

In 1897 Barrington electricity lights homes

By BARBARA BENSON

(Thirteenth in a series based on the collection of more than 700 letters written between 1889 and 1904 from the National Landmark house on West Main Street.)

At the beginning of 1897, Emaline Hawley Brown was in her 65th year, and her husband, Joseph Putnam Brown, was approaching his 73rd birthday. Their two daughters, Laura and Hattie, were married and settled into lives as the wives of farmers, Laura and Joseph Nightingale in Fairmont, Minn., and Hattie and Lorenzo Porter in the Barrington countryside about three miles west of town. Laura and Joe had two sons, Arthur and Roscoe; Hattie and Ren one son, Howard, born on Oct. 19, 1896. The Browns had no further grandchildren after this, and they thrived and doted on the three boys. Emaline had been in Minnesota when Arthur was born, but illness prevented her traveling to Fairmont for Roscoe's birth. This was probably agonizing to her because she never quite lost the conviction that Laura had gone to live in a wilderness. She thought of her eldest daughter as a pioneer.

By contrast, the Browns had moved out to the Porter farm for Howard's birth, and provided an extensive support system for the Porter household as Hattie recuperated. Emaline certainly hadn't intended to spend so long "in the country" but about Christmas time of 1896, she contracted pneumonia and wound up staying three months. Hattie and Ren gave up their downstairs bedroom to her, and Dr. Richardson rode out from the village to prescribe her medicines and check her progress. By Jan. 8, 1897, she was writing again:

Dear Laura, As there is a prospect of mailing a letter tomorrow, thought I would try and write. I am getting better slowly sit up considerable and walk a little, but my drumsticks don't go off very well. I cough and raise now so am in hopes to feel well soon. Hattie has given me her bedroom and brought a bed downstairs and put up in the sitting room for her use. Pa takes care of me and helps Hattie all he can, he takes a good deal of care of the baby. New Year's Day pa and Ren went over in the woods chopping, they cut some small trees and as Ren was trimming off limbs his axe slipped and cut a gash in his shin, but it is doing well, will get along all right if he don't get cold in it. I think Sarah (Joseph



Carrie Kingsley

Nightingale's sister) sent you all very nice presents, Roscoe's dress is lovely. Hattie got me a rubber hot water bag, they are so nice to warm up anyone and to relieve pain.

I think the spoons you sent me are real nice. Tell Arthur grandma is glad he has a chest of tools, and of course every time he gets through using them he will put them back in his little chest then he will always know where they are. We all think that is a pretty fine cow he sent Uncle Ren. How do you like his knee protectors. I expect Roscoe rolls around the floor some by this time, I think you are sensible to put colored dresses on him. Howard is fast outgrowing his clothes, hope he can wear them till he is old enough to wear short clothes.

Hattie washed today, had 41 napkins in the wash. Her hens lay from 8 to 12 eggs a day, Hattie is making Ren a vest, he can't

"Mrs. Bute has just moved into her new house, she will have her house lit with electricity, and a good many others are going to do the same, our streets are now lit by the electric lights, and it makes the streets look pretty light."

buy any large enough he weighs over 270 pounds. Uncle Will Johnson does not get along very fast, he cannot lift his right foot but shoves it along the floor, I would like to ask Addie what her Christian Science is about. I will now close for I cannot think of anymore to write this time, all send love, Mother.

By Jan. 15, Emaline is writing again:

Dear Laura, I am wondering what you are doing today, guess you have plenty of work. I am improving slowly, sit up almost all day, and have been out in the kitchen to eat. Yesterday I had a baked potato and a piece of broiled beefsteak for my dinner, seems as if I never had anything taste so good and I am going to have some for my dinner today. We have been here three months. I never stayed away from home as long as that since we kept house, and we have kept house 40 years.

Later in the same letter:

Two of my under teeth have been so sore and loose for a long time that I just took hold of them with my fingers and jerked them out, they have tormented me just long enough have only four left now, on my under jaw I mean. I had only six right in front and the ones I pulled out were the two middle ones, think I will have the others out when I get well and have a new set.

Frank Waterman's wife is very sick with typhoid fever, they have shut up their bakery it will probably be a long time before Irene can bake anymore. Mrs. Dodge is very anxious to have me come home. I intend to go as soon as I am able. I expect it will seem strange at first and it will seem lonesome.

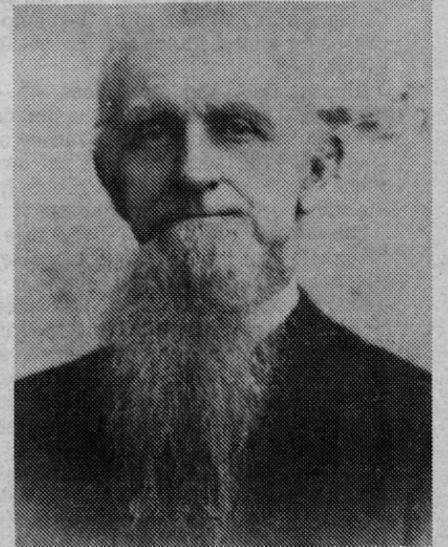
Emaline had indeed not expected this long separation from the world which had become most familiar to her, that of West Main Street, her immediate neighbors and the village life around her, and when she returned to the Octagon House on Jan. 23 there was a lot of catching up to do. New people were moving into the established order, and many of her contemporaries were fading away. At one point she commented that the street should be called "Widow Street" there were now 10 widows living up and down it. The Applebee house was now occupied by Fred Wiseman, and Roxanna Crabtree had moved away, lots were being sold, and houses built, frequently by older farmers who sold or leased their acreage out in the countryside and found it desirable to move in or near

the village.

One of the families who had followed this trend was the Kingsleys. Actually there were two families, cousins, those of Shubuel and Jerome W. Kingsley. It was the latter who was such a good friend of the Browns and whose daughter, Carrie, was a friend of Hattie. The Kingsley lives represented the story of the growth of Barrington Township, being among the earliest of the Yankee settlers.

When A.T. Andreas published his "History of Cook County, Illinois" in 1884, with sections on all the Townships and their most prominent citizens, Jerome W. Kingsley was written up as follows:

J.W. Kingsley, farmer and Justice of the Peace, P.O. Barrington, was born in Berkshire, Mass. in 1821, the son of Hezekiah and Joanna (Wells) Kingsley. He came to Illinois in 1840, and located at



Millius B. McIntosh, Barrington village president, 1866-84

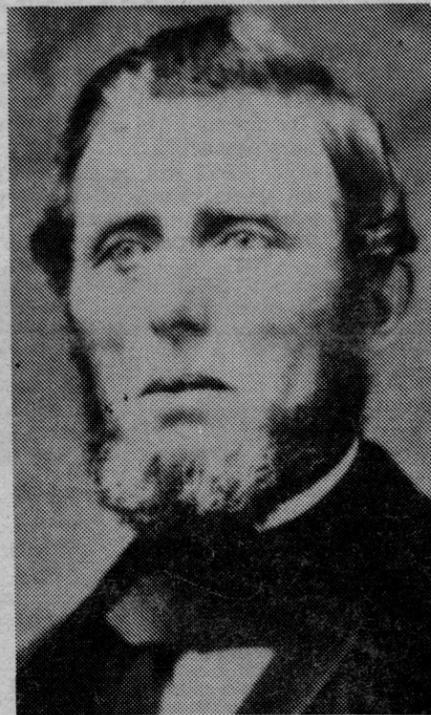
Jerome Kingsley has continued work on the cellar of his new house, opposite the schoolhouse, north of it.

From other sources, we now know that this was 114 W. Lake St., the house which has been rescued from demolition by the Sav-A-House project. When the project began, the house was dated according to available sources at the time as 1889, but subsequently the Octagon House letters have revealed the true date of construction. Jerome Kingsley's Italianate villa, with its beautiful bracketed details and exquisite semi-circular porch was built by Fred Lines, who two years earlier had built his own family's home on West Lake Street, the house where his 96-year-old daughter Jennie, still lives. The millwork in the two homes, with deep moldings, heavy sliding doors between parlors, and beaded screens above doorways, is almost identical. Fred Lines later built the Robertson homes on West Main Street. One remains, the home of Barrington Realty, the other was torn down at the site of the Chuck Hines store.

Carrie Kingsley was active in the Sunday school and young women's bible class which Hattie also attended at the Methodist Episcopal Church. Carrie worked for the Chicago and North Western Railway and traveled into Chicago every day. She eventually became secretary to the president of the railway and the story has been passed down, that if she was a little late in the mornings getting to the station in Barrington, the train would be held for her, the only person known to have received this privilege. The complete time frame of Carrie's work at the Chicago and North Western is unclear, but in a letter of May 16, 1897, Emaline tells Laura:

Carrie Kingsley has had to quit work on account of her eyes, they have troubled her a long time and now are so bad she is home doctoring them. She has used them so much, I don't wonder they gave out, she does a sight of very nice fancy work and works on the train going and coming from Chicago and works at nights after she gets home. She has been wearing glasses lately but they did not save her eyes.

Carrie was 34 years old at the time of this letter. She lived until 1939. In about 1919 she apparently sold the Lake Street house, where she had continued living since her parents died, and moved into Chicago. Her father and mother were buried with her grandparents, Hezekiah and Joanna, at Barrington Center Cemetery, next to the old Methodist Church at Route 68 and Sutton Road.



Jerome Kingsley

Aurora, where he remained two years. In 1842 he removed to Barrington and located on his farm in Section 21 (an area south of Route 68 and east of Sutton Road) where he resided until 1882 when he removed to the Village of Barrington. He still owns the farm, which consists of 124 acres, all under cultivation. He was married in 1845 to Miss Polly T. Peirce, who died in 1847. He was married in 1848 to Miss Harriet Marlett, who bore him one child, Alfred. His wife died in 1853, and he was married in 1857 to Miss Clarendia Applebee, daughter of Gilbert and Betsey A. Applebee, who has born him two children—Willis and Carrie. Willis died in 1877 at the age of 17 years. Mr. Kingsley is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He has held the office of Justice of the Peace for 20 years. He was elected town clerk at the second election after the organization of the township, and held that office for 21 consecutive years. He has been supervisor and collector for several years, and has served in the capacity of assessor for eleven years. He was department revenue assessor for 1861 to 1865.

Jerome Kingsley became president of the Village of Barrington in 1886 and served in that capacity into 1889. In 1891, according to one of Emaline's letters,