

Trace Return

Myron G. Stolp, B. C. E. '72

December 29, 1848 - - - - - March 3, 1906

Myron Greeley Stolp was born in Aurora, Illinois, on December 29, 1848. He was the son of Joseph George Stolp, a descendant of Everardus Bogardus and Anneke Jans. Anneke Jans migrated from Holland to New Amsterdam in 1639, with her husband, Roeloff Jansen. He died soon after obtaining a grant of 62 acres, between Broadway and the Hudson River, and she married Bogardus, Dominie of the Dutch Church and the farm became known as the "Bowerie Farm" and the "Dominie's Bowerie". In 1654, after the Dominie's death, Anneke secured a patent to the farm in her own name and later removed to Albany, where she died, leaving eight children. August 29, 1664, when the Dutch, under Stuyvesant, surrendered New Amsterdam to the English and it was renamed New York, the English claimed that the Dominie's Bowerie was government property, confiscated it, and called it the "Duke's Farm" and "King's Farm", and by letters patent of the province it passed to Trinity Church, which still owns the greater part of it and derives an immense income from it. In 1671, a conveyance was obtained to Governor Lovelace from all of the children of Anneke Jans but one. The descendants of this non-conformer still claim the property and have made it the subject of voluminous litigation.

Myron Stolp's mother, Temperance Dustin, was descended from Thomas Dustin brickmaker of Haverhill, and Hannah Dustin, who with her babe, was carried off by the Indians in March 1696 from Haverhill, Mass., to an island in the Merrimac, near Concord, N. H. where the babe was killed against a tree; and whence Hannah, and two other captives, made their escape by tomahawking their ten captors in a drunken sleep. Monuments to Hannah stand in the market place of Concord and the City Hall Park of Haverhill.

Myron Stolp's father, Joseph G. Stolp, born in Marcellus, N.Y. in 1812, and trained as a wool carder, migrated to Aurora, Illinois in 1836, where he found about 18 houses, and preempted the island in the Fox River, now known as "Stolp's Island", around which the flourishing city has grown. There he built dams, developed water-power, established woolen and other factories, invested ~~xxxxxxx~~ in enterprises promoting the welfare of the town, and with liberal spirit donated the sites for the City Hall, for the Y.M.C.A. building and for the Memorial Hall for the Civil War Veterans.

Aurora was early an intellectual community; its Seminary, chartered in 1855, took high rank; a public library was maintained under a special charter and supported partly by membership fees and partly by proceeds of Lyceum lectures by Emerson, Phillips, Curtis, and others for years before the system of public libraries maintained by taxes was established.

Myron Stolp grew up in an atmosphere of high thinking. His education began in the Aurora public schools, continuing in a private school in Batavia Ill., then in Clark Seminary in Aurora and in 1867 he entered the preparatory department of Oberlin College; and then, at the opening of Cornell University he came to Ithaca and entered ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in the course in Mechanic Arts remaining through the full four years and was graduated with the degree of B.C.E., June 1872.

Cornell attracted him because of the prominence given the sciences and the opportunity to study mechanical engineering. He had always been of an inventive turn of mind and while at the University, made such changes and improvements in his rooms in Morrill Hall that it attracted the attention of Goldwin Smith who wrote a letter about them which was published in a Toronto paper. He also constructed an attachment for a piano so that the keys of the instrument could be struck the same as the bells of the chimes and this device, together with the assistance of O'Neill (the first Master of the Chimes, who graduated in 1870) he gained the appointment to serve as his successor, which position he held satisfactorily while he remained at Cornell.

He was a member of the Kappa Delta, the Sophomore society founded by '72 men, and also was one of the '10-30's, well known in its day. In the Cadets, he was appointed First Sergeant, Company B. 2nd Battalion, as a Junior and as a Captain in his Senior year.

When he returned to Aurora, after being graduated, he became 1st Lt. of the Aurora Light Guards and, in the absence of the Captain, led the Company into active service when the State troops were called out to quell the riots among the miners at Braidwood, Illinois.

His father's woolen mills and later, the Aurora Silver Plate factory were the scenes of his early business endeavors. There he perfected many labor saving devices; his inventions being many and practical, but his interests being scientific rather than practical, others reaped any financial benefits accruing from his labors.

On Thanksgiving day, November 26, 1874, in Aurora, he married Anna Sumner Gilbert, daughter of Samuel Whiting and Firilla Sumner (Cook) Gilbert of Aurora. His widow and their three children survive him. The children are Cleora Anna Stolp, now Mrs. Claude R. Marvin; Samuel Sherer Stolp and Lillian Adelaide Stolp, now Mrs. Donald B. Fishburn.

In 1891 he was appointed City Civil Engineer of Aurora and during the following 12 years he improved roadways, regraded walks, drew the plans for the first sewers and was responsible for the very efficient system installed.

He was Surveyor of Kane County, Ill. for a number of years and engineer of the Chicago Drainage Canal at Lockport, Illinois from 1905 to 1906.

Fraternally, he was a member of the Elks.

His chief joy was found in the study of scientific subjects, about which he often talked at meetings of various Chicago scientific and engineering societies. He contributed articles to the Scientific American and kindred magazines, sometimes receiving favorable editorial comment. The happiest days of his life were when he found his "Theory of the Injector", on which he had talked and written for years, accepted by engineering societies in Chicago and New York City and resolutions adopted by them in support of it which was to change, not the working of the injector, but all text-book statements in regard to it, and would further result in a saving of fuel.

These societies, by petitions and letters, asked the Carnegie Institute in Washington D.C. to make a grant "In Aid of Research" to fully investigate this theory. Armed with these letters and resolutions, an appointment had been made to meet Dr. Pritchett, President of the Institute, to discuss its merits when Mr. Stolp was taken suddenly ill in New York City and died of pneumonia in St. Luke's Hospital on March 30, 1906.

His daughter, Cleora, was able to reach his bedside a few hours before he passed away and accompany the body home. She found her father in full vigor of mind and happy in the prospect of seeing the fruition of his life work.