

Mrs. Luella Edwards

A BELATED MEMORIAL

by

Alice Baker

Even though this memorial is a quadrennium late, it is none the less heart-felt and grateful to the memory of Luella Parks Edwards. Probably no woman and possibly no person did more for the people of Eagle than this stanch, active, intelligent woman.

Born on the Ides of March 1861, of Vermont parents, in the town of Vernon, she was endowed with dynamic energy and organizational ability rarely found in one person. While just an infant, her parents moved to Eagle.

No record is kept of her school attendance until the academic year of 1878-79 when she is listed on the Carroll College rolls. She attended this institution only one year.

Very little biographical information can be found concerning her. Even her marriage to Mr. H. B. Edwards of Whitewater, Wis. and the social rites connected with it ~~its~~, at this late date, are no longer available. No one has a photograph of her. Only in group photos can one see her slight figure and her pleasing facial features.

But members of the older generation have a high regard for her dynamic ability and grateful memories for what she contributed to the social and civic well-being of the town and county.

Mrs. Edwards first ^{attempted} organization ^{that of} was the After-noon Whist Club designed for pleasure only, but ~~it~~ ^{that association} became singularly useful as years passed and social needs changed.

^{Societies} One of the earliest in point of time (1903) was the OPEN DOOR CLUB. Its members included women of town and country who had a hunger for service in the projects of the expanding world of the first quartile of the Twentieth Century. Affiliated with the State organization, the club was to become a resource for other organizations. Its interests were: Home economics, health, farm problems, child and adult welfare, political and legislative subjects and current happenings.

A review of the minutes of the meetings reveals their intense patriotic leanings and also their friendly ^{regard} out-going to the foreigner. It was the time of the "Melting Pot" theory and to reveal their whole-hearted support of that sentiment, the club hunted up all the foreign women, feted them, and welcomed them to the Eagle neighborhood.

The ODC was only three years old when some of the business men recognised the need for village improvement and came to Mrs. Edwards for help in organizing the EAGLE ADVANCEMENT ASSOCIATION. The first improvement that these men, and more women, sought was cement sidewalks. During the early spring months, roads were quagmires lasting sometimes almost a month. Owners could pay for their own walks, but there were some ~~there were some~~ important paths that

~~were the concern~~ ^{that served} of the populace which showed the EAA that a community project must be undertaken . Money was needed !

✓ This need was told to the ODC. How could the money , about \$100, be raised?

xxx The ODC members scratched their collective heads and came up with the idea of a Country Fair. Villagers and farmers brought in ~~th~~ their apples , melons, pumpkins , sheep , cattle, and horses .

xxx When the Fair was over ~~it had~~ ^{the take} a net of \$104.75 . With this unexpected munificence , cement sidewalks were built in front of the Methodist Church, , the I.O.G.T. Hall, along ~~south~~ ^{the} north side of the road ~~from the top of the hill~~ to the Oak Ridge cemetery, and walks for the homes of two indigent widows. The cementing of ~~this~~ long stretch ^{How much?} antedated the hard road building by twenty years (1906-26).

In 1914 WWI came on . By 1916 appeals for help were made from ^{over seas} (Europe.) Mrs. Edwards saw the ~~need~~ ^{demand} of a Red Cross organization and immediately solicited helpers ^{for} this very crying need . Calling on her very willing card players for a ten-cent fee for playing, she received a generous response. Women who didn't know a club from a spade decided to play cards and with the many ten-cents raised money enough to buy ~~some~~ ^{a lot of supplies} yarn and cloth for garments.

Mrs. Florence was made Pres. of the Eagle Red Cross., and in securing this helper she had ^a peer organizer. Knitting socks and helmets could be done at home, but making the garments necessitated a center, under supervision . The homes of the members ~~were~~ ^{became} ~~the~~ ^{revolving} centers. Sewing Machines were needed and many (six), This difficulty was obviated by Mr. Don Pardee who took his Pick-up and transported the ~~needed~~ ^{keep it} machines, ^{each week} to the various centers . Finished garments were sent to the Milwaukee ^{R.C} center. When the Milwaukee ^{Women} found out

that Eagle was having difficulty making money to buy supplies but had many eager workers, they sent out some of their supplies for whom they had a dearth of workers.

For sometime Eagle was affiliated with the Milwaukee Red Cross and not until Miss Julia Rockefeller headed the Waukesha Red Cross was Eagle incorporated into the Waukesha County group.

In Post WWI years there was much concern about the prevalence of Tuberculosis, especially was this true of rural communities. The whole state became conscious about ^{the health conditions} conditions and was advocating county nurses to watch known cases and ^{and} teaching preventive measures. In 1919

Mrs. Edwards went to the County Board, gave a talk on the great need of Waukesha County and nominated a nurse, ^{for health improvement} an ITS graduate, who had served six months as a Red Cross nurse in Russia, and who had recently returned from a year and a half term of Army duty in the Vichy sector of France. ^{through Mrs. Edwards' influence} The County Board hired the first Waukesha County nurse, ^{Ann} ~~Miss~~ Aurel Baker, ~~later~~ ^{Ann} Mrs. Harold Pardee.

Mrs. Edwards last effort of organization was that of the Eagle Parent and Teacher's Association affiliated with the State and National Organizations. The group still exists but today it is no longer affiliated the the State.

How much did this busy, businesslike, canny, gifted woman bring to the people of Eagle? I am asking the readers of this article to evaluate her services?