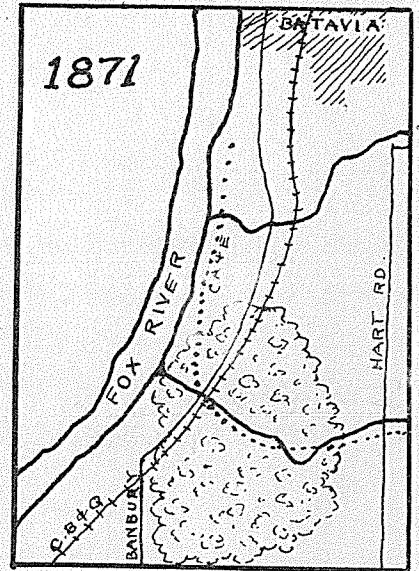


THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER
 Winter 1973

WHAT TO SEE ... ROCKS

If you could have been in the valley of the Fox River with the first settlers, you would have been delighted with one of its tributaries that had apparently cut down through the bedrock making a valley like a shallow box canyon. It flowed through a beautiful grove of oak, hickory and black walnut trees. The melt-water from the glacier, and subsequent erosion, had worn down through about five feet of the thin-bedded limestone. This map from the 1871 atlas of Kane County shows the stream flowing into the Fox River about two miles south of Batavia.

Was the Batavia spur of the Aurora & Elgin detoured to take advantage of this cut in the bedrock or did the builders choose to put the tracks through the grove, Glenwood Park, which was to become a favorite picnic area for local and Chicago residents? Whatever the reason, the route was laid down the valley. Now the old right-of-way is again occupied by a torrent of water vigorously cutting away with rapids and carrying off the ballast that covers the old, worn-smooth surface of the bedrock.



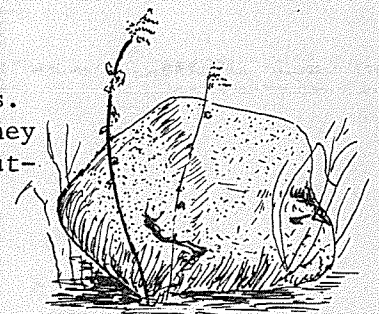
Present location of
 Prairie Path shown
 with dotted line



Niagara limestone
 exposed along side
 of valley

Our footpath here becomes very narrow and somewhat hazardous, and the walker will have to ford the stream frequently. But it is worth the effort. For about 200 feet, near the place where the Path goes under the railroad and highway 25, the rock walls are most obvious; the south-facing exposure being mostly bare rock, the north-facing green with mosses.

Just to the west side of the highway bridge, the Path goes over the scoured surface of the bedrock and then, leaving the stream, swings north. Within the next 1000 feet there are a dozen or more glacial boulders. As you examine them, particularly where they lie almost on the base of the limestone outcrop, you can understand why they were called *erratics* and why they were such a source of puzzlement to people 150 years ago who knew nothing of the continental glacier. Many are of granite, brought from the far north and shaped by ice-scour. One even shows glacial scratches, *striae*.



Glacial boulder
 - granite

The bedrock, Niagara limestone, is not exposed along the Path anywhere in DuPage County, but it is here in Kane County. If you want to walk this section of the Path, start at Hart Road, about 2-1/2 miles north of Butterfield Road, where Kane County has put up a handsome Prairie Path marker.

THE ANNUAL MEETING ... was held on Nov. 12 at The Morton Arboretum. The members voted to re-elect to the Board the 5 directors whose terms of office had ended. Those of you who were unable to attend missed a delightful illustrated report given by Paul Mooring on "The Saga of the Bridge." The guest speaker was L. W. Aggers from N.I.P.C. who emphasized the need to acquire open land NOW.

At the regular Dec. Board meeting, the following officers were elected:

President *Paul Mooring*
Vice-president *Mrs. Robert Headen*
Secretary *Eugene Lewis*
Treasurer *Mrs. Corwith Hamill*

Our warmest thanks go to retiring president *William Nemeč* who piloted us through 4 years of great progress. He continues to serve on the Board.

PATH ACTIVITY -- building it and using it

Repair work following flood damage continued as long as the weather permitted. Contributions for screenings totaled \$370!!!

The bridge over the East DuPage has certainly had its ups and downs! The high bridge was too dangerous and had to be taken down. The low bridge was too low and was washed out in floods -- twice. Now, thanks to the *DuPage County Forest Preserve*, we have a fine new one -- not too high, not too low -- built with strong abutments, and the approach graded and surfaced too.

Prairie rose seedlings -- given by *Mrs. Ralph Kroscher* -- were planted along the Path south of Arbor Street by the *Ecology Club of Edison Jr. High School*, Wheaton (*Mrs. Lebo*, sponsor). They made screen cages to protect them from rabbits.

The Annual Walk was quite well attended in spite of the rain, but we were glad for a warm, dry place for lunch -- the headquarters in Rathje Park. The next day, still raining, family groups from the *Community United Methodist Church*, Naperville, walked the section from Lincoln to Jewell. There are many other group walks. Sometimes we know about them in advance; sometimes we just meet them striding along.

WHEATON

The *Wheaton Friends of the Prairie Path* are on the go again ... fighting to have Wheaton's Master Plan altered to exclude the Path as a route for a N-S highway. Faced with 1500 signatures on a petition and a meeting with *the Friends*, the Plan Commission unanimously recommended an altered plan to the City Council. The Council adopted it as policy, and directed the city staff to (1) investigate the ramifications, and (2) draw up an amendment to the Master Plan. There will have to be a public hearing to consider the change.

As a direct result of this citizen action, the DuPage County Board soon will be asked to go on record for preservation of the whole Path. *The Friends*, accompanied by members of the Wheaton Plan Commission and Mayor Barger, have already made a presentation to the executive committee of the Forest Preserve commission urging preservation -- including a suggestion that management of the Path by the Forest Preserve would solve the Path's problems, especially within municipalities. Further meetings will be held.

Robert Raymond, highway chairman on the County Board, said he would write a letter to the Board urging no highway on the Path. The county wants to retain its options for use of the land -- for an underground water line from Lake Michigan, for example.

COOK COUNTY

In the Summer Newsletter there was a report of a meeting with the mayors of western Cook County communities. One of their resolutions was to "get cooperation from the Cook County Board of Supervisors." They persisted, and in Nov. met with *George Dunne*, President and *Arthur Janura*, General Superintendent of the Cook County Forest Preserves. The meeting was attended by 20 people representing federal, state, county, and local interests. We still have hopes of acquiring the Cook County section.