

# DUSTY ROADS®

## STORIES OF

## KEWANEE

## PAST & PRESENT

Dean Karau

December 2024

### *George Randall Parrish - “the man just couldn’t stop himself!”*

*Another example of his predicaments and falsehoods.*

I've written about and made a video on Kewaneean George Randall Parrish before. (Click [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for two stories and the video.) He was a scoundrel of the first order and even served time in prison for his skullduggery before he became a famous author.

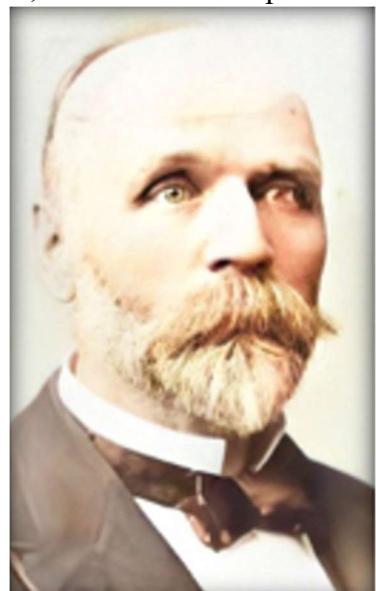


George Randal Parrish

I just found another example of the kind of man Parrish was even before he embarked on his infamous life before he became a well-known writer. And it happened in Kewanee.

When G. R. Parrish returned to Kewanee after graduating from law school and moved out West, he and C. N. Whitney, then editor of the KEWANEE COURIER, teamed up to travel around the area to make a number of political speeches. After their first successful night in Saxon, the two were to speak the next night at Library Hall in Kewanee.

The hall was packed, and Parrish was first on the agenda. Parrish had worked all day on his new speech, but when the time to speak came, his mind was a perfect blank. He stood silently for a few moments, but could not remember a word of what he had written. But then he recalled Whitney's fine speech



Cephas Newhall Whitney

from the night before in Saxon. Parrish proceeded to give Whitney's speech to the Kewanee audience in Library Hall, and he was roundly applauded with vociferous cheers.

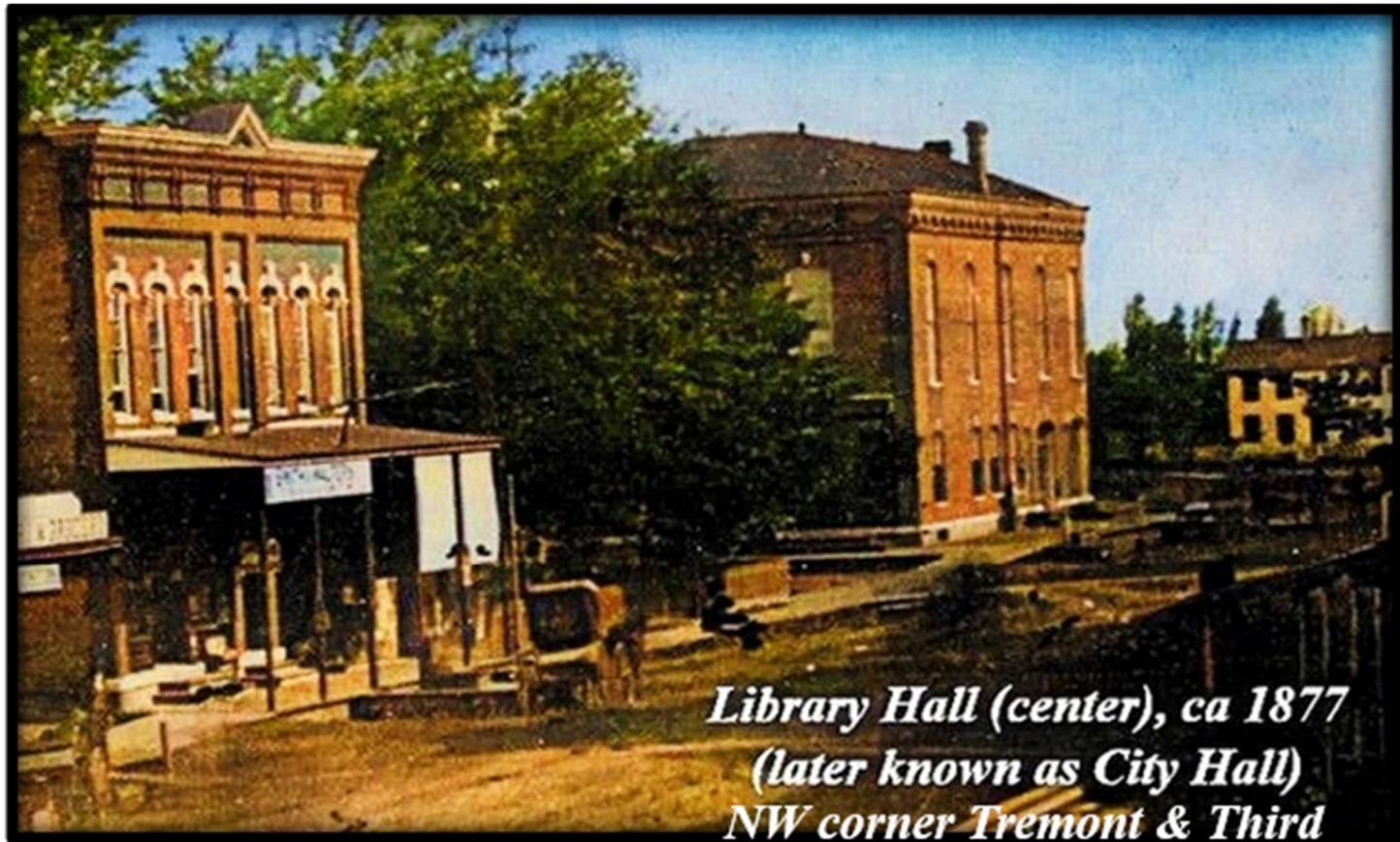
When Whitney was introduced, he stood but could merely speak extemporaneously because his material had been co-opted by Parrish. But he received only muted applause from the listeners who had expected more.

After that, Whitney refused to go out speaking again with Parrish.

Parrish later admitted that it was a "mean trick" and that he felt guilt. But he said that to save his life, he could not have said anything else that evening

A few days ago, I told this story to Judy Davidson, Parrish's descendant who helped me with my stories. Judy could only say that it was "a classic GRP kind of predicament, falsehood, semi-apology. He just couldn't stop himself!"

That's just the kind of man George Randall Parrish was.



***Library Hall (center), ca 1877  
(later known as City Hall)  
NW corner Tremont & Third***

*My previous works on George Randall Parrish:*

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*STORY: KEWANEE'S G. RANDALL PARRISH: FROM CONVICT MINISTER TO FAMOUS AUTHOR:*

<https://kewaneevoice.com/kewanees-g-randall-parrish-from-convict-minister-to-famous-author/>

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*STORY: A FAMOUS KEWANEE WRITER'S WESTERN ESCAPADES: BUT DID GEORGE RANDALL PARRISH CREATE THEM OUT OF WHOLE CLOTH?*

<https://kewaneevoice.com/a-famous-kewanee-writers-western-escapades-but-did-george-randall-parrish-create-them-out-of-whole-cloth/>

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*VIDEO: GEORGE RANDALL PARRISH: THE MYSTERIOUS LIFE OF THE MAN IN THE MURAL*

[https://youtu.be/yby6w\\_NCDX4](https://youtu.be/yby6w_NCDX4)