

**William M. Loughlin: Early Founder of Lake Forest and Civil War veteran**

Since next year Lake Forest will celebrate its sesquicentennial, it seems appropriate to introduce a key forefather, William M. Loughlin, a contractor and builder who was elected one of the first aldermen when the city was established in 1861.

William M. Loughlin was born in 1824 in Maple Grove, Quebec, Canada. There is no record of how or why he came to Lake Forest. As was common with immigrants to the U.S. and Canada, the spelling of the family name was changed from McLoughlin to Loughlin, although some public records also spell his last name McLaughlin and occasionally Laughlin.

Loughlin was the contractor for the original Lake Forest Academy building located on the present site of the Durand Art Institute at Lake Forest College. It was a white frame structure with green shutters and three stories according to Edward Arpee's 1964 history of Lake Forest. The Academy's frame building burned down in 1879; amazingly, no lives were lost.

Arpee also mentioned Loughlin's own home in his history: "When the Academy building was finished, there were several new houses under construction. William Loughlin... was perhaps the first to build a home for himself, though he may not have been the first one to occupy one. He is said to have moved into his own home on January 1, 1859. His house was erected on the south side of Deerpath [SE corner of Deerpath and Washington] and later moved across the street. It was occupied by Dr. Theodore Proxmire for several decades, in the new location, until it was torn down in 1960, and the land converted to a parking lot for the Presbyterian Church."

Loughlin married Isabelle Jane Miller in Chicago in April, 1853. They had eleven children between 1854 and 1875. The first three children were born in Cook County and tragically their first child, Electa Lucinda, died at eight months. The middle four children were born in Lake Forest, bookended by Kittie Jane in 1859 and Webster LaForest, who was slightly over a year when he died in 1868. The final three children were all born in Cook County. In all, four of the Loughlin children died as infants.

Arpee characterizes Loughlin as a key player in the organization of Lake Forest as a town. "This first town election was conducted in the Lake Forest Hotel [site of the current Triangle Park] on July 16, 1859, for the purpose of establishing officials for an interim government until the charter should be received and approved. Thomas R. Clark was elected President of the Trustees, R.G. Rossiter was elected Secretary and James H. Wright, clerk. William M. Loughlin became Notary Public." He was one of the 29 voters who approved the City Charter at a poll at the Lake Forest Hotel on March 23, 1861. Several weeks later he was elected an alderman from the second ward. At the first meeting of the city council, April 13, 1861 he was named city marshal. According to

Arpee, the city marshal's duties also included serving as town policeman. Loughlin also was the postmaster from 1866-69.

Shortly after Lake Forest became a town, the Civil War broke out and Loughlin volunteered for the Union Army. He was the only man from Lake Forest to join the 96<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry, Company C as a 2nd Lieutenant on September 5, 1862. He was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1863 and mustered out on August 12, 1864. (The county military records record his name as William M. McLaughlin.)

According to *A History of Lake County, Illinois*, edited by John J. Halsey in 1912, William Loughlin led an effort to annex the northern sections of Deerfield Township into Lake Forest and Shields Township. In a "Battle of the Pen" he was challenged by Patrick Doyle, who had been a supervisor of the town of Deerfield. Doyle had been educated for the priesthood, but became a farmer and he wanted nothing to do with Lake Forest's attempt to steal land from the farmers. All through the spring of 1869 a battle was waged in the local paper, the Lake County Patriot, between Loughlin and Doyle whose pen name was "Justitia."

Though Loughlin backed the move to annex the northern sections of Deerfield Township, the measure was defeated. The Lake County supervisors turned down the request because a petition for the change was only signed by 35 citizens while the opposition gathered 340 signatures.

Excerpts from the following poem by a clever farm boy in his twenties named Michael Farley capture some of the battle between these two individuals and communities. Note McLoughlin is referred to as Mac.

"A Summing Up"

"A mighty war has late begun  
'Tween Mac of Shields and Deerfield's son [Doyle],  
And each has taken to the field  
Resolved to die before he yield  
The way this mighty war arose:-  
Justitia, famous for his prose,  
Accused Lake Forest in her pride  
Of trying old Deerfield to divide;  
And in a bitter fierce oration,  
Defied that wealthy corporation.

...

The one they chose right well they knew  
Had courage bold, His [Loughlin's] heart was true;  
For three long years had worn the blue,  
Had rebels fought on southern plain,  
Was willing now to fight again,

Now that the Union was restored,  
To try the pen in place of sword  
So down he sat, and seized his pen;  
Lord! Didn't Justitia catch it then?  
At his opponent now he hammers  
Outraging spelling books and grammars;  
And in his headlong haste and hurry  
He sadly maimed poor Lindley Murray [a writer of school textbooks and grammars]

...

And Loughlin, you return again  
And try your chisel and your plane.  
You'll find your hammer and your saw  
Will pay you more than quoting law.  
So be a good and honest creature  
And don't go on perverting nature,  
For I feel certain and quite sure  
You'll never thrive in literature."

Loughlin and others eventually won that battle, however – Deerfield Township is now indeed part of Lake Forest. Loughlin died August 20, 1913; he and his wife and some of their children are buried in Rosehill Cemetery, Chicago.