

Coppell, Texas, USA



George Coppell  
(1838-1901)



Coppell Depot in Texas  
(track completed 1888)



Coppell, TX was a stop on the St. Louis - Southwestern RR that stretched from Gatesville, Texas to St. Louis, Missouri



Train hauling cotton

Coppell, Ontario, Canada



Herbert Coppell  
Son of George Coppell  
(1874-1931)



Coppell Station in Ontario  
(track completed 1914)



Coppell, ON was a stop on the Algoma Central RR that stretched from Sault-Ste-Marie 280 miles north to Hearst, ON.



Train hauling lumber

# A Tale of Two Cities Named Coppell

A Comparative  
Historical Analysis of  
Coppell, Texas, USA  
&  
Coppell, Ontario, Canada

By

Philip LaBerge

## **A Tale of Two Cities Named Coppell**

### **A Comparative Historical Analysis of Coppell, Texas & Coppell, Ontario**

Prepared in May, 2017 by Philip LaBerge

In a paper written by Wheelice (Pete) Wilson, Jr. and presented to the Coppell (Texas) Historical Society on April 10, 2010 entitled *Information about Coppell's Probable Namesake, George Coppell*, he stated that:

*"There was another town named Coppell, in Canada. The area still exists, but it is not a town anymore, just a residential area. Unfortunately, the area is almost all French-speaking, and so communication about the place has been sparse. A letter from a nearby municipal office suggested that it was the railroad that influenced the creation of the original town and its name. One might speculate that George Coppell had business dealing with that railroad, but no evidence has been found."*

As a French speaker, I have researched the history of the town of Coppell, Ontario and have communicated with Danielle Coulombe who is the Archivist & Professor of History at the nearby Hearst University. As a supplement to this paper, I have translated a paper written by one of her graduate students, Olivier Groleau, which is entitled, *Village Disparue Coppell (Lost Town Coppell)*. See Appendix B.

Unlike Dickens' classic novel *A Tale of Two Cities* in which he compares the lives of those living in the cities of London and Paris, in this paper I have provided a comparison of two towns that share the same name, Coppell.

Despite being separated by 1,330 miles, the two cities share a similar history of immigrants moving westward to settle the land and enduring hardships. Both towns established communities founded on strong faith in a frontier that demanded hard work to survive. In Texas, the flat expanse and rich soil of the Grape Vine Prairie provided a fertile planting ground for cotton. In Canada, seemingly endless forests stretched northward into Ontario.



Texas' cotton fields & Ontario's Lumber

As time passed, the two towns, which both began as a small collection of farms on a new railroad line in vastly undeveloped territories, evolved quite differently.

Coppell, Texas was named after Gorge Coppell in 1892. Coppell, Ontario was named after Herbert Coppell, his son, in 1914, some 22 years later.

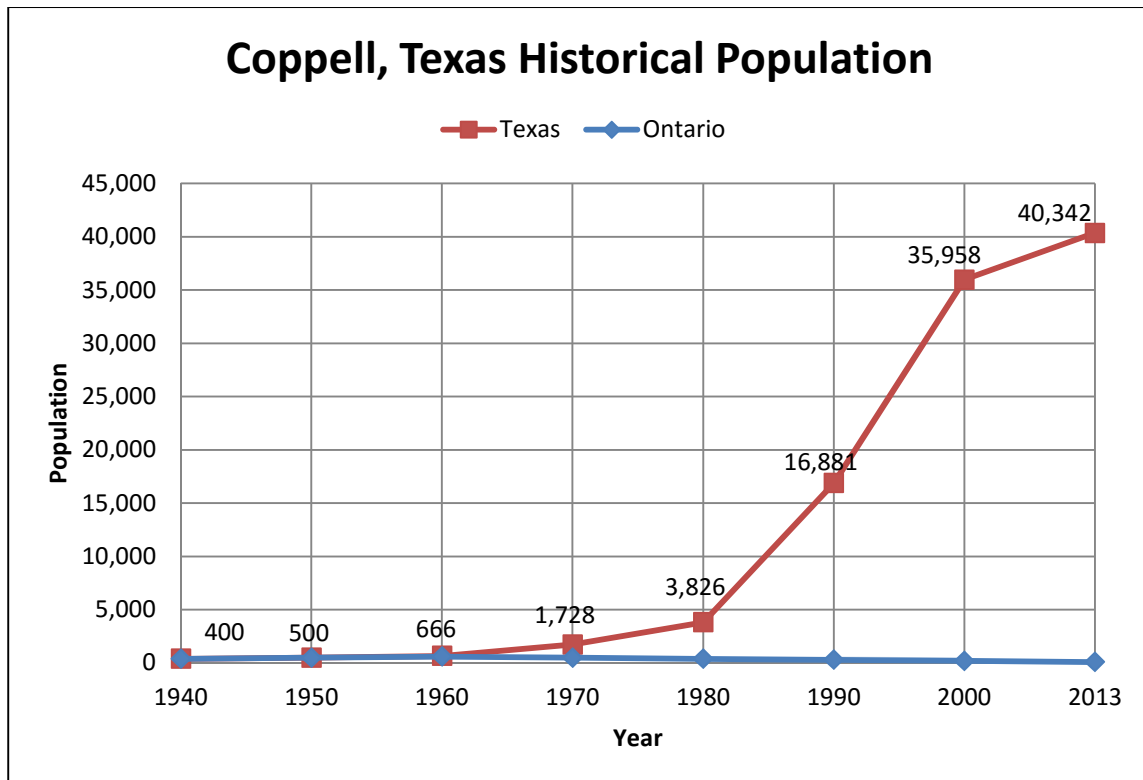


Herbert Coppell is shown in the above photo standing to the right of J. Frater Taylor, the head of the Algoma Central Railroad (ACR) as they inspected construction of the railroad line in March of 1910.

Both cities remained small rural towns up until the 1930's and had a population of only 400 or so people. By 1960, however, Coppell, Texas' population had risen to almost 700 while Coppell, Ontario hit a peak population of about 600. From that point on, the population of Coppell, Texas took off while that of its northern cousin began to decline. While growing cotton and transporting it on the Cotton Belt Railway sustained Coppell, Texas in its early history, the development of

other modes of transportation would fundamentally shape the town's future. In 1974, DFW International Airport was built on its southwest border and spurred the town's most dramatic growth in the 1980's. As the region grew, roads and highways connected the City to what would be referred to as the DFW Metroplex with DFW International Airport and the City of Coppell, Texas at its geographic center.

Coppell, Texas also benefited from strong civic leadership that was capable of recognizing and planning for the future growth of the City. Now in 2017, Coppell, Texas is a highly sought after place to live with a population of over 40,000. Its parks, schools and many facilities are exceptional, its businesses are prospering and the property values of its residents are rising rapidly.



The fate of Coppell, Ontario, however, has been quite different. While the two cities had roughly the same population up until the 1960's, after that, unfortunately, Coppell, Ontario's began to steadily decline.



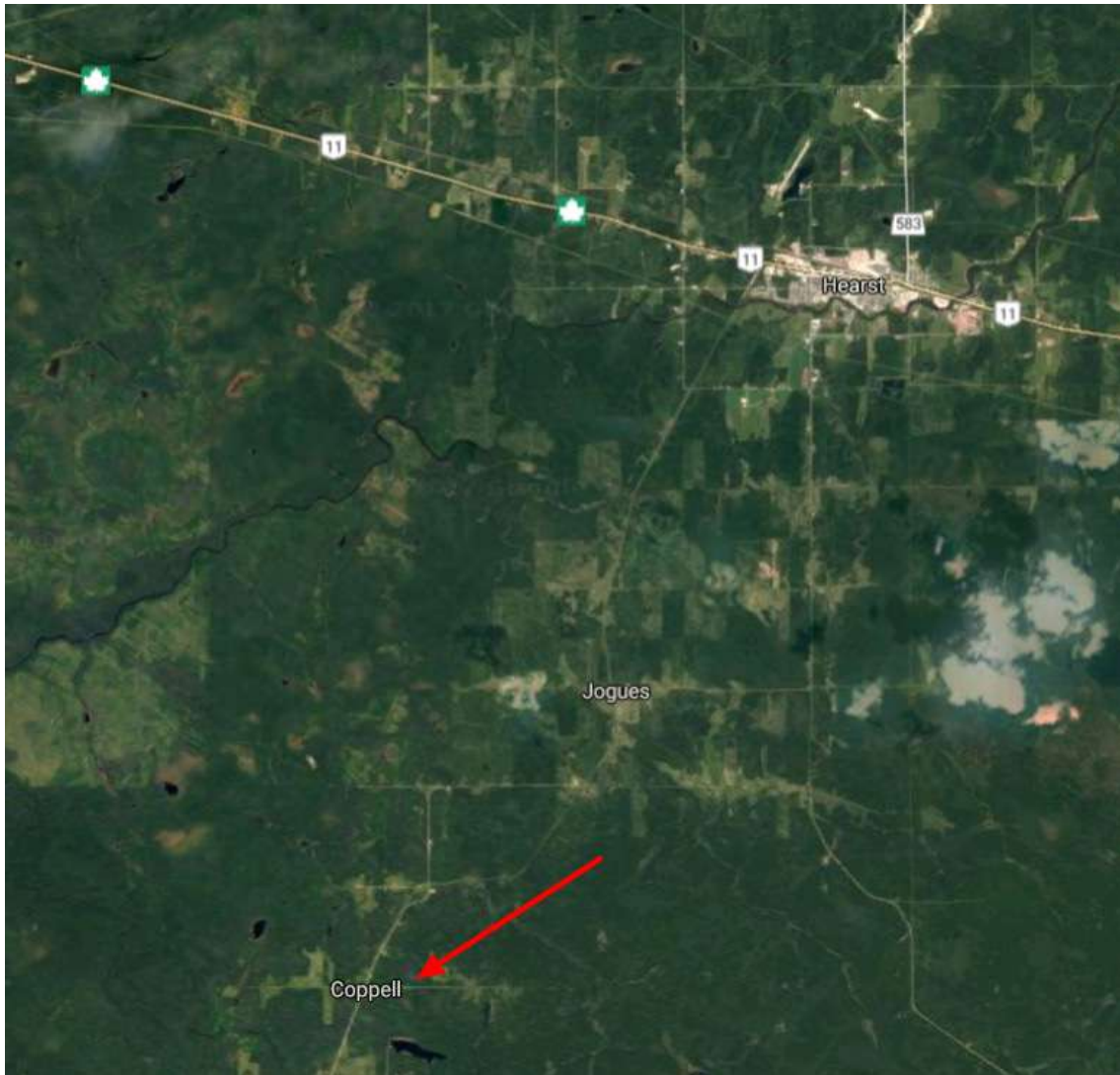
In Coppell, Texas, cotton farms slowly disappeared over the years and the two cotton gins shut down. They were replaced on one half of the city with large warehouse distribution facilities. Those facilities benefit from being in an international free trade zone close to DFW International Airport. They also fund a large portion of the City's tax base. The other half of the city has become predominantly residential subdivisions and small businesses. While freight trains still run along what was the Cotton Belt Railway, in the near future the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) will be building a commuter light rail line along it using the existing track bed. The light rail line will connect Coppell to DFW International Airport, and the rest of the DART network.



Aerial view of Coppell, Texas courtesy of Google Maps


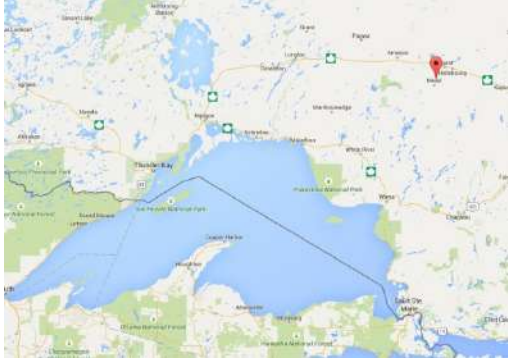
In Coppell, Ontario, the lumber industry began to slowly decline. The railway which was built to transport lumber to the south was replaced by a tourist train. In 2015, the tourist train lost federal funding and Coppell, Ontario currently is without rail service. Hopefully funding will be found in the future to restore rail service to the area. The neighboring town of Hearst has grown to over 5,000 and

is supported by a large university, the surviving lumber industry and its location on Kings Highway 11 which crosses northern Ontario. Coppell, Ontario is now just a small collection of homes.






Aerial view of Coppell, Ontario courtesy of Google Maps


The table of on the following pages compares the two cities and the two people that they were named after, George Coppell and his son Herbert.


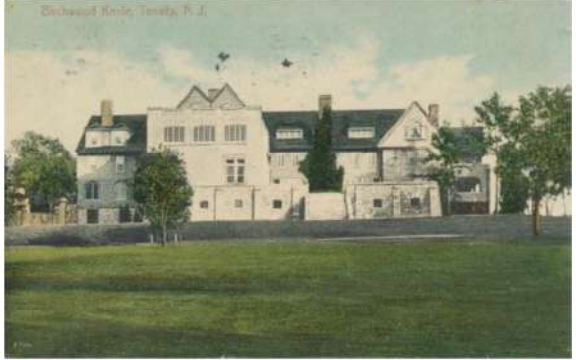


Name	<b>Coppell, Texas, USA</b>	<b>Coppell, Ontario, Canada</b>
GPS	32°44'19"N 96°53'21"W	49°32'10"N 83°49'45"W
Nearby Towns	Approximately half way between Dallas and Fort Worth, north of DFW Airport	17 miles southwest of Hearst, Ontario and 280 miles by train north of Sault Saint-Marie, Ontario at Lake Superior.
		
County	Dallas & Denton County	A dispersed rural community classified as an unincorporated place in geographic Lowther Township, Cochrane District in Northeastern Ontario, Canada
Population: 2016	40,310	Less than 100. It was once as high as 500 to 600. Now counted as part of the Unorganized North Cochrane District which covers 50,852 square miles and had a total population of 3,064 in 2011.
2016 High/Low	Aug=107°F/Jan=14°F	June=89°F/Jan= minus 33°F
Languages Spoken at Home	English=72%, Spanish=9%, Other=19%	French=87%, English=10%, Other=3%, Bilingual=69%
Namesake of:	George Coppell	Herbert Coppell (son)




Name	Coppell, Texas, USA	Coppell, Ontario, Canada
Photo		
Birth/Death Date	1838 - 4/19/1901	3/10/1874 - 10/30/1931
Birth/Death Location	Liverpool, England/New York, NY	Tenafly, NJ/Tenafly, NJ
Marriage Date	10/15/1862	7/22/1897
Photo	 <p data-bbox="399 1680 850 1759">Early photo of Helen Hoffman Gillingham</p>	<p data-bbox="943 987 1536 1123">No photo of Georgia (Georgie) Estelle Myers can be found. See Appendix A below for further details.</p>



Name	Coppell, Texas, USA	Coppell, Ontario, Canada
	 <p><i>Helen Hoffman Gillingham Coppell</i></p>	
Wife	Helen Hoffman Gillingham	Georgia(Georgie) Estelle Myers
Wife's Birth/Death	1844-1894	1869-1933
Wife's Social Status	Respected New Orleans Family	Daughter of tobacco company founder Liggett & Myers
Children's Names	Elizabeth Cordelia, Helen Gillingham, George, Jr., Mary, Arthur, Edyth, Herbert, Florence, and Grace.	Stepson: George M. Church
Company of Employ	Maitland & Coppell, Inc.	Maitland & Coppell, Inc.
Railroad on which Town Named	St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railroad, in 1891 becomes the St. Louis & Southwestern and called The Cotton Belt Line	Algoma Central Railroad
Year Chartered	1888	1899
Year Railroad Built	1888	While the railroad was chartered in 1899 and began construction, it did not reach Coppell and its termination at Hearst until 1914
Year Town Named	1892	1914

Name	Coppell, Texas, USA	Coppell, Ontario, Canada
Mansions	 <p data-bbox="337 655 750 714"><i>George Coppell's first summer mansion in Tenaflly, NJ, called Birchwood Knole.</i></p>	 <p data-bbox="974 634 1513 703"><i>Birchwood Knole after Herbert expanded it to 68 rooms, before it was demolished in 1925.</i></p>
Mansions	 <p data-bbox="324 1192 954 1222"><i>The Towers, George Coppell's second Tenaflly mansion.</i></p>	 <p data-bbox="977 1423 1448 1537"><i>Cotswald, built by Herbert Coppell, converted to apartments in 1935, still standing.</i></p>

Name	Coppell, Texas, USA	Coppell, Ontario, Canada
Mansions		<div data-bbox="959 247 1466 871"></div> <p data-bbox="959 877 1466 913">Mi Sueño, Pasadena, CA, built in 1915</p>

## **Description of Appendices**

As a supplement to this paper, the following appendices are provided for additional reading.

Appendix: A – **Banking, Railroads & Wealth:** The Coppel family amassed a huge fortune through the reorganization of railroads during a period in the United States called the Gilded Age (1870's to 1900.) They built lavish mansions in Tenafly, New Jersey and lived in a manner befitting their social class which was among the most affluent of the era. In 1915, Herbert Coppel built a mansion that was the largest of its day in Pasadena, California. Details of my visit to that mansion provide a glimpse into the life they lived.

Appendix: B – **Village Disparue Coppel (Lost Town Coppel):** A paper written on the history of the town of Coppel, Ontario gives insight into the place, its history and its people.

## **Railroads**

Appendix: C - **The History of the Cotton Belt Line:** The railroad line that was built through our town in 1888 was just a small section of The Cotton Belt Line that stretched from Gatesville, Texas to St. Louis, Missouri.

Appendix: D – **The History of the Lake Superior Corporation and the Algoma Central Railroad:** Among the major investments made by Maitland, Coppel & Company was in the Lake Superior Corporation and the Algoma Railroad that ran north to Coppel, Ontario.

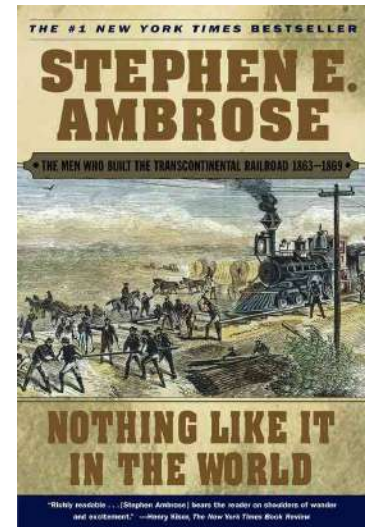
Appendix: E – **The History of the Wisconsin Central Railroad:** In 1898, George Coppel was the chairman of the reorganization committee of the New Wisconsin Central Railway. Herbert Coppel would later become its director while also a director of the Lake Superior Corporation.



## Appendix: A – Banking, Railroads & Wealth

Before the start of the Civil War, one of the great issues of the day was whether the Transcontinental Railroad, which would be the first to span the country, would be built along a northern or southern route. Like the issue of slavery, the issue divided the nation. It pitted the industrialized North which relied on the railroad as its primary mode for transportation of goods and materials as compared to the agrarian South that relied on the steam boat for transportation of goods and its primary commodity, cotton.

So divisive was the issue in congress that it was not resolved until after the South succeeded and the northern route was chosen. The building of the Transcontinental Railroad is one of the great stories of this country and it was orchestrated by a group of uniquely talented, powerful and wealthy individuals. The book *Nothing Like It In The World*, written by Stephen E. Ambrose, is a fascinating book and is even better, in my opinion, listened to as an audio book read by the author.



While George Coppel was not involved in the building of the Transcontinental Railroad which was completed in 1869, after he moved from New Orleans around 1867 to Tanafly, New Jersey he began working for one of the oldest banking firms on Wall Street. The firm Maitland, Phelps & Company specialized in reorganizing railroads and he quickly became enormously wealthy and respected in the business. By 1896, the firm changed its name to Maitland, Coppel & Company.

Little is known about the personal life of Coppel family and the mansions that they built in Tanafly, New Jersey beyond the paper written by Wheelice (Pete) Wilson. Birchwood Knoll and The Towers mansions were built by George Coppel. Birchwood Knoll was later demolished and rebuilt by his son Herbert. Herbert also built The Cotswald mansion. In 1915 he built a mansion in Pasadena, California as a winter residence which was named *Mi Sueño*, meaning My Dream in Spanish. It was designed by the renowned architect, Bertram Goodhue in what was called The Spanish Revival style.

[illegible]

[https://issuu.com/arroyomonthly/docs/am\\_0408](https://issuu.com/arroyomonthly/docs/am_0408)

Photo of me with the owner,  
Gary Cowles in November, 2016.



In *The Herbert Coppel House, A History* there is a paragraph with the heading: *The World And Community in 1915* , the paper states:

*“While Europe continued to suffer the devastation of World War I, the middle and upper classes in the United States still clung to the last vestiges of Edwardian refinement and respectability under President Woodrow Wilson.”*

While I can only find one photo of Herbert Coppel and none of his wife, Georgia (Georgie) Estelle Myers Coppel, we do have clues about the way that they lived from the information that we have about *Mi Sueño*. If you have watched the series *Downton Abbey* on PBS, the Coppells would have easily fit into the high society portrayed in it. The series depicted high society between the years 1912 to 1925. When it was built in 1915, the Coppel mansion was the largest in Pasadena.

On the following page is one of many articles that appeared in the local papers.



# MANSION TO BE MARVEL OF ART

**Plans for Herbert Coppel  
Residence Filed for  
Big Permit.**

## **BUILDING RECORD AGAIN SURPASSED.**

**Spanish Renaissance Style  
Is Followed in Design  
for Westside.**

Filled with novel features, the plans for the magnificent mansion to be built on South Grand avenue at the edge of the Arroyo Seco for Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Coppel of New York, have been filed today with the building department of the city and the permit will be issued tomorrow. The total cost of the building, exclusive of furnishings, will be in excess of \$70,000, it is said, swelling the building record for October to about \$200,000, and passing the record set by last October by over \$60,000.

B. C. Goodhue of New York is the architect. He is also the architect of the new Episcopal cathedral to be built in Los Angeles, and the home to be built here has a strong touch of the cathedral type of architecture, being pure Spanish renaissance. In fact, the structure would fit in beautifully with the architecture of the San Diego exposition.

The plans for the structure are filed by Thomas C. Marlowe of Los Angeles, who has built many of the most magnificent homes in Southern California. Some idea of the elaborateness of the structure can be obtained from the fact that the sub-contract for the plumbing alone runs to \$11,600.

The mansion, which has one of the most novel ground plans of any ever filed with the building department, has a total frontage of 194 feet. It can be likened in shape to a letter Z, though that does not quite give the style of the structure for the main building is 115 feet long and the southerly wing has a frontage of some eighty feet.

The front main entrance is approached over heavy flagging such as the mission fathers delighted to use, and several steps lead down to the "stairway" room, the vista across this apartment disclosing a magnificent grand staircase which divides at a landing, branching to right and left. There is a broad and deep entrance from the other side for those coming in automobiles and this flagged platform is unroofed.

It is in the details of the structure that the wonderful beauty of the home will be found. Heavy carving is used freely, as is the case in all Spanish renaissance structures. The doors will be real works of art, while nothing outside of the San Diego exposition ornamentation can be found in California showing a greater variety of delicate grill work and Spanish treatment of detail.

The building is to be two stories in height and its exterior finish is in stucco. The roof is in Spanish tile and the handsome grounds will be made to match the style of architecture which predominates.

About a year will be consumed in completing all of the details of the building.



When they traveled from Tenafly, New Jersey to Pasadena, they did so in their own Pullman cars



Photo of the Coppel's Pullman cars

They owned the most modern vehicles of the day. On their estate, they had a two story, seven room garage which housed their many automobiles and had quarters for their chauffeur and gardener.

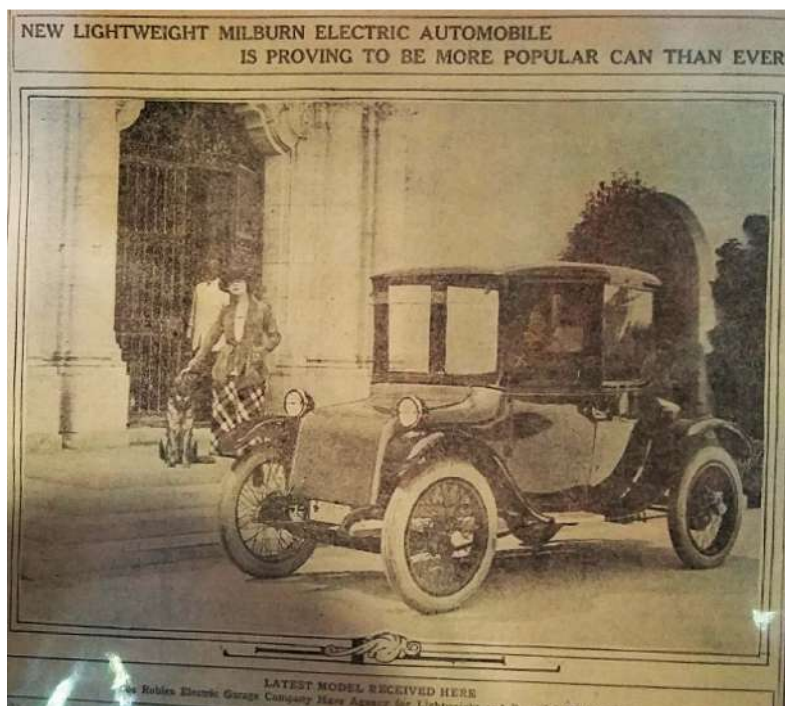


Photo of a 1915 Milburn Light Electric Model 22 taken in front of the Coppel residence.

The film *Wealth* was filmed at the Coppell residence in 1921 and is representative of the way the Coppells would have lived. Silent films ended six years later with the introduction of talking movies.

Jesse L. Lasky presents

## ETHEL CLAYTON

In  
William D. Taylor's  
PRODUCTION  
"Wealth".  
*A Paramount Picture.*



A MID Greenwich Village gaiety she struggled for wealth and fame.

Until, wearied of poverty, she married a millionaire.

Then began the real struggle—for love and happiness! It's a story that goes deep into the heart of a woman, and brings out the tenderest truths of life.

The gay life of New York's Bohemia put on the screen for the first time!

**A Paramount Picture**

By  
**COSMO HAMILTON**

Photoplay by  
**JULIA CRAWFORD IVERS**

3-Column Ad Above



*Ethel Clayton*  
Paramount Pictures

**Ethel Clayton's Wonderful Eyelashes—**  
long and curling—give a shimmering fringe for her eyes and give them that wistful appeal which adds so greatly to her beauty and magnetism. Beautiful Eyelashes and well-defined eyebrows—how wonderfully they bring out the natural beauty of the eyes! They are now within the reach of all women who will use only a little.


**Lash-Brow-Ine**

For a short time, thousands of thousands of women, prominent in social circles, as well as stage and screen stars, use and enthusiastically recommend this Lash-Brow-Ine cosmetic, which magnifies and preserves the growth of Eyelashed Eyebrows, making them long, thick and wavy. Why not you? TWO SIZES: 50c and \$1.00. AT YOUR DEALER or send check to plain cover, no receipt of goods. SATISFACTION ASSURED.

It will be the greatest step in cosmetic advancement in 1922. Lash-Brow-Ine is made by the same firm that is giving the greatest help in the history of "The Lash" and "The Brow" since the first of Lash-Brow-Ine was introduced.

**MAYBELL LABORATORIES**  
4512 N. Broadway, New York

"THE LASH-BROW-IN-E AD."



JESSE L. LASKY PRESENTS

## ETHEL CLAYTON

in William D. Taylor's Production  
"WEALTH"

By Cosmo Hamilton · Photoplay by Julia Crawford Ivers

*It's a Paramount Picture.*

© FAMOUS PLAYERS-LASKY CORP. 1921





Ethel Clayton at the entrance to the Herbert Coppel residence.

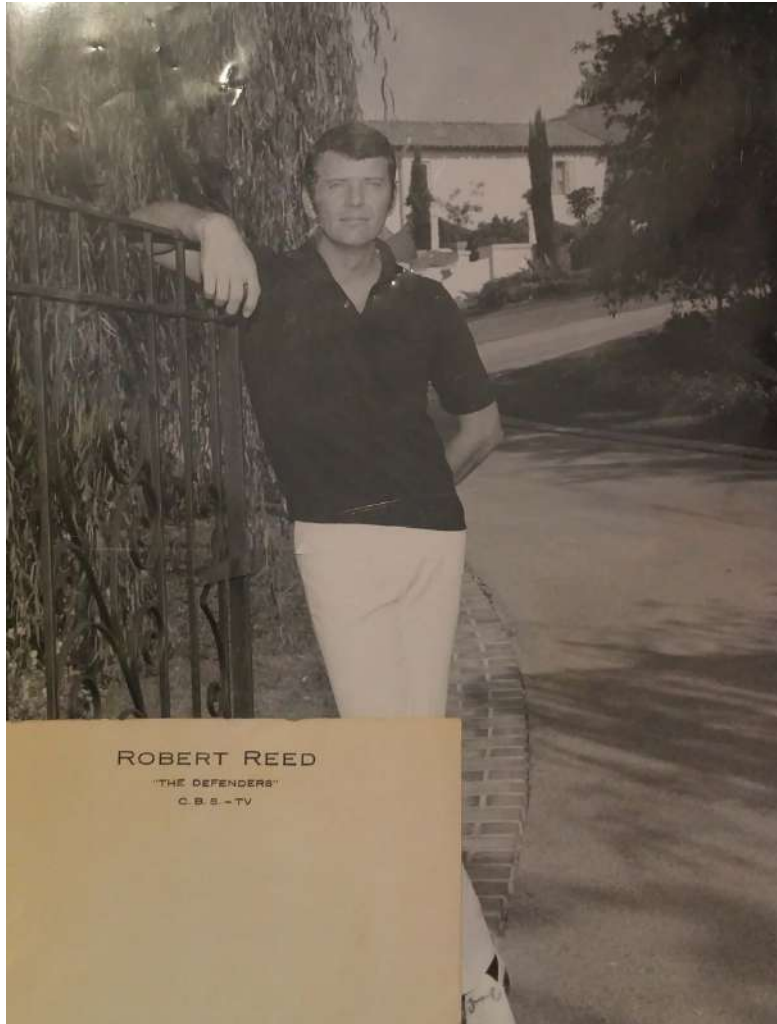


Scene filmed on the patio.



Footman at the entrance to the home.





The home was later owned by Robert Reed, who played the role of the father, Tom Brady, in *The Brady Bunch*. The photo above was taken at the front gate in front of the house. The house was later owned by Phil Spector who was the music producer for the Beatles' John Lennon and George Harrison as well as many others.

## Appendix: B – Village Disparue Coppell (Lost Town Coppell)

The following is a paper that was written on the history of the town of Coppell, Ontario. It has been translated from French and it gives insight into the place, its history and its people.



HEARST UNIVERSITY  
HEARST\*KAPUSKASING\*TIMMINS

View of the road after its renovation in 1999

Hist3276F history of north Ontario

# Village Disparue (Lost Town) Coppell

**YESTERDAY  
to  
TODAY**

- \*Parish
- \*Schools
- \*Store
- \*And More

**Tragedy of the  
Payeur Family in  
1929**

Author: Olivier Groleau,  
proud descendant of the  
inhabitants of Coppell,  
Ontario, Canada.  
English translation by  
Philip LaBerge, Coppell, Texas

Lost but not forgotten

# THE BEGINNINGS OF THE TOWN OF

# COPPELL

**Origin of the town name**

The town name "Coppell" was written "Qu'opel" because of the many dialects present over the course of the years.

The town grew tranquilly with the arrival of different villagers around 1910.

Many nationalities have lived in Coppell since its start like Fins, Germans, English, Yugoslavians, and Canadians.



Coppell was founded by the gathering of logging families who logged along the railroad line.

The town of Coppell in the winter of 1935

## Fertile land for young families

The reasons that pushed the families to establish themselves in Coppel during the 1920's varies, but the most common was the lack of land to which young people of Québec were facing and so, they hoped to obtain it in North Ontario to properly start their family. The promise of fertile land, level, and without large rocks that the government promised in the Canadian Belt was too attractive to let go by.

**57 Québec immigrants in Coppel, Ontario**  
The land is offered to them by the Toronto government



Article in the journal The Right dated May 18, 1949, that testifies to the immigration of numerous families to the east of Québec towards our regions.

At its peak, Coppel and its surroundings counted between 500 and 600 people. It should be noted that at that time, families often had 10 or more children. Also, it is difficult to determine with exactitude the number of inhabitants of Coppel, because at that time, there wasn't a census in the small towns.





Sister Marie Angélique and Sister Annette Laflamme (daughter of Alfred Laflamme) near the church of Coppell.

## The Statue of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary

The reason why the saint was chosen to represent the parish of Coppell was because an early resident of Hearst named Nérée Lemay truly believed in her. After having successfully insisted, a statue of this saint was installed in the church.

## The Parish of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary

The first building that was the home of the church of Coppell was constructed in 1946, thanks to the help of the residents of the town and under the direction of the abbot Corriveau. It was blessed on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1946 by Monseigneur Léon G. Landry.

On the other hand, the first mass in the parish was said on October 19, 1924 by Father Pierre Grenier of Jogues, who was a priest at that time in the neighboring town.

The building was later sold to the Episcopal corporation of the diocese of Hearst. The last celebration of the Eucharist in the church of Coppell took place in December 1970, 45 years after its opening.

During all of the active years, the parish of Coppell was home to a total of eleven priests:

1925- J. V. Legendre  
 1926- Théophile Roy  
 1932- Eugène Descombes  
 1939- Edgar Bissonnette  
 1942- Alphonse Corriveau  
 1947- Albert Millette  
 1952- J. M. SAUVÉ  
 1954- Émile Lafrance  
 1956- J. A. Tardif  
 1956- Louis J. Boucher  
 1961- Jean-Marc Pelletier

## **The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame of Montréal**

In 1950, after receiving a request from the abbot of Millette, the sisters of the congregation of Notre Dame of Montréal decided to establish themselves in Coppel. With their arrival, there was the construction of a convent and the creation of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes. The nuns also occupied themselves with teaching the primary levels. Finally, the convent closed its doors ten years later because of the decline of the population of Coppel. The covenant was also sold to the episcopal corporation of the diocese of Hearst.



The first church and school of Coppel before being ravaged by flames on January 22, 1934



The presbytery and chapel of Coppel in 1934. It was a garage that was transformed into a church. It's there that René, Joseph, Marie-Paule and Marie-Laure made their first communion and their confirmation.

Coppel had two cemeteries. The first dated to 1928. It served to bury the children of the Payeur family who died in a house fire. That cemetery was later transferred to the current location, at the bottom of Charbonneau Way.

In 2001, many people decided to move members of their family that had been buried in Coppel to Hearst, so that they could be closer to them but also be in an existing parish.



The restive mare belonging to Joseph, carrying on its back Laurent Payeur, son of Uncle Ovila, as well as his little nephew, the son of Laurette Payeur-Bernatchez. They were on a visit to Coppell. The Coppell schoolhouse is in the background.



A photo taken at the very beginning of the colonization of the parish of St. Elizabeth o Coppell. In front of the school church you can see Romeo Champagne with his pupils.



# The School of Coppel

The priority for the schools:  
the utilization of French

The town of Coppel had two schools. The first was situated on Route 583. One of the teachers was named Rita Levesque and the other carried the name Décloué. These two women came from Québec and did not accept the usage of English in the establishment.

The building that housed that school still exists. After its closure, the lessons were given in the church, and that continued a few years, before proceeding to new construction.

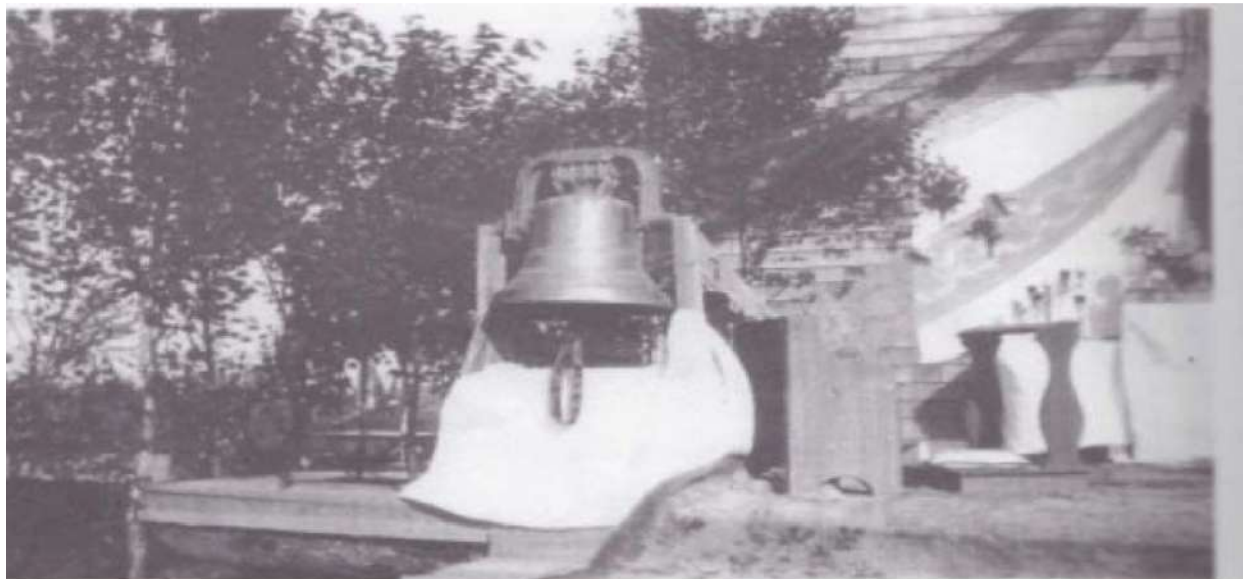
The construction of the second school of Coppel started July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1923, thanks to Monseigneur J. Hallé. It was completed August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1923, in time for the new school year. The first instructor was named Marguerite Laflamme and the second, Émilienne Girard. The church and school of Coppel were constructed at the same site and were connected.

Unfortunately, the two burned on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1934, as it often happened with (wood) buildings of that time. The following spring, again with the help of the inhabitants of Coppel, a new church and another school saw a new day, separately. The school, however, closed its doors during the 1960's.



The abbot Albert Millet and Monseigneur Landry at the school Marguerite-Bourgeois at the town of Coppel.





*La cloche le jour de la cérémonie.*

The bell during the day of the ceremony.



Debuted in the 1920s. This picture and the other two following on the next page are those of the blessing of the Coppel bell.

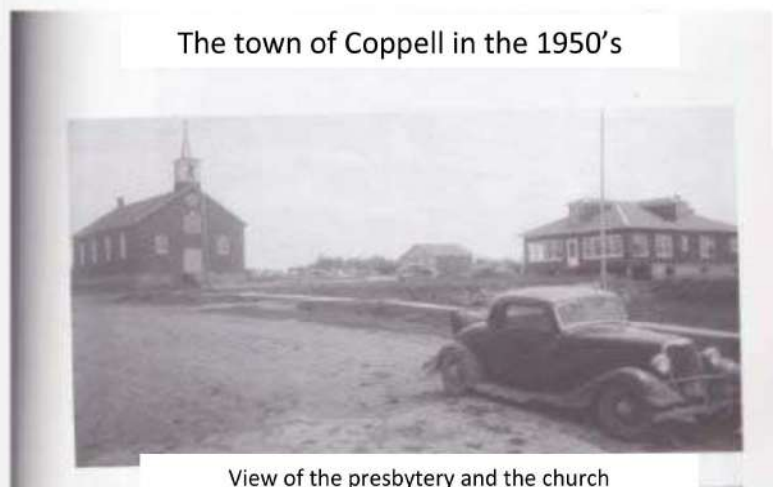
The grotto behind Coppel church



*La grotte à l'arrière du couvent.*



The presbytery of Coppell and the convent of the sisters of the congregation of Notre Dame.



The town of Coppell in the 1950's

View of the presbytery and the church



The first presbytery of Coppell that was moved to George Road in Hearst.



## Services Offered In The Community

The town of Coppell around 1945

Although the shops that served the village of Coppell no longer exist, their services will forever be appreciated by the former inhabitants.

1

### Laflamme General Store

This store belonged to the Laflamme family. It was in service the longest of all of Coppell's stores. The villagers bought food, linen and merchandise to work the land as well as products used by farmers of the region. There was a loyalty program where after the purchase of a number of products, the next was free.

The store was located in the middle of town. The building is still standing but it has become a residence.

The reason for its closure was the falling population and access to the town of Hearst.



The Laflamme Inn for the people who were disembarking from the train. The general store and the post office were in the same building in the years 1930 – 1940.



2

**Gosselin Hardware Store**

This store was owned by the Gosselin family and construction products were found there like hammers, screws and nails. It was located very close to the Laflamme General Store.

4

**Second General Store**

Very little information is available on this store and even the name remains a mystery.

It sold products very similar to the two other stores in the town, like linen, food and construction materials.

The opening and closing dates are both unknown as well as its name.

3

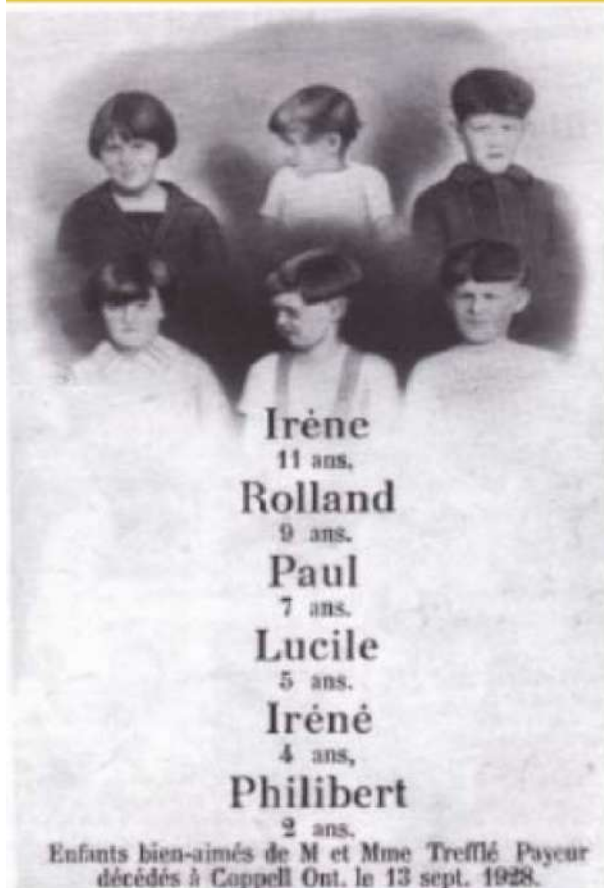
**Cement Block Factory**

Due to the distance between Coppell and Hearst, it was not always easy to procure heavy products, thus a cement block factory was opened in Coppell named "Brisebois."



The Coppell Train Station

# The Payeur Family Tragedy



The morning of September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1928, the town of Coppel was the victim of a terrible fire where six children of Mr. Trefflé Payeur died. By grasping courage, Mr. Payeur repeatedly attempted to brave the flames to rescue his children trapped in the house that was doomed. Iréné Payeur was 11 years and 4 months old; Rolland was 9 years and 3 months; Paul was 7 years and 4 months; Lucille was 5 years and 10 months; René was 4 years and 4 months and Philbert was 2 years and 8 months old.

## A Tragedy That No Parent Should Experience, Certainly Not Six Times At Once....

### Awful Fire in Coppel, Ontario

#### COPPEL, ONTARIO

La mort, cette terrible destinée, vient de frapper six fois de suite, dans la même maison, la famille de M. Trefflé Payeur, lorsque la flamme a envahi le domicile en un instant et brûlé ses habitants.

On se rappelle, non sans émotion, l'incendie survenu, au cours du 13 septembre, dans la ferme, l'habitation de M. Trefflé Payeur, lorsque la flamme a envahi le domicile en un instant et brûlé ses habitants.

Ensuite, que jour, le 13 octobre, la mort vint de frapper six fois de suite, dans la même maison, la famille de M. Trefflé Payeur, lorsque la flamme a envahi le domicile en un instant et brûlé ses habitants.

Il est vrai que, dans cette maison, de voir disparaître six enfants dans un espace d'un mois et quelques jours. Mais ce sont, certes, des choses qui ne se passent pas tous les jours. C'est le fait que la famille de M. Trefflé Payeur, lorsque la flamme a envahi le domicile en un instant et brûlé ses habitants.

Cependant, nous, parents éplorés, nous ne pouvons nous empêcher de penser que, dans cette maison, de voir disparaître six enfants dans un espace d'un mois et quelques jours.

En résumé, la mort a frappé six fois de suite, dans la même maison, la famille de M. Trefflé Payeur, lorsque la flamme a envahi le domicile en un instant et brûlé ses habitants.

La mort a frappé six fois de suite, dans la même maison, la famille de M. Trefflé Payeur, lorsque la flamme a envahi le domicile en un instant et brûlé ses habitants.

M. Clément Payeur, cousin de M. Trefflé Payeur, qui, lui-même, a été tué dans l'incendie, a été tué dans l'incendie.

M. Clément Payeur, cousin de M. Trefflé Payeur, qui, lui-même, a été tué dans l'incendie, a été tué dans l'incendie.

Extrait du journal *Le Droit*, 13 septembre 1928.

Six personnes brûlées à mort, une autre survivant à ses blessures, mais épouvantablement brûlée. — La demeure de M. Trefflé Payeur réduite en cendre.

(Spécial à *Le Soleil*.)

Coppel Ont., le 13 sept au matin. — A l'heure du lever, Mlle Marie Anne Payeur, servante chez M. Trefflé Payeur, voulut allumer le poêle, avec de l'huile de pétrole et une explosion fit décoller le vase d'huile. La flamme aux habits de la jeune fille, dans toute la maison. La jeune fille se sentant brûler prit la course et fit quelques fois le tour de la maison, mais heureusement le maître de la maison, M. Trefflé Payeur parvint à l'atteindre à la porte et à lui enlever ses habits. Quoiqu'elle soit horriblement brûlée, on croit que son cas n'est pas mortel. Elle fut transportée à l'hôpital de Hespeler. Pendant que M. Payeur portait secours à celle-ci, Madame Payeur, qui occupait un lit au premier étage réussit à sortir avec un bébé de huit mois. Dix autres personnes restèrent dans les flammes, mais aucune secours put leur être prodigué. En enfouissant le tout, l'on parvint à en retirer deux des flammes mais la mort avait déjà fait son œuvre. Les autres restèrent dans les flammes et ce n'est qu'après la diminution du feu que l'on parvint à extraire les restes.

Plusieurs fois, dans son désespoir, le père tenta de braver les flammes pour aller chercher ses enfants, mais heureusement que d'autres personnes l'ont retenu parce qu'il courait à une mort certaine.

Le coroner a tenu une enquête sur les lieux et a prononcé un verdict de mort accidentelle.

Les noms des petites victimes sont : Irène, âgée de deux ans et quatre mois; Roland, âgé de neuf

#### BEAUCEVILLE, J.

et trois mois; Paul, Albert, âgés de quatre mois; Lucille, âgée de dix mois; René, âgé de quatre mois; Philibert, âgé de huit mois.

Le 14, à 10 heures, eurent lieu les obsèques à l'église paroissiale, en milieu d'un grand concours de personnes. L'église pour la circonstance avait pris ses plus beaux habits de deuil.

Le service fut chanté par M. Théophile Roy, curé de la paroisse. Sa Grandeur Mgr J. J. O'Neil, évêque de Frébourg et vicar général du lieu, présidait aux obsèques.

Le service fut chanté par M. Théophile Roy, curé de la paroisse. Sa Grandeur Mgr J. J. O'Neil, évêque de Frébourg et vicar général du lieu, présidait aux obsèques.

Le service fut chanté par M. Théophile Roy, curé de la paroisse. Sa Grandeur Mgr J. J. O'Neil, évêque de Frébourg et vicar général du lieu, présidait aux obsèques.

Le service fut chanté par M. Théophile Roy, curé de la paroisse. Sa Grandeur Mgr J. J. O'Neil, évêque de Frébourg et vicar général du lieu, présidait aux obsèques.

Le service fut chanté par M. Théophile Roy, curé de la paroisse. Sa Grandeur Mgr J. J. O'Neil, évêque de Frébourg et vicar général du lieu, présidait aux obsèques.

Le service fut chanté par M. Théophile Roy, curé de la paroisse. Sa Grandeur Mgr J. J. O'Neil, évêque de Frébourg et vicar général du lieu, présidait aux obsèques.

Article from the Beauceville Journal that Aunt Lydia sent my mother a few weeks after the fire on September 13, 1928.



# Facts About Coppell

The little town of Coppell never had a mayor, but at one time there was a group of citizens named the "Statue of Labor" that consisted of citizens of Coppell, notably Edmond Groleau and Mr. Laflamme, who took care of public maintenance and all the little details concerning the town. One of the efforts realized by the group was construction of the route to go to Lake Coppell. It was completed in 1968 with the help of the tractors of Mr. Dillon of the town of Jogues.

The group met with the Minister of Natural Resources, who at that time was Renée Brunelle. He refused to allow any cottages on Lake Coppell. Only hunting camps could be set up there, and the government would not spend money on the road. He even prohibited the committee from opening one. Despite everything, a first chalet was built. It belonged to the Payeurs. They weren't discouraged, and to avoid going against the orders of Renée Brunelle, they organized festivals among friends. Also, they needed wood for their fires and after several of these festivals, they figured out that they had returned to Lake Coppell. Subsequently, a committee of citizens took up the matter and raised funds to support the needs of the town.

The committee is responsible for the organization of the Coppell Carnival, which was held at Lake Coppell. During this event, ski mobile courses were organized and maple taffy was offered to all the citizens. The people of Hearst participated often in the carnival that took place each winter between 1969 and 1975.



Near the fire tower, part of the Northern Paper Mill and a few houses where the owners of the company lived.

**An astonishing rumor that often comes up with research concerns Highway 11. According to the original plan, it went to Coppell, behind Newago (lumber mill), but after the Gerladton mines were discovered, it was built further north.**



Left to right: Trefflé, Aunt Emma, Marie-Anna, Uncle Alyre St-Hilaire and in front, Aunt Yvonne. In front of the road side cross in 1944 – 1945.



A beautiful harvest of hay in Coppell in the 1930's.



The Coppell fire tower.

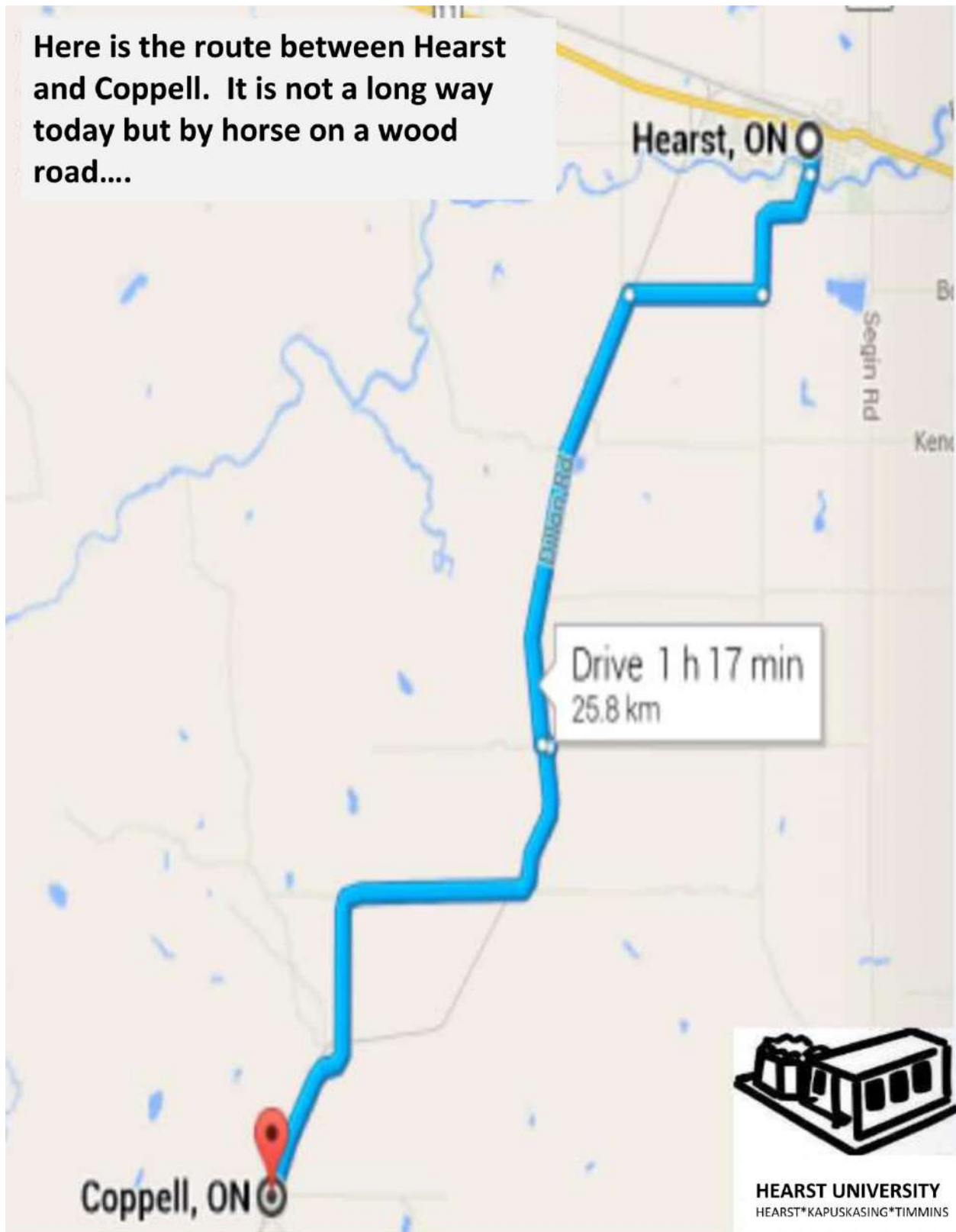
With the advancement of technology and the ability to clear the woods, the town of Coppell obtained its first road in 1910, but the roadway remained gravel until the 1960s. Of course, there was a wooden (plank) road to get there, but it was difficult to access. It was repaired several times to reduce the accidents like the tragedy of April 23, 1949.

Electricity arrived in Coppell in 1951 – 1952, and a little later, the telephone lines were next. Before that, the only way to communicate was by private lines of the Algoma Central Railroad.

Other interesting facts - Due to the intensive logging that took place in Coppell during the 1950's, the rocks surrounding the village became veritable land of blueberries. During the years 1955 - 1965, it was even named "the Klondike of the blueberry." People came from as far away as Kapuskasing to pick them!

The town of Copell was recognized as having a very strong sense of volunteer work and each year, for several years, this group of people met and raised a farm for a family such as the Groleaus, Camirés, and Deroschers.

Here is the route between Hearst and Coppel. It is not a long way today but by horse on a wood road....



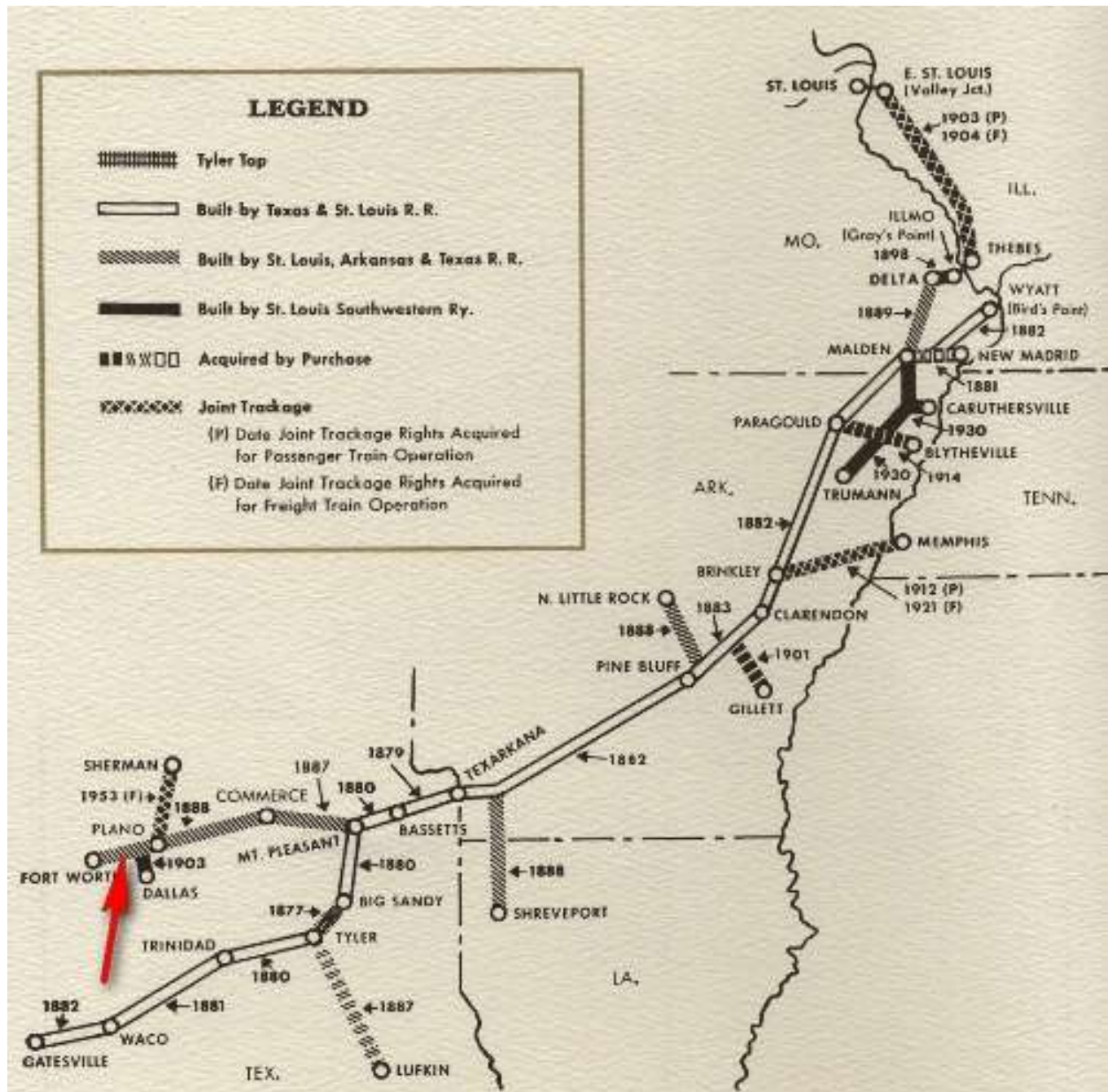


## Appendix: C - The History of the Cotton Belt Line



In 1888, the St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railway opened its line from Commerce to Fort Worth, through the town that had fifteen years earlier been given the name of Gibbs. Two years later a depot was built at the station in Gibbs and the depot was named Coppell after a bond holder in the railroad, George Coppell. In 1892, the town officially adopted the name of Coppell.

The St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railway in Texas was chartered in 1886 and acquired the properties of the Texas & St. Louis Railway Company in Texas, which had been sold under foreclosure. That company was headed by James W. Paramore, president of the St. Louis Cotton Compress Company who had the ambition to build a railway to haul cotton from the south to his factory in St. Louis. In turn, Paramore had acquired the Tyler Tap Railroad which had built track from Tyler, 21 miles northeast to Big Sandy. By 1886 when it went into foreclosure, the Texas & St. Louis Railway Company had built track stretching from Gatesville through Waco to Tyler. It then continued to Mt. Pleasant and then to Texarkana through Arkansas to Bird's Point, Missouri on the Mississippi River. So, in 1886 when it was sold at foreclosure, the Texas & St. Louis Railway Company had a continuous line running from Gatesville, Texas all the way to the Mississippi.

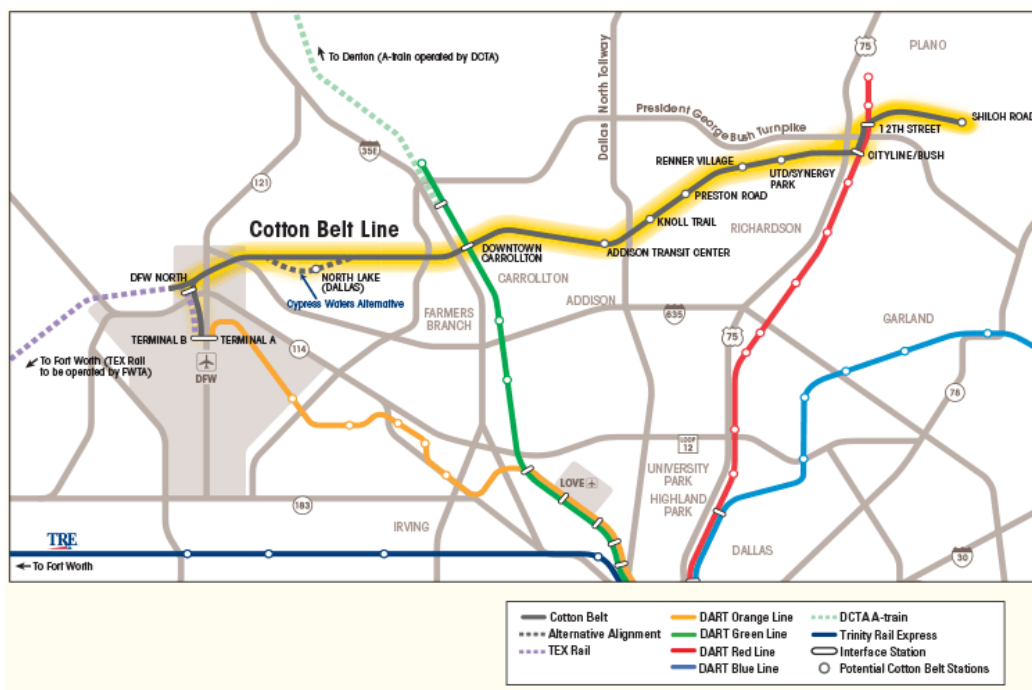


A year after acquiring the Texas & St. Louis Railway Company, the St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railway built a line westward from Mt. Pleasant to Commerce. The following year, in 1888, it built the line from Commerce to Fort Worth through Gibbs. The stop was called Gibbs Station. In 1890, a depot was built and named after George Coppell.

In 1891, St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railway went into foreclosure and was acquired by financier Jay Gould, the owner of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway. He also owned the Missouri Pacific, the Texas & Pacific and the International-Great Northern. The St. Louis Southwestern was known as The Cotton Belt Route. In 1892, the city changed its name to Coppel.



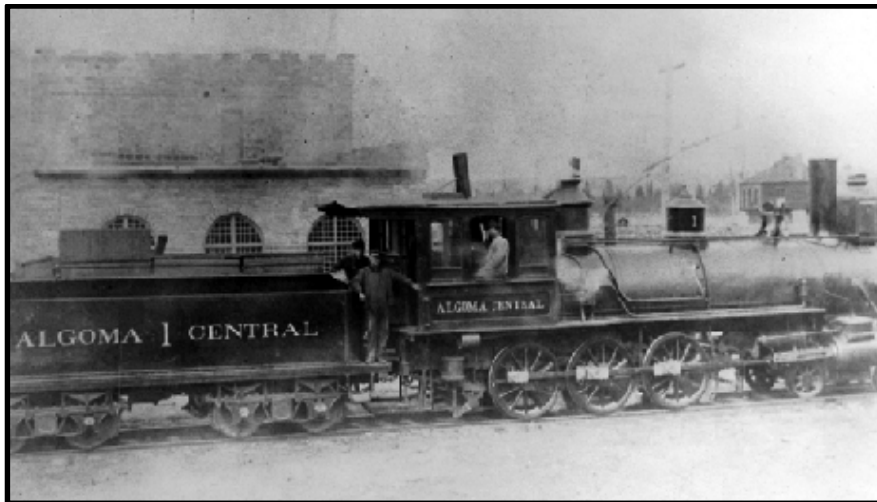
In 1932, the Southern Pacific (SP) Company took control of Cotton Belt system and it was eventually consolidated into the company in 1992. In 1996, the SP was acquired by the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad. The Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is currently in the process of planning a light rail commuter line along the Cotton Belt Corridor extending from DFW Airport to Plano and connecting in with the rest of the DART light rail system. It will be referred to as the Cotton Belt Line.



Route map and above photo of DART commuter train taken from DART.org



## Appendix: D – The History of the Lake Superior Corporation and the Algoma Central Railroad



Picture of an early Algoma Central locomotive.

The Algoma Central Railway was initially owned by Francis H. Clergue, who required a railway to haul resources from the interior of the Algoma District to Clergue's industries in Sault Ste. Marie; specifically, to transport logs to his pulp mill and iron ore from the Helen Mine, near Wawa, to a proposed steel mill, later named Algoma Steel. The Algoma Central Railway was chartered on August 11, 1899. (from: *Wilson, Dale (1984). The Algoma Central Railway Story*)





**Francis Hector Clergue** (August 28, 1856 – January 19, 1939) was an American businessman who became the leading industrialist of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario in Canada, at the turn of the 20th century.

*“Born in Brewer, Maine, Clergue studied law at the University of Maine after which he was involved in a number of business ventures until coming to Ontario, Canada. Clergue came to the city backed by Philadelphia businessmen. He saw the potential for industry with the location of the town. He helped establish a hydro-electric dam which provided the town with cheap and abundant electricity. Following the 1895 construction of a new canal and lock, he founded paper mill St. Mary's Paper (closed in 2011), Algoma Steel (now called Essar Steel), as well as a portion of the Algoma Central Railway connecting the city to the transcontinental artery of Canada, for which the city is most noted. He also established the Helen and Gertrude mines. He used all of his ventures collectively to build his empire. Algoma Steel was started by using pig iron from the Helen mine to make steel rails. By 1903, Clergue had overextended himself and the companies that he had founded continued under new management.”* From the Wikipedia

The reorganized company was called The Lake Superior Corporation, which was incorporated on May 19, 1904, and both Arthur and Herbert Coppel were directors.

The statement in the above paragraph that “Clergue came to the city backed by Philadelphia businessmen” may have included that of Maitland & Coppel Company. George Coppel may have initially established the relationship with Francis Clergue that later led to Arthur and Herbert becoming directors.

From Moody’s Manual of Railroads and Corporation Securities, Volume 2 for the year 1921:

#### Lake Superior Corporation

**Officers:** J. Frater Taylor, Chrm. of Board, Toronto, Ont.; W. H. Cunningham, Pres., Philadelphia; James Hawson, V-P; W. C. Franz, V-P, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.; Herbert Coppel, V-P, New York; Alex. Taylor, Sec., Toronto, Ont.; A. A. Pinkney, Treas. & Compt., Sault Ste Marie, Ont.  
**Directors:** J. Frater Taylor, W. C. Franz, James Hawson, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.; Herbert Coppel, J. S. Dale, New York; H. I. Underhill, South Orange, N. J.; F. McOwen, Sidney Mason, W. H. Cunningham, H. C. Coleman, T. D. Wood, Philadelphia, Pa.; Alex Taylor, R. Home Smith, Toronto, Ont.; W. K. Whigham, London, Eng.

#### Algoma Steel Corporation

**Officers:** W. C. Franz, Pres., Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.; Herbert Coppel, V-P, New York; D. Kyle, V-P; Jas. Hawson, V-P; E. W. Shell, Treas.; P. B. Nash, Compt., Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.; Alex. Taylor, Sec., Toronto.  
**Directors:** J. Frater Taylor, W. C. Franz, James Hawson, Capt. D. Kyle, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.; Herbert Coppel, J. S. Dale, New York; Alex. Taylor, R. Home Smith, Toronto; F. McOwen, Sidney Mason, H. C. Coleman, W. H. Cunningham, Philadelphia, Pa.; H. I. Underhill, South Orange, N. J.; W. K. Whigham, London, Eng.

### Appendix: E – The History of the Wisconsin Central Railroad

In January of 1898, among many of the ventures that he was involved in, George Coppel was the chairman of the reorganization committee of the New Wisconsin Central Railway.



# WISCONSIN CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

GEORGE COPPELL,	24 Exchange Place,	New York
JOHN CROSBY BROWN,	59 Wall Street,	New York
WM. L. BULL,	38 Broad Street,	New York
CHARLES C. BEAMAN,	52 Wall Street,	New York
JAMES C. COLGATE,	36 Wall Street,	New York
FRED T. GATES,	26 Broadway,	New York
GERALD L. HOYT,	24 Exchange Place,	New York
FRANCIS R. HART,	Old Colony Trust Co.	Boston
H. F. WHITCOMB,		Milwaukee
HOWARD MORRIS,		Milwaukee

The term of Office of the above named Directors expires  
the second Tuesday of October, 1900.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

GEORGE COPPELL,	New York
JOHN CROSBY BROWN,	New York
WM. L. BULL,	New York
CHARLES C. BEAMAN,	New York
H. F. WHITCOMB,	Milwaukee

## OFFICERS.

GEORGE COPPELL,	Chairman of the Board,	New York
H. F. WHITCOMB,	President,	Milwaukee
CHARLES M. MORRIS,	Secretary,	Milwaukee
JOS. S. DALE,	Assistant Secretary,	New York
FREDERICK ABBOT,	Treasurer,	Milwaukee
W. R. HANCOCK,	Assistant Treasurer,	Milwaukee
CHARLES C. BEAMAN,	General Counsel,	New York
HOWARD MORRIS,	Counsel,	Milwaukee
THOMAS H. GILL,	Attorney,	Milwaukee
ROBERT TOOMBS,	Auditor,	Milwaukee
SUMNER J. COLLINS,	General Superintendent,	Milwaukee
BURTON JOHNSON,	General Freight Agent,	Milwaukee
JAMES C. POND,	General Passenger Agent,	Milwaukee
ROBERT B. TWEEDY,	Chief Engineer,	Milwaukee
JOHN A. WHALING,	Purchasing Agent,	Milwaukee
W. H. KILLEN,	Land, Industrial and Tax Commissioner,	Milwaukee

New York Office,	24 Exchange Place
Milwaukee Office,	Colby & Abbot Building

From the WISCONSIN CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY FIRST ANNUAL REPORT FOR  
THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1900



Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society: Wisconsin Central Railway locomotive no. 221, the first "big engine" on the Wisconsin Central. Built by the Brooks Locomotive Works in 1898, and later renumbered 2619 on the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie, where she was a class E-22. Engineer Arthur Willett and fireman Al Follett are also pictured.



In the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Monthly Journal issued in 1901 after the death of George Coppel, it described him and his firm. It also stated that Gerald L. Hoyt was now its senior member. Among many other interests, Hoyt was a director of the Wisconsin Central. In the obituary of Herbert Coppel in 1931, it stated that he was also a director of the Wisconsin Central. It is interesting to note that in 1995 the Wisconsin Central acquired the 322 miles of track belonging to the Algoma Central

Railway in Canada.

Above is the system map of Wisconsin Central's rail lines in 1998. The Coppel depot is located just before Hearst at the very top.

In 2001 the Wisconsin Central was purchased by the Canadian National Railway (CN). Along with the former Illinois Central Railroad, the former Wisconsin Central became part of CN's United States holdings and its property integrated into the CN system.

As a final note, the locomotive shown above is the same model that my paternal great-grandfather, Eddie Barber was the conductor of on the Chicago & Northwestern Railway. One of my father's great thrills in life was, at the age of 7 years old, riding with him in the cab of the locomotive, shoveling coal into the fire box and pulling the whistle while going 60 miles per hour!



Photo of Eddie Barber.