

Souvenir History

For the

BETHALTO CENTENNIAL

1854 - 1954



View of Bethalto Business District About Fifty Years Ago

SEPTEMBER 3-6, 1954
BETHALTO, ILLINOIS

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FOREWORD

The Centennial Historical and Publicity Committees have tried to include in this Souvenir Historical Booklet as much information as possible about the history of Bethalto and this area. However, it would take a very large book to include all the fine history of the past century, and this is not possible in such a booklet.

Few people realize the historical importance of Bethalto and its contribution to the progress of our country. When the early settlers and those who followed them needed flour and other milled products badly; when limited transportation made a ready source of good coal most important; when lumber, bricks, implements and other equipment was needed, Bethalto provided it.

Sometimes a community is "100 years old" but after thinking of the present day fast growing Bethalto, its homes, its schools and its spirit of active community progress, "100 years young" seems a better way to express the Centennial anniversary

This souvenir historical booklet would not be possible without the fine cooperation of the Advertisers. We know that the people of Bethalto join with the Committees in expressing our thanks to the Advertisers .

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ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Bethalto's Name

Bethalto was first known as Bethel. There was a church near Bethalto for many years named Bethel, and the community was given that name. When the first postoffice was established it was necessary to change the name since there was another town in the state with the same name. There is general agreement that the name was formed with the four letters (BETH) from Bethel and with the four letters (ALTO) from Alton. Few are in agreement with a claim that the name was formed from Bethel and the Latin word "altus" which means high, or the claim that the first four letters came from Bethal, the name of a family that once lived in Bethalto.

In an atlas published in 1857 there is a map which shows the towns of Bethalto and Dorsey. Bethalto is the only town of that name in the United States.

Pioneer History

Many years before Bethalto was platted the early settlers favored the area and there was a settlement in the area. Some of the homes still standing were started before that time, and the settlers began to arrive in numbers about 1809.

The area was also favored by the Indians who were so numerous at one time along Indian creek where there were Kickapoo villages that the creek was named after the Indians. This creek is about one and a half miles east of the Village limits. Many Indian relics have been found in that vicinity.

Bethalto was favored in many ways to become an early settlement. It had fine soil for growing grain and all needed food. There was a fine vein of coal which had outcroppings that were discovered at an early date. There was a fine growth of timber, especially on the west, north and south sides of the site, which included oak, hickory, walnut and other trees suitable for making building material. There was also better than the usual roads in the time when trails were the roads and ferries were the bridges. Game was plentiful, there being an abundance of squirrels, rabbits, turkeys, prairie hens and other game.

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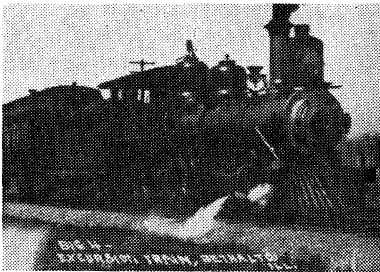
Although surrounded by Indians there was little trouble. Block houses were built in case that protection might be needed but the only recorded tragedy was the Indian massacre of 1814 when seven members of the Regan and Moore families were killed at a place a few miles west of Bethalto.

The first known school near Bethalto was located about one and one-half miles south of town. The school was in a block house and was conducted in 1818 by Rev. William Jones who was one of the prominent pioneers. The area known as the Rattan's Prairie located about one mile south of Bethalto was settled by Thomas Rattan in 1804.

History of Bethalto

(Special sections of this booklet are devoted to the histories of churches, schools and other organizations, which therefore will not be included in this general history)

In 1854 the growing community made it desirable to organize the building of homes and stores and a section of the land was laid out by Joel Starky. The plat was recorded on June 23rd of that year. The original section was in the northeast part of Wood River township in Section 1. Later additions were necessary and ground was platted in Fort Russel Township, as well as in Wood River township. Prairie Street, the main thoroughfare, is the dividing line between the two townships. The unincorporated village was called Bethel for a short period of time.



The second railroad to be constructed in Madison County is the one passing through Bethalto. It was at one time known as the Alton Terre Haute and then as the St. Louis & Terre Haute. The railroad was incorporated in 1851 and was largely built between 1854 and 1856 when it was extended to St. Louis. Later it was taken over by the Big Four and is now operated by the New York

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Bethalto, Illinois

Central. Railroads were the most important means of transportation in those days before we had good roads or motor vehicles, and most towns were located on or near railroads. No doubt, the location of Bethalto was made with the railroad in mind.

Bethalto Is Incorporated

Like many towns, Bethalto existed and prospered for many years before it was incorporated. It was incorporated on April 19, 1869, under a special charter, and the first town board was composed of: Jacob Huppert, John V. Richards, James P. Cummings, J. C. Bangert and John J. Jackson. The first Justice of the Peace was John A. Miller.

In 1873 it was incorporated as a village under the general law, and the following were elected to the Board of Trustees: Stephen A. Albro, President; Conrad H. Flick, John V. Richards, Adam Ellspermann, and John Steele as members of the village board. The following were appointed by the Board: William Eleher, Village Clerk; John A. Miller, Police Magistrate; Frank Rundle, Constable; F. W. Stolze, Superintendent of Streets; Louis Klein Treasurer.

In the election held to determine whether the town should incorporate under the general law, there were 14 votes for the organization, and 9 against it.

Following the organization the officials were busy setting up streets and boundaries, making previously used names legal, and doing other work that required some legal advice. However, no record is available of a Village Attorney until 1879 when a Village Attorney was voted the sum of forty dollars per year, payable quarterly, and the sum of two dollars for handling all suits. In cases where he was successful in getting a judgment of ten dollars or more he received an additional fee of two dollars. A short time later the salary was increased to sixty dollars per year and other financial consideration was given the Attorney.

The Bethalto Corporation has had an interesting history during its first

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Bethalto, Illinois

100 years but it is impossible to list all those who have served as the elected and appointed officials. The following are the present officials of Bethalto: Erwin Plegge, Village President; Robert Klein, Carl Rogers, Floyd Ellspermann, Marion Zimmerman, George Neuman and Clarence Oldendorph, Aldermen; Louis Bartels, Clerk; Violet Van Meter, Treasurer; R. C. Reed, Fire Chief; and Charles Bernhard, Water Department Superintendent. William (Hoot) Doerr is the Fire Department Secretary-Treasurer.

The present Village Hall has served many purposes in addition to those of the officials, including the police and fire departments. It has been used for school purposes, lodges and the meeting place of many organizations. The library is located on the second floor at this time.

Early Industries and Buildings

The first building on the newly platted area was a frame building sixteen feet square erected by Thomas Smith in 1854 on what was called the Widow Mape's place on Oak Street. It was used as a dwelling and grocery store. The next recorded building was one erected by William Tyron in the spring of 1855, which was a frame building 30 x 30, located on Prairie street and Railroad Ave., and it was used as a general store.

The next building was in connection with a Brick Yard established by John A. Miller in the spring of 1856 and it was located north of the railroad on the corner of Mill and Oak Streets. Mr. Miller had followed the trade of his father in making bricks and operated the yard until 1862 when he enlisted in the Army.

About that time, in the spring of 1856, the firm of Hamilton and Pigott erected a steam operated saw mill on the north side of the railroad on Oak street. This mill was operated many years to serve the needs of the community and other areas until the supply of good building timber near Bethalto became scarce and it was moved to another location.

The first Postmaster was William Tyron in 1855. Nothing is said about the postoffice building except a reference to the fact that the early railroad depot

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Bethalto, Illinois

was in a box car which was also used as a postoffice. (The present Postmaster is Elmer O. Schoeneweis).

The first blacksmith shop was started in 1856 by Richards and Samuels. This is the first recorded shop although in those days such industries had been needed and used for many years. The shop was located on Second and Oak streets. The first hotel was built and operated by Anthony B. Carroll in 1858. It was located on Prairie street and Railroad Ave., north of the railroad. It was known as the Carroll Hotel. Other buildings and industries came to Bethalto after this more rapidly, and by 1860 the town was well established as an important place.

By the year 1866, in addition to mills and coal mines, there was an agriculture and implement building, a plow shop and cooperage shops. The large President Merchant Mills and Elevator had been built in 1859.

In the following years there was an unusual number of industries, large and small, established to meet the needs of the area in and around Bethalto. It is hard to realize, as we look back that there were the following:

Baehr & Fors, Wagon and Buggy Makers, and Charles Buck, wagon maker.

J. C. Bangert, Manufacturer of boots and shoes.

Smith and Cobb, Dress Makers.

Charles Landhart and Charles Gundhall also made shoes and boots.

Watchmaker & Jeweler, George Dorr.

Harness and Saddlery, John Gray.

Carpet Weaver, Caroline Starkey.

Milo Hovey had a blacksmith shop and manufactured plows, cultivators and harrows.

There was a stockyards in nearby Moro and Meat Markets killed their own animals and operated their own packing plants.

Most stores of the type now in operation were soon established. Several of the type then in operation, but no longer seen, were those called harness shops, tinware stores, blacksmith shops, livery stables, and repairer of farm machinery of every style.

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Bethalto, Illinois

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Mills and Elevators

An important part of early history is the fact that the greatest difficulty experienced in the early days was in securing a supply of meal, and flour was obtained by very few. Even the "hand mill" was a God-send at that time. Many went as far as Cahokia in St. Clair County to secure meal.

With the coming of the railroad, and having grain in good supply, mills were started in Bethalto early. The milling industry grew until Bethalto became one of the important milling towns in the Nation and had the largest mill in Illinois at one time.

The first mill was the President Merchant Mill and Elevator which was established in 1859 by James Neimrick. Like most modern mills of that time, it had what were called "three runs of stones" with a manufacturing capacity of 100 barrels of flour daily.

In 1877 it was torn down and rebuilt with a daily capacity of 500 barrels. Both members of the firm died about 1879 and it was leased to the E. O. Stanard & Co. which operated the mill about one year. In January 1881 it was purchased by J. W. Kauffman who increased the capacity to 600 barrels. In March, 1882 a complete change was made, substituting the Gray Roller System in place of Burrs, which was an improvement in milling of grain.

The mill proper was 54 x 80 and was five stories in height. It had a stone basement. The elevator in connection with the mill was 40 x 80 and was 85 feet high. It could store 70,000 bushels of wheat and had an elevating capacity of 15,000 bushels of grain daily. A warehouse near it, 65 x 150 would store 10,000 barrels of flour. There was a cooper shop conducted in connection with the mill and there was a railroad switchtrack from the railroad to the mill. Fifty men were employed and flour was shipped to the eastern states and Europe mainly. In addition to the other facilities it had a bran bin capable of storing ten carloads of bran and a smaller one that held four carloads of shorts. Another building was a corn elevator which was 16 x 30 and 30 feet high with a storage capacity of 5,000 bushels of corn.

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The mill was burned on August 22, 1882. A terrific dust explosion occurred about 11 o'clock that night and the large structure was on fire immediately from top to bottom. At that time the mill was said to be producing 1200 barrels of flour daily. There was a strong wind which fanned the fire, causing flying timber and sparks to sail through the air over homes in the neighborhood. The residents used every means to keep their homes from burning and fortunately none of them was burned. A nearby elevator, 100 feet high and a large grain storehouse were soon on fire and were destroyed.

At that time there was a pond or small lake about one-quarter mile long on the northern part of the town and this supplied water for the mills and other industries. The pond was also used in connection with a large cooper shop where the hoops, staves and barrels were soaked before being made ready to hold flour. Ox-teams were used to haul the barrels to the mills to be filled with flour. This pond was a favorite place for fishermen in those days. This area later was platted and is now filled with homes and no trace of the old pond remains.

Following the disastrous fire of 1882, Kauffman built a new mill and constructed it of brick. The new mill was a five story building and was 100 feet high. A new warehouse and elevator were also constructed. The daily output of the new mill was 2500 barrels of flour daily and the demand for wheat was increased to the point that wheat was shipped from places such as Kansas and all farmers from the surrounding communities took their grain to Bethalto. Bethalto became an important grain market during those days.

Although the new building was equipped with water sprays having spray heads at ten feet intervals and was thought to be fire proof, a second dust explosion occurred in March, 1895. The explosion rocked the entire town and flying glass from broken windows was sprayed over the neighborhood. The explosion so damaged the sprinkler system that it did not operate. It is said the people were frantic but there was no way to stop the fire and they could only watch from a distance until walls crashed down and the building became a smoldering wreck.

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GENERAL CONTRACTOR
Bethalto, Illinois

COMPLIMENTS OF

PAUL GROSS BARBER SHOP

Bethalto, Illinois

The Kauffman Milling Company immediately made plans to erect a new mill but objections were made by some citizens when the first building, a temporary machine shop was started in an alley back of the building. The objection was backed by officials who would not permit the shed to be built in the alley. Later the Kauffman Company constructed a mill in Kansas.

The brick storehouse stood many years later and was used as a market place for wheat.

The Karnack mill, called the Custom Mill, was established by the firm of Ewan and Flick in 1872 and passed into the hands of Mr. Ewan in 1879. It was located on Prairie Street a little north of the railroad. The mill had several buildings and was started with four runs of burrs. It had a grinding capacity of 100 barrels of flour daily and gave employment to 12 men. The mill had a cooper shop run in connection with the mill. The flouring was done by an improved process and the flour sold well in the eastern cities.

A portion of the main building is still standing and is a part of the present modern Prehn Hardware store.

There were other milling activities in Bethalto and in connection with the two mills described. There were other grains marketed and many products such as bran and shorts sold. The making of barrels was, in itself, a sizable industry.

Coal Mines

Coal Mining is an important part of Bethalto's history. There were few mines in those early days and modern transportation had not reached the point where coal was available from great distances. The Bethalto area had railroad facilities and during those days there was a railroad extending to a river dock near what is now Hartford. Coal was not only shipped and distributed by the railroad but was carried by steamboats on the river to river towns.

There were many mines and one company mentioned frequently is the Madison County Coal Company which shipped much coal up and down the Mississippi river for many miles. Although the number is not available,

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it is known that the Madison County Coal Company employed a large number of men, and shipped from three to five thousand tons of coal each month.

Another mine was the Job mine just west of town which employed several hundred workers. It furnished coal to the railroad and sent wagon loads of coal to other places including Edwardsville. The Edwardsville market mainly disappeared when a rich vein of coal was discovered north of the city by Bethalto prospectors. In those days, some fifty years ago, coal was selling for as little as eight cents per bushel at times but such a low price made operations unprofitable until prices increased. Possibly there is something like the law of "supply and demand" responsible for that.

Another mine was the Spencer mine on a twelve acre tract north of town and the Wood River Coal and Mining Company property located about one and one-half miles west of Moro. Other mines were the David Brunton and Michael Mayer mines near the suburbs of the town.

There have been more than forty coal mines in the Bethalto area. Perhaps the most famous of all is the place called the "Yankee Diggins" which employed about 150 men and was located a short distance north of town. Much of this coal was marketed in the Mississippi river towns and at considerable distances in railroad towns. There was a switch railroad track running from the main line to the Yankee Diggins. In January, 1878 a sewer was established and constructed on Prairie street, about 260 feet south of this single track railroad to the Diggins mine area.

Coal was found in some other areas reached by the railroads at that time but it is recorded that the finest vein of coal found early was in the Bethalto area.

Saturday nights were the end of the week for the miners, coopers and mill men, also pay day evening. These were husky men and not inclined to back away from any argument or trouble. Bethalto still has one of the Ball & Chains used in those days to quiet the more troublesome celebrators.

Hotels

Bethalto has an unusual history of hotels. One of the first buildings in

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BETHALTO, ILL.

Bethalto, erected in 1858, was the Carroll Hotel. This hotel was in active use for many years. Another hotel was the Cooper Exchange operated by John Husum.

A well known hotel was the Sheridan House located at the corner of Third and Oak Streets. Conrad Flick was the Proprietor. The hotel was in a fine brick building and contained sixteen guest rooms, two store rooms, a commodious office and a sample room. It had a dumb waiter which was somewhat unusual in the earlier days, and it had all the other advantages of a good hotel.

Another well known hotel was run by John Cooper. It was the Bethalto House and was said to be known far and wide.

If one traveled any distance in those days it meant staying in a hotel at times, and traveling men spent much of their time when away from home, in hotels. Sample rooms were not uncommon even in the smaller hotels of that day and other facilities were made available to what were called "Traveling men."

Theatre

The place called the Public Hall was also used as a theatre. It was in the second story of the Neisler building, now the Klein building, and was large enough to seat 500 people. It was well arranged as to seating of spectators and had a well equipped stage and stage fittings such as foot lights, curtains, scenery, etc. The stage is 30 feet wide. The public hall has been used many times in the past for gatherings and has been a useful place for the people of the community.

Lodges

Although other sections of the history have been given over to the history of organizations, there should be mention of some that no longer are here. One of these is the United Ancient Order of Druids, Teutonia Grove, No. 25 which was organized September 9, 1871, and chartered in 1874. There were at one time forty-five members of the organization which was very active during its existence in Bethalto.

The other lodge is the Order of Odd Fellows. Many prominent residents

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of Bethalto were active in that lodge during the time it was in Bethalto. John A. Miller was one of the Charter Members and Zeb Owens was a Noble Grand of the lodge at one time. The name of George Wiemers is also mentioned as having been active in the lodge at one time.

Bethalto Bands

The records show there was one band in the history of Bethalto that deserves mention. This was the Cornet Band organized about 1879 which won renown throughout the state of Illinois. It was started with 11 horns, 2 tenor drums and one bass drum, and the original uniforms cost \$500. This band grew in size and was famous for many years. There is no record received of other Bethalto bands except those in the schools.

Halloween Celebration

Halloween deserves mention because of the vigor with which it was once celebrated. Occasions are known when a spring wagon was placed on top of a large blacksmith shop. Wagons were placed on the tops of buildings and once a buggy was placed on top of one of the high mills. This required a lot of work since the vehicles had to be taken apart and reassembled on top of the buildings. Halloween was indeed a time when everyone was busy. If you were not one of those out to play pranks and bother others with the halloween spirit, you were one of those at home, and very much alert with halloween in mind.

Bethalto Area Farmers

The history of Bethalto would not be complete without mention of those engaged in farming in that community. The history is a literal salute to farmers, not only in the immediate area but to many others in the Moro and Fosterburg communities and in other places, who have done much to help the progress of Bethalto.

In the early days there was a club called the Farmer's Club which met in Bethalto. Mr. Harvey Dorsey who has a farm in Moro Township and is President of the Madison County Historical Society, knows of the Farm Club which

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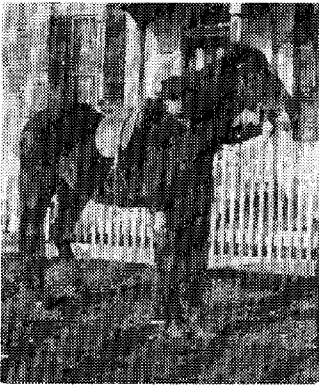
Bethalto, Illinois

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Bethalto, Illinois

was in existence many years, and he said they met many years ago in Bethalto to discuss better methods of farming. It is also said that this old organization which no longer exists, was the first farmers organization and provided the beginning for the present day farm organizations which have become large and helpful to farmers.



The following is a "True Story" with names omitted. It is a very interesting story of a typical farmer in the early days. This young farmer worked on a farm during the period shortly before Bethalto was platted, and he received \$12.00 per month, which was more than most farm hands received at that time. As a result of his savings he was able to purchase some ground in 1852 and was able to locate on it in 1855. It was a tract of wild land, but he cleared away the trees and brush broke the ground with oxtteams and in course of time started to gather good harvests. He improved the ground acre after acre and built buildings as he was able. His life was a busy one and a useful one to his community and he may truly be called a self-made man for he started without capital, except willing hands and a strong determination. Today (in 1894) he has fine buildings and is owner of one of the finest farms in the community. Bethalto not only has some of the finest farm land in the country, it has some of the finest farmers.

Early Bethalto Laws

The following ordinances are interesting since they tell the story of the problems which existed in the past years:

Parking—No one could fasten any horse or other animal to any fence railing or tree without the owner's consent.

Speeding—There was a fine for anyone who purposely rode or drove rapidly any horse or mule through any street or alley of the village.

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Gambling—Anyone caught playing cards for money was subject to a heavy fine.

Intoxication—Anyone appearing on the streets intoxicated was subject to a heavy fine. No one could sell or give any liquor away on election day.

Dogs—There was a rule which covered the muzzling of dogs and a dog tax.

Fall Safety—To prevent falls there was a law which prohibited leaving open any cellar doors, wells, cisterns or other excavations that might cause injury to anyone.

Street Safety—Boys or other persons playing ball, rolling hoops, or engaged in any other play or amusement on the streets or sidewalks which impeded safety were subject to punishment.

Taverns—Taverns could not be open before 5:00 P. M. and must be closed each night by 10:00 P. M.

Charivari—To protect the newlyweds, there was a rule prohibiting such things as beating on cans, ringing bells and raising Cain outside the doors of the newlyweds. Those doing it were subject to a fine.

Railroads—In those early days there were no fast trains such as we now know them, and one of the laws stated that any train, engine or locomotive running through the limits of Bethalto should run no faster than eight miles per hour under penalty of not less than ten dollars. The railroad through Bethalto was one of the most important in the early days and it is recorded that trains were often run every thirty minutes. The people in the early days would go to the station to see the puffing iron horses pass through town. It was a sight not common in many towns at that time.

Briefs

The first doctor in Bethalto is said to have been Dr. Albro in 1866 when advertising was not so much frowned on by physicians. The good doctor advertised as a specialist in chills and fevers of long standing. Without mentioning names, it must be said that our many good physicians have been an important part of the history.

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BETHALTO, ILL.

The early history speaks of "special events" including such things as strawberry festivals, ice cream suppers, hay rides, buggy rides, spelling bees and corn husking parties. In those days the roads were either muddy or dusty but neither mud nor dust interfered with the day's work or the evening's pleasure.

The first sewer installation was one to eliminate a creek which ran across Third Street between the drug store and the Sheridan building.

The first street was paved in 1930, modern electrical service started in 1923 and the new water plant and sewage plants were constructed in 1943.

Moro History

Moro town plot was recorded March 7, 1855 by James Hugh Smith and James Montgomery. First named Hampton, it was later changed to Moro. Railroad came through in 1853. First store built by Hugh and James P. Smith, a warehouse for shipping on new railroad was then built by James Montgomery. In 1856 James Montgomery and Hugh Smith built a flour mill three stories high. It was prosperous until winter of '70-'71 when it burned. The Presbyterian church building was erected in 1853 and still remains as a part of the present place of worship. Moro became a thriving business place with stockyards and shipping center for a large territory previous to the appearance of auto and trucks.

Probably the first business was a blacksmith shop operated by a Mr. Skiles, later followed by John Klaus, Geo. Griffith, Geo. Hovey, and Edward Helmkamp. Early stores also were Wm. Montgomery, T. A. Mutchmore, Hiram and Edward Stahl; shoemaker, Carl Boettger; tailor, Wm. Zoelzer; wagon-maker, T. J. Sapp; postmaster, Wm. Montgomery; brick yard, Henry DeWerff; physician, Dr. Frank Gerel.

Present businessmen are Paul Lowenstein, general store; Henry Nolte, general store; Helmkamp Bros., farm machinery; Geo. Burwell, hardware; Homer Klein, garage; Ed Lowenstein, trucking; Omar Helmkamp, earth mover; Fred Boettger, shoe repair; Henry Hahnenkamp, Quality Dairy Co.; Elmer Helmkamp, small tractor work; Art Aljets, contractor (building); Wm. H. Wilking, barber; Louis Kasten, contractor (building); Kenneth Wood, Wm. Wallace, feed, farm supplies, petroleum products.

COMPLIMENTS OF

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BETHALTO TODAY

The booklet has included briefly the history of Bethalto 100 years ago and some of the happenings through the past years. The more recent and better known history has been omitted. Bethalto has grown into a community of fine homes, fine schools, fine churches, a bank and many good business establishments and community organizations.

There are few places where local industries mean so little in the town. Bethalto is at the edge of a fine, large industrial district which offers the best in employment. It has fine roads, an airport nearby and is within a few miles of cities which provide everything one wants in these modern times.

Bethalto has grown rapidly into a community filled with people who want good homes and good home surroundings, and there is a spirit of cooperation which makes it a town everyone likes.

May the next hundred years prove to be even better than the past.

School History

Little is known of the schools before the beginning of the past century except that the first known school in the area was a log building, taught by an old man named Peter Flynn who left after a long period of service.

The next school of a century ago was a two-room building located on what is now Prairie street. This small frame building was the result of an influx of population caused by the opening of a mine in the area known as the "Yankee Diggins."

During 1866 a four-room brick building was erected. This four room building was noted for its beauty at that period and is pictured in the early Madison County Atlas. This new building was soon crowded due to a further increase of residents who came with the erection of a large flour mill.

Among the teachers who taught in the early schools were Hughey McCrea, D. M. Bishop and John Uzzell who later became County Superintendents of Schools. Other teachers were George Klein, J. W. McCracken, Henry Zimmer-

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man, M. E. Newell, John A. Culp and Doris Bruns who taught school here for thirty-nine years.



The High School started in 1921 and was constructed on the site of the 1866 building. Ralph N. File was the Principal of the school. A new grade school was being constructed at that time, and it provided several extra rooms which were used for the two-year High School. Some of the classes were also held over the Klein Drug Store and in the Town Hall.

In 1930 a two-room wood structure, known as the "White Building," was built on the site now occupied by the File Gymnasium. The Seventh and Eighth Grades used this new building and the High school then took over the entire second floor of the grade building. The Legion Hall was rented for Physical Education classes, basket ball practice and games. Ike Rhine was the Basketball coach and held that position 17 years.

In 1937, while a new four-room brick building was being built for the grade school it was necessary to find additional space for the High School and classes were held in the basement of the Presbyterian Church which was located next to the building.

In 1941 another building program was started when four rooms and a second story was added to the original high school building and while this construction was being done, classes were held in the former McGaughey place and the Legion Hall. Shop and Mechanical Drawing classes were held in the White Building during this period. The two year high school had

(Continued on page 20)

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PROGRAM—WEST PLATFORM

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Rose McCracken and Piano Students
Tex and His Rhythm Rangers
Cottage Hills Mother's Club Play
Bethalto 4-H Girls Dance
Interviews, Spot Ads
Entertainment Sponsored by Wm. Neunaber
Bethalto Agricultural Club
East Alton Ramblers
Style Show Centennial Group
John Fabjance Magician
Ernest Opp Organ Music

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Rose McCracken and Piano Students
Snicklefritzers German Band
Republican Day Governor Stratton, 8 P. M.
Entertainment Sponsored by Wm. Neunaber
Janet and Roger Dawson and Carl Troutner Dancers
Style Show Centennial Group
Spot Ads and Interviews
Ernest Opp Electric Organ
John Fabjance Magician

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Street Parade
Western Horse Show
Judging of Beards
Fosterburg Band
Joe Greenwell Sunset Valley Boys
Edith Vainback Classical and Semi-Classical Vocalist
Hills Brothers, Roodhouse
Betty Carnio Pantomimist
Catholic Daughters Kitchen Band
Hills Brothers, Roodhouse
Ernest Opp Electric Organ
Crowning of Queen

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Joe Greenwell Sunset Valley Boys
Spinning Wheel and Skit By Prairietown Home Bureau Unit
Tex and His Rhythm Rangers
Street Parade, Entertainment by Marching Units
Rose McCracken and Piano Students
Snicklefritzers German Band
Democratic Day Senator Douglas, 8 P. M.
John Fabjance Magician
Ernest Opp Electric Organ
Entertainment Sponsored by Wm. Neunaber
Joe Greenwell Sunset Valley Boys

PROGRAM—EAST PLATFORM

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Jan Storm	Dancing School
Jerry Acunious and Partner	Tap
John Neunaber	Songs
Jerry Acunious and Partner	Tap
David Apple	Trumpet Solos
Janet and Roger Dawson and Carl Troutner	Dancers
Indian Dancers	E. DeKay

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Rebecca Baker's Tap Dancers	Tappers
Jerry Acunious and Partner	Sponsored by Hahnenkamp Dairy
Indian Dance	
Fosterburg Band	
East Alton Ramblers	

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Spinning Wheel and Skit	By Prairietown Home Bureau Unit
Rose McCracken and Piano Students	
Mae Cliff	Baton Twirlers
Historical Talks:	
Josse R. Brown	"Fort Russell"
Don Lewis	"Wood River Massacre"
Janet and Roger Dawson and Carl Troutner	Dancers
Indian Dancers	E. DeKay
Entertainment	Sponsored by Wm. Neunaber
John Fabjance	Magician
Chuck Mitchell's Down Home Band	

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Bob Meyers, Whitehall	
Chuck Mitchell's Down Home Band	
Jerry Acunious Tap Students	
Cottage Hills Mothers Club	Playlet
Bethalto 4H and Ag. Club	
Gospel Quartet, Whitehall	
Indian Dancers	Sponsored by Hahnenkamp Dairy
Tex and His Rhythm Rangers	
Chuck Mitchell's Down Home Band	

Wood River Township Officials Congratulate the People of Bethalto

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(Continued from page 17)

been changed to the three year school and Walter H. Schuette was the Principal of the school for a number of years.

In 1949 the people of the community voted for the organization of a local High School District and a four year high school was formed. Then, again, there was the problem of more rooms and a section of the Prehn Hardware store was partitioned off into four rooms and a barrack type building located back of the grade school building was used for classes.

The name of Ralph File is prominent in the history of the schools. He served thirty-five years in the school system and is now retired. When he became Superintendent, Donald Moore became Principal.

In 1950 a new unit district called the Bethalto Community Unit No. 8 was formed and the new Civic Memorial High School was later constructed at the west edge of the town. Students from the surrounding communities of Cottage Hills, Meadowbrook, Culp, Forest Homes and Maple Park also attend this High School. Wilbur R. Trimpe became Superintendent of the Unit and John Mull the first Assistant Principal of the Four Year High School.

In 1953 the eighth and ninth grades, known as the Junior High School, moved into the annex of the original High School. Recently plans have been made to establish four new kindergartens to be set up at Meadowbrook, Culp, Cottage Hills and Bethalto.

The struggle to improve schools and provide each new generation with better training is in the history of thousands of towns in our country and these efforts have been most important in making the United States a great nation. We believe anyone reading this brief history of the Bethalto Schools will agree it is something for which all Bethalto can be proud.

Think of the beginning of the fine educational system. The Civic Memorial High School has one of the most modern plants in the state, also a curriculum fitted to the present day needs of all students. The Bethalto Community Unit No. 8 provides services to the handicapped through the Opportunity Room, Speech Correction, a Public Nurse, Counseling for socially mal-adjusted, fine

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American Legion Auxiliary

The Bethalto Unit No. 214 was organized April 12, 1922 with eighteen members and has accomplished many worthwhile services for the community. Among these activities is to care for and entertain disabled veterans, help in providing funds for the Cancer Drive, for the Community Chest and Insulin, helping the needy orphans at Normal, giving to needy children at Christmas time, remembering the boys in service and those in the hospitals.

Officers for the first year were: President Luna Bowman, Vice-president Leona Schoeneweis, Secretary-Treasurer Eva Prehn, Chaplain Julia Humm and Edith Crimm was Chairman of the Election Board. The present officers are, President Mrs. Florence Beckman, Vice-president Edna Strohmeier, Secretary Violet Neunaber, Treasurer Ruby Riggs, Sergeant-at-Arms Bertha Schoeneweis, Historian Laura Schmidt and Chaplain Josie Sutter.

Meetings have been held in many places, the old Legion hall, in many homes and at present the meetings are held in the Village Hall. Other activities of historical interest is the annual sale of poppies and work in promoting Americanism.

The Unit has two Gold Star Mothers, Mrs. Violet VanMeter of Bethalto and Mrs. Mary Bertels of Dorsey. Mrs. Edith Crim is a Gold Star member.

Rotary Club

The Bethalto Rotary Club was organized during 1941 and was sponsored by the Alton and Wood River clubs.

Dr. W. J. Reuter was the first President. The club started with twenty-five members and met at the Hamilton Cafe. Later the club met at the Presbyterian, Methodist and Lutheran churches. It is now meeting in the Lutheran church. At present the club has thirty members and the officers are: Carl Cain, President, Albert Paul, Vice-president, Harold Prange, Treasurer and Lynn Claussen, Secretary.

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BETHALTO, ILL.

Of special historical importance is the community activities of the club which includes among its many services: placing Street Markers and House Numbers, a flag pole and circular walk at the High School, a walk leading from the village to the High School, swings at the Community Park, sponsoring an annual Hallowe'en Party for about 1000 children which includes dancing, games, movies and eats, help in promoting and obtaining the Bank and activity in promoting formation of School District No. 8.

Bethalto Area Chamber of Commerce

The Bethalto Area Chamber of Commerce was organized on the 100th year anniversary of the founding of Bethalto. The Bethalto Area is the first area in Wood River Township to organize as a division of the Wood River Township Chamber of Commerce. The Bethalto Area Chamber of Commerce was officially organized on May 25, 1954, when the By-Laws were adopted, the officers and directors were elected, and the chairmen of the standing committees were appointed. The first Board of Directors is Wilbur R. Trimpe, President; Carl Cain, Vice President; James Grisham, Secretary & Treasurer; Mrs. Lela Depew, Dr. Robert Wiehe, Floyd McGaughey, R. Lynn Claussen, and James Ravanelli, Board Members; and Russell M. Bell, Executive Secretary.

The object of the Bethalto Area Chamber of Commerce is to organize and promote the commercial, industrial, civic, and general interests of Bethalto, Moro, Meadowbrook, and the trade territory adjacent thereto.

First Baptist Church of Bethalto

This church grew out of a mission that was started by the First Baptist church of Roxana and a revival meeting that started in August, 1937 in the old American Legion hall conducted by Rev. Denzil of Roxana and Rev. Cross from Missouri. On Sept. 5, 1937 the first Sunday School was started in the Legion hall with eleven people present. Later in September the mission moved to what is now Prichett's store. Later in September Brother Wilbur Strader preached his first sermon to a congregation of sixteen people. The work continued as a mission until May 4, 1940 when the first Baptist Church

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was constituted and organized with twenty-six charter members.

In July, 1940 the lot where the present building now stands was purchased and a basement was started and made ready for use in July, 1941 for Sunday School and church services. In August, 1943 Rev. Ralph Gibson of Johnson City, N. Y. was called as pastor and served for two years.

On October 15, 1947 the Church voted to become affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. The Church is now a member of the Madison County Baptist Association, Illinois Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention.

On October 5, 1948 the present auditorium was completed and used for services. On August 20, 1952 Rev. Paul J. Hall from Nashville, Illinois was called as pastor and has served as pastor since October 1, 1952.

In February, 1954 the new annex, a 40 x 40 structure was equipped with seven classrooms, an assembly room, a furnace room and was entered into for use. The present membership is two hundred and sixteen with a Sunday School enrollment of two hundred and seventy including the Cradle Roll and Extension Departments.

Bethalto Assembly of God Church

This church was organized in 1922 and Rev. A. G. Brewer, now of Greenville, Illinois, was the first pastor. The original Board of Deacons consisted of Isaac Flack, John B. Lawrence and Ed. Opperman, all of whom are not deceased. These men purchased the Baptist church building located on the corner of Sherman and Sheridan streets.

The original membership was only about fifteen and this like the Sunday School has grown much. The Sunday School started with approximately thirty enrolled and the average Sunday School attendance for the past year was one hundred and fifty-nine.

In 1950 the building was completely remodeled and the congregation met in the American Legion pavillion for six weeks during the period. Several years ago a parsonage was erected on a lot adjoining the church. Due to the

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extensive growth of the Sunday School and church attendance, a thirty foot annex is now under construction on the north side of the church building.

The present pastor is Rev. A. H. Ferguson who is the ninth pastor of the church. He has served as pastor for the past twelve years. The present Board of Deacons is George Flack, John Flack and James Vaughn.

The church has, in addition to Sunday School and Sunday worship, a Christ Ambassador Services and Evangelistic Services each Sunday evening. A special activity of the church is the work of the C A's which holds services for the convalescent homes in Alton.

Bethalto Zion Lutheran Church

Among the settlers who chose the area near Bethalto known as Rattan Prairie for their homes in the early part of the past century were some families from Holland and Germany who were members of the Lutheran Church in their homeland. The "circuit riding" preacher who gathered these Lutheran families for services was the Rev. Schliepsick from New Gehlenbeck. So it was that when the first resident pastor, Rev. D. W. Warns came to the area in 1859, he found a congregation organized both in Moro and Bethalto. Thus Zion Lutheran Church, a short distance outside the southeast corporation line of the village, dates its organization back 95 years to 1859.

After meeting in the homes of the people and then in a temporary log church, the congregation built its first permanent building in 1866, a brick structure 28 x 42, with four rooms in the rear for a parsonage. This building stood until 1910 when it was replaced by the present frame structure. Since the building is too small the congregation is now planning for a new larger building to be finished by its centennial year, 1959.

Because most of the early settlers were German, the language used in the early years was German. In 1913, however, with the coming of the Rev. W. G. Bruegmann, who served the congregation for the following 40 years, English services were started and the German gradually dropped.

Five families comprised the first group which was organized in 1859. This

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number has continued to grow through the years so that today the congregation consists of 600 baptized members and 450 communicant members. Ten pastors have served the congregation during its 95 years. The present pastor, the Rev. Erwin J. Kolb, came to the congregation in 1953.

The church has many organizations which have been active in service to the church and the community. Some of these are the Men's Club, The Ladies Aid, the Senior Walther League, the Junior Walther League and the Savior Club.

The Bethalto Catholic Church

Catholic services were first held in Bethalto in 1858. Mass was celebrated in a house which belonged to the Madison Coal Company at a point about two miles north of the town.

A frame church was built in Bethalto in 1861. Bishop Juncker of Alton laid the cornerstone in May of that year. Twenty-seven families were in the first congregation which became known as the Parish of St. Martin of Tours. Nothing is recorded about the priests who served until August, 1870 when Bishop Baltus appointed Rev. Fredrick Lohmann as pastor. The known names of priests who served until 1887 are Fathers Tecklenburg, Weis, Spaeth, Kaenders, Gesenhues and Zwiesler.

During the pastorate of Rev. John Herlitz, after Father Brown, S. J. had completed a mission on November 11, 1886, a fire broke out that evening which destroyed both church and rectory.

The congregation immediately drew up plans and gathered money to erect a new church. On July seventeenth of the following year, Father Herlitz blessed and opened the new church. The parish was then placed under the patronage of St. Joseph, even though all the church documents retained the name of St. Martin down through the years. After several years the number of families became so few the parish was disbanded and they attended mass in Alton and Wood River.

A few years later many Catholic families moved into the Bethalto community and the latter part of 1944 arrangements were made to have mass
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celebrated again in Bethalto. On December 25th of that year High Mass was sung by Father Douglas. Father Douglas and his assistant, Father Lee celebrated mass each Sunday during the next several months and on April 26, 1945, His Excellency, Bishop James A. Griffin, appointed Rev. Thomas Manning as the first pastor of the newly established parish.

The name of Our Lady Queen of Peace was given to the new parish on May 8. The parish includes Bethalto, Cottage Hills, Fosterburg, Moro, Meadowbrook and Dorsey. Dr. Walter J. Reuter, and Kenneth Henkhaus were appointed Trustees.

Work on the new building began in the fall of 1945 but due to war shortages of material and labor, work progressed slowly. On Good Friday, 1946 the Way of the Cross was the first church service conducted in the church basement. After many months of delay the upper structure was sufficiently completed to allow the celebrating of mass on Holy Thursday in 1947. The Bishop designated October 7, 1947 the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary. The church was dedicated as a temporary church and there was the hope Deo Volente that it will become the parish school. When the new parish was started there were sixty-four in the congregation and this has grown during the past few years to two hundred and twenty-five.

It is not possible in this brief history of the first church in Bethalto to give all the interesting facts that have accumulated through the years or list all priests who served its spiritual needs and the people who have been most active.

The Bethalto Presbyterian Church

In the Vandalia Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Bethalto Church was organized on April 23, 1866 in the old School House. At that time the minister was Rev. J. W. Egan. The two Elders were David Starkey and John A. Miller. The two Deacons were John H. Lad and E. C. Long. Holding church in the school house was not very satisfactory and in May, 1866 it was decided to raise money and make plans for a church building. The task was given to the Trustees; Joel Starkey, John A. Miller, F. H. Randle

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and Thomas Belk. Soon the place of worship was built and for nineteen years the church was supplied by traveling ministers.

In 1906 the church became a part of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. and was in the Alton Presbytery.

In 1943 the belfry was destroyed by fire. The bell with the inscription, "1859 Troy N. Y." was saved but many old records were destroyed. A basement was added in 1944 which is entirely modern and the church has enjoyed the benefits of this addition.

Inside the old church nearly everything has been changed. There is a new floor, a change in the pews and interior decorations. All of this was financed by the Ladies Aid which was started following the organization of a Missionary Society a few years after the church started in 1866. The lot on which the church stands was donated by Joel Starkey and a lot was later donated by another member.

During the period since 1866 many have served the church which has grown throughout the years with the Bethalto community. The present minister is Rev. Cecil T. Allen. The Elders are Alonzo Draper, George Wulf, Carl Rogers, Mervin Oetken, C. G. Oldendorph and James Moore. The Trustees are Carl Rogers, Mervin Oetken, George Richardson, Miss Henrietta Kaiser, Alonzo Draper and James Moore. Mr. James Chapman is Superintendent of the Sunday School. Under the leadership of Rev. Allen there has been developed the Westminster Fellowship and other helpful activities. Thus the old Presbyterian Church is progressing and caring for the spiritual welfare of the congregation.

The Moro Presbyterian Church

The history of this church has had an important part in the history of the Bethalto area and deserves a place in its history. The church is situated in Ft. Russell township and was organized in a Bethalto school house on Prairie street just across from the Heeren store in 1848. Two ministers, Rev. Valentine Penzer and Rev. P. D. Young along with the family of Samuel and Anne Duncan Smith started the church. The Smith farm adjoined what is now

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MORO, ILL.

both Bethalto and Moro, and during the winter of 1853-54 a small church was built on the Smith farm near Moro. This same building is now a part of the present church building making it probably the oldest church, which has been in constant use, in the community if not in all of Madison County.

The church has been enlarged from time to time and has been made attractive with beautiful windows. It has a large basement with modern equipment and people of all religions have been welcomed to fellowship and worship in the church.

The present pastor is Rev. C. T. Allen. From the beginning the building has been known as the "Little White Church on the Prairie" and was referred to as the "Light House" in early days.

Bethalto Methodist Church

The Bethalto Methodist Church was organized in 1886. Prior to that time the church attended mainly had been a Liberty Prairie. In 1886 The Liberty Prairie church was disbanded, the building was razed and the land reverted to the original owner. Money received from sale of the lumber went into the building fund of the Bethalto "Society," which had purchased a building site at what is now 219-223 Prairie Street. Later it was decided the plot was too small for the proposed building and the present site at Sherman and Logan was donated by Mrs. Leannah Cox.

The first Board of Trustees included T. J. Ewan, George Uzzell, H. S. Deem, Jacob Kauffman, J. E. Kelsey, A. J. Canipe and George Jackson. Of these charter members only George Jackson remained a member of the Bethalto church for his entire life.

The first pastor to serve the church was Rev. Charles Virden and the present pastor is Rev. C. H. Carlton. Thirty-eight ministers have served the Methodist church in this community since the church was organized. The church has an active membership and has continued to grow through the years. It has been active in the social life as well as the religious life of the people in the Bethalto community.

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Bethalto American Legion

The American Legion Post No. 214 was organized in the fall of 1919 comprising the northern part of Madison County and was known as the Bethalto-Moro Post with Les Prehn as Commander.

The Legion Community Hall was built in 1920 by contractors with the help of Legion members and citizens of the community. A bond issued was used and money was loaned the post on these non interest bearing bonds. The last one was paid off about 1942. Arthur Edsal was Commander at the time of the building of the Hall. The Post meets in the Legion Barn property north of town which was acquired from George P. Humm a member of the Post.

The Post has been active in promoting projects of interest to the area and has been active in promoting the annual Homecomings which have attracted much interest starting in the early Thirties.

The present Commander is Earl Schmidt.

Bethalto Home Bureau

The Home Bureau is a means of adult education and is an extension service from the Home Economics Division of the University of Illinois. Training is given in crafts, health legislation, home decoration, sewing, cooking and other subjects.

The Home Bureau has been a part of Madison County since 1937 but is fairly new in Bethalto. Six of the original members belong to the Wood River unit which meets at Bethalto the first Wednesday of each month. The name of the unit is derived from Wood River township where it originated. Over half of the thirty-six members live in Bethalto area.

The officers of the Home Bureau are: Chairman, Mrs. Victor Strohbeck; Vice-chairman, Mrs. Donald Nix; Secretary, Mrs. Donald Harris and Treasurer, Mrs. William Hawkins, Sr.

The Bethalto Women's Club

The Bethalto Women's Club was organized in April, 1945 with twenty-one

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charter members and the present membership is fifty-five. Plans have been made to celebrate the club's tenth anniversary during the current year of 1954-55. The club has been active in promoting many things of cultural interest in the area. Its main project has been the Bethalto Public Library which was established by the club in 1947. The club meets on the second and fourth Fridays of each month, in September through May of each year.

The first president of the club was Mrs. Robert Klein. Mrs. Leslie Prehn is now president of the club and will enter her second year as president in September. Other officers are: Vice-President, Mrs. Eugene Kasten; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Carl Barth; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Leroy Ducommun.

The club has conducted house-to-house canvass to help in such welfare projects as the March of Dimes, the Heart Fund and the Cancer Fund Drive.

Bethalto Masonic Lodge

The Bethalto Masonic Lodge No. 406 A. F. & A. M. was formed by ten members from Franklin Lodge of Alton and the first regular meeting was held February 25, 1864 under dispensation of the Grand Lodge of Illinois. The charter was granted on October 5, 1864.

The first meeting place was in a building on the south side of the New York Central railroad track and directly south of the present Village Hall. From June, 1874 until June, 1953 meetings were held in the Village Hall, second floor. The lodge now has a Masonic Temple located on Prairie street. The building was started in March, 1953 and was dedicated on March 6, 1954 by Grand Lodge Officers. Since the lodge was formed approximately four hundred members were received and the present membership is approximately two hundred active members. Two of the members have served as District Deputy Grand Masters.

The first elected president of the Village, Jacob Huppert, was one of the ten original members. John McGaughey and Charles Weimers are fifty year members of the lodge. The first Master was Hiram Johnson.

Bethalto Boy Scouts

The history indicates that there was a Boy Scout troop in Bethalto in 1913.

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Boy Scout Troop No. 18 was organized about 1932 with Charles Taylor of Wood River as Scout Master.

Troop No. 9 was sponsored by the American Legion Post starting about 1946.

Troop No. 103 was sponsored by the Methodist Church with Glen Schoene-
weis as Scout Master and the meetings of this troop are held in the church
the first and third Mondays of each month.

Many Bethalto citizens have taken an interest in Scout work and are
devoting time to promoting and helping Boy Scout activities.

Bethalto Girl Scouts

The first Girl Scouts of Bethalto were organized in August of 1941. Sixty
girl scouts and Brownies gathered on the lawn of Flora Buck's home and
became the Lone Troops affiliated with the New York Girl Scouts of America.

In August of 1942 the Girl Scouts were organized and became affiliated
with the Alton-Wood River Area Girl Scouts of America and were under the
direction of Miss Irene Beardsley.

In 1945 and '46 the Girl Scout House was erected and dedicated with Mrs.
Glen DeAtley in charge.

The first president was Flora Buck, and Emma Stotler is the present officer.
There are now approximately eighty Girl Scouts and Brownies active in
Bethalto.

Bethalto Fire Department

The Bethalto Fire Department has always been strictly a Volunteer Group
and while a fire fighting plan existed previously, the first record of equipment
is in 1884 when the equipment consisted of a cart with rubber buckets and
ladder made by Gottlieb Klem who was a blacksmith and wagon maker.
The Chief at that time was C. H. Flick.

In 1889 a hand pumper and an alarm bell were purchased. The Chief at
that time was John Humm, Sr. The Charter members of the Volunteer De-
partment were Nick Smith, Lucas Bauer, John Humm, Sr., J. D. Elliott,

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John Dippold, J. H. Hickerson, John Klein, C. F. Bangert, Chris Langhorst, Ben Picker, H. A. Ewan and Henry Scott. The first charter remained in force until 1930 when the department was reorganized with Tom Scott being appointed Chief. In 1930 a new Ford pumper was purchased which was paid for with proceeds from the annual Homecomings.

In 1936 a \$300.00 siren was purchased to replace the old smaller siren. The first siren was purchased by the Department and the second by the Village. In 1944 a new 500 gallon pumper truck was purchased by bond issue. The present fire house was enlarged in 1944 to accomodate the new pumper. In 1948 a panel fire truck was purchased and equipped to be used as an emergency truck.

In 1954 a White International 500 gallon front mount pump, with 750 gallon booster tank, was purchased and paid for by the Fire Department through sale of fire seals and proceeds from the Homecomings and other donations.

All through the years the Fire Department has been maintained entirely by community efforts entirely and without taxation. None of the firemen has ever received any remuneration for services.

The present Fire Chief is R. C. Reed. The Department has forty members with Leonard Adkisson as President, Vic Erzen, Jr. is Vice-president, William "Hoot" Doerr, Secretary-Treasurer, Melvin Bruktgen, Asst. Chief and Executive Board members are Clifford Doerr, Charles Hick and Charles Pelan

In addition to the two pumper trucks and panel truck, the Department has lighting equipment, first aid equipment and much other necessary equipment including hose. The history of the Department has been excellent from the days of hand brigade and hand pumper to the present time.

Bethalto Girls 4-H Club

This club has twenty-five members who work on a variety of projects such as handicraft, room improvement, sewing and cooking. The club exhibits its work at the County Achievement Day in July, and at the Madison County Fair held in Highland each year where their work is graded and honors are awarded.

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Out of thirty-two clubs in the county, the Bethalto club was selected as the "Club of the Year" the past two years.

The first club president was Shirley Hart. The present officers are: President, Ursala Emde; Vice-president, Ann Strohbeck; Secretary, Shirley Oetken; Treasurer, Dorthy Strohbeck and Reporter, Donna Best. Mrs. Cathorall is the club leader and Mrs. Mervin Oetkin is the co-leader.

Bethalto Firemen's Auxiliary

Bethalto's interest in fire prevention, fire fighting and public safety is an important part of its history, and in 1951 the women decided to form an auxiliary for the Fire Department and give their assistance in maintaining interest in the department.

At the first meeting Mr. and Mrs. Thad Fife of East Alton were present to explain the procedure to be followed. The Auxiliary was formed later in a meeting held on December 4, 1951 and the first officers were: Mrs. Melvin Bruntjen, President; Mrs. Mabel Van Duker, Vice-president and Mrs. Beulah Reed, Secretary-Treasurer. The present officers are: Mabel Van Duker, President; Bernadine Schuette, Vice-president; Joan Hicks, Secretary; Beulah Reed, Treasurer; Myrtle Adkisson, Historian and Myrtle Berghoff, Chaplain.

The Auxiliary meets the first Tuesday of each month. It is affiliated with the State Assembly and representatives attend the conventions of the State Assembly. The present membership is eighteen.

The Eastern Star

Bethalto Chapter No. 847 of the Order of the Eastern Star was instituted August 9, 1920, in the Village Hall where it continued to hold bi-weekly meetings until the erection of the new Masonic Temple on Prairie Street, where it now meets.

The Bunker Hill Chapter was the instituting and mother-chapter. Mrs. Josephine Klein was the first Worthy Matron and George Reiken, the first Worthy Patron. Charter members included Mrs. Josie Williams, Mrs. Mae Rotsch, Mrs. Luella Reiken, Mrs. Ada Caputo, Mrs. Louise Elliott, Mrs. Louise

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File, Mrs. Sarah Rotsch, Mrs. Lillian Oetken, Mrs. Louise Westhoff, Mrs. Mary Gieselman, Mrs. Margaret Cooper, Mrs. Viola Burwell, Mrs. Martha Stahl, Mrs. Lutie Stahl, Mrs. Sarah Kabel, Mrs. Rebecca Elliott Lyford, Mrs. Eva Elliott Prehn, Mrs. Alberta Wood Schoeneweis, Joe Caputo, John Klein, Herman Kabel, Irby Williams, Charles Rotsch and Mrs. Klein and Mr. Reiken. There are only seven charter members in the chapter today.

The chapter received its charter in Springfield October 5, 1920 at the Grand Chapter session which was held there. Today the membership has reached a total of 128. The presiding officers are Mrs. Ruth Darr, worthy matron and Elza Smith, worthy patron.

Historical Floats in the Centennial

Moro P. T. A. Float

This large float will have multiple scenes. First on the float will be two men, one a Minister in memory of the century-old Moro church and the other a Politico in memory of John M. Palmer, one time resident of Moro Township who became governor of Illinois, a member of the U. S. Senate, a Major General in the Civil War for the North and a candidate for President of the U. S. A. Second will be a replica of a stock yards in memory of its place in Moro's past industry. Midway on the float will be a coal miner depicting his important services to Moro's past. Next will be a modern dairyman and a farmer representing these present day industries. Behind these men will be a mock graveyard, putting to rest Moro's great ball teams of the past called the "Moro Unions." Last will be an oil rig, one of Moro's hopes for the future.

Old Fort Russell

The Madison County Historical Association will provide a float containing a replica of old Fort Russell which was built in 1812 and was used as a fort during the war of 1812. The fort received its name in honor of Col. William Russell of Kentucky who had command of ten companies which assisted in the defense of Illinois. The fort was built under the administration of Ninian

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Edwards for protection of the frontier. For several years it was used as the headquarters of the Illinois Territory and has great historical importance. In the year 1819 the Kickapoo Indian Chiefs signed a treaty at or near this fort with Ninian Edwards. The fort stood for sixteen years after this event but was little used except for parties and in 1835 it was destroyed by fire. It is not known what became of the cannons or other equipment at the fort after it was abandoned but again tradition has it that they were dumped into a hole where the fort stood and some have hopes of some day finding these cannon.

Bethalto Public Library

The Public Library was established by the Women's Club in 1947 in a small building on Central Avenue, and it was located there until 1954 when it was moved to the upper story of the Village Hall.

The building in which the library was first located was formerly a large chicken house which was sometimes referred to in a joking manner as the Chicken Coop. Although cramped for space and with all walls lined with shelving and books, this first library served the community well and grew in size until larger space was a necessity.

The present library is well equipped and the library room is attractively decorated. The Women's Club has received much cooperation from the community and recently received a gift of \$100.00 from the Rotary Club.

The library is open on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:00 to 5:00 and from 7:00 to 9:00 P. M. On Saturdays it is open from 3:00 to 5:00 P. M.

A large number of the books have been donated and public interest is growing in the library. The original Library Committee was Mrs. Quentin Zimmerman, Mrs. Homer Albers, Mrs. Ike Rhine, Mrs. Orville Prehn, Mrs. Elmer Olthoff, Mrs. Ernest Lennington and Mrs. Allen McGaughey. Mrs. Charles Schoeneweis has been Chairman of the Women's Club Library Committee.

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- FINANCE**—Edward Kirk, Harold Prange, Clarence Fry, Pop Oldendorph, Lynn Claussen, Erwin Plegge, Hoot Doerr.
- PARADE**—Wm. Neunaber, Chas. Aghetta John Beckman, Cal Neunaber, Albert Ingold, Ben Vanduker, Jerry Newcomb
- PUBLICITY**—Bob Klein, Darrell Smith, Wes Emde, Carl Rogers, Floyd Ellspermann, George Leighty.
- ENTERTAINMENT**—Jim Apple, Darrell Smith, Kenneth Sheary, John Mull, Dale Ball.
- HISTORICAL**—E. O. Schoeneweis, Laura Schmidt, Mrs. Fred Humm, R. C. Reed, Hattie Elliott, L. D. Palmer, Frank Johnson, Pop Oldendorph, H. E. Dorsey, Nelle Ellspermann, Mrs. J. T. McCaughey.
- BEARD**—Paul Gross, Pete Balster, Jim Ravanelli, Adolph Harr.
- DECORATIONS**—Jim Fitzgerald, Carl Carl Neunaber, Alberta Aghetta, Harry Braumaster, and Rotary Anns.
- BINGO**—Carl Schmidt, Louis Schmidt, Vernon Harvey, Geo. Strohmeier, John Holmes, Chuck Hicks, Chas. Pelan, Wes Lehnen, Al Paul, Geo. Stuck, Bob Baumgartner, Eldred Russell, Stanley Madison, O. Dustman.
- All members of both Ladies Auxiliary of American Legion and Fire Department*
- RAFFLE**—Glen Schuette, Les Cook, Jim Grishom, Oscar Cain, Greg Schuette.
- PARK**—Bill Strohmeier, Herman Strohmeier, Leonard Schmidt, Geo. Humm, Jr., Otto Williams, Wes Lehnen.
- HISTORICAL WINDOWS**—Bob Klein, Chas. Aghetta, Herman Bruntjen, Mae Schoeneweis, Dr. Reuter, Woman's Club.
- RELIGIOUS**—R. N. File, Dr. Reuter, Elmer Helmkamp, Elmer Schoeneweis, Ev. DePew.
- OLD TIMERS**—Geo. Humm, Sr., Chas. Neunaber, Fred Humm, John Neunaber, Elmer Elliott, Wm. Heeren, Geo. Ellspermann.
- WOMEN'S COSTUME**—Mrs. Ruth Darr and Eastern Star Chapter.
- PARKING**—Village Officials, Carl Cain, Eugene Pointer, and Boy Scouts.
- HISTORICAL DISPLAYS**—Hazel Zimmerman, Wm. Hattery, Erwin Plegge, Nelle Ellspermann, Fay Schuette, V. V. Virgin, R. N. File, Phil Canfield.
- REGISTRATION**—Chas. Neunaber, Bud Oetkin, R. G. Klein, Fred Humm.
- DANCE**—Herman Strohmeier, Bob Doerr Cliff Doerr.
- WOODEN NICKLE**—Earl Helmkamp, Edw. Plegge, Preston Hendricks, Don Best, Bob Ricks.
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