



## Memoirs of Julia Kirk

We came to Wilmette in April, 1877. That was the Spring Henry A. Dingee's mortgages came due and half of the people gave up their places and went back to the City, so there were nearly as many vacant houses as occupied ones. It was a cold, wet, Spring and our house seemed cold, damp and forlorn. There was nothing to be seen from the windows but bare trees and bushes, except in front, where we could see our neighbor's house across the road. Forest Ave. was a road then, grass grown with a wagon track down the middle and a very deep ditch on the South side of it. At night there was not a light to be seen and not a sound except now and then the screech of a hoot owl somewhere in the woods.

I had always lived in the City and been accustomed to draw all the water I wanted for all purposes from a faucet. Here I found pumps. Two pumps, one for rain water and one for well water and the rain water was not good for tea and coffee and the well water was not good for washing. I did not care much for pumps with their assorted water. They took too much strength to produce results. In a day or two after arriving in the Village I went to the store, and it was The Store! A small grocery store with the Post Office on one side. Mr. Henry Kinney was the proprietor, and I asked for vegetables and fruit. He said they never kept those things, everybody had a garden and there was no demand for them. He suggested there was a farmer named Mahoney down by the lake who sometimes sold vegetables. As that was a  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile thru the woods and across a meadow from our house it seemed a long walk for a squash or a turnip. I then went to the meat market, a much smaller store where Mr. Baptist Mueller told me he butchered most of his meat in his back yard. Rather dismayed with my marketing, I walked back home, and neither on my down nor back again did I see a single person.

By that time our two babies had taken cold, their eyes were inflamed, they were feverish and fretful. I was worried and wanted a doctor. I went across the road to our only neighbor whose name I could not pronounce (but I soon learned to say Panushka) to ask where I could get one. She said there was a little young doctor down the road by the railroad track, but no one went to him. Everybody had Dr. Mann or Dr. Bragdon. They had Dr. Mann from Evanston, as he was the best known. As I crossed the road to return home I could see a white fence to the East and was told Tommy Brooks lived there, but I could not see the house for the trees and the bushes. I was discouraged enough by that time. Pumps, no fruits and vegetables, such very fresh meat, and no doctor nearer than Evanston. There was no telephone in those days, no autos, and we did not own a horse and buggy. The only transportation was the Railroad. There were two trains to the City in the morning, one each way at noon, and two coming from the City at night. I did not wonder people had given up their places and gone back to the City. I wished with all my heart we could do the same. But the good man-of-the-house went to see that little young doctor down by the railroad track, had him come to see our babies and he helped them. We also found he kept a cow and we could get milk there. So instead of going back to the City, we lived in Wilmette 38 years. That young doctor was our family physician all those years and was the trusted and loved family doctor for all the Village as well as all the country round about – Dr. Byron C. Stolp!



And in those years we saw this little, straggling, country Village, with its empty houses, dark streets and wooden sidewalks, many of them just two boards laid lengthways, change to an up-to-date suburb, with electric lights, paved streets, telephones, autos, a bank, a moving picture house, blocks and blocks of stores, and hundreds of beautiful homes.

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