

The Song of Elgin

James T. Gifford left New York in 1835 to start a new town in a new state. He had heard about the good farming soil in Illinois and wanted to start a new town. A popular song at the time said it best:



*"Then move your family westward.
Good health you will enjoy, and rise to
wealth and honor in the state of El-a-noy!"*

James T. Gifford wanted to build his town on a river because he knew the river could be used for water, power, food and transportation. When he and his brother, Hezekiah, found a perfect spot on the Fox River, James wrote a letter to his wife, Laura,

"The Fox is the finest stream I ever saw, it has uniformly in this State a limestone bottom, its current uniform and gentle, its waters pure, and is abundantly supplied with fine Fish. We have selected sites to build upon."

This would be the first permanent settlement on the site. Native American tribes passed through the area when hunting, but no villages had been built here. James T. Gifford had already decided what to call his town. He would name it after his favorite tune, "The Song of Elgin." James T. Gifford liked the song so much he had picked out the name before he left New York!

Some new towns are named after the people who started them, like Carpentersville. Some new towns are named after where the settlers used to live, like Dundee. Some towns are interesting words that people thought sounded good, like Streamwood. Others are named after favorite things, like James T. Gifford's favorite song.

If you started a new town, what would you call it?
Would you name it after your favorite song too?



Elgin Memory

Cut out the game pieces below. Mix up the cards. Lay them in rows, face down. Turn over any two cards. If the two cards match, keep them. If they don't match, turn them back over and it is the other player's turn. Remember what was on each card and where it was. Watch and remember during the other player's turn. The game is over when all the cards have been matched.

E	E	L	L
G	G	I	I
N	N		
			