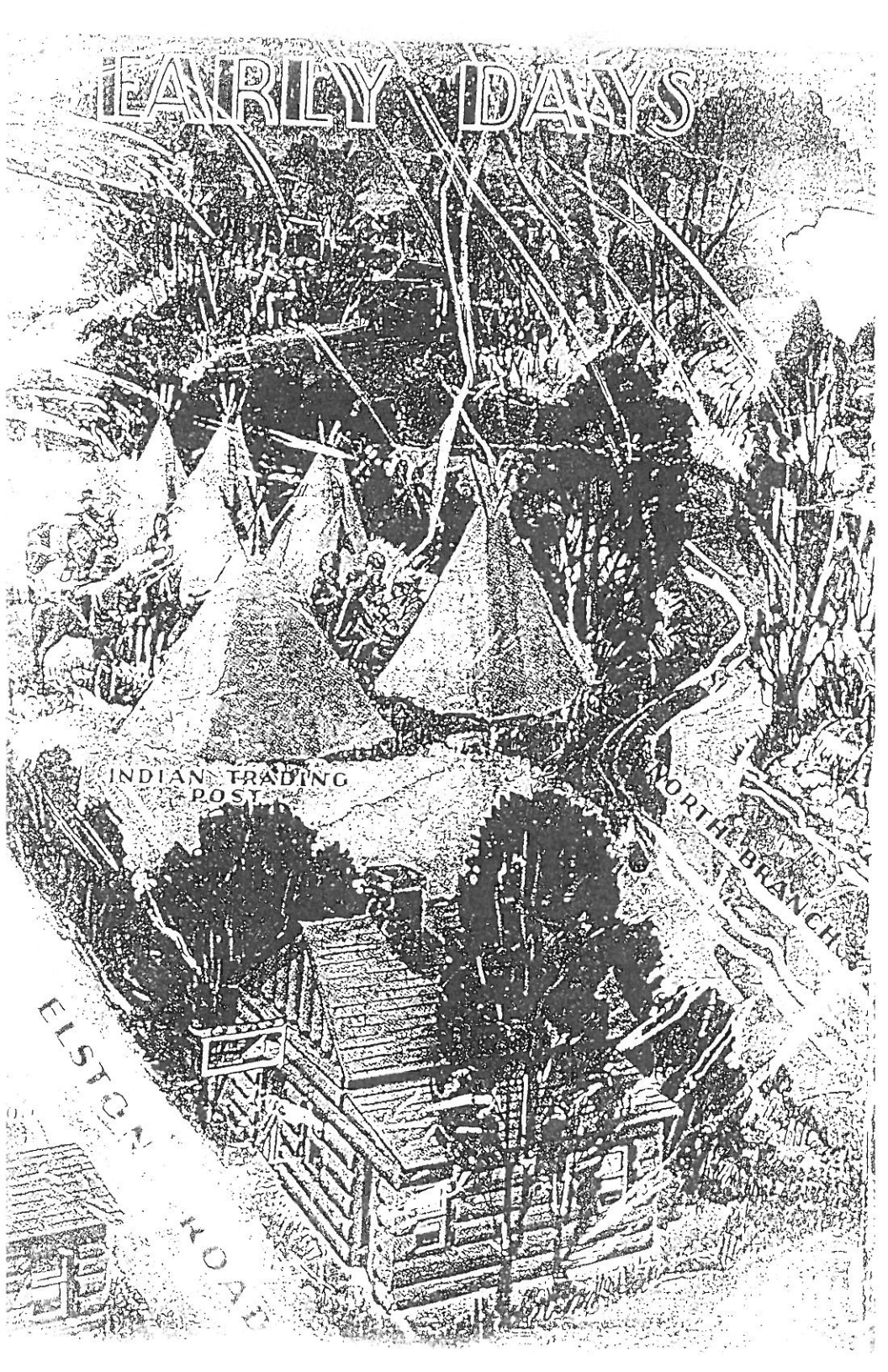
EARLY DAYS

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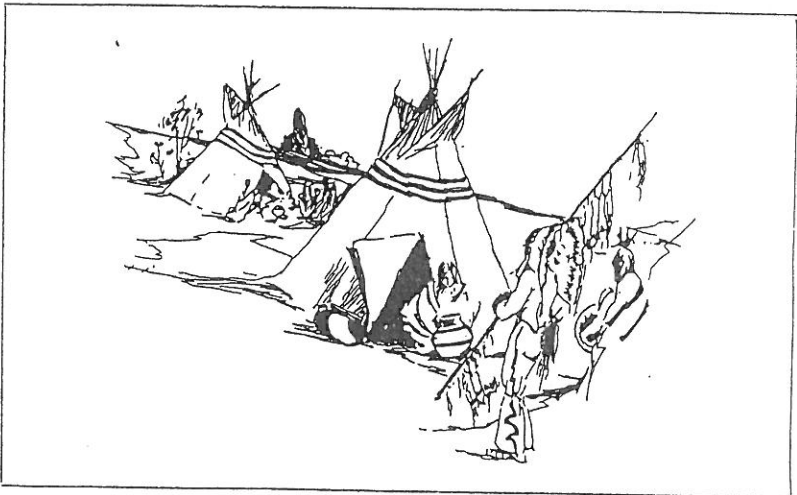
ELSTON AVENUE

From an Indian Trail to a City Street

By FRANKLIN S. CATLIN and
FRANK P. MURPHY

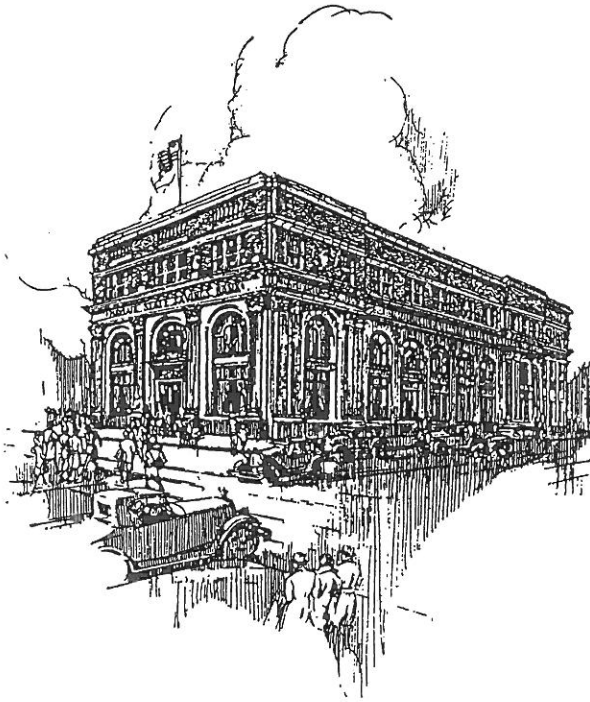
THE history of people is often marked by the roads that they build. For instance, the Appian Way brings to our mind the glory that was in Rome; the Strand, a crooked street in the greatest City in the World, that once like Elston Avenue was a trail through the marsh where London now stands; Unter den Linden, means Berlin; Broadway, New York, and Pennsylvania Avenue, brings to your mind the Grand Review of the Union Troops that marched through Washington at the close of the Civil War.

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early days of Chicago there were two roads leading to the North, the Green Bay Road, which lead up to what is now Rush Street, a short distance north of the river, and then slanted northwesterly to the corner of North Avenue and Clark Street, and from there out practically followed what is now North Clark Street.

Village Roads and Trails

The other way out of Chicago to the Northwest was an Indian trail up to the Des Plaines valley, which gives rise in early days to two country roads, which today find place on the map of Chicago as important city streets. Quaife in "Chicago's Highways Old and New" says "One of these was Elston Road which Andreas, the historian, describes as a crooked wagon track leading from Kinzie Street through Jefferson to the western part of Niles, and thence on through Northfield toward Deerfield. The other was the Milwaukee Road, now Milwaukee Avenue. These two streets run parallel for a distance of nine or ten miles when Elston merges into Milwaukee Avenue."

Private Roads and Toll Gates

In 1840, the "Prairie Farmer" said, "The rate of toll allowed by law is two and one-half cents per mile, but it is far too high and will be reduced. The public do not as yet complain because they are glad to get the road at any

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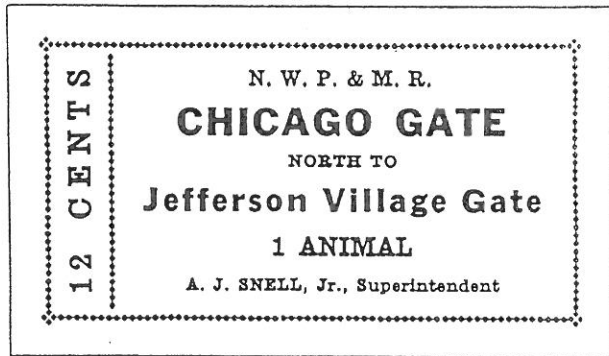
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CHICAGO

rate.” Another paper said that these roads were paying their owners from thirty to forty per cent a year profit.



Reproduction of a Toll Gate Ticket

Plank roads sprang into being all around Chicago, and in 1849, the Northwestern Plank Road was built. It left the City of Chicago on Milwaukee Avenue with Wheeling as its destination, and in September, 1849, "The Democrat" reported that the planks had been laid as far as Oak Ridge, eight miles out. In the next two years the main line was extended three miles beyond Dutchman's Point (now Niles) towards Wheeling.

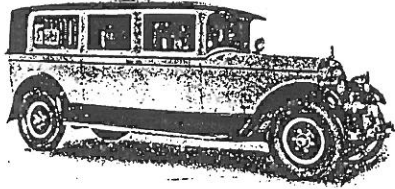
A branch plank road was laid along Elston Avenue with toll gates at Division Street and one just south of Lawrence Avenue, and another at the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue on Elston Avenue. William Ringler, one of the old toll gate keepers, in an interview once said, "I was on the job for fourteen years and I guess I took in more money than any other gate keeper. One Sunday, with several Polish

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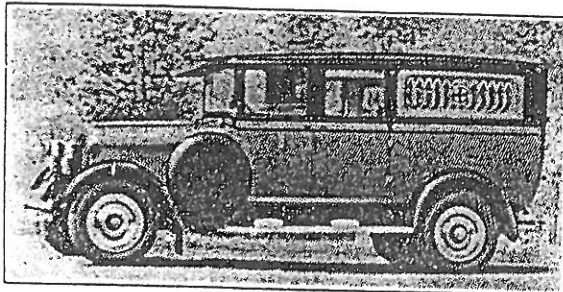
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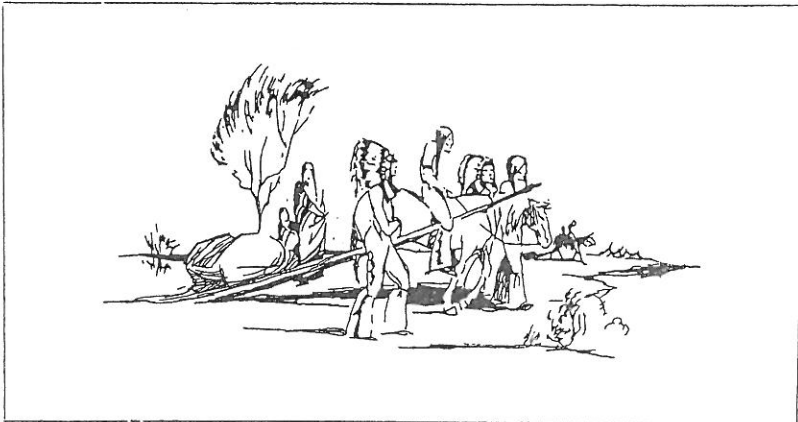
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ELSTON AVENUE—From an Indian Trail to a City Street

and Bohemian picnics at Niles and Des Plaines, and the new cemeteries then opening up, my receipts were \$790.00. The average from all gates at that time was about \$400.00 a day." The real necessity for the construction of these old toll roads is shown from an article about the roads out of Chicago written by Irving Bull in his book "The Township of Jefferson," he says "Every settler suited himself as he drove over the prairie to avoid swamps, sloughs, holes or ruts.

These plank roads continued to operate with great success and to the enrichment of their owners, the principal owner being Amos J. Snell, until sometime in the year 1889, when the Township of Jefferson was annexed to the City of Chicago. The terrific increase in traffic from all directions caused indignation meetings to be held by the farmers who finally staged a modern edition of the Boston Tea Party and organized a band of "Indians" and swept down upon the Milwaukee and Elston



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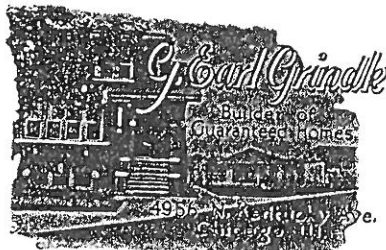
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Plank Roads, chopped down the toll gates and built great bon-fires therewith as a token of their Declaration of Independence from the further paying of toll for the right to travel on these great highways.

History of Elston Avenue

Elston Avenue in its early days was known as Elston Road, named after Daniel Elston, of whom E. O. Gale in his *Reminiscences of Early Chicago*, in talking about the early days, said that the hostelry of Comptain L. C. Hugumin marked the northern limits of civilization in Chicago, "as far as our vision extends, although we are informed that along the Indian Trail, yonder, Daniel Elston is living, who arrived in 1832 and pre-empted 160 acres of land." Moses and Kirkland's *History of Chicago* in discussing the business houses here in 1833, says, "The manufacture of soap and candles was begun in 1833 by Elston & Woodruff, in a log cabin on Kinzie Street at the junction of the north and south branches," of the Chicago River and in giving a list of the aldermen of the City of Chicago from 1837 to 1848, the same book gives Daniel Elston as one of the two aldermen from the Fourth Ward in the year 1842, when there were only six Wards in the entire City of Chicago. We also find in a copy of the City Directory for the year 1844, the following:

"Daniel Elston—patent press brick maker—res. N. Branch Mile End." We find on a map of Chicago in 1830, a quarter section of land

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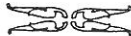


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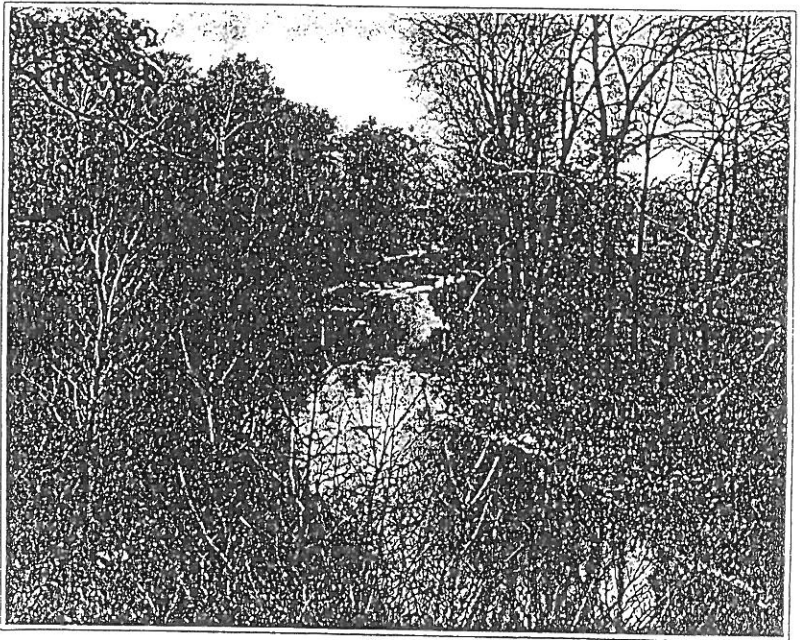
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ELSTON AVENUE—From an Indian Trail to a City Street

owned by Daniel Elston, extending west of Halsted Street and south of Chicago Avenue, with the Northwestern Plank Road running diagonally across the northeast corner thereof. This was where Daniel Elston laid out a great subdivision on the west side known as Elston's Addition to Chicago, and it was in the northern portion thereof, near the intersection of Chicago Avenue and the Plank Road now known as Milwaukee Avenue, that Daniel Elston, following the meandering Indian trail that paralleled the north branch of the Chicago River laid out Elston Road.

Early Days

The same map of Chicago in 1830 shows a frame house standing at the southeast corner



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ELSTON AVENUE—From an Indian Trail to a City Street

of North State Street and Chicago Avenue in the dense woods that at that time covered that part of the Village of Chicago, and it is marked on the map "Billy Caldwell's frame house," which brings us back again to think of the days when the Red Men ruled throughout this land of ours. We are all well acquainted with the great Forest Preserve which the County of Cook has created along the west fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River, but many, perhaps do not know that the nucleus thereof was the great tract of land on both sides of that river which extended north-westerly from Rogers Avenue was known as Caldwell's Reserve. This whole section of Chicago teems with tales of Billy Caldwell, or, as he was known by the Pottawatomie Indians, the "Sauganash," which meant, "The Englishman." Billy Caldwell was one of the most conspicuous characters identified with the early history of Chicago and was a half-breed Indian. He was the son of Colonel Caldwell, an Irish officer in the British army stationed at Detroit and was born about the year 1780. His Mother was a Pottawatomie Indian who was said to be remarkable for her beauty and intelligence. He was educated at the Jesuit schools in Detroit and learned to speak fluently and write both the French and English languages. He also acquired a knowledge of a great number of Indian dialects. "Andreas" in his History of "Early Chicago, says, "In person he was large and commanding, of great strength and power of endurance." At first his Indian name was "Straight Tree," on

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ELSTON AVENUE—From an Indian Trail to a City Street

account of his fine appearance, but he was better known by the name of Sauganash. "He was a supporter of Tecumseh in his battles for the English against the United States, and for many years was his secretary. We first hear of him in Chicago in 1812, the day after the destruction of Fort Dearborn, when he appeared with Black Partridge, and Shaubonee at the home of John Kinzie and saved the wife and children of the Kinzie family from being massacred by the marauding savages. He is believed to have taken up his permanent residence in Chicago about 1820, living near Fort Dearborn, which was then nothing but a trading post. The Fort had been rebuilt and was the central point for Indians to gather to do their trading and receive annuities from the government. Andraes says, "In 1826, we find Caldwell duly appointed justice of the peace for Peoria County. At that time the northern part of Illinois was known as Peoria County. He was a voter and his name appears in the poll lists of 1826 and 1830. He usually officiated as one of the Clerks of Election. By the treaty with the Pottawatomies, held at Prairie du Chien in 1829, two and one-half sections of land on the Chicago River were granted to him, and by the subsequent treaties of 1832 and 1833 an annuity aggregating \$1,000.00 was bestowed on him by the Government." This was the land that is now known as the Edgebrook Forest Preserve. Andreas further says "Caldwell was very desirous of teaching his people the habits and customs of the whites. He wanted them to become educated

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ELSTON AVENUE—From an Indian Trail to a City Street

and civilized. When Mr. Watkins started one of the first schools in 1832, Caldwell offered to pay the tuition and buy books and clothes for all of the Indian children who would attend school, if they would dress like the Americans, but it is stated that none of them accepted the offer. Neither did he approve of the Indian costume of polygamy and he never had but one wife."

Indian Treaty and Land Marks

At the east end of Billy Caldwell's reserve, where Caldwell Avenue intersects Rogers Avenue, there stands a tree known as Chicago's most historic tree, "The Treaty Tree." This

The Majestic Old Treaty Elm

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Sauganash

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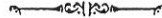
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was planted by the Indians to mark the boundary line of the Fort Dearborn Reservation in the Treaty of 1816, which line runs from Lake Michigan at the southeast corner of Calvary Cemetery, southwesterly to Riverside, it is known as the Indian Boundary Line. It was originally known as Indian Road, or the Indian Boundary Road. Another treaty is represented by the same tree, that of 1833, when after the defeat of the Indians in the Black Hawk War, treaties were made with all of the tribes in the territory between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River to give up their lands to the white man. An English traveler arriving at that time said in a letter home, "When within five miles of Chicago, we came to the first Indian encampment, five thousand Indians were said to be collected around this little upstart village for the purpose of participating in the treaty by which they were to cede their lands in Michigan and Illinois." In this treaty, the sum of \$100,000.00 was set aside to satisfy sundry individuals on behalf of whom reservations were asked, for claims due them and for services rendered by them, and also to indemnify the Chippewa Tribe who were parties to the treaty for certain lands along the shore of Lake Michigan. A further sum of \$150,000.00, afterwards increased to \$175,000.00, was provided to satisfy claims against the United States, "which they have here admitted to be justly due and directed to be paid," and also a sum of \$230,000.00 to be paid in annuities of \$14,000.00 per year for twenty years, and \$150,000.00 for the erection

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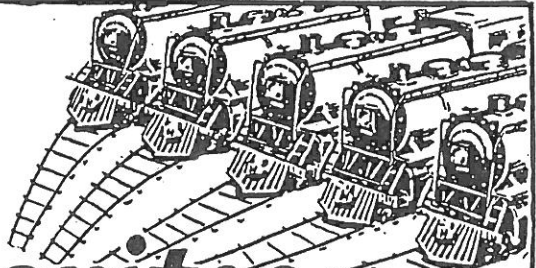
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of mills, houses, shops, agricultural improvements, etc., and \$70,000.00 for educational purposes to be applied at the discretion of the President of the United States.

This treaty, known as the great Indian Treaty of 1833, was only concluded after a long session, because the Indians knew that after the defeat of Black Hawk they must sell their lands whether they would or not, and the Indians did not want to sell, but felt that they were forced to and delayed closing the treaty as long as they could. The principal commissioner opened the pow-wow by stating that the Great Father in Washington had heard that they wished to sell their land and he had sent commissioners to treat with them. The Indians promptly answered through their interpreter "that their Great Father in Washington must have seen a bad bird that must have told him a lie, for instead of wishing to sell their land, they wished to keep it." The Commissioner notwithstanding replied, "That nevertheless as they had come together for a council they must take the matter into consideration." The government was furnishing rations for all of the Chiefs, all of their tribes, men and women included. The negotiations dragged for many, many days, entirely at the government's expense, until finally concluded, and history says that even then some of the Chiefs would not have signed the treaty had it not been for the services of Billy Caldwell. He was well paid, however, because we find in the schedule of persons receiving money out of the \$100,000.00 set aside that no one

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received more than Billy Caldwell, as he and Alexander Robinson got \$10,000.00 each.

Billy Caldwell continued for several years to live in Chicago as a white man and one of its leading citizens. The house which I have mentioned as being shown on the map of Chicago in 1830 was located about where the southeast corner of North State Street and East Chicago Avenue is, and was built for him by the Department for Indian Affairs and was the first frame house erected for a residence in the village of Chicago. Having been educated by the Jesuit priests in Detroit, Billy Caldwell was, of course, a Catholic, but he was very liberal minded and "Mosea and Kirkland say, in their History of Chicago, that "Methodism found a congenial soil in the earnest character of the hardy settlers around Fort Dearborn. Services were held at more or less irregular times and at various places, the favorite localities being Billy Caldwell's headquarters, Cherter Ingersoll's Tavern, and Walker's School House, and we find, upon examining the history of the Catholic Church in Chicago, that the first Catholic society that was organized in Chicago was that of St. Mary's Church. Its first priest was Father John Mary Irenaeus St. Cyr, who was appointed by the Bishop of St. Louis in April, 1833, pursuant to the presentation to him of a petition by the Catholics of Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. Foremost among the signers we find the name of Billy Caldwell. As old age crept upon him, however, he longed for his Indian friends, and leaving the haunts of the white man he went to live with the mem-

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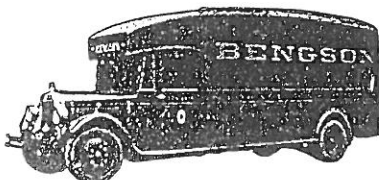
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1909

*Progress
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Reliable Service*



1928

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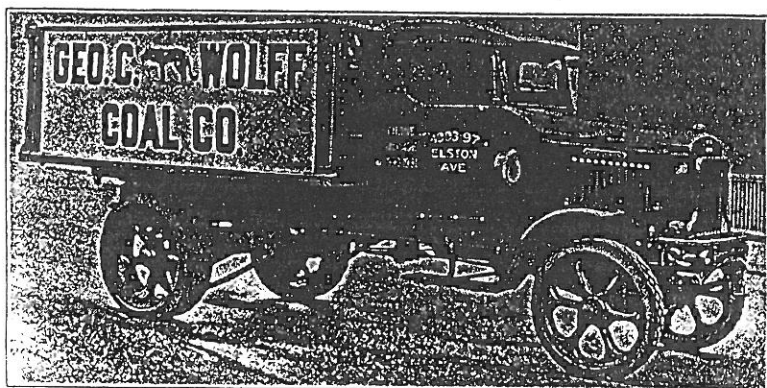
1921

ELSTON AVENUE—From an Indian Trail to a City Street

bers of his tribe on the reservation near Council Bluffs, Iowa, and there died on the 28th day of September, 1841, at the age of 62 years.

So ends the romance of a road, from Indian trail to a narrow plank road and then a broad highway. A century has passed since first the white man knew of the Indian trail that led to the Northwest and is now a city street. What if old Daniel Elston with Billy Caldwell as his companion could journey out to Caldwell's reserve to the Boy Scout cabin which stands on the spot where Billy Caldwell's home was and see the mighty city that has grown since they passed to the Great Beyond.

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A Friend*



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Any Body Style

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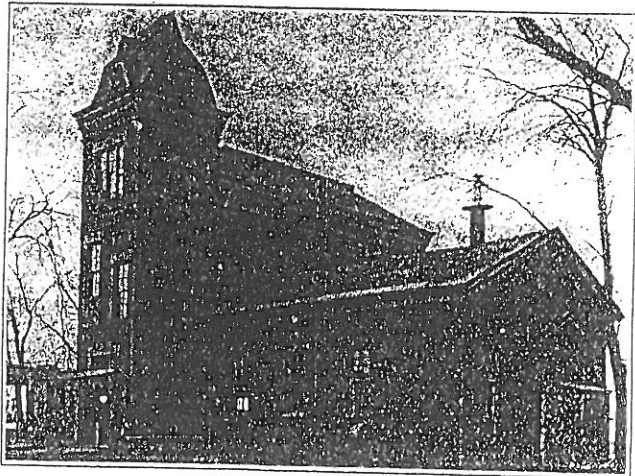
2004 Diversey Blvd. 611 W. Roosevelt Rd. 2919 S. Western Ave.
Lake View 8114 Roosevelt 4800 Roosevelt 4770

S A L E S a n d S E R V I C E

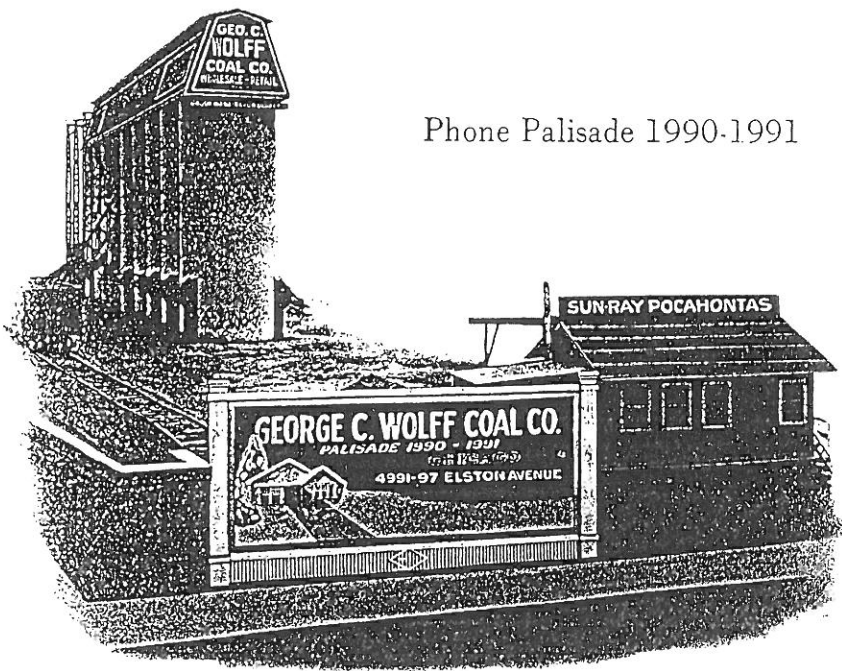
Mayfair

Mayfair has been transformed into a high class residential and commercial district within a very short period. Very few communities can boast of the progress displayed by Mayfair in recent years. Almost like magic many schools, churches, banks, and any number of commercial houses have been erected.

The railroad tracks which run through Mayfair were elevated in 1927 thereby eliminating dangerous grade crossings and opening up



District School No. 7 located at Kostner and Lawrence Ave. is the same school in which the children of the early pioneers of the Mayfair district were taught. It is possible some of the early pioneers' descendants attend this school now. This is one of the oldest schools in the Mayfair district.



Phone Palisade 1990-1991

Office and Rail Yard of

GEO. C. WOLFF COAL CO.

SUN-RAY POCAHONTAS COKE,
HARD AND SOFT COAL
OF ALL KINDS

4993-4997 ELSTON AVENUE

MAYFAIR—A High Class Residential and Commercial District

important thoroughfares such as Montrose Avenue.

In 1909 street car tracks were laid on Lawrence Avenue, and in 1911 the tracks on Elston Avenue were extended from Montrose Avenue to Lawrence. Great excitement was manifested when the first street cars ran on these lines and city officials and car line superintendents rode on the first car at each event. The early pioneers of the district hardly dreamed that they would see the day come when the transportation facilities of the district would be as well developed as they are at present.



Attorney James W. Burke, long a resident of Mayfair, who fought for a public benefit to be allowed to the tax payers in connection with the expense of the paving of Elston Ave. and helped to win for the people.

Phone Pensacola 3700

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December
1928

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STORE

KNAPSTEIN'S
FARM

ERIKSON'S
FARM
1860

BROWN'S
FARM
1860

HUGHAN'S
TAVERN
1842

LAWRENCE

ELSTON AVE.

