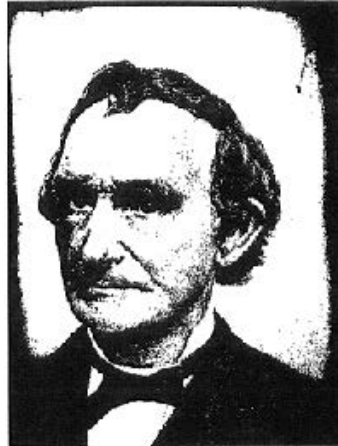


# THOMAS STILLWELL HUNTLEY



Born March 27, 1807, in Cortland County, New York, Thomas Stillwell Huntley grew up in Ellicottville, New York, where he established himself as a hard-working man on his father's farms and in his father's many businesses.

At age thirty-nine he migrated west to Illinois with his wife, Eliza, and three children, Charles, Harriet and William. Huntley bought a 640 acre section of farm land at what is now Conley Road and Rt. 47 and a few years later purchased two additional 40-acre parcels north of that tract. He paid \$1.25 an acre. He purchased other pieces of property around this area as well.

Learning the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad line was to go through south of his land holdings, Huntley purchased 80 acres along the proposed railroad line.

From these holdings, he generously provided a site for the train station (Site #2), opened a small general store, sold lots for businesses and residences, earmarked three lots for churches (Sites #4, #5, #6), set aside another piece to be the town square park

(Site #3), donated land for a cemetery (Site #7) and thus established Huntley Station, which also was known as Huntley Grove, and later Huntley in his honor.

The first train came through September 5, 1851 and the town of Huntley became a shipping center for butter, eggs, milk and other farm and dairy products. The Village of Huntley prospered.

In December of 1852, Huntley's youngest son, William, died at the age of fourteen. William was buried in the town cemetery, land donated by his father.

Thomas Huntley was a very religious man and was a founding and active member of the First Congregational Church. He served the church as an elected trustee and as a deacon. He served on the church finance committee and donated much money, and even a piano, to the church. We know that he re-membered the Congregational Church in his will.

Huntley was an active, public-spirited man, but never aspired to elected office. The only office he ever held was as the first supervisor of Grafton Township, having been chosen in the first election in 1850.

As he watched the village grow, Huntley remained a wealthy farmer, accumulating large amounts of property here and in other states.

He traveled extensively, from Atlantic to Pacific, by rail and by wagon team.

He was said to be a cheerful and pleasant man, always in good health and good spirits. He enjoyed the friendship of others. He often lent people money, never charging interest. He trusted people and they trusted him and he never lost money.

T.S. Huntley's first wife, Eliza, died in 1873 and in 1876 he married Emma Annette Brinkerhoff. At the time, he was sixty-nine and she was thirty-four. Two years later, at the age of seventy-one, Thomas Huntley became father to his youngest son, Thomas S. Huntley Jr., and the only one of his children to survive him. Thomas's second wife, Emma, died in 1882, leaving Thomas (then seventy-five) with a son not quite four years old.

Thomas Huntley died May 21, 1894 at the age of eighty-seven. His young son was fifteen years of age.

Thomas Huntley was mourned not only as the town's founder, but also as a much loved and well-respected citizen. The First Congregational Church was filled to capacity with mourners and many had to remain outside.

Thomas Huntley's obituary stated that his "kindness and generosity will always be remembered so long as the history of this town remains." In prophetic commentary the obituary concluded saying, Thomas Huntley's "name shall be spoken hundreds of times daily for many generations to come." The Village of Huntley is one of only two towns (Cary) in McHenry County named for its founder.

Thomas Huntley and his family are buried in the Huntley Cemetery on Dean Street.

