

The History Corner By Beth Carvey

John H. Hauberg

With the vision of creating a new state park local philanthropist John Hauberg began a campaign to persuade the Illinois State legislature to purchase 200 hundred acres of land in Rock Island. The year was 1921. He spent his time and money, used his influence, and wrote countless letters to state officials to accomplish this goal. His hard work was rewarded in 1927 when the State created Black Hawk State Park (now Historic Site). Residents of the Quad Cities owe a debt of gratitude to this extraordinary man.

John Hauberg was born November 22, 1869 on his father's farm just north of Hillsdale. His childhood education was limited as he was often needed to work on the farm. Hungry for knowledge, he taught himself by memorizing documents and reading as many books as he could.

In 1890, anxious for life experience, Hauberg headed to the American West, working his way across the continent. For a time he worked on a logging railroad crew in Missouri, at a saw mill in Arkansas, and as a cowboy in Wyoming. He returned home in 1893.

In 1894, Hauberg received a degree from Duncan's Business College in Davenport. He enrolled at Northern Indiana Normal College, receiving a BS in 1896 and a BA in 1897. In 1900, he graduated from the University of Michigan School of Law. In 1901, Hauberg returned to Moline and established a law practice.

Hauberg married Susanne Denkmann June 29, 1911. Mrs. Hauberg brought many business interests to her marriage. Her father co-founded the Weyerhaeuser and Denkmann Lumber Company. Hauberg abandoned his law practice in 1914, taking several executive board positions and serving as president of the Lumber Company. Mr. and Mrs. Hauberg were generous with their time and money and were involved in many civic and church activities.

Hauberg was a gifted historian. He was founder and president of the Rock Island County Historical Society. He interviewed many local residents and recorded their memories of early Rock Island County. These interviews fill three file drawers at the Historical Society Library and are of immeasurable use to today's researchers.

Hauberg was fascinated by Native American history. He documented the locations of the Great Sauk Trail between Rock Island and Detroit, the Indian and Military Trail between Rock Island and Oquawka, and the Black Hawk War camp sites of Abraham Lincoln's company. In 1916, Hauberg traveled to the Sac and Fox reservation in Oklahoma. There he met Black Hawk's descendants and formed a lifelong friendship with Mary Mack, Black Hawk's great great granddaughter. At the same time Hauberg became acquainted with the Meskwaki in Tama, Iowa. In 1940, he was formally adopted into their Nation.

In 1921, Hauberg began to petition State legislators to purchase the land that now comprises Black Hawk State Historic Site. He recruited several local, influential people to help him. As a part of his campaign he wrote and published a 78 page booklet about the history of the Sauk and Meskwaki Nations and the Black Hawk Watch Tower area. The booklet was distributed to State legislators. In 1927, Hauberg personally addressed the Legislature requesting the purchase of the land to make the state park. The

Legislature responded with a unanimous vote of approval. In July 1927, the State appropriated \$200,000 to purchase the 200 acres that comprises Black Hawk State Park.

State officials wanted to build a Native American history museum at the Park and Hauberg agreed to donate a portion of his personal collection of Native American artifacts. The museum opened in May 1939. Though the building was erected by the Civilian Conservation Corps five years earlier, Hauberg personally paid for the installation of the electricity, plumbing, and heating. He also purchased the cabinets to house the artifacts. He brought two Meskwaki from Tama to construct a bark covered summer long house and a winter wickiup for the museum exhibit. Hauberg contacted the Works Progress Administration office in Chicago and commissioned the painting of two large murals depicting the seasonal activities of the Sauk and Meskwaki. He intended that they serve as a backdrop for the museum exhibits. Alas, the murals proved to be too large and later were placed in the Black Hawk Room, in the center of the Watch Tower Lodge.

In 1940, Hauberg organized and financed the first Labor Day Pow Wow which grew into a popular, annual event. For the next 44 years the Sac and Fox came from Oklahoma and the Meskwaki from Tama to dance, drum, sing, and reconnect with their ancestral home.

Mr. Hauberg's final public appearance was at the Labor Day Pow Wow in 1955. He died two weeks later on September 13, 1955. He was 85 years old.

Thanks to this humble farm boy from Hillsdale, we have a protected historic site enjoyed by thousands each year.