

WHEATON'S FIRST
SETTLERS
1837



THE STORY OF WHEATON BEGAN IN POMFRET, CONNECTICUT, THE BIRTHPLACE OF ERASTUS HIS THREE SIBLINGS AND THE WHEATON BROTHERS WARREN AND ERASTUS. IN SEARCH OF PRIME FARMLAND, NEW OPPORTUNITIES, AND MINDFUL OF WHERE THE NEXT RAILROAD WOULD BE BUILT, ERASTUS LEAD HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO PRESENT DAY WARRENVILLE BY 1837. ERASTUS FIRST CLAIMED 640 ACRES OF LAND NEAR WARRENVILLE ALONG WITH 500 OR 600 ACRES OF LAND NORTHEAST OF WARRENVILLE THINKING THE RAILROAD MAY PASS THROUGH. EVENTUALLY HE BUILT A MILL NEAR THE INTERSECTION OF TODAY'S 38 AND 59. WARREN WHEATON FOLLOWED BY CLAIMING 640 ACRES NEAR PRESENT-DAY NAPERVILLE AND ROOSEVELT ROAD WITH HIS BROTHER ERASTUS MAKING CLAIM TO 300 ACRES ADJOINING HIS BROTHER TO THE WEST. DUPAGE COUNTY WAS ORGANIZED IN 1839 THE YEAR ERASTUS WHEATON AND ERASTUS' SISTER ORINDA WERE MARRIED. IN 1848 THE WHEATON BROTHERS AND ERASTUS GARY GAVE THE RAILROAD 3 MILES OF RIGHT-OF-WAY, THUS SECURING WHEATON'S FUTURE AS A PROMINENT RETREAT FROM THE CITY.

STATELY HOME
1882



BORN INTO ONE OF DUPAGE COUNTY'S MOST NOTABLE FAMILIES, ELBERT GARY WAS RAISED IN A HOME PURCHASED BY HIS FATHER NEAR THE FAMILY LUMBER MILL. AFTER BRIEFLY SERVING IN THE UNION ARMY DURING THE CIVIL WAR, ELBERT ATTENDED WHEATON COLLEGE AND THEN UNION COLLEGE OF LAW IN CHICAGO. ELBERT PURCHASED 2.6 ACRES OF LAND FROM HIS FATHER THAT IS NOW A PORTION OF MEMORIAL PARK. PLANS TO BUILD A STATELY HOME WERE STARTED IN 1880 WITH THE HOUSE BUILT IN 1882 AND THE CARRIAGE HOUSE LATER BUILT IN 1888 TO HOUSE ELBERT'S MANY CARRIAGES AND HORSES. DURING HIS LIFETIME IN WHEATON, ELBERT FOUNDED WHAT IS NOW THE GARY-WHEATON BANK WITH HIS UNCLAS, WAS MAYOR OF WHEATON FOR THREE TERMS, CO-FOUNDED UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION AND SERVED AS IT'S CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD FOR TWENTY-FOUR YEARS. THE TOWN OF GARY, INDIANA WAS NAMED IN HIS HONOR. ELBERT GARY'S STATELY HOME PROVIDED A PROMINENT ROLE IN WHEATON SOCIAL CIRCLES AND A RETREAT FOR BUSINESS COLLEAGUES FROM THE CITY.

WHEATON'S FIRST
PARK
1921



AT THE AGE OF 54, ELBERT GARY MOVED FROM WHEATON TO NEW YORK IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE HEADQUARTERS OF U.S. STEEL, GIVING HIS HOME TO ONE OF HIS DAUGHTERS. DURING THIS TIME THE HOUSE WAS DEMOLISHED AND THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED WHEATON PARK DISTRICT PURCHASED THE LAND FOR \$20,000 IN 1921, AS WHEATON'S FIRST PUBLIC PARK. WANTING TO COMMEMORATE THOSE WHO HAD RECENTLY SERVED IN WORLD WAR I, THE WHEATON PARK DISTRICT GAVE THE PARK IT'S CURRENT NAME, "MEMORIAL PARK". A LANDSCAPE DESIGNER DREW UP PLANS IN 1922 FOR THE OVERALL PARK DESIGN AND \$3,000 WAS ALLOCATED TO REMODEL THE CARRIAGE HOUSE, THEN KNOWN AS "HALE STREET BARN". AFTER REMODELING COMMENCED EARLY USES OF THE CARRIAGE HOUSE INVOLVED THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 76 HEADQUARTERS, PARK DISTRICT MEETING SPACE, KINDERGARTEN CLASS, AND PATRIOTIC GATHERINGS. THE FIRST TENNIS COURT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1924 FOR USE ON WEEKDAYS ONLY.

COMMEMORATING
THE GREAT WAR
1929



STARTING IN 1922 THE WHEATON PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BEGAN THE SEARCH FOR A SUITABLE MEMORIAL STATUE FOR WHEATON'S NAMESAKE IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SERVED IN WORLD WAR I. THE BRONZE CAST DOUGHBOY STATUE DESIGNED BY SCULPTOR JOHN PAULDING WAS DEDICATED TO MEMORIAL PARK ON ARMISTICE DAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1929. ENTITLED "OVER THE TOP TO VICTORY", THE TERM DOUGHBOY REFERS TO AN AMERICAN INFANTRYMAN OF THAT ERA. RESTORATION OF THE STATUE WAS COMPLETED IN 2000 AND RE-DEDICATED ON VETERANS DAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2000. OVER THE YEARS, MEMORIAL PARK HAS BECOME A SPACE TO HONOR THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED IN OUR NATIONS WARS. AS TIME HAS GONE BY, VARIOUS COMMEMORATIONS MEMORIALIZE THOSE WHO FOUGHT IN WORLD WAR II, THE KOREAN WAR, AND VIETNAM WAR. THE REMAINDER OF THE PARK GROUNDS HAVE BECOME A SPACE TO HONOR LOVED ONES THROUGH THE WHEATON PARK DISTRICT'S MEMORIAL TREE PROGRAM AS WELL AS PARK BENCH DONATIONS.

PROVIDING MUSIC
IN THE PARK
1955



THE PROMINENT ARCHES WERE BUILT ALONG NORTH HALE STREET'S NORTH AND SOUTH PARK ENTRANCE TO INVITE VISITORS INTO ONE OF DOWNTOWN WHEATON'S LARGEST OPEN SPACES. ART SWEET ARRIVED IN WHEATON IN 1944 AND BECAME THE THEN ESTABLISHED WHEATON MUNICIPAL BANDS DIRECTOR A YEAR LATER. AT THE TIME, THE BAND USED CITY HALL FOR REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES YET ART SWEET HAD A VISION OF THURSDAY NIGHT PERFORMANCES IN MEMORIAL PARK WITH A MORE SUITABLE ACOUSTIC FRAME. SINCE CITY FUNDS WERE TIGHT AT THE TIME, ART SWEET LEAD FORMAL FUNDRAISING FOR SEVERAL YEARS UNTIL ENOUGH MONEY WAS SAVED TO BUILD A SUITABLE STRUCTURE. IT TOOK THREE SUMMERS OF CONSTRUCTION PHASING TO COMPLETE THE BANDSHELL. WITH THE FIRST SUMMER INSTALLATION OF THE FLOOR. THE SECOND SUMMER INSTALLATION OF THE WALLS AND FINAL COMPLETION IN 1955 BY ADDING THE ROOF. ART SWEET WENT ON TO DIRECT THE BAND UNTIL 1964 AND PASSED AWAY IN 1998. THE BANDSHELL WAS FORMALLY RENAMED AND DEDICATED TO ITS GREATEST FUNDRAISER WENDY NESE, 2008 AS THE ART SWEET MUNICIPAL BANDSHELL.

HONORING THOSE
WE LOST
1970-PRESENT



THE SENIOR CENTER OPENED IT'S DOORS IN 1970, HIRING MARY LUBKO AS IT'S FIRST SUPERVISOR, SERVING UNTIL 1990. MARY BECAME THE VISIONARY THAT HAS LEAD THE CURRENT LEISURE CENTER TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SENIOR PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS WITH MORE THAN 3,000 MEMBERS. SHE STARTED WITH A NOTECARD CASE OF 20 PARTICIPANTS, DEVELOPING ACTIVITIES SUCH AS TRAVELING GROUPS, SEASONAL PARTY'S, SPORTS LEAGUES, BIKE CLUBS, AND DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES. AFTER MARY'S UNTIMELY PASSING IN NOVEMBER OF 2015, THE LEISURE CENTER WAS FORMALLY DEDICATED MAY 17, 2016 AS THE MARY LUBKO LEISURE CENTER IN COMMEMORATION OF MARY'S STRENGTH AND DEDICATION. THROUGHOUT IT'S HISTORY THE FORMER CARRIAGE HOUSE HAS HAD SEVERAL TRANSFORMATIONS WITH REMODELING DONE IN 1974, AIR CONDITIONING ADDED IN 1978 AND A SOLAR GREENHOUSE BUILT IN 1981, FUNDED BY THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGING. DUE TO LEAKING ISSUES THE WHEATON PARK DISTRICT REBUILT THE GREENHOUSE INTO THE COACH ROOM. FURTHER UPDATES WERE MADE IN 2009 BY ADDING THE PHILLIPS ROOM AND ADA ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE.