

The background of the cover is a stylized illustration in blue and white. It depicts a city skyline with various buildings, including a prominent bridge on the left and a lighthouse on the right. The sky is filled with stylized clouds. The title 'THE BLUE ISLAND STORY' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font across the upper half of the image.

# THE BLUE ISLAND STORY

1835-1962




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# THE BLUE ISLAND STORY

## **AN HISTORICAL REVIEW**

OF THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED  
AND TWENTY—SEVEN YEARS

OF | OUR CITY ON THE HILL  
BLUE ISLAND, ILLINOIS

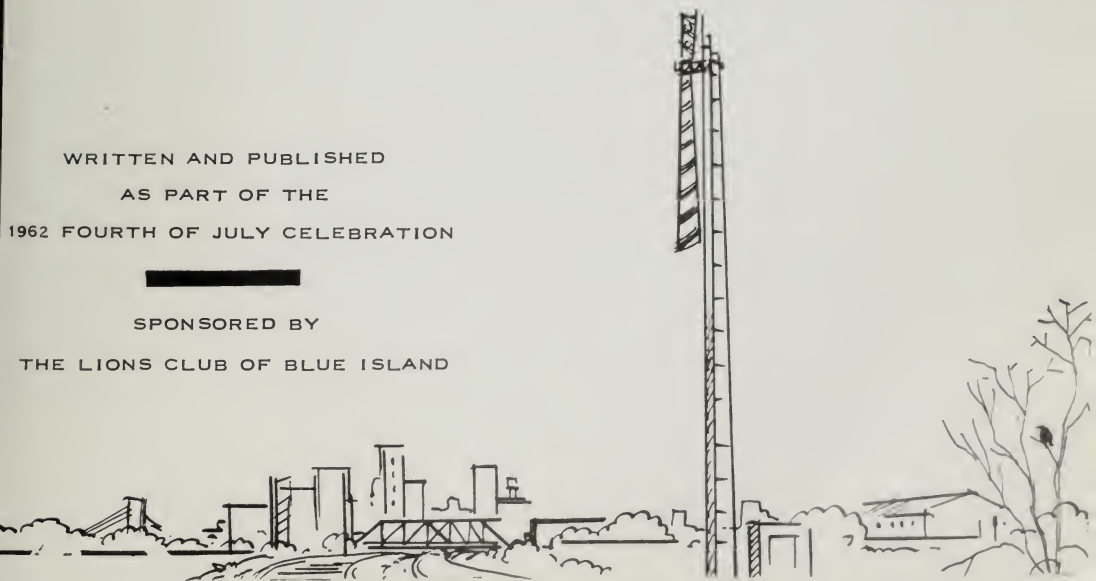
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1962 FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

SPONSORED BY

THE LIONS CLUB OF BLUE ISLAND









## FOREWORD

### How "The Blue Island Story" Came To Be

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In planning the 1962 Fourth of July Celebration, the Lions Club of Blue Island has believed that part of its duty was to bring the history of our city up to date. Could we not look back and retell the story of our past? Could we not catch again that determination to conquer all obstacles, which has always marked our people? Could we not re-dedicate ourselves to the furtherance of that spirit which has brought us from a little pioneer village to our present prosperous city? Perhaps by studying again The Blue Island Story, and rewriting it for others to read, we might accomplish all these aims.

Thus inspired, we have herein attempted to tell of our city's 127 years growth. Fortunately our committee has been able to lean heavily on the fine historical efforts of the late John H. Volp, who wrote "The First Hundred Years." This book not only presents invaluable source material, but also sets a standard of excellence which we hope we have met. The Blue Island Sun-Standard has been our sole authority for happenings since 1935, so we owe the Volp family and organization a double debt of gratitude. Although our work is principally concerned with the years after 1935, we have attempted to condense Mr. Volp's presentation, in order to tell the entire story of our city's prosperity.

Our hope now is that you, our readers, will accept "The Blue Island Story" in the same spirit in which it is presented: that all the tomorrows of this city, our home, will be as fine and as good and as great as have been its yesterdays.

The Lions Club of Blue Island  
1962 Fourth of July Celebration Committee  
Henry G. Baumann, General Chairman

"The Blue Island Story" Committee  
Harold L. Richards and Harold Volp, Co-chairmen,









JOHN HENRY VOLP  
1868                      1938

## Dedication

*In part borrowed, and in part ours —*

When John H. Volp wrote "The First Hundred Years" he penned this dedication:

"Dedicated to the Men and Women of a past generation — those sturdy Pioneers who conquered a wilderness and laid the foundations of Blue Island, The City on the Hill; to the Men and Women of Today, who are striving to make Blue Island a clean, prosperous and progressive community; and to the little Citizens of the Future, on whose shoulders will fall the duty to carry on this work and who must set for themselves even higher ideals."

To which the committee responsible for "The Blue Island Story" would add these words —

"And to the memory of John H. Volp, who wrote so well of our First Hundred Years."







# THE BLUE ISLAND STORY

"If a cat held by its tail is swung in a circle, it will touch all four walls."

This description of Norman Rexford's first tavern, built in 1835 in the north section of Blue Island, would not only fit this one building, but would handsomely compliment any structure in the tiny settlement at this time.

Even though Isaac Greenacre's comment on the four room log hut is certainly not flattering, this structure would seem palatial when compared to the home of Thomas Courtney, the first white man known to have settled in the "Blue Island," in the summer of 1834. Standing alone in the wilderness, this crude cabin had but a single room, no windows, only one opening, a makeshift fireplace at one end, and an earthen floor. When this first home is compared to the beautiful and impressive First Lutheran Church which now occupies its place, it seems scarcely worthy of being called a human habitation.

After operating his little tavern for about a year, Norman Rexford decided to move nearer

Courtney's location, which would bring him close to a well traveled trail, the Vincennes Road, and enhance the business possibilities of his inn. In 1836 he began another tavern about 1000 feet away from Courtney's place, on the highest point of the southeastern part of the elevation. This would place him on the east side of the meandering path which is now Western Avenue, about half way between Grove and Fulton Streets. No crude cabin this, but a frame building sided with boards costing \$40.00 a thousand feet, and brought by team from over one hundred miles away.

This, the "Blue Island House," soon proved that Rexford had chosen his site well. The high part of the Blue Island elevation was much steeper and more abrupt in those days than it is now, and the traveler could get a grand panorama of much of the low lying country all around, from the veranda of the Blue Island House. Army officers and settlers, pushing their ways south and west along the Vincennes Trail, running nearby, stopped overnight,



and this structure, the first of any permanent character, became the nucleus of the "city on the hill."

But why the name Blue Island, and when was it adopted? The most logical explanation seems to be one made in the Chicago Democrat of February, 1834, in this description: "Nearly south of this town (Chicago) and twelve miles distant is Blue Island. This name is particularly appropriate. It is a table of land about six miles long and an average of two miles wide, of an oval form and rising some forty feet out of an immense plain which surrounds it on every side. The sides and slopes of this table as well as the table itself, are covered with a handome growth of timber, forming a belt

surrounding about four or five thousand acres of beautiful table land.

"In summer the plain is covered with luxurious herbiage. It is uninhabited, and when we visited it, from its stillness, loneliness, and quiet, we pronounced it a vast vegetable solitude. The ridge, when viewed from a distance, appears standing in an azure mist of vapor, hence the appellation, 'Blue Island'."

Geographically and geologically this description is well supported. Geological survey maps in John Volp's book, "The First Hundred Years," show the present city a true island for ages during and after the melting of the ice cap which covered it during the glacial



*The Blue Island House*

*This was the first structure of a permanent character to be erected in Blue Island. It was built by Norman Rexford in 1836 and for many years served as a hotel and as a home for the Rexford family. The drawing above was reproduced from a pencil sketch made during the early years when the building was still standing. The sketch was kindly loaned by Fred K. Rexford of Pasadena, California.*



period. Then it was at least eight miles from the present western shore of the lake. At first, Blue Island and Mount Forest Island were the only islands in the lake, with Lane's Island and Stony Island appearing out of the receding waters at a somewhat later date. It is thought by some that Lake Michigan's original shore line was at Blue Island, receding first to the present Michigan Avenue ridge, and from there finally to its present shore line.

The "Blue" part of the name is at least partly due to another story, told by an early visitor to the elevated part of this region, who remembered the acres and acres of blue flags (wild iris) which grew in the marshy spots at the base of the ridge, and seemed to impart their color to the vapor rising from the stagnant water. Perhaps the most interesting of all explanations of the name might be the one advanced by H. B. Robinson, member of a pioneer family which located here in the early days. He told of a tribe of Indians formerly living on the ridge, who painted their faces blue, and who were referred to by hunters in the area at that time as the "blues of the ridge." While history does tell us that Blue Island was once the site of a sizable Indian village, with a nearby important council meeting place and burying ground, there is no other record of the "Blue" Indians. If there were, one might wonder why the name

did not become "Blue Indians Island."

Although the name Blue Island seemed well accepted, even before the settlers came in any large numbers, its official adoption became another story, which has caused no small amount of concern and confusion. This was due, in part, to the somewhat grandiose schemes of Peter Barton, a pioneer real estate promoter who came to the area in 1837. After helping Norman Rexford improve the main road leading south (now Western Avenue) he plotted the section beginning at what is now our drainage canal and extending south to the present township line, between Western Avenue and the Calumet River. This section he named Portland, laid out and named the streets, and "donated" a public square — thereby causing himself to be more cussed than discussed for many, many years in the future. For, in donating this square, which he had presumably meant for the court house location, it had been "dedicated to the use of the people forever." In the first place its location placed it at the later intersection of Broadway and Chatham, making the property four small squares instead of one, and in the second place, there was no clear title to the property, so that it could not be sold, deeded, or disposed of in any way. However honest and public spirited Mr. Barton's intentions were, his visions of developing Portland were



quite premature, as the early settlers continued to prefer the heights to the north of his subdivision, and "Portland" never became the important river town he had hoped. In fact, it was at least twenty years before families took up claims here in any numbers at all. His early scheme was effective enough, however, to get the whole area officially designated by the post office department as Portland. Unofficially and generally the name Blue Island was still used and recognized until about 1850, when another name entered, to confuse the issue still further. Legislation was passed that year to make the post office name the same as that of the township, and so the little settlement officially became Worth. This forced name did not fare any better than that of Portland, and in 1860, after the Rock Island Railroad had named its local stop Blue Island, the post office department, evidently concluding that if "you can't lick 'em, join 'em," finally gave its blessing to this name, which had persisted from the very beginning.

Some of the names given to other sections of this early settlement were neither as pleasantly descriptive nor, fortunately, as lasting as that of Blue Island. For instance, there were Bachelors' Grove, the "black" or "Robbers' Woods" and worst of all, "Horse Thief Hollow."

Much to the disgust of the eligible young ladies, many of the

young men coming to the settlement in its early days preferred to take up quarters in a section somewhat removed from the hill, hence the name, "Bachelors' Grove." Because several farmers, returning from Chicago after having sold their produce, were robbed in the vicinity of a thick forest near the Vincennes Road and 119th Street, this "Robber's Woods" became a place to be shunned. "Horse Thief Hollow" was a deep and very steep ravine in what is now Morgan Park, furnishing a hiding place, and even a fortress for the questionable nocturnal activities of these gentlemen. Farmers had found bags of horse feed here, many hoof prints, and occasionally a horseshoe, which was more than enough to cause them to brand the area thus descriptively and to avoid it, as well.

Now what was the life of these pioneer Blue Islanders like? Some of us today, surfeited by the easy life which we know, would have found the conditions which they faced and conquered too much for us — in fact, we would probably have passed out on the way to this elevated wilderness. But these elementary Blue Islanders were made of sterner stuff. They had to eat, to build homes, to earn a living, and they went about these tasks with courage and dispatch.

The men of the Rexford clan, prominent early pioneers, would give some of the best examples of





*Mr. and Mrs. Norman Rexford, Pioneer Couple*

*So many of the Rexford families were among the first citizens of Blue Island that the name is inseparably connected with the early history of the city.*

*— Photo courtesy of Fred K. Rexford, Pasadena, Calif.*

this determination. The keen business sense of Norman Rexford caused him to locate his tavern and inn near the Vincennes Trail — the first to see the great commercial and trading possibilities of locating in this area. He was also the settlement's first postmaster. His son, Fayette, when only eleven years old, carried the mail on horseback from Chicago to Bunkum, a distance of ninety miles. His brother, Heber, was one of our earliest farmers, sharing the rewards which the good black dirt of this region brought to all those who tilled the soil. It was he who gave us an almost idyllic picture of the natural resources of the place—"

All the early settler had to do when he wanted fresh meat was to take his gun and walk a mile or so from his cabin, where his wants were soon supplied . . . Wild fowl, both land and water, abounded, and the creek and river teemed with fine fish."

The position of this family in the little community is further shown by Heber's having been elected police magistrate. At that time he and S. D. Huntington, chosen constable, represented the law. Commenting upon his position, Rexford stated: "I do not think the negroes of the South ever entertained half so extravagant ideas of the powers of bulldozers as did the majority of our then



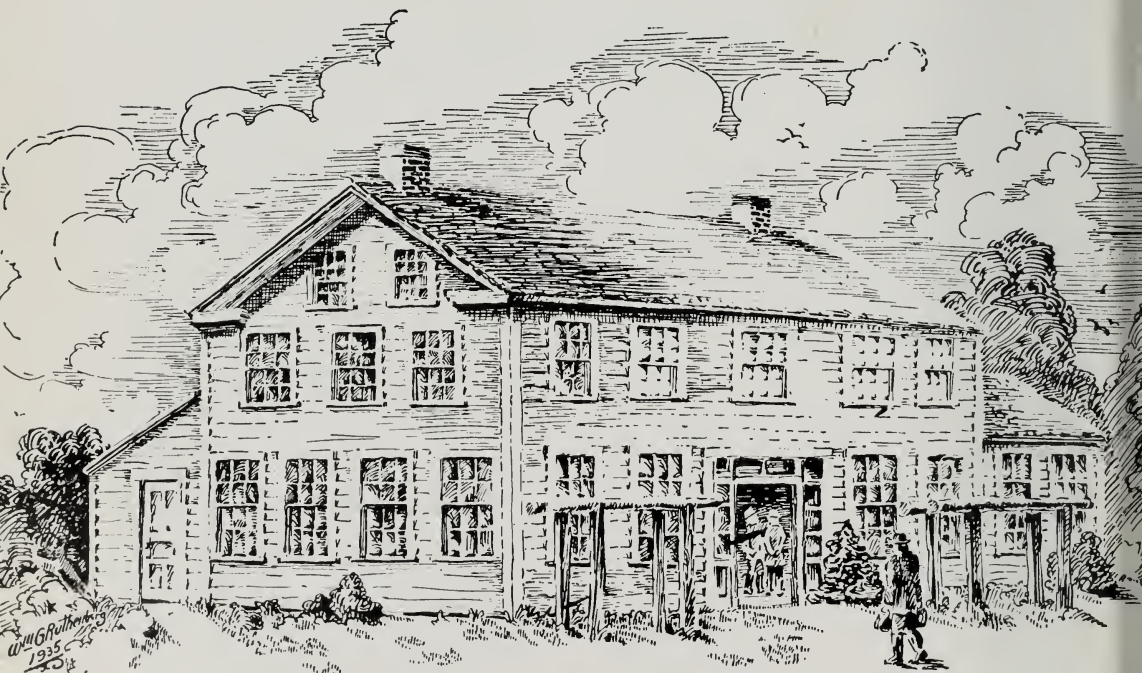
population of the functions of 'Mr. Heber and Mr. Sam.' I was clothed in their minds with almost unlimited powers, but Sam was a terror to evildoers. None were insane enough to dissent when Sam indicated his wish." Evidently then, as now, Blue Islanders were a well behaved lot!

Some time later Heber received a government contract to carry the mail from Blue Island to Iroquoise, Illinois, twice weekly. Some idea of the wages paid then might be gained by stating that for this service he was paid the sum of \$598.00 per year.

Other men soon put their talents to work in Blue Island. Stephen

Jones, one of the three men to settle here in 1836, opened a wagon shop. Next year John Brittain came with his blacksmith shop. After four years of farming, Carlton Wadams, perhaps inspired by the success of the Blue Island House, opened his "American House" tavern in 1844, on the west side of Western Avenue, north of Vermont. At one time Wadams owned all the land between Western and Maple, from Vermont to Burr Oak.

The Robinson family was another to make its mark on the early days. Daniel, coming here in 1836, was the first to arrive. He helped build Rexford's Blue



*The American House, Built in 1844*

*This popular tavern and hotel stood north of Vermont on the west side of Western. Business was very good during the building of the feeder canal. Carlton Wadams was the proprietor.*



Island House, and was later a real estate operator, a teacher, a school director, and a justice of the peace. C. D. Robinson and his son, Henry, might be called the fathers of Blue Island retailing, as they opened a general merchandise store at the northwest corner of Western and Grove. Here the passing traveler or the settlers could buy anything from gunpowder to trousers. The farmers selling produce in Chicago seemed to prefer to stop here on their way home to buy their supplies, and to sit around, puffing on their pipes and discussing the problems of pioneer times. The popularity of the store as a stop-over place was undoubtedly greatly aided by the well nigh impassable roads, especially during certain seasons of the year. Despite these difficulties vast herds of cattle and sheep, coming in over the Sauk Trail from the south and west, and destined for the Chicago market, would strike their northward course near Blue Island, and pass over the Vincennes Trail through the tiny settlement. These enormous herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, sometimes three or four miles in length, would bed down for the night on the prairies near here, giving both animals and their weary herders a welcome respite before they pushed on to the Chicago stockyards.

Two other families still noted for their outstanding successes in the retail field are the Schreibers

and the Schappers. August Schreiber, who came in 1843, bought property below the hill on James



*Herman Schmitt*

*Pioneer merchant and founder of a mercantile establishment which for many years was a leading institution in the village.*

Street and opened the hardware store which is still doing business there, and under the same family's management. In 1852 Schapper moved his little drug store to the northeast corner of Grove and Western, where his establishment, now the Pioneer Drug Store, is still located.

By the late 50's there were four breweries going, which shows that the early Islanders liked the brew that cheers and sometimes inebriates. The Bauer Brewery was the first, rather quickly followed by three others. The Reiser Brewery only operated for a short time, but Busch and Brandt, and





*Robinson Hall*

*C. D. Robinson built this hall in 1860; it was destroyed in the big fire of 1896.*

the Metz Brewery, known for its Bohemian or Pilsner broth, were well patronized for the noble tankards they put forth. One reason for Blue Island becoming known as a brewing town was the easy availability of the "hill" for tunnels used to cool the amber liquid. Those who still like an occasional glass might pause to shed a silent tear for these good old days when beer sold for three to five cents a glass, with the harder stuff going for twenty-five to thirty-five cents a gallon. Housewives also depended upon the brewer's art for their baking, sending on Saturday for a penny's worth of yeast — more than enough to take care of even the enormous home baking done in those days.

Other infant industries flourished for a while in the little settlement. Franz Schwartz, and William and Frederick Seyfarth and after them, Bernhard Knirsch, worked their stone quarries, with the stone from the latter being used to build the First Lutheran Church in 1863, and costing \$2.50 a cord. The Roll flour and grist mill had to quit when the dam supplying their water power was blown up. Henry Wibben, and after him Henry Tews and Carl Reusnow, sold fine, handmade bricks, but later competitors, using machines, put them out of business. Jacob Sauerteig, early locksmith, fell before similar competition, as did Anton Bainteile, with his handmade shingles. The tanneries of Waniata and Linder





*Bauer's Brewery*

*This was the first of four such "thirst quenchers" erected in Blue Island during the 1850's.*



*The Old Union House*

*John Engelhart built this structure in 1875. For many years the hotel went under the name of Bairischer Hof.*

*— Photo courtesy L. Staffel*



were forced to quit when the local supply of skins and pelts ran out. Even the ladies were important in early industry, with Edie Ann Jones, the first white female child born in Blue Island, and her mother weaving rag carpets for the floors of many homes. Beginnings in the cooperage industry were made by William Benjamin and Michael Koenner about this time. Other "homemade" industries included horseshoe nails made by Ferdinand Luedtke, and baskets, woven by Christian Driese.

Early Blue Island profited greatly from its skilled tradesmen. Following John Brittain as a smithy were Nathaniel Sherwood, William Lowe, Louis Brand, John Hartung, Henry Boening, and Fred Dietz, all working here by 1852. Wagon makers after Stephen Jones included Fred Steffes and William Sorgenfrei, before 1855. Carpenters and masons also had plenty of work in the early days, building the early breweries, the German Methodist and the First Lutheran churches, as well as some of the more pretentious homes. D. O. Robinson and John Kelly were carpenters working in the forties, and by 1852 they were joined by Fred Koehne, Theodore Guenther, Erich Claussen, Fred Wuetig, and William Heckler.

Among the first bricklayers, all at work in Blue Island by the same year, were John Black, John and Michael Heim, John Koehler,

William Bouri, and William Betts.

The shoemaker's last also claimed such skilled workers as Peter Kich, Henry Asche, Fred Klein,



*Henry W. Schmitt*

*This pioneer of the early fifties was first a blacksmith, and a manufacturer of wagons. In 1872, he operated a meat market and later ran a restaurant and boarding house known as the Transient House.*

and Walter Williams. John Popp and William Bishop were known far and wide as the well diggers.

As with most primitive communities, professional men were scarce. Mr. Volp tells us that there were no doctors closer than Chicago for the first eight or ten years in Blue Island. In her reminiscences, Mrs. Fuller, the daughter of C. D. Robinson, mentions a Dr. Bachelder, and other records contain the names of a Dr. Truesdale, a Dr. Henry Folk, Dr. Henry Douglas, Dr. Adolph



Bodenstab, and Dr. Graham Marr. There was certainly enough illness, and more, for these good men in the early days. The years 1847, 1849, 1853 and 1854 brought terrible sicknesses. The fever and ague, or the "shakes," as the pioneers knew this disease, may have been augmented by the swampy conditions of the lowlands surrounding the hill. The 50's brought the dreaded cholera morbus, which killed whole families. Burials were made as quickly as possible, often at night, and flowers for the funeral were unknown.

Men of the law did not seem to have much activity before 1850. The power of the magistrate has already been attested by Heber Rexford, who served in this capacity around 1846. Other lawyers then assisting the settlers in legal matters included Rodney N. Day, Daniel O. Robinson, Benjamin Sanders, and Andrew H. Dolton.

While it is difficult to give the exact reason why so many settlers of German descent came to Blue Island in the early days, the fertile soil, as reported by the first of these men from the Fatherland to settle here, might have been the source of attraction. Perhaps August Schreiber, coming in 1848, or perhaps some unknown trader or trapper, familiar with the lush vegetation of the region, spread the good news. At any rate, the staid burghers came and found the region fair and with abundant products. Soon they greatly out-

numbered the "Yankees" who had preceded them. In addition to the business, industrial, and professional leaders already mentioned, some of the German immigrants



*Mrs. Stephen Jones and Daughter  
Edie Ann*

*Edie Ann Jones (standing) was the first white female child born in Blue Island. She and her mother wove many of the rag carpets for a number of the early homes. The mother, Martha Crandall, married Stephen Jones in 1837, with the ceremony being the second to be performed in the little village.*

*Photo courtesy of Mrs. Peter Hall*

included John Englehardt, coming in 1848; Ernest Ulrich, 1849; William Baumbach, 1850; Edward Seyfarth, Christian Krueger, and Fritz Boeber, in 1851; Louis A. Krueger, 1852; H. W. and Hermann Schmitt, 1854; and Frederick Hune and Christ Ahlschlaeger the same year.



At this time it is certainly not the intention of the committee charged with the writing of this history to indulge in idle speculation, or to moralize. But it does seem apropos to suggest that those qualities of honesty, hard work, and good, sound, common "horse sense" which still distinguish many of Blue Island's fine families today may have had at least part of their origins in these German Americans of this early day. Certainly it can be said that these men and women gave an honest day's work for their pay; that such "necessities" as fringe benefits, time and a half, or double time; such practices as feather-bedding, were not only unknown to these good people, but, if

known would have been frowned upon and rejected as unethical.

But if a settler were not a businessman, did not have a trade, were not a professional man, and did not farm, how could he make a living in the pioneer times? Well, there was always a job to be had on the canal, or on the roads. Even before the first settler came, the Indians and the French missionaries and traders had used Stony Creek and the Calumet River for freighting supplies. Even as early as 1830, the Calumet Feeder Canal had been recommended by James M. Bucklin, an engineer of that day, as a water supply source for both the Illinois and the Michigan canals. But the more venturesome of the



*A Pioneer Family*

*Mr. and Mrs. Hart Massey and Children.*

*The Massey home was on the present site of the First National Bank, with the house facing south on Vermont Street. Two daughters, Hattie and Ella, were teachers here in the early days.*





*The Schmitt Brothers Department Store was later expanded to include these three buildings.*

pioneers did not wait for the completion of any man made channel to use the waters of both of these bodies. Peter Barton, the pioneer promoter already mentioned, had chartered a schooner as early as 1835 and brought supplies by water from Thornton to Blue Island. The Young Brothers began operating their "Calumet Traders" a little later. A note in the Chicago Democrat of August 15, 1849, stated that the Calumet River was navigable for as large

When Benjamin Wright, a distinguished engineer of the day,

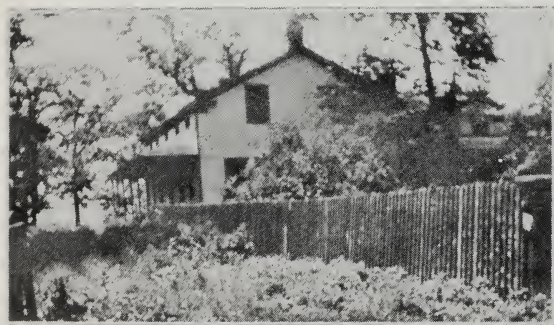
schooners as enter the Chicago River "clean up to the canal dam at Portland (Blue Island). Another settler, A. W. Spies, felt that the Calumet River had great advantages over the Chicago River as a means of water transportation.

made a survey of the possibilities of a feeder canal, he pointed out that the Calumet River had its source in Indiana, passed into Illinois and sometimes discharged into Lake Michigan and sometimes into Indiana. When the feeder dam was being built, Blue





*Northwest Corner of York and Western  
This building was erected in 1855  
by Herman Schmitt. In later years it  
was much improved and occupied by  
the Schmitt Brothers Department Store.*



*C. D. Robinson Home  
This home, built in the early 1840's,  
stood north of Burr Oak, in what was  
then the northwest part of the settle-  
ment. Its doors and window casings  
were brought from New York.*

*— Photo courtesy of  
Mrs. George Pettijohn*

Island experienced its first business "boom," with any able bodied man in the area needing work securing employment on the canal, or in connection with its building. The great trouble, however, was that the meandering course described above made the feeder body both a blessing and a curse. When finished, the dam across the Calumet raised its waters ten feet above those of Stony Creek. This caused much bitter feeling among the farmers, especially those in nearby Indiana, causing them to make many claims for damages to their lands, which were flooded by the backing up of either the Calumet River, Stony Creek, or tributaries to either body of water. Finally in 1857 the aroused farmers attempted to destroy the dam, and while they were not successful, the Illinois legislature did authorize the removal of the dam. For some reason, this order was never enforced, which greatly benefited the Roll grist and flour mill operated in Blue Island at that time. Finally the enraged farmers could stand no more, and in 1875 a group of fifty or more banded together and blew up the dam, stopping the mill operations completely.

The plank roads and plank sidewalks, while they lasted, meant work for many. Even after action had been taken to lay out roads on section or half section lines, roads were little better than quagmires during certain seasons of the year, or in the



swampy lowlands. Plank road companies, to build toll roads, were formed, laying down heavy planks for roadbeds, and hoping that many would pay the toll charged to travel over them. Starting from Chicago in 1850, the Southern, or Old Plank Road, got as far as Vincennes near 80th Street, and did prosper for a while. The Blue Island, or "New" Plank Road, beginning on Western a little north of 95th Street, was to connect our village with the western side of Chicago, but it did not succeed any better than its mate. The coming of the railroads spelled the doom of both.

That the early Blue Islanders were interested in their churches and schools was clearly evidenced. In 1846 Heber Rexford wrote: "All attended religious meetings, whether Methodist, Baptist, or Universalist." He told of the Me-

thodist farmer-preacher who on his way to sell his products in Chicago, would stop in Blue Island on Saturday night, don his store clothes the next morning and preach a sermon, then resume his trek on Monday. This preacher he described as tall, uncouth, and unlearned, saying that if the man could not think of a word to express his meaning properly, he would make up one.

There were no denominational meetings until the early 50's, when the German Methodist Society had the honor of being the first to organize, with thirty-seven members in 1854, and the first to build a church in 1855. This little building was erected on the south side of Grove Street, west of Artesian, at a cost of \$1,250.00 for both the grounds and the building. The Universalists had been meeting separately as early



*First Congregational Church, Built in 1865.*



as 1849, but did not build their church on Greenwood and High until the 60's. Members of the Congregational faith organized in 1860, and in 1865 built their church — then, as now, on York Street. The Catholics had their first services here in 1854, with St. Benedict's being organized as a parish in 1861, and the church built in 1864 on the corner of York and Gregory, on land which had cost \$125.00. A full time local priest began his work with this congregation in 1883.

Those of the Lutheran persuasion held their first services at the home of Peter Engelland around 1861, effecting their organization in 1863, with a membership in sixty-six. In May of that year they laid the cornerstone of their church — then, as now, on Grove and Ann Streets. The stone for this building was taken from the local quarries and hauled to the church by members donating their services. One of the great sources of pride of these Lutherans has continued to be that, in its first century, their church had been served for forty years of this time by three ministers from the same family — the Rev. J. H. Doermann and sons, Henry and Martin. The last of these early church groups in Blue Island was the English Methodist Society, organizing in 1873 with twenty-four members, and dedicating its church home the next year.

Early attempts at education in

the little settlement were private — in more ways than one. Any learning the first children received was from their parents, in the little time that could be saved from the sterner tasks of earning a living and making a home in the wilderness. The first school was opened by Elizabeth and Abigail Periam in 1845, and was for girls only, as the dictates of the time held that boys old enough to go to school were also old enough to work. Mary Perkins conducted another private school in her home about this time, as did Mrs. Thomas McClintock and her daughter. The many German settlers coming into the village around the middle 50's made the several German schools established by Carl Adams, Samuel Wuest, and Joseph Abel fairly popular for a short time.

No record is left of the teacher who started the first public school here. In fact, even the exact location is not known. But sometime in 1846 or 47, and somewhere in the vicinity of Grove and Gregory streets, Blue Island public education did begin. In 1848 came the building of a one story schoolhouse, just east of the present Whittier school. This soon became a general purpose building, used for the town hall, church meetings, and public gatherings of all sorts when school was not in session. Its first teachers included William Hamilton, Daniel Barnard, and Mary Perkins, who earlier had operated a private



school of her own. D. O. Robinson joined the faculty just before the "new" Whittier school was built in 1854. From its beginning, this was a graded school, even though it started with just two rooms. By the 80's such names as Professor J. W. Troeger, principal in charge; Misses Clark, Starbuck, and Hegan, in the grammar grades; Miss Bose, intermediate level; and Misses Keith and Swan, primary department, were known for their contributions to Blue Island education.

As proof of the fact that boys will be boys, especially in pioneer times, Rexford tells of an incident at the time when Professor Seymour and his wife were in charge of the school. Some of the students, perhaps a bit irritated

at the teacher, attempted to leave a large dead dog on his doorstep. Sallying forth in hot pursuit of the culprits, Mrs. Seymour caught one of them and brought him back to the house, keeping him there until he promised to mend his ways. The fact that one of the later buildings was named after Prof. Seymour, however, seems to indicate that the majority of the settlers thought very highly of this good man. Another educator to be likewise honored was Mr. M. T. DeWitt, for whom the DeWitt School (now no longer in operation) was named.

An effort to establish a library was also made in the early days. All the reading the settlers could do was from the books each family had brought, plus copies of the Chicago papers. At the request



*Blue Island's First Schoolhouse*

*This one story frame building was built in 1843 on Vermont Street, just east of the present Whittier School. It was also used for the village hall, and other public gatherings.*



of some of his friends, Thomas McClintock offered to loan books



*Pioneer Educator*

*Professor Seymour, after whom the Seymour School at Maple Avenue and New Street was named.*

*— Photo courtesy of  
Mrs. Albert Schmidt*

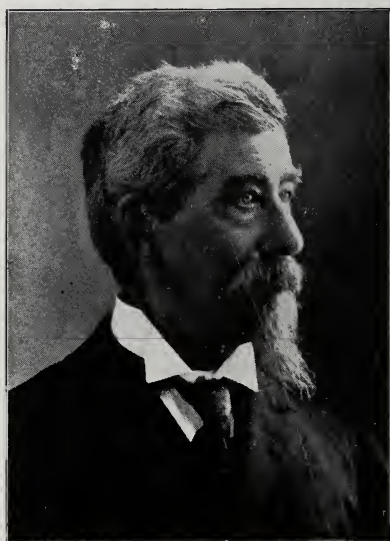
from his own collection, and thus was started Blue Island's first circulating library. After the school was built in 1854, its library books were circulated for adult as well as student usage. This collection provided about 800 volumes. However, it was not until the last decade of the century that a library movement of much consequence got under way, and then largely through the efforts of the Current Topic Club, forerunner of the Blue Island Woman's Club.

What did these folks do in their leisure time? Before answering this question, one might ask, what

leisure time? Despite their hard lives, however, these pioneers did take time to enjoy themselves.

Even from the time of its erection, Rexford's Blue Island House was the leading social center for almost fifteen years. People would come from miles around, to attend the dances and parties there. There was also Englehardt's Hall, built in 1852; the first schoolhouse; Schubert's Hall, built for the German Dramatic Society in 1856; and one of the most imposing structures and landmarks for many years, the three storied Robinson's Hall.

Filled with a love of music and the old songs of the Fatherland, a group of men calling themselves the Saengerbund had been singing together for some time.



*Charles F. Eidam*

*A pioneer shoe merchant who was active in the Blue Island Liederkranz.*



Charles Ellfeld had been their outstanding member from their first rehearsals, so when they definitely organized in 1853, under the name of the Blue Island Liederkrantz, he was their only choice as director. The success of their first public concert soon afterward was so pronounced that new voices eagerly sought to join the group, which had numbered eighteen singers by 1857. In a Saengerfest held in Milwaukee that year, a quartet, composed of the director, Herman Schmitt, Au-

gust Schreiber, and Gottfried Voightmann won first prize; and in a larger contest had the following year in Chicago, the local Liederkrantz took second place, winning an enviable position in the entire Northwest. The apex of the group's development was probably reached by 1887, when the society was able to buy the former hall of the Blue Island Turnverein Society, and to present a gala two day Saengerfest, ringing in many singing societies and visitors to Blue Island to



*Celebrating the Saengerfest*

*One of the several arches erected at street intersections for the Liederkrantz Saengerfest in 1887. Looking west on Grove Street.*



participate in the festivities.

The growth of the dramatic group mentioned above started about the same time of the Liederkranz, and included both men and women. Not only did they want to indulge their own love for the theatre and perhaps realize a little income from the plays they staged, but also they felt that their productions would be well received and applauded by the entertainment starved villagers.

At first they staged their plays at the Blue Island House, play-

ing before appreciative audiences sometimes as often as once a week. This early success inspired the group to contract with August Schubert to build a hall especially designed for their plays. Schubert erected a two story building for this purpose, planning the first floor for a tavern and living quarters for his family, and the second floor for the theatre, complete with footlights and dressing rooms. Unfortunately the village was building away from the tavern location and soon the crowds



*Liederkranz Hall*

*Rebuilt after the great fire of 1896, but destroyed again by fire in 1918.*



which had patronized it and the theatre began to fall off. Shortly afterward a fire of mysterious origin destroyed the building and the dramatic group did not long survive this loss.

During these early days the younger men of the little village were anxious to show their excellence in gymnastics; hence the popularity of the Turnverein. This group had been able to buy property and build its own hall in 1872, but the heavy financial burden assumed, and some internal dissension among the members split the group, with part of the membership forming a separate organization called the Concordia Turnverein, and building a separate hall.

Certainly no history of the early days of any settlement can neglect the volunteer fire department. In these times it might be said that the social importance and functions of the fire department were almost as impressive as its more serious duties. To belong to the fire department was a mark of distinction. It was "the" organization of the times, planning and arranging the picnics, dances, and other public events, with the Fourth of July the greatest, most splendid celebration of all. The fire department uniform of that time was especially colorful — red flannel shirts, with blue collars and bib shirt fronts on which the fire department insignia was outlined in white, and leather helmets. The chief carried a large,

silver plated speaking trumpet, complete with long gilt tassels, through which he gave his marching orders. The hook and ladder wagon was bright red, and carried ladders, axes, pike hooks, and rows of leather buckets. Its motive power? The proud firemen themselves, and how the eyes of the small boys glistened, as each one saw himself a future fire lad-die!

Too, Blue Island's fire alarm, if a blaze were discovered at night, was most novel. Always someone would rush to the home of John Huppel, a tinsmith living at the foot of the hill on Western Avenue, and rouse him. John would get up, sometimes not completely clad, hang his big drum around his neck and march up and



*William Schreyer  
Active for many years in the fire department, and one time old chief.*



down Western, banging as loud as possible, so that everyone would know there was a fire.

Only twice during those happy, halcyon days did the horrors of war touch Blue Island, and fortunately, the suffering caused by either the Mexican War or the Civil War, was comparatively light. In 1846 Blue Island was too small to have been greatly effected by the Mexican War, and there is no record of anyone from this area seeing actual service during that conflict.

The Civil War came much closer to Blue Island. In Lincoln's call of July 4, 1864, Cook County was asked to furnish 4,259 men — a quota far out of line with the population in those days, and reduced sharply because of this. Certainly, however, Worth Township, and the surrounding ones of Bremen, Calumet, and Thornton, had every right to be proud of their wonderful response. Worth, asked to send twenty-one, actually sent 242. Bremen supplied 198 men against the twenty-two requested, and the other two townships surpassed their quotas almost tenfold.

While it is not the purpose of the present publication to detail the war record of all the Blue Islanders who served in the Civil War, as has been so ably done by Mr. Volp in "The First Hundred Years," it would indeed be remiss to omit the names and actions of those who paid the supreme sacrifice. Of the fifty-five listed in

"The First Hundred Years" as having seen war service, four lost their lives. Martin Ocker, who entered his country's service in 1861 and took part in the siege of Vicksburg, was killed in a surprise attack while on his way back North, and was buried in the National Cemetery at Nashville, Tennessee. Felix Durress, who enlisted in the 100th Illinois Volunteers, was killed in action, as was William Berger, a member of Company B of the 82nd Illinois Infantry. Roscoe E. Rexford, taken ill after a length of active service, was given a furlough, but did not live to reach his Blue Island home.

## Section II EARLY GROWTH (1866-1900)

Blue Island settlers had been working for village organization since the close of the Civil War, so it was no great surprise that, in 1872, they won this right. A special election for this purpose was held in the home of Gottlieb Klein on Saturday, September 7, 1872, with Christian Krueger, Henry Bertrand, and Hart Massey having been appointed as judges. Out of the 114 votes cast, ninety-nine favored village organization, only thirteen opposed, and two ballots were not marked. This meant that the early Blue Islanders could then choose six men as members of the first village board. Out of the fourteen



who sought this honor, the six receiving the highest number of votes were declared elected as the original Blue Island fathers, and included the following, each listed with the number of votes he received: Richard McClaughery, 194 votes; Ludwig Krueger, 192; Benjamin Sanders, 191; W. C. Bauer, 188; Jacob Appel, 119; and Walter P. Roche, 115.

The early meetings of this first board were busy ones. Since the rules governing organization prescribed that the members were elected just as members, they had to select their own officers. Benjamin Sanders was named their president by unanimous vote, and Hart Massey was appointed clerk by the same majority. The appointment of Peter Schlueter as treasurer again shows how important the German influence was at that time, as Ludwig Krueger had made the suggestion that the offices be equally divided between German and American settlers. The fact that Schlueter declined the post of treasurer did not disturb this division, which had been accepted as equitable by all concerned. Herman Schmitt accepted the position and gave bond for \$3000.

As might be expected, the first business of the board was concerned with the weighty problem of finances. Having no money whatsoever, the board members appointed a committee to borrow \$200.00, which the group hoped would pay the expenses of their

operations for the following six months. Their willingness and determination to make a go of the infant government were seen by their passage of the very first ordinance, which provided that they would serve without pay until the following April. Having decided to postpone one expense, the next move was to provide income. This was assured by the passage of the second ordinance, providing that "anyone riding, driving, or leading an animal or a team over or across any bridge within the limits of Blue Island faster than a walk, shall be fined not less than five dollars (\$5.00), said fine to be collected before any Justice of the Peace and be paid over to the village treasurer." Mr. Volp's wry comment on this ordinance is too good to leave unquoted. He wrote: "Woe to the man who would trot a horse across a bridge those days. The police officer seemed to be constantly on watch, the judge was stern and inexorable and — the village treasury needed the money!"

During these early days it did seem to the newly elected board members that someone wanted something from the village at every hour of the day or night. Demands came in for plank sidewalks (built at village expense, of course) better police and fire protection; complaints were made about the stock running at large; and many other petitions and requests were presented. In 1873 the board passed its first appro-



priation, in the amount of \$2,000, to cover the expenses of the following year — a sum which may seem trifling to us today, but which must have been staggering to these hard pressed early solons.

In April of 1873 the second village election was held, to choose the first full term officials. Their pay was also set at this time, and was to be \$50 each per year. Chosen as board members were Jacob Appel, Ferdinand Daemicke, Edward Eichhoff, Merrill Kile, Christian Krueger, and Walter P. Roche; with Appel and Roche being returned from the original board. A police justice, Henry Bertrand, and a clerk, F. G. Diefenbach were also chosen. What seems to be the first official use of any local newspaper was made at this time, as the trustees ordered that the annual budget be published in the columns of the Weekly Herald.

That the board members expected a good deal from those who worked for the infant village can be seen by the list of duties they gave their captain of police. This worthy was "to see that the laws are enforced, to make arrests and bring offenders to trial; if fines were imposed, to see that the money was collected and turned in to the village treasury; to prevent tramps from loitering in the village, and if any were found, to chase them out; to give no meals to anyone except cripples or sick; to clean

off the planks on Stony Creek Bridge and from time to time to tighten the nuts and bolts on said bridge; to keep street crossings clean and free from mud and snow; to see that dead animals were removed from the streets; to light the street lights and keep the lights clean and in good repair; to extinguish street lights each night between eleven and twelve o'clock" — and all this to be done for a salary of \$35.00 a month! At this time it should also be noted that this officer was responsible for feeding any prisoners held in the village jail, a service for which he was paid thirty-five cents per day per prisoner. The three meals stipulated were each to consist of one-half pound of boiled beef, all the bread wanted, and one pint of coffee. Certainly the drunk and disorderly, the unfortunates who could not pay fines, and the tramps who seemed to infest the area were not liable to get fat on this diet or its variety.

If all the demands of the citizens of the infant village were to be listed in order of their frequency, top priority would probably go to an adequate safe water supply. In 1877, after the village board had purchased the property where the present city hall is now located from Charles J. Pochman of Washington Heights, and after investigating the waterworks plant at Chebanse, Illinois, a decision was made to sink a well on the newly acquired



lots. The excavation was forty-five feet deep, contained eleven and a half feet of "good" water, and cost the village \$306.00. Following the sample seen at the Chebanse plant, a water tower and windmill were erected, to pump and store the water. The first water line was laid to a hydrant near the well, indicating that even at this early time the trustees regarded the need for fire protection almost as important as that for good drinking water. Additional water lines, however, came rather slowly. About two years later, the first one was a six inch cast iron pipe, laid east from the village property to Western Avenue and south from

there to Grove Street, with fire hydrants placed at Western and Vermont and Western and Grove.

Had a violent storm not destroyed the windmill in 1881, it is doubtful that it could long have continued to pump enough water for increasing demands. The trustees chose to replace the windmill with a power house and a steam engine, which furnished 1200 barrels of water a day, when the average daily consumption was but 500 barrels.

The biggest early impetus to an increase in water usage came in 1884, when the village board issued interest-bearing water bonds to be used to provide added water mains. The water tax of



*Down the Hill*

*Looking south from Grove Street, this picture of the west side of Western was taken before the big fire of 1896. The three buildings on the corner were destroyed.*



ten cents per front foot, along the streets or alleys where pipes were laid, also was a powerful stimulant, as the villagers figured that as long as they were going to have to pay the tax, they might as well use the water. By this time also the village had contracted with its first commercial users of water, the Busch and Brandt Brewery, which it charged \$20.00 a month, with no limit put on usage.

Feeling that the water supplied by their rather shallow wells would not long be sufficient, the authorities next contracted for two artesian wells by 1895, which would provide for a great deal more fire protection through additional hydrants, as well as increase the supply of drinking water. It might be pointed out at this time that the development of adequate fire protection paralleled very closely that of the expanding water system in the village. In a history of the fire department which Mr. Volp very graciously reproduces in his book, John Link, fire chief appointed in 1907, tells us of the early days of its organization. Although there had been records of volunteer fire companies as early as 1855, these groups changed both their numbers and personnel frequently. Some of the pioneers most active include Charles Ellfeldt, John Huppel, he of the loud sounding drum, Charles Johler, Conrad Kich, John Staffel, and others. In 1873, the trustees took some steps toward

creating a fire department by appointing a committee to inspect cisterns and wells, determining the amount and places of water available for fighting fires; and



*Jacob Link and Fred Hohman, Two of the Old Fire Laddies.*

to inquire into the amount of money for buying fire fighting equipment. In 1875, \$2,000 was budgeted for fire fighting equipment, but as far as can be learned, only \$200 of this amount was actually allotted for this purpose. The committee had a chance to buy a \$650 second hand fire engine, but available records indicate that only several fire ladders, pike poles, and rubber buckets were purchased. To get this equipment to a fire as rapidly as possible, a public subscription was taken up to build a ladder wagon, costing \$175.



In 1875 seventeen men met at the village hall to effect a definite organization for fire fighting, electing Carl Brand as their captain; Mathias Helbreg, secretary; and George Engelhardt, treasurer. There is no record of the date that a second fire company was formed on the south side of Blue Island, but in 1880 the two companies were united in the village's first official fire department. Henry Gantry was chosen as fire marshal and Jacob Thoenig named his assistant. In 1893, the members changed their uniforms from the very colorful red flannel shirts, blue collars and fronts, with monograms outlined in white, to the more sober attire already adopted by the Chicago Fire Department — blue coat and pants, with cap to match.

The young department did not have to wait long to meet a supreme test. On the morning of

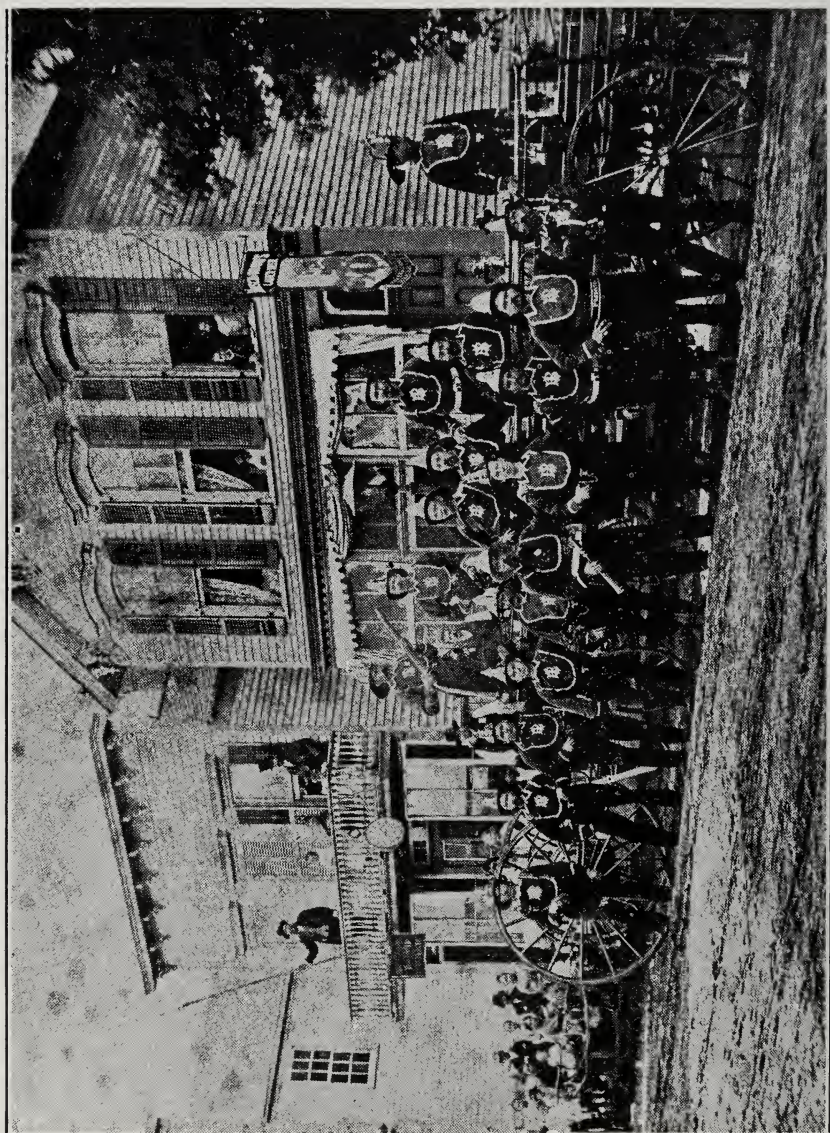
May 17, 1896, a fire broke out in a barn back of the Union House, on Western Avenue. Fed by high winds it spread rapidly to both the Saenger and Turner halls. Although aided by their fire buddies from Chicago, Morgan Park, and West Pullman, the local department could do little against the inferno, handicapped as they were by a water shortage at that time. Before the fire burned itself out at the top of the hill on Rexford Street, twenty-six buildings, including both stores and homes, had been totally destroyed, and many others were badly damaged. The loss was estimated at \$200,000, with most of the business houses or homes only partially insured. Flames were so intense that one entire area of the wood block paving on Western had to be replaced.

Proposals for underground drainage or sewage disposal did



*Fire Department Equipment near the Turn of the Century  
This horse drawn steam pumper was bought from Chicago after Blue Island's big fire of 1896.*





*Blue Island Volunteer Fire Department in the Early Eighties*  
*First row, left to right. First two men not identified, Carl Brand, Nick Behrens, Henry Neibert, Jacob Link, George Mecklenburg, George Engelhardt, Fred Hohmann, Christ Peters.*  
*Second row, Henry Gantry, Louis Luchtenmeyer, John Clausen, Matt Helbreg, William Schreiber, Albert Driese, Fred Landgraf.*



not lag very far behind the development of a Blue Island water system. In 1880, property owners on the south side, led by Andrew Reiner, asked permission to install a storm sewer from Des-Plaines Avenue to Stony Creek. The appointment of a board of health, which was done as the result of a petition filed with the village by members of the local school board, probably had much to do with getting an additional drainage pipe laid along Western from the creek to the south limits of the village. Shortly before the city council form of government was adopted, appropriations were made for almost \$125,000 for sewers, indicating that the trustees were vitally concerned in providing health and sanitary protection.

With adequate and good water becoming more and more available, other services of a public nature were not lagging far behind, both as the result of an active board of trustees, and the work of interested citizens. For some time the trustees had been after the Rock Island to put an underpass at Western, starting their conferences with Supt. Riddle as early as 1874. Despite the danger of the grade crossing at that point to all foot traffic, especially children, nothing was done about this until 1888, when a passageway about half as wide as the street was opened under the tracks. Neither did the village authorities have much better luck in dealing with the railroad to get two (yes, the number is two) viaducts to pass over the tracks



*The Village Fire Department on Parade*

*What a grand day was the Fourth of July, with the Fire Department one of the features of the big parade!*



at Burr Oak, and at Vermont. The original agreement between the village and the railroad was that, if the village would vacate certain portions of York and Union streets, the railroad would put in both viaducts. But for reasons unknown only one viaduct, the one at Burr Oak, was ever constructed, and while the railroad got the two streets vacated, the village, even until this very day, had to be satisfied with the one viaduct, and auto and pedestrian traffic up and down the Vermont hill must accommodate itself to the whims of the Rock Island train crews, who seem to know no law except their own sweet pleasure in moving across Vermont Street.

Attempts were likewise being made in improving roads and highways. The particular hope around 1880 was to make Western Avenue a hard surfaced road, but funds were so lacking to do a

complete job that the stipulation was to "begin at Grove Street north as far as we have the money for" and the south side to go "one block from Canal Street south." After some attempts to agree on action with the trustees in 1894, some property owners on Maple Avenue, from Burr Oak south to York Street, agreed to have their street paved themselves, thus avoiding any assessment. This agreement went through only as far south as Union, with the rest of the distance being paved the next year with brick. After the unhappy experience of plank sidewalks and roads, and even wooden blocks, a definite step forward was taken in 1899, when an ordinance was passed to prohibit the construction of sidewalks or cross walks except those of "brick, stone, cement or concrete."

Another great step forward was taken when the Excelsior Electric



*The Corner of Western and Vermont, in 1890  
The First National Bank is now located on this  
site.*



Light Co. and the Phoenix Boiler Co. were awarded contracts to install Blue Island's first municipal electric light plant, and petitions for the arc lights began to pour in from both business houses and private residences. This municipally owned company also had the distinction of being able to tell its users when they could expect service, as in 1894, the customers were notified that no electricity would be furnished on moonlit nights, and furthermore, that no refunds would be made in rates because of this lack of service.

The telegraph and the telephone also had their local beginnings about this time, with the Postal Telegraph Co. being granted the right to begin operations here in 1882 and the Chicago Telephone Company given the right to erect

poles and string wires the next year, and to expand their services in 1885. With ample electricity available, offers to come in to the village with street cars were not slow in coming in 1896, and a franchise was granted the Englewood and Chicago Electric Street Railway Co. to operate a line from 119th Street through Blue Island for twenty years. Since no action seems to have been taken by this company, the village retained its \$3000 deposit and two years later granted the Chicago Electric Traction Company a franchise for its tracks and street car services.

One of the highlights of the "good old days" is no longer with us — and as far as Blue Island itself is concerned, there are perhaps quite a few today who would breathe a sigh of relief at its ab-



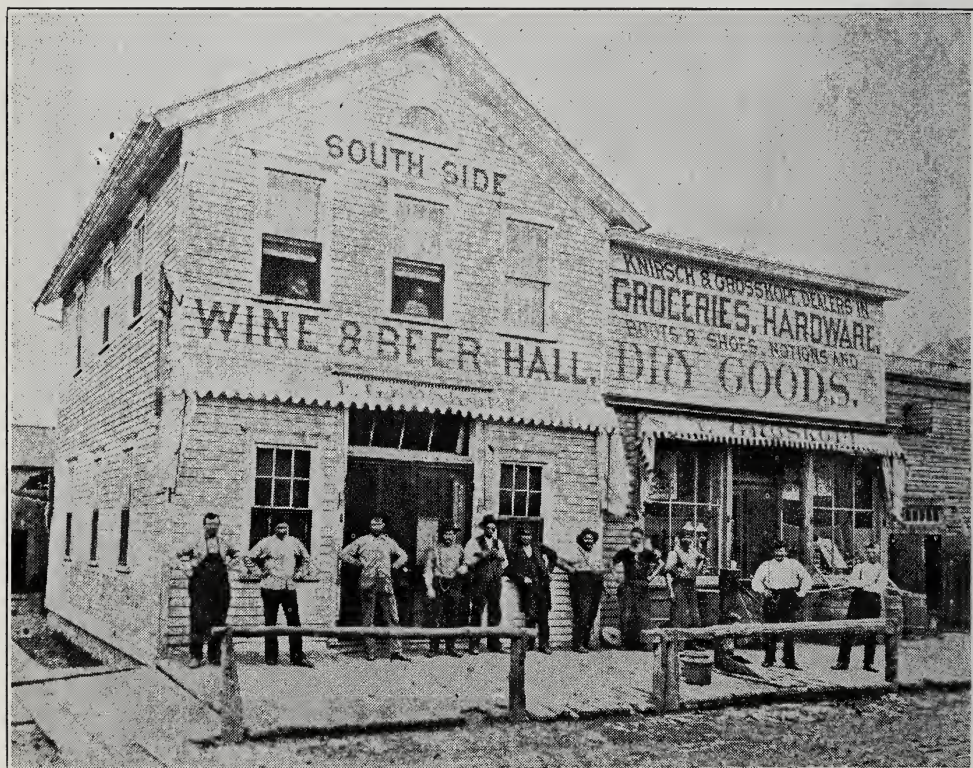
*Market Day*

*This picture was taken along South Western Avenue, in 1880's.*



sence and say, "Thank goodness!" This institution was Market Day, always the first Thursday in every month, and known far beyond our limits as a place to buy, sell, barter, trade livestock of all kinds and description or just a place to come and "rubber-neck," have a good time, or perhaps toy with a glass or two of schnapps. How or just when Market Day got started no one seems to know, but originally it did of-

fer the farmers of the area a common trading post of which they took full advantage, some driving all night to get on the original grounds, on Western Avenue near Canal Street, and secure a favorable place. But unfortunately for the honest farmer and trader, the place soon became infested with fakers and grafters, replacing honest farm products with cheap and shoddy merchandise. Soon the village was to take



*A Pioneer South Side Corner*

*The Groskopf corner, Western Avenue and Broadway. This corner saloon was well patronized on the old Market Days. Next to the saloon was the grocery store of Knirsch and Groskopf, and farther to the right the blacksmith shop of Jacob Thoming. In the rear of the corner building was the blacksmith and horseshoeing shop of James Scherwitz.*



steps to exclude the market from Blue Island.

While Blue Island is known far and wide as a railroad town, is it a town which was made by the railroad?

Whatever the answer to this question might be, the coming of the railroad to Blue Island in 1852 was not exactly greeted by cheering and the tossing of hats of assorted sizes in the air. Many of the early settlers openly opposed the railroad, thinking of the plank roads then in use as the only means of developing the country. In spite of such opposition, however, everybody who was anybody was down to "meet the train" that auspicious morning when the Little Rocket, under a shining coat of paint and puffing mightily as the proud head of six beautiful coaches, pulled into the local station, then located just south of Grove Street. Stops along the two hour trip to Joliet included Junction, six miles from Chicago; Blue Island, fifteen miles; Bremen (now Tinley Park), twenty-three miles; and Mokena, twenty-nine miles.

Seventeen years later the suburban line went into operation, giving Blue Island the advantage of being served by both the main line and the suburban line from the same station. One of the advantages of locating this station at the bottom of the hill was the easy availability of tons and tons of gravel and sand, needed for track ballast. Cars were loaded

here by hand, with the pay being first fifty cents a day and then later, seventy-five. Track laborers at that time received ninety cents a day which was boosted to \$1.00 and then \$1.10. The railroad needed other workers to keep the tender filled with water and wood, and sometimes an extra flat car filled with wood followed the tender, to make sure that the engine wouldn't run out of fuel between stops.

Blue Island's "second" railroad, the Illinois Central, began its service to this community in 1892, when the four mile branch from Kensington opened for daily operation. This new line gave the localities the opportunity to ride to the gates of the great World's Columbian Exposition, then transferring Chicago's Midway into a veritable fairyland of beauty and color. Until this line was electrified Blue Islanders could make the trip downtown in fifty-eight minutes. Together with the Rock Island, the I.C. brought the finest suburban rail service in the entire country to this village and other communities served by these roads.

Blue Island had the additional distinction of having its name as part of the title of two other lines serving this area. The first of these was a remote forerunner of the Grand Trunk, once known as the Chicago, Blue Island, and Indiana Railroad Company, which was chartered in 1868 to be the Illinois division of a road then



under construction to run from Chicago to Port Huron, Michigan, and across the St. Clair River to Sarnia, Ontario. Various mergers and transfers saw the little line operate under several titles, on its way to becoming known eventually as the Grand Trunk. In 1870 the Peninsular Railroad took over the ownership and operation. The next step occurred three years later, when the line became part of the Chicago and Grand Trunk, which is now the Grand Trunk Western.

The other road to use Blue Island as part of its name was the present Baltimore and Ohio Chicago Terminal Railroad company. In 1889, a road known as the Chicago and Blue Island Railway Company obtained a franchise, but before this group did anything, the grant for a right of way between 75th Street in Chicago and the northern part of Blue Island was transferred to the Chicago Central Railway Company, and the right of way was extended through Blue Island in 1890. This line began operations that year, and the next it was extended to Harvey. A new company now took over — the Chicago and Northern Pacific. This line offered a real bargain in transportation in those days, for which it was known for a while as the "Nickel Line," as its one way fare between Blue Island and Chicago was only five cents. Several other transfers in ownership occurred before the road came

under its present title, the Baltimore and Ohio Chicago Terminal Railroad Company.

Street car companies under various names and ownerships also had much to do with Blue Island's progress during those years. Records show that a beginning was made along this line in 1890, when a group of promoters got a charter for a street railway to connect Blue Island, Harvey, Wireton Park, Morgan Park, Pullman, Kensington, and South Chicago. This line was to be known as the Chicago, Blue Island, and Harvey Electric Railway Company, but after some preliminary work, the project came to nothing.

The next step was taken in 1896, when the Englewood and Chicago Electric Street Railway Company was granted a franchise from the village board to operate a street railway line from 119th Street to the south limits of Blue Island for a twenty year period. Service over this road was first offered in 1897, with the first cars operated by cumbersome and costly storage battery power. Although the batteries sometimes failed before the cars returned to the charging station, and this inconvenienced and delayed the passengers, these cars were still considered a vast improvement over the old cable car types. In 1902 the battery type car was replaced, but when the line was extended to Kankakee, finances became involved, and



quarrels with the communities which it served soon placed the company in disrepute.

Near the end of the 19th century the villagers again began to experience growing pains when a goodly number of them petitioned the trustees to hold an election on incorporating under city government. For some unknown reason, however, some of the signers asked that their names

be stricken from the petition, which rendered it valueless. Before the matter was brought up again, there were other signs that Blue Island was truly growing up. In 1898, the trustees decided to prohibit further burial within the village limits, finally settling an old question that had caused much bitterness. Second, a tax of two mills on the dollar was voted for the establishment of a free



*An Interurban Car*

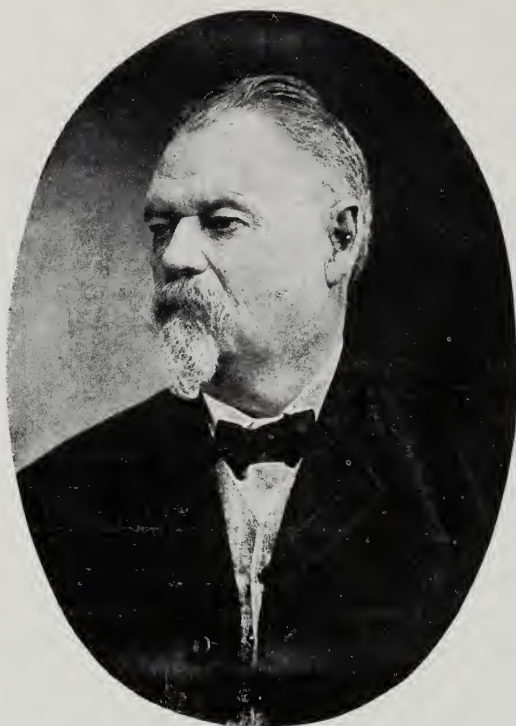
*This was the type used on the Kankakee run about 1909.*



*Battery Powered Street Car*

*When the battery went dead, the passengers were delayed — or got out and walked!*





*Honored Public Servant  
Fred Hohmann, Village and City Clerk for over  
Thirty Years.*

public library, with almost 1000 ballots cast. Elected as the first directors of this infant organization were Mrs. A. C. Fuller and Mrs. Henrietta B. McGrath, for the three year term; H. B. Robinson and Joseph P. Eames for two years; and Henry Biroth and F. T. E. Kallum for the one year period.

In February of 1901 the question of a change in government form came up again, this time based on a petition properly presented, and calling for an April election of a mayor, a city clerk,

an attorney, a treasurer, a magistrate, and two aldermen for each of the five original wards. It is rather interesting that, at the same time these officials were voted on, what was to be the last election under the village form of government was also held, with these results: village president, O. W. Bourke; village trustees, Charles J. Heckler, W. D. Henke, John W. Neibert; village clerk, Fred Hohman; police magistrate, Emil Boehl; and directors of the public library, Mrs. A. C. Fuller, and Mrs. Henrietta B. Mc-



Grath. Since the proposition for the city council form of government had carried, and an election for its officials had to be held within sixty days, these last officers under the village form of government were not seated, but the old board continued until the new officials were selected.

At this time it might be interesting to present the names and positions of those who served as officials during the years of village government, 1872 to 1901. They are as follows:

## ROSTER OF VILLAGE OFFICIALS

1872 to 1901

The first Village Board, elected immediately following the election to incorporate, served only from October 26, 1872, until April 15, 1873, when a full time board was elected. Those serving the first six months were:

Trustees — Benjamin Sanders (president). Richard McClaughry, Ludwig Krueger, W. C. Bauer, Jacob Appel, Walter P. Roche. Clerk — Hart Massey, Treasurer — Herman Schmitt.

1873-1874

Trustees — Merrill Kile (president), Christian Krueger, Ferdinand Daemicke, Edward Eichhoff, Walter P. Roche, Jacob Appel. Clerk — F. G. Diefenbach. Treasurer — Herman Schmitt. Police Captain — Herman Sieman. Po-

lice Justice — Henry Bertrand. Superintendent of Public Works — Wm. B. Brayton.

1874-1875

Trustees — George Luchtemeyer (president), Christian Krueger, Edward P. Hansen, Ferdinand Daemicke, Edward Eichhoff, Thies Clausen. Clerk — \*Charles Trapp. Treasurer — Herman Schmitt. Police Captain — John Sidel. Police Justice — Michael Arnold. Superintendent of Public Works — Charles Ellfeldt.

(\*) Charles Trapp resigned as clerk and H. B. Robinson was appointed to fill the unexpired term.

1875-1876

Trustees — Benjamin Sanders (president), Peter Lussion, Daniel Klein, Samuel D. Huntington, R. S. McClaughery, Jacob Thoeming. Clerk — F. G. Diefenbach. Treasurer — Herman Schmitt. (Office of Captain of Police and Superintendent of Streets declared vacant. Later both offices were combined and George Hinman appointed to combined offices.)

1876-1877

Trustees — Benjamin Sanders (president), S. D. Huntington, Daniel Klein, Peter Lussion, Jacob Thoeming, R. S. McClaughry. Clerk — F. G. Diefenbach. Treasurer — Herman Schmitt. Police Justice — W. E. Day. Street Superintendent and Captain of Police — George E. Hinman.



### 1877-1878

Trustees — Benjamin Sanders (president), R. S. McClaughry, Jacob Thoeming, Daniel Klein, Peter Lusson, S. D. Huntington. Clerk — F. G. Diefenbach. Treasurer — Herman Schmitt. Police Magistrate — Charles Ellfeldt. Street Superintendent and Captain of Police — George E. Hinman. Constable — John Sidel.

### 1878-1879

Trustees — Joshua P. Young (president), F. L. Bushnell, Benjamin Cool, Charles Neukirch, Henry Bertrand, John Staffel. Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — Herman Schmitt, Chief of Police — Christian Peters. (George Hinman was appointed Superintendent of Streets but was "relieved" of his office at the following meeting.)

### 1879-1880

Trustees — J. P. Young (president), Benjamin Cool, M. McClaughry, Christian Krueger, William Black, Conrad Kich. Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — Herman Schmitt. Captain of Police — Christ Peters. Street Superintendent — Christian Zacher. Constable — F. C. Farnum.

### 1880-1881

Trustees — Christian Krueger (president), William Black, Mike Noce, M. McClaughry, Emil Boehl, Peter Lusson. Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — Edward Seyfarth. Police Captain —

Christ Peters. Police Magistrate — Charles Ellfeldt. Street Superintendent — Charles Strickert. Constable — J. R. Lewis.

### 1881-1882

Trustees — Christian Krueger (president), John Staffel, M. C. Eames. C. F. Eidam, Emil Boehl, William Black. Clerk — Louis Luchtemeyer. Treasurer — Edward Seyfarth. Captain of Police — Ethan Wattles.

### 1882-1883

Trustees — Christian Krueger (president), Emil Boehl, William Black, C. F. Eidam, Charles Staffel, M. C. Eames. Clerk — Louis Luchtemeyer. Treasurer — Edward Seyfarth. Captain of Police — Ethan Wattles. (\*Wattles resigned in June and W. J. Huntington was appointed Police Captain.)

### 1883-1884

Trustees — M. C. Eames (president), Christian Krueger, Theodore Guenther, F. L. Bushnell, C. F. Eidam, John Staffel. Clerk — Louis Luchtemeyer. Treasurer — Edward Seyfarth. Captain of Police and Superintendent of Streets — Christ Peters.

### 1884-1885

Trustees — Christian Krueger (president), John Staffel, M. C. Eames, George Luchtemeyer, Theodore Guenther, F. L. Bushnell. Clerk — Louis Luchtemeyer. Police Captain — Christ Peters. Treasurer — Ed Seyfarth.



### 1885-1886

Trustees — M. C. Eames (president), Christian Krueger, F. L. Bushnell, H. W. Schmitt, John Staffel, George Luchtemeyer. Clerk — Louis Luchtemeyer. Treasurer — Edward Seyfarth. Police Captain and Superintendent of Streets — Christ Peters. Police Magistrate — Charles Ellfeldt.

### 1886-1887

Trustees — Christian Krueger (president), Edward Seyfarth, M. C. Eames, Nicholas Stoll, F. L. Bushnell, H. W. Schmitt. Clerk — Gustav Volkmann. Treasurer — F. G. Diefenbach. Captain of Police — Christ Peters. Police Magistrate — Charles Ellfeldt.

### 1887-1888

Trustees — Christian Krueger (president), H. W. Schmitt, Louis Groskopf, Nicholas Stoll, M. C. Eames, Edward Seyfarth. Clerk — Gustav Volkmann. Treasurer — F. G. Diefenbach. Captain of Police — C. F. Banderob. Superintendent of Public Works — Andrew Reiner. Police Magistrate — Charles Ellfeldt\*. (S. C. Reid elected Dec. 6, 1887 to fill the unexpired term of Charles Ellfeldt, deceased.)

### 1888-1889

NOTE—Prior to this time the Village Trustees had selected one of their number to act as president. Now, however, a change in the election laws required the election of a president of the village

board for a one year term, and the election of three village trustees to serve two years each, leaving three hold-over trustees. The village clerk was also elected for one year. Christian Krueger was the chosen president of the village board at that time. In order to be eligible under the new law for president, he resigned as trustee, leaving a vacancy. This vacancy was not filled until May 12, 1888, when Matt Helbreg was chosen. The result of the regular election held April 7, 1888, was as follows:

President — Christian Krueger, one year term. Trustees — Marshall Alexander, Edward Seyfarth, John Staffel, two year terms. (Holdover Trustees — Matt Helbreg, H. W. Schmitt, Louis Groskopf). Village Clerk — Gustav Volkmann. Police Magistrate — S. C. Reed. Captain of Police — C. F. Banderob. Superintendent of Streets — Andrew Reiner. Treasurer — F. G. Diefenbach. Constable — F. Cordt.

### 1889-1890

President — Christian Krueger. Trustees — Matt Helbreg, Louis Busch, Henry Rust, M. Alexander, \*John Staffel, Edward Seyfarth. Village Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — Louis Krueger. Police Magistrate — S. C. Reed. Captain of Police — C. F. Banderob. Superintendent of Streets — Andrew Reiner. Village Attorney — George Borman. Constable — Ethan Wallis.



(\*John Staffel resigned; O. W. Bourke elected to fill his unexpired term.)

#### 1890-1891

President — Jacob F. Rehm. Trustees — M. C. Eames, H. L. Bridgeman, Louis Luchtemeyer, Louis Busch, Matt Helbreg, Henry Rust. Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Police Magistrate — S. C. Reed. Treasurer — Henry F. Klein. Police Captain — Ethan Wattles. Superintendent of Streets — A. C. Boeber.

#### 1891-1892

President — Jacob F. Rehm. Trustees — O. W. Bourke, Ira McCord, John Busch, M. C. Eames, Louis Luchtemeyer, H. L. Bridgeman. Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — Henry F. Klein. Superintendent of Public Works — A. C. Boeber. Captain of Police — E. H. Wattles. Police Magistrate — S. C. Reed.

#### 1892-1893

President — Jacob F. Rehm. Trustees — Matt Helbreg, Louis Luchtemeyer, Fred Koenecke, O. W. Bourke, Ira McCord, John Busch. Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — H. G. Klein\*. Captain of Police — Fred Banderob. Superintendent of Public Works — A. C. Boeber. Village Constable — Holden S. Stafford. Police Magistrate — S. C. Reed.

(\*) H. F. Klein resigned — Henry Beer, appointed.

#### 1893-1894

President — Everett H. Rexford. Trustees — Ira McCord, Edward Seyfarth, Louis Groskopf, Louis Luchtemeyer, F. Koenecke, Matt Helbreg. Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Police Magistrate — S. C. Reed. Treasurer — W. S. Rexford. Superintendent of Public Works — Andrew Reiner. Village Attorney — George Borman. Captain of Police — Walter Huntington.

#### 1894-1895

President — John L. Zacharias. Trustees — August C. Boeber, Oliver W. Bourke, Alexander Prussing, Louis Groskopf, Ira McCord, Edward Seyfarth. Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Police Magistrate — S. C. Reed. Treasurer — Robert Krueger. Village Attorney — George Borman. Superintendent of Public Works — Charles F. Lochow. Captain of Police — Henry Matthews.

#### 1895-1896

President — John L. Zacharias. Trustees — D. A. Murphy, Charles J. Heckler, Alexander Prussing, A. C. Boeber, O. W. Bourke. Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Village Treasurer — Robert Krueger. Superintendent of Streets — C. F. Lochow. Village Attorney — George F. Borman. Police Magistrate — S. C. Reed.

#### 1896-1897

President — John L. Zacharias. Trustees — Edward N. Stein, A.



C. Boeber, Everett H. Rexford, Charles J. Heckler, D. A. Murphy, Charles Staffel. Village Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Village Treasurer — Robert Krueger. Police Magistrate — S. C. Reed. Superintendent of Public Works — Henry Schreiber. Captain of Police — Thomas Cinnamon. Village Attorney — George Borman.

#### 1897-1898

President — Jacob F. Rehm. Trustees — E. H. Rexford, Edward Stein, A. C. Boeber, Joseph Schroth, Charles J. Heckler, Andrew Reiner. Village Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — N. A. Cool. Superintendent of Public Works — O. W. Bourke. Village Attorney — George F. Borman. Captain of Police — Thomas Cinnamon. Constable — L. L. Whitson. Police Magistrate — Dan Harker.

#### 1898-1899

President — Jacob F. Rehm. Trustees — E. H. Rexford, Dan Murphy, George Meyer, Andrew Reiner, Charles J. Heckler, Joseph Schroth. Village Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — N. A. Cool. Police Magistrate (to fill unexpired term of Dan Harker, deceased) — Emil Boehl. Village Attorney — George F. Borman. Superintendent of Public Works — O. W. Bourke. Captain of Police — Thomas Cinnamon. Village Engineer — P. R. Fletcher.

First Election for Directors of Public Library — Mrs. A. C. Ful-

ler, Mrs. Henrietta McGrath, 3 years; H. B. Robinson, Joseph P. Eames, 2 years; Henry Biroth, F. T. E. Kallum, 1 year.

#### 1899-1900

President — Jacob F. Rehm. Trustees — D. A. Murphy, George Meyer, E. H. Rexford, Edward Stein, Joseph Schroth, Charles J. Heckler. Village Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — John C. Klein. Village Attorney — George F. Borman. Superintendent of Public Works — O. W. Bourke. Captain of Police — Thomas Cinnamon. Constable — Fred Farnum.

Directors of Public Library — Henry Biroth, F. T. E. Kallum.

#### 1900-1901

President — O. W. Bourke. Trustees — Charles J. Heckler, Edward Stein, Joseph Schroth, Frank X. Rauwolf, George C. Gobet, Henry Clausen. Village Clerk — Fred Hohmann. Treasurer — John C. Klein. Village Attorney — George E. Borman. Superintendent of Streets — Charles F. Lochow. Captain of Police — Thomas Cinnamon.

Directors of Public Library — J. B. Robinson, Joseph P. Eames.

#### 1901-

President — O. W. Bourke.  
\*(Trustees — Henry Clausen, Frank Rauwolf, George C. Gobet, Edward Stein, Joseph Schroth, Charles J. Heckler. Village Clerk — Fred Hohmann.



Treasurer — John C. Klein. Police Magistrate — Emil Boehl.

\*Charles J. Heckler (an incumbent in the office), W. D. Henke and John W. Neibert were elected as trustees at the election held on April 16, 1901, but as the proposition to incorporate as

a city carried at that election these men were not seated at this time, the old board continuing to function until the city officers were elected and installed.

Library Trustees — Mrs. A. C. Fuller, Mrs. Henrietta McGrath.

### III THE CITY ON THE HILL

(1901-1935)

When Blue Island made the change to city government in 1901, its population was 6,114, and the total vote cast for the new officials was 1,277, which was considered practically the full voting strength of the community. The first officials elected under the new form of government were headed by John L. Zacharias as mayor. Fred Hohmann, who had previously served as village clerk from 1878 to 1880, and from 1889 to 1901, was elected city clerk without opposition, only one of the tributes the voters had paid to his serling services over these many years. The city attorney chosen was George Guenther. August C. Boeber was elected treasurer and Emil Boehl won as police magistrate. The two aldermen chosen from each of the five wards which then marked Blue Island's political divisions were Harry Rohrbach and John W. Neibert, from the first ward, composed of that part of the territory between Stony Creek on the south, York Street on the north, the Rock Island tracks on the east, and the city limits on the west.

The second ward, from the city limits on the south to Stony Creek on the north, and the city limits on both the east and the west sides, chose Louis Groskopf and John C. Joens as its aldermen. V. B. Schreiber and George C. Gobet were unopposed in the third ward, which was composed of all the territory within the city limits east of the Rock Island, and north of Stony Creek. The fourth ward, north of York Street, south of Burr Oak, west of the Rock Island, and east of the city limits, picked W. D. Henke and C. R. Foster. The fifth ward, where the most intense political campaigns were fought, with seven contestants vying for aldermanic honors, finally picked Adolph Danielson and Max Gese. These two won over their next highest rival candidate by only fourteen and eight votes, respectively.

Even though this election followed the last one under village organization by less than sixty days, the fortunes of the political wars smiled on some of the former village officials and frowned on others. Only Fred Hohmann,



as previously stated, survived the change over without any opposition. Neibert and Henke, representing the first and fourth wards respectively, had served on the old village board, as had Emil Boehl, police magistrate for both bodies. New legislation under the city form of government had made the library board officers appointive instead of elective, but Mayor Zacharias kept all those members originally elected to this board in office, and added John W. Reiner from the second ward, Mrs. Myrtle Murphy from the third, and George Warren from the fifth.

The first official family under the new form of government was increased on July 10, 1901 by eleven appointments. In the police department Thomas Cinnamon was named chief, and Edward Garver his lieutenant. The four patrolmen named were Charles Farnum, Charles Malmquist, Ben Steffes, and Otto Wilcke. Other appointments included C. F. Luchow, superintendent of streets; Ed Kinzel, chief engineer; A. Marsh, city electrician; P. R. Fletcher, civil engineer; and Fred Brunhof, city chemist.

From having started with a



*Blue Island Village Hall, Built in 1891*



debt of \$200.00 in 1872, the village board had rendered meritorious service indeed throughout its tenure in office, as a total balance of \$3,726.73 was given in the last report of the village treasurer before the change over occurred. The new officials realized what a good job their predecessors had done along other lines as well, for their first ordinance, number 380, continued all ordinances which had been in force when the new set up came into being.

The committee charged with the project of rewriting this history of Blue Island has not meant to demean any part of its previous years by referring to the era from 1901 to 1935 as those in which the settlement came of age — especially in the fields of political, economic, and institutional growth. The beginnings of this time under the city council form of local government have already been traced; now might be the time to trace the benefits of this change, to present that part of the industrial growth occurring during the first third of our Twentieth Century, and to continue the story of our churches and our schools, the two most important institutions of any local government. Later, in a final section of this treatise, this group will try to appraise the importance of these great forces for good on what has been, what is, and what is to be our Blue Island.

First of all, it would be beneficial to show the expansion of the city itself, in the several annexations made to bring additional properties within its physical boundaries. When the city council form of government took over in 1901, the boundaries of Blue Island formed an almost perfect rectangle. 119th Street marked our northern line, extended to Division Street on the east; thence south to 135th Street; and from there to California Street, our western boundary. The first territory to be added to this rectangle came into the city limits in 1903, when a small plot east of Division, from slightly north of Vermont Street up to Burr Oak, was acquired. This made the city limits on the east run down Division Street from 119th to Burr Oak, then east to Wood Street, then down Wood to a rather irregular line between York and Vermont Streets, and then back west to California.

The next expansion came in 1908, and was to the west, bringing in a very small section west of California Avenue, and south of Broadway to 135th. This tiny bit ran that section of the western city limits only to Francisco Street.

1919 and 1921 brought a much larger bite out of the then unincorporated territory into the city. All the land west of California, from Burr Oak on the north to Vermont Street south was taken in during 1919 with





*Western Avenue in 1910.*



the western city limits becoming Sacramento Avenue all along this stretch. Then, in 1921, this new western boundary was extended northward, almost to Birdsall.

The next expansion went back to the east, again incorporating a very small section just south of that brought in in 1903, with a very irregular eastern boundary lining up about Wood Street. Then in 1927 came the largest acquisition of all — all the land across the southern boundary clear to 139th Street. This new southern limit also ran east of Division in a rather irregular line almost as far as Ashland at its southern tip. The next year

another sizable chunk of land was annexed, on the east again, and taking the city limits there from 139th up along the Little Calumet River to a point somewhat beyond Champlain Street.

Shortly before the close of the city's first hundred years, or in 1931 to be exact, the southern boundary, from California west at 139th Street was extended a little beyond 142nd Street, south and west along the Rock Island right of way to Kedzie. Additions made after 1935 will be detailed in the following sections of this history.

The municipal water system, which had shown numerous short



*Fire Department Equipment in use in 1925  
The first engine was purchased in 1917, and the second in 1925.*





*How the Bank Has Changed!  
The former Haas Restaurant is now the County Trust and Savings Bank of Blue Island.*



comings in the years it had been in use, had come in for increasing attacks in the early part of the twentieth century from citizens who had been complaining about the taste and smell of their drinking water. It was charged that seepage from the waters of Stony Creek, polluted by oil, chemicals and other discharges of the several plants along its banks, had penetrated into the artesian wells. These complaints caused the city council to make its first attempt to get Lake Michigan water through arrangements with the city of Chicago. The local Chamber of Commerce quickly got behind this effort, to push for its realization. About a year later Chicago made an offer to bring in an eight inch water main at the Blue Island city limit on Western, at 119th, but our city fathers wanted a main twice that big.

Finally, on April 5, 1915, a contract was signed with Chicago for twenty-five years, to be extended if found mutually satisfactory to both parties, and the localites were finally freed from the disagreeable tastes and smells that had plagued them for so long. It is not known that this water contract had anything to do with an election which came up about this same time, to annex Blue Island to Chicago, but the proposition was decisively beaten, 2965 to only 894.

Those of us today who sometimes feel that our water bills

are on the steep side might be even more unhappy to see this list of charges made in 1918, after the connections with that good Lake Michigan water had been made, and it was flowing through our Blue Island pipes. For the first 10,000 gallons, the price was 18c per 1,000; for the next 90,000 gallons, 16c per 1,000; next 150,000 gallons, 14c per 1,000; next 200,00 gallons, 12c per 1,000; next 500,000 gallons, 11c per 1,000; and for all usage over one million gallons of water, only 10c per thousand gallons.

If it is true (and there are many who would claim this, as well as many others who would deny it) that Blue Island is *not* a railroad city and does *not* owe its place in the sun primarily to the railroad, then the same dispute might rage rather violently about our city being built upon, out of, and by the clay that has gone into the billions of bricks which have come from the various holes that now dot the city and its surrounding area. There is no gainsaying that brick making has meant much to Blue Island, from the earliest days of Tewes and Reusnow, with their hand made bricks, down to the present time.

Near the close of the 19th century, there were six brick yards in and around Blue Island: the Hayte and Alsip plant, near Calumet Grove; the two Purington yards at 119th Street and the



Rock Island; the Weckler and Prussing yard, the Wahl Brothers plant, both located at 123rd and the Grand Trunk line; and the Alsip yard, two miles west of Blue Island. Altogether in their heyday, these plants employed about 700 men. Mechanical improvements and other changes in brick making increased the capacities of these companies so that, in 1900, when the Illinois Brick Company was formed, and most of the old and obsolete equipment dismantled, Blue Island and its surrounding territory led in the production of common brick, turning out over a million bricks a day.

Listing the other industries which have had some influence on the growth of Blue Island is a task which cannot be completed without some criticism on the amount of space given to this in-

dustry, or the neglect shown to that one. In trying to compile such a list, with appropriate comments, the history committee has felt that the most attention should be given to those industries which have existed here for some time, were extremely important to the city at least one time during their years of continuance, or have grown with the years. First, those of some public nature, as well as historical significance, will be presented.

The beginnings of the local municipal electric light plant have already been sketched. Near the start of our city government operation here, the Sanitary District expressed a wish to furnish Blue Island with electric current for street lighting and commercial usage. The council signed a contract with this organization to do this, allowing it also to oper-



*The First National Bank of Blue Island*

*This view was taken before the drive-in window and passageway was opened, to the north of the bank.*



ate the water works plant, for ten years. Near the end of this contract, in 1908 to be exact, the North Shore Electric Co. wanted to buy the locally owned electric light and power plant. However, in 1911, the present Public Service Company of Northern Illinois acquired all properties of the North Shore organization, including the Blue Island system. Later the city gave the Public Service Company a franchise to construct, maintain, and operate for thirty years a system for the distribution and sale of electricity for lighting, heating, and power.

Ordinance number 300 was granted in 1895 to a Charles A. Rolfe, to construct and operate a gas works. What happened to Rolfe's endeavors is not known, since the next entry on the city's records having to do with gas refers to a Clarence Geist, whose petition to operate a gas company was referred back to a special council committee in 1901. Another applicant for the same privilege at about the same time was J. B. Woodruff, who asked for a fifty year franchise. Geist was granted his franchise in September of 1901, but in the very next year the Northern Gas, Light and Coke Company was declared a successor to Geist, and given the rights and permission to operate a gas company in Blue Island. About ten years later the Public Service Company acquired gas properties in several suburbs, including Blue Island, where it

continued to provide both electric and gas service until a division was made in 1954, and two separate companies were formed — Northern Illinois for gas, and Public Service for electricity.

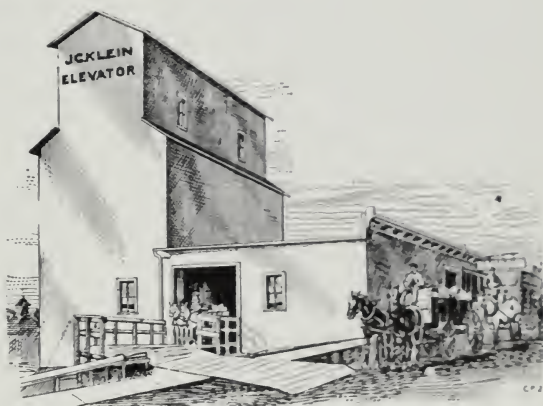
Another public utility service coming in before 1900 was the Chicago Telephone Company, establishing its first toll station in Schapper's Drug Store in 1885. Doctors in Blue Island welcomed the telephone with open arms, with some of its first subscribers including Dr. G. Seim, Dr. R. I. James, Dr. J. S. Kaufman, and Dr. Edward Doepp.

Meeting the needs of the farmers of the area, especially those who grew grains and hay from the very early days down to the twentieth century, has been the role of the Klein Elevator Co., owned and operated from its beginning by members of the Klein family. No gardener from the rankest amateur with a two by four postage stamp sized plot, to the largest truck gardener, with acre after acre under cultivation, ever went away from their store on Vermont Street without knowing that he had bought the very finest products from the two brothers, John and William, or one of their associates. What farmer does not remember the O. K. Poultry Food, and the various kinds of stock foods manufactured under this name, and sold so extensively that their quality was known far from Blue Island? In addition to their ac-





*The Klein Elevator as rebuilt after the fire.*



*A pen and ink sketch of the Klein Elevator destroyed by fire in 1914.*

tivities as business leaders throughout many years, members of the Klein family were also extremely active in civic and church affairs, and their store and elevator is still recognized as one of the landmarks of Blue Island.

In trying to keep some historical and time sequence in any list of industries growing along with Blue Island near the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the Gilbert and Bennett Manufacturing Company would have to be

listed. Beginning elsewhere as early as the 1800's with a "factory" in the basement of his home, making household sieves out of horsehair and wooden hoops which he had shaved down by hand. Benjamin Gilbert expanded his small concern to include the manufacture of curled hair, used in cushions, mattresses, and furniture padding. In partnership with Sturges Bennett he built a factory, in which the hand sieve was still the main product.



Trying to hit upon a more durable product than horsehair for their sieves, the partners began to experiment with weaving fine wire, and the manufacturing of wire cloth thus accidentally came into being. Gilbert and Bennett came to Blue Island in 1885, locating in a section of this area even now bearing, as a part of its name, the staple on which their industry was founded — wire. For many years this company was the only producer of wire poultry netting in the United States. In the early part of this century there were between 125 and 150 men employed in the plant, which contributed much to the development of Blue Island.

All confirmed cigar smokers may dwell with some nostalgia on those dear departed days

when cigar making was a good paying trade, and the man who could “roll his own” was an acknowledged artisan. Perhaps there are, even today, those in this area who remember the satisfaction of pulling on a good, hand made cigar, such as the “Rock” or the “Golden Heights” made by John W. Wolff; the “Belle of Blue Island” or the “Smokehouse” of the Koenecke Brothers, or the “Lentz,” and “260” and the “J.A.L. Smokers” of John A. Lentz. Certainly, if the expression, “What America needs most is a good five cent cigar,” is true, Blue Island, in those days, could easily supply this need. But the coming of prohibition, in part, plus the perfection of the machine made cigar, made the old time individual cigar maker outdated. The present



*Koenecke Brothers Cigar Factory in 1881*

*Reading from left to right the men shown in the picture are Herman Koehler, Mike Arnold, John W. Wolff, Peter Heim, Frank Seidel, Peter Schneider, Albert Kern, Gustave Eberwein, Julius Hess, Fred Stolz, August Koenecke, and Jacob Link.*

*— Photo courtesy of Mrs. Martha Gau*



F. W. Koenecke Company, wholesale dealers in cigars, cigarettes, and tobacco, is one of the few survivors of these early concerns, but alas! the hand made cigar, formerly a number one seller, is no longer among their leaders.

Originally known as the Chicago Copper Refining Company, founded in 1884 and concerned with the smelting and refining of copper matte and the separation of gold and silver contained therein, in 1912, this company became the Chicago Copper and Chemical Company with its plant still in operation just east of the Burr Oak viaduct.

One of the several family operated and controlled industries which began to prosper at the turn of the century was the Blue Island Specialty Company, founded in 1898 by Dr. C. F. Montag, and controlled by the Montag family. If a prize were to be given to the Blue Island product distributed most widely throughout the world the dentist's burrs and other dental and surgical instruments manufactured by this company would certainly be among the foremost contestants for this award. Unfortunately, here is also proof of the old Scriptural verse, "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country," for it is doubtful if ten per cent of the present day Blue Islanders know of the precision equipment and skill needed to manufacture such instruments, or that a Blue Island product may be among the

prized possessions of a dentist or a surgeon in Perth, Australia, or any other city in the entire world.

Another and more recent industry also coming out of the back yard garage of its originator is the Modern Die and Drop Forge Company, organized in 1915 by M. M. Farmer, and under the present day direction of Mrs. Sadie Farmer. Farmer had that rare mechanical ability necessary to design and manufacture intricate dies and to use them to stamp out any number of useful and needed articles. Even throughout the depression the company kept at work and continues today as one of the leaders in its field.

In the early twentieth century one of Blue Island's industries rapidly came to assume a position of foremost importance. This was the canning and bottling, as so well done by the Libby, McNeill and Libby Corporation, which came to our city in 1918. In line with the Libby policy of establishing its plants near the fields and gardens supplying the fruits and vegetables required, the company picked the Blue Island location because of the many truck gardens which still produce bumper crops of tomatoes, cabbages, beans, cucumbers, and other garden staples. Canning or bottling tomatoes, tomato juice, catsup, chile sauce, tomato puree, and other associated products, probably make up the bulk of the local plant's business, but in later



years many new products have been coming from its kitchens to go through the production lines and grace the nation's tables. Now apple butter, pork and beans, jellies, mustard, olives, pickles, relishes, onions, and the famed Libby's baby foods of great variety roll off the lines.

Thus far in this history the part which the railroads and associated industries have played in the development of our city has dealt only with these as a means of transportation. Another side of their meaning must now be presented — that analyzing the importance of their repairing and replacement facilities. The decision of the Rock Island to locate one of its main shops here, in particular, has meant much to Blue Island — employees of the line settling and building their homes here, more money spent here — to mention only two advantages. At this present date the fact that these shops are no longer in operation still does not cancel their overall meaning to the community through the years, for at one time over 500 men were employed here.

There is some probability that the Rock Island shops location here might have caused the North American Car Company to open its local operations, at 135th and California, in 1919, and to grow along with other aspects of the transportation industry. Although competition from truck lines, and, to some extent, air lines, has re-

duced the company's business, its cars still return to the local yards for repair, and there is still some business in dismantling and scrapping those no longer fit for service.

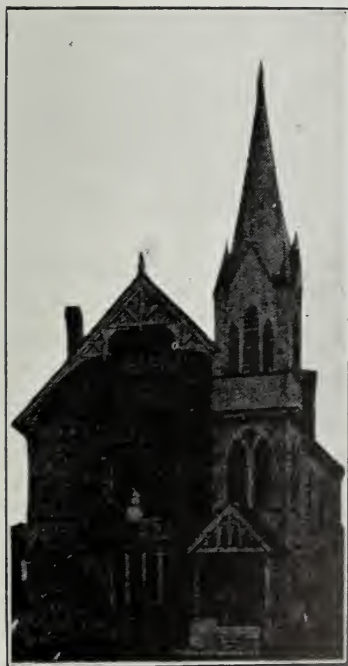
To justify the claim that Blue Island has been, through the years since her very earliest days, a place where the home, the church, and the school have always been of paramount importance, the rapid growth of all three of these institutions may be cited. A brief history of the churches in the early days has already been given in the first section of this history. Now some aspects of their growth may be narrated.

As stated earlier in this account, the first church ever built in Blue Island was the German Methodist, erected and dedicated in 1855, on Artesian Street, just south of Grove. When Detlef Heuer, one of the oldest members of its congregation died in 1888, he left \$5000 for the building of a new church. This edifice was erected in 1891, on Vermont Street, on lots given the church by Mrs. Catherine Henke. The dedication date for the new structure was April 10, 1892, and two beautiful memorial windows of stained glass, one bearing the name of Mr. Heuer and the other that of Mrs. Henke, further enobled its interior.

Further extensive changes, repairs, and additions were made to the building in the middle



twenties. Perhaps because of feelings engendered during the First World War, services in the German language were discontinued in 1920, with English continuing as the official language, both in the pulpit and all departments of the church work. It was near this time that Mr. and Mrs. Frank Popp donated a wonderful pipe organ, and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Schwartz added a set of chimes. In the three day re-dedication exercises in November of 1926 the official name of this church was changed to Central Methodist Episcopal Church. Services in the Vermont location continued until this congregation united with that of the First Methodist Church.



*Central Methodist Church*

When special credit is given to the three Doermanns for their forty-eight years of service to the First Lutheran Church, it is not to say that the other ministers were not devoted and did not render able service. It is seldom, however, that one church is fortunate enough to profit for almost half a century from such devoted leadership as the Doermanns, and such fine followship as their congregations gave them. During the fifteen years of the father's (Rev. J. H. Doermann) pastorate, from 1883 to 1898, a new entrance hall and steeple, plus three bells, were added to the church. The first son, Prof. H. K. G. Doermann, was chosen to succeed his father when the latter retired because of ill health, and led the church to even greater growth, building a parsonage at Grove and Ann. When he returned to college life, the younger brother, Rev. M. P. F. Doermann succeeded and he, along with Rev. R. Reinke, a later day pastor of the Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, had the longest record of pastoral service of any minister in Blue Island as both occupied their respective pulpits for twenty-five years. During this Doermann's service the congregation grew mightily, as did the church property. A modern two story brick school replaced the old frame building in 1921, and four years later an auditorium was added. Adding services in English was another step forward



taken at this time.

The First Methodist Church, as already stated, dates back to 1874. In its first twenty-one years the church grew so large that some additions were deemed absolutely necessary, so the building was enlarged. Several years later a parsonage and an institutional building were added. This church continued its growth and services until the merger with the Central Church, as previously noted.

The First Congregational Church was organized in 1860, but a regular minister did not come until 1863, with the church dedication being held in 1865. The first enlargement came only seven years later, with church parlors being added about this time, and an addition for a kitchen being built in 1890. After the turn of the century a "new" church came into being by moving the old one back on the lot to become the dining and social rooms, and the auditorium then occupying the space left on the front of the lot.

After a steady growth in its number of parishioners, the present St. Benedict's Catholic Church was built in 1895, at a cost of approximately \$30,000. At first its ground floor was divided into four school rooms, with the auditorium above. The next big step forward was taken in 1909, under Rev. Paul Halbmaier, with the building of a home for the sisters, costing \$10,000. Father Paul

Rosch continued a much needed building program by erecting a modern rectory on property which had been recently purchased back of the church, and making a school building out of the old rectory. His successor, Rev. Theodore G. Gross, recognizing that the rapidly expanding student body had quickly outgrown even this change, bought the rest of the property along Grove Street, from south of the church to the corner of New Street. In 1925, the corner stone of the present school building was laid, with classes starting in January of 1926.

All of the churches listed above had their origins considerably before the close of the nineteenth century, but the following faiths originated and first met near the end of this time, and some did not appear before the beginning of the twentieth century. The Swedish Lutheran Siloa Church was organized in 1889, with the church going up in 1892. Rev. A. P. Martin was the first regularly ordained minister, taking charge of his flock in 1898. During the ministry of Rev. S. J. Sebelius the corner lot on Collins and Greenwood was bought, and a parsonage built. Unfortunately the pulpit was vacant for about two years, until Rev. J. A. Hemburg took charge in 1921. However, the faith of the congregation survived, and new activities were well supported, such as the purchase of another lot on Or-





*Masonic Temple, Built in 1921  
Several churches held services here temporarily and at different times.*

chard and Greenwood, and the building of a new parsonage in 1922.

Although blessed with a dedicated band of followers, the Universalist Church seemed to have more than its share of difficulties in making its way in Blue Island. After using a school house, other churches, private homes, and business halls for their meeting place, the members of the congregation did build their own sanctuary after the close of the Civil War. During the early part of the present century, however, this church, located at Greenwood and High, was abandoned and church records now available do not include

any mention of this particular faith's continuing in Blue Island.

The Blue Island Mission Covenant Church, called by some of the old timers the Swedish Covenant Church, was another church having a very humble beginning. In 1890 August Henkel invited a number of "mission friends" to worship in his home. After meeting in other churches and a vacant store, a congregation was definitely organized in 1894 with twenty-one charter members.

The next year this devoted group started their first church building on Cochran and Greenwood and dedicated this building in 1897. A break with the old



practices came in 1924 when the first English services were held.

In its early days St. Paul's Evangelical Church, located at Gregory and New, was known as Friedens Evangelical Church. From its beginning in 1893, this church has grown very rapidly, until it has become one of the leading Protestant churches in Blue Island.

The only other churches coming into being before the dawn of the twentieth century was St. Isidore's, the second Catholic parish to appear in Blue Island. Rev. C. Gronkowski was appointed its first priest in 1900, and its first high mass was celebrated in the new church and school building on Christmas Day of that year. About twelve years later additions were made to both the church and the school, and a home for the pastor was also built, with Father Pyterck coming from Posen to take full time charge. A new home for the sisterhood order followed in 1914.

A third Catholic church and parish came into being in 1908, when the Italian families in the city established a small chapel to St. Donato. This group first received permission from the Archbishop to buy the old frame church belonging to St. Benedict, and moved it to Orange and Division Streets. A home for a full time priest was made possible in 1917, with Father Mondino placed in charge as full time resident priest. Growth of the membership

has been steady since that time.

The Slovak Lutheran Church, St. Peter and Paul, was organized in 1907 by fourteen families, holding its early services in the First Lutheran Church. Property on Greenwood Avenue was purchased in 1921, and an old church building on High and Greenwood was bought and moved to the new location. Brick veneering and the purchase of a magnificent pipe organ further enhanced the appeal of this edifice, which has continued its services to an increasing congregation.

The Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized in 1909. Before their own beautiful church on Maple Avenue and High Street was ready this congregation met in the Congregational Church. Another kinship between this church and the first Lutheran was shown in two ways: Rev. A. Reinke, the first Salem pastor, was the son of Rev. A. Reinke, the first pastor of the Grove Street Church, and his twenty-five years of service equalled the record of Rev. M.P.F. Doermann, pastor of the older church.

Started by the members of fourteen families, the Blue Island Church of Christ dates back to 1914, when these devoted few began meeting in the C.J. Pronger home. Several ministers from outside of Blue Island worked with the localites, hoping to get a permanent church organization started, but it was not until 1930 that this congregation was able



to dedicate its own structure. Rev. W. R. MacDowell took over for two years as minister here until 1932, when he resigned. A Rev. N. Ortman took over as supply pastor, serving without pay until August of that year, when he was called as the group's full time minister. In the mid thirties it did seem that at last this church had come upon good times, with encouraging growth, in both members and financial support.

Following the settlement of a few families in an open prairie over in the northern part of Blue Island, the Evangelical Community Church began its services in a garage at 119th Street and Irving in 1923. Three years later the group moved into a bungalow church at 120th and Gregory.

First organized in 1912, and then re-organized in 1924, the Orchard Street Christian Church was blessed with a congregation which, like several other Blue Island religious groups, began with a mere handful of members. This group seemed able to grow steadily, as had the others, and yet to maintain the friendly atmosphere of the small church. Up to 1935, their greatest step forward had been taken in 1930, when their present sanctuary was erected.

Other additions to the church family of Blue Island included an Episcopal group, which after beginning with meetings in homes, halls, and other churches around 1900, discontinued its local ef-

forts to organize a parish here for about ten years. In 1920, however, the purchase of the Institutional Building, some lots at Greenwood and Oak, assisted by a re-aroused interest on the part of the members of this faith, assured them a church to worship in. The new mission was named St. Aidan's. Slow but steady growth blessed the congregation, with a new church being completed in 1931, and the old building being remodeled as a parish house.

The year 1935, ending the first hundred years of Blue Island's history, brought the Central Church of Christ, which held its meetings in the Masonic Temple at that time. There was some relationship between this group and that which composed the congregation at the Orchard Street Christian Church, as Rev. Nicholas Ortman, who had served as minister of this latter body became the first pastor of the Central Church that year.

The next year brought the First Church of Christ Scientist to Blue Island. Organized by a small group of Christian Scientists, this group held its first service on June 14, 1936, in the Blue Island Masonic Temple.

The story of the growth of the public schools in Blue Island is first and foremost the story of those dedicated men and women—teachers, administrators, board members who gave largely of their time and energies to build-



ing and improving the schools. The earliest public school records, as already stated, go back to the year 1854, and there is some knowledge of private schools before that time. There is no doubt, that from its very earliest days, Blue Island has always been education-minded.

Among the earliest records yet available are accounts of school board meetings in 1885, praising such men as Thomas Lewis, president of the board at that time, Jacob Thoeming, its secretary, and Asa Farmer, the third member of the body. Probably the most respected and admired educational leader of the closing years of the nineteenth century was Principal Seymour, who was in charge of the local school at the time of its first high school graduation, in June of 1877. It is now estimated that this gradua-

tion would compare favorably with today's completion of the tenth grade. Five of the six graduated this first year were Nellie Fuller, Maggie Hulett, Victie Pepper, Anne Purer, and Grace Roche — all girls, with the name of the sixth graduate not being known. Next year the first boy to be graduated, William Black, teamed up with Addie Diefenbach, to make up the graduation class of only two.

From this time until 1897 there are no records of graduation from the Blue Island schools, the supposition being that local students went to Chicago schools to get their high school education. During this time, however, grade school buildings continued at a good pace, with additions made to the Whittier School, and the building of Seymour and DeWitt, making up the three buildings



*One of Blue Island's Oldest School Buildings*

*The feet of thousands of Blue Island students trod these ancient halls until 1925, when the building, the Whittier School, was condemned and had to be torn down.*



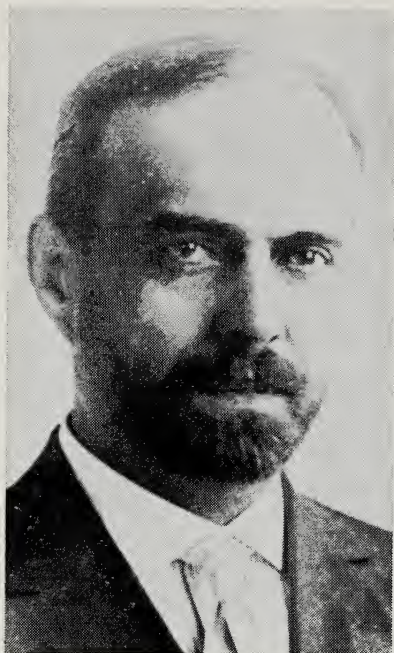


*St. Benedict's Church in construction, 1895.*



*Home of the Chicago Telephone Company, 1905  
After remodeling this building became the Elks Club.*





Mr. J. E. Lemon

*Mr. Lemon served as superintendent of all Blue Island schools from 1894 to 1934, as superintendent of Community High School for one year following, and as instructor in Latin and vocational civics in 1935-36, thus completing forty-three years of devoted service to the students and schools of this community.*

used at this time.

In 1894, one of the most important decisions effecting the Blue Island schools ever made was the decision to invite J. E. Lemon, of the Bay City, Michigan, Schools, to take over as local superintendent. Here was a man who, with the one other who succeeded him, might be said to have had more influence on the Blue Island schools, especially in their formative years, than any other who could be named. Coming to the

local schools when they were still young, Mr. Lemon was also blessed with a series of dedicated and hard working board members. Those who were responsible for bringing him here might be mentioned first. These include Henry Bibroth, board president; W.H. Weber, secretary; and members C. C. Claussen, Charles Lochow, Louis Luchtemeyer, L. P. Vorhees, and A.M. Weinhardt. At that time the faculty was composed of twenty teachers, two of which, Miss Alice Gray and Miss Margaret Smith, were assigned to the high school. Location for these two and the thirty-one students they taught were two rooms on the second floor of the old Whittier Building, and one on the first. Twenty-two of these students were freshmen and nine were sophomores.

Under Supt. Lemon's leadership the school soon began to prosper. In 1896 a third story was added to the Seymour School, with the high school occupying all four rooms which this addition made possible. In 1897 the Worth Township High School District was established, with Mr. J. L. Zacharias chosen as president of the township high school board to operate the new organization, and Louis Wirth named as secretary. That same year the first high school class since 1890 was graduated from the local school, with eight students making up its membership. Acting on Supt. Lemon's invitation, representa-



tives from Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois, had inspected the school and, the following year, placed it upon their lists of whose graduates were accepted for entrance to the universities. In 1899 another important and even greater distinction came to the school as the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools placed it on the accredited list. Perhaps the proudest boast that the school can make, even today, is that throughout the years, it has maintained this rating, in spite of hard times and lack of money that frequently handicapped its efforts.

Because of a legal technicality the Worth Township School District had to be discontinued in 1900, and the high school again was under the jurisdiction of District 130. Another high school district succeeded this arrangement within a short time, being known as District 213. While it was distinct and separate from 130, the only difference between the two was that 213 included a cemetery that was not in District 130. Nevertheless this separation made two boards of education necessary, even if they did have the same president, and had the good judgment to retain the superintendent of schools, Mr. Lemon.

Especially helpful to the Superintendent at these times of rapid transition were a number of

board presidents who helped greatly in meeting growth problems that were even then being experienced. Among these leaders were W.H. Weber, who had acted as board president for sixteen years; and A.C. Seyfarth, in that office for twelve years.

By 1916 there was little but standing room for the 250 students who were packed into the six rooms at Seymour then used for all high school classes. A new, separate building for these older students was clearly indicated.

More important, this building, now known and loved by thousands as Old Main, was erected the next year, with the idea of serving the 200 or 250 high school pupils then enrolled. As has been the case so many times in Blue Island's educational history, these good intentions simply were not adequate enough to cope with the student growth. Within ten years the enrollment at Old Main had jumped to 428, over double the capacity of the school.

Plans for a very adequate addition to Old Main, including a cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium, art and music rooms, a little theatre, and a swimming pool were unfortunately and drastically cut because of inadequate funds, and the high school had to continue on a make-do basis. District 130, however, was faring a bit better at this time, as two junior high schools went into operation — one at Seymour, and a new building on 123rd Street.



In 1927 the present Community High School District was established, to be operated under the jurisdiction of a new board of education. A. C. Seyfarth was chosen as president, and continued in the same capacity for District 130. Other board members for the new district were L. E. Pipin, L. Biedenkopf, John Aregood, and Emil Blatt. Benefiting both the high school and the elementary schools in Blue Island, Supt. Lemon was retained as chief

administrator for both bodies. The increasing number of youngsters in Blue Island brought two new buildings to meet such challenges, with Paul Revere being built as a new elementary school, and the North Building being opened for the freshmen class of Community High.

Unfortunately the effect of "black Thursday" and the stock market crash were becoming increasingly felt throughout the length and breadth of this coun-



*Public Library*

*Built in 1902, this library was made possible by a gift from Andrew Carnegie.*



try, with schools suffering along with other institutions. Both the new high school and the elementary schools of the city had to drop shop work, home economics, music, art, and physical education. Whether this had anything to do with the parting of the ways as far as the two school districts were concerned at this time is not known, but in 1934, separate board presidents were chosen for the two districts, and separate superintendents were hired. Frank Van Overstraeten was chosen as president of the grade school board, and J. C. Joens elected to head District 218. Walter C. Eggert came in as the new superintendent for the local elementary school, but Supt. Lemon continued as head of the high school staff. The following year Harold L. Richards replaced Mr. Lemon who, after forty-two years of devoted, efficient service to his community, retired with the plaudits of his students, teachers, board members, and the entire community.

Since the turn of the century Blue Island's parochial schools have enjoyed almost as great a rate of growth as the public schools. The present First Lutheran School was erected in 1912, at a cost of \$25,000. The two story brick then contained four class rooms and an assembly hall. The auditorium was added in 1925. In 1935 the attendance was about 150 students.

The first graduation exercises

at St. Benedict's School was held in 1889, with six pupils receiving diplomas, and the total enrollment then about 250. By 1924 the enrollment soared to over 500, which meant that more teaching sisters would be needed, and larger quarters for their home provided. The cornerstone of their new school was laid in 1925, with classes starting next year.

In 1928 a new building was completed to add to the educational advantages which Blue Island has to offer. This was Mother of Sorrows Institute, located on South Western Avenue at the corner of 138th. The property had been bought some time previously by Fred Bauer, with the intention of erecting a building to be used as a boarding school for children. When the Mantellate Sisters, Servants of Mary, took over and the beautiful new building was completed, this idea really came alive. Before the place had been only a primary and kindergarten school, but now children of all nationalities were accepted, with the good Sisters furnishing a well rounded education and a fine home.

Going along with the school in benefits for the community were the growth of the public library, and the increasing influence of the community's newspaper.

As already narrated, a start toward a public library had been made under private management as early as 1870. The Current Topic Club, forerunner of the





*Sanders School*

*Blue Island's exploding school population has made several additions necessary to this, the original Sanders School.*



*Early Parochial School*

*This Lutheran School was erected in 1871.*

*— Photo Courtesy of Archie Ely*



Blue Island Woman's Club, really brought the prospects of an adequate library to near realization by raising approximately \$6000 through a series of entertainments and public subscription, purchasing and securing donations of new books and magazines until about 1500 volumes were ready for circulation. First officers of this group included Chas. Young, president; Mrs. C.C. Massey, vice president; Frank Dunning, secretary; and O. W. Bourke, W.N. Rudd, Henry Bibroth, C.S. Young, Mrs. H. H. Massey, Mrs. M.M. Rudd, and Mrs. A.C. Fuller, directors. Unfortunately the great fire of May 16, 1896, wiped out all their work, burning the library and all the books with the exception of the few then out in the hands of readers. Even this severe blow did not stop the directors, however, for within a few days they opened a temporary reading room.

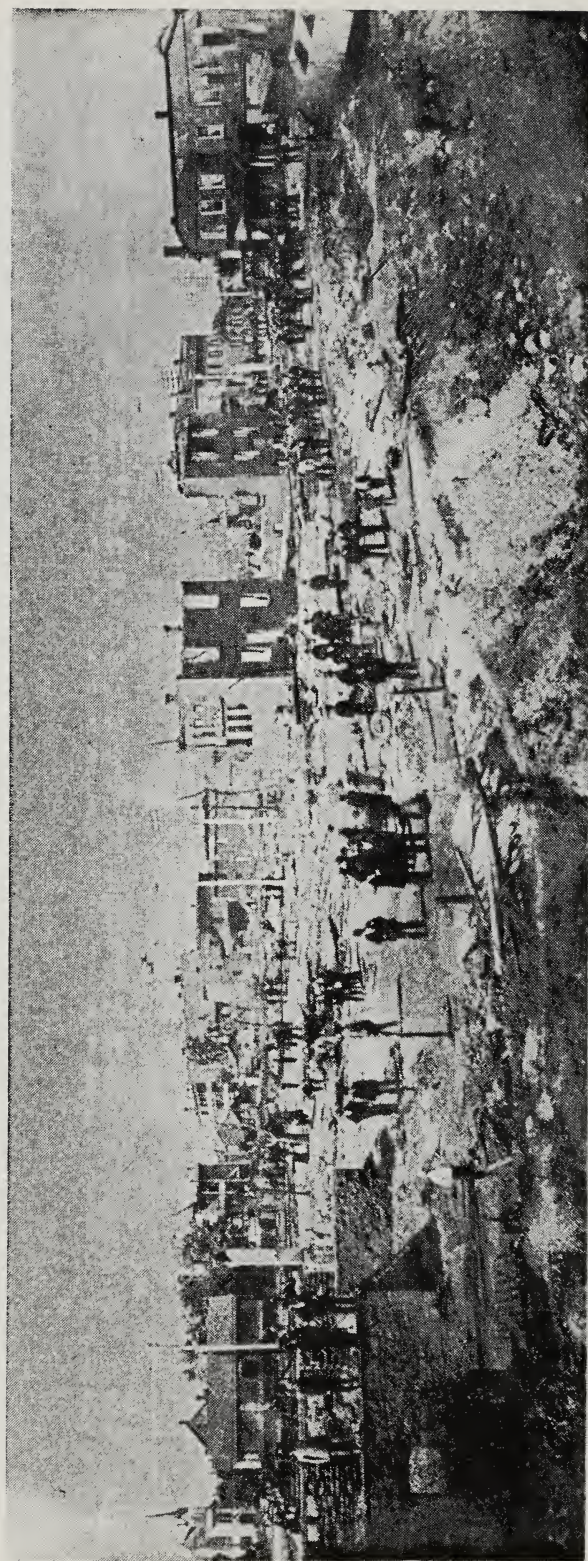
The next step forward was taken in 1897 by the passage of a two mill tax for a free public library, which carried in April by a vote of 567 to 253. Library directors elected shortly afterward included Mrs. A.C. Fuller and Mrs. Henrietta B. McGrath, for three years; H.B. Robinson and Joseph P. Eames for two; and Henry Bibroth and F. T. E. Kallum for one year. After the city council form of government came into being a bid was made to the great steel multi-millionaire, Andrew Carnegie, soliciting

his help in securing a library building. Mr. Carnegie offered to donate \$15,000 for a building, providing that the city would provide a site, and appropriate \$1500 a year for maintenance. This offer was quickly accepted and in 1903 the new library, located on York Street, was opened for public use. Gradual but steady growth in its usage caused Architect Otis to propose an addition in 1928, but the \$35,000 this would have cost was far beyond the board's ability to pay that kind of money. By 1935 the library had grown to over 12,500 volumes, with a yearly circulation of 61,000 books, plus a goodly usage of its premises as reading rooms.

The first newspaper ever printed in Blue Island was the Weekly Herald, which, as already narrated, started in 1873, and was soon designated as the official newspaper of the village, printing all legal notices. This early and worthy attempt at informing the public did not last very long, due to lack of support, and its publisher, Charles Feistkorn and editor, Carl A. Dilg soon grew discouraged.

A Chicago paper, the Daily Press, began a special edition for Blue Island folks, but it also did not gain financial success and perished after a couple of years. So interested were a small group of local citizens in having a newspaper, however, that they subscribed \$800 for type and other printing necessities and employed





*The morning after the great fire in 1896*



William Freedman as editor and publisher of a paper which was named the Standard. Even this public spirited effort went for naught, as this paper, too, failed to obtain enough subscribers for it to prosper. Carl Dilg came back into the picture at this time as editor of a Blue Island edition of the Chicago Sun, but this too had financial troubles and was discontinued. Since the dream of every newspaper man is to have his own publication, another died in the wool journalist, Gardner by name, tried with his Standard-Herald, and Dilg transferred his talents and activities to a Blue Island edition of the Chicago Beobachter, a German newspaper. Gardner, too, became discouraged and sold out to S. F. Wuest. Wuest succeeded in getting Dilg to take over as his editor, and changed his paper's name to the Blue Island Standard. This paper first appeared on May 25, 1882, with a subscription selling for \$1.25 a year. The business methods introduced by Mr. Wuest put his paper on a sounder financial basis than any of the previous publications had had, and although it consisted of only a single sheet printed on a crude, hand operated press, it deserves the title of Blue Island's first successful newspaper.

Mr. John H. Volp, author of "The First Hundred Years," the model for the sections of this history up to 1935, and, to all present day Blue Islanders the

man most deserving of the title "Mr. Newspaper," because associated with the Standard in 1884, when he was fifteen years of age. Through a life-long association with the press, in every field of its activities, from lowly printer's devil to publisher and president of a prosperous printing corporation which did much for Blue Island, he became, from his first day of work, one of Blue Island's truly fine citizens and civic leaders.

One of his most interesting and entertaining sections of The First Hundred Years was to tell of the time he was assigned by his editor to cover the village board meetings, solely because he could understand the English, German, and Plattdeutsch which were spoken by the board members—sometimes all at the same time! In 1888, S. C. Reed, who had purchased the paper from Eugene M. Pope, called in his step-son, Howard Hamilton, only one year older than Volp, and proposed to sell his paper to these two, neither who was yet twenty-one. These two astounded young men took a deep breath and accepted Pope's sudden offer, agreeing to give notes guaranteeing payment to Pope.

Due to their combined talents and long hours of labor, the two young owners succeeded from the very first. Since one paper did not offer them enough of a challenge, they expanded their field. The Morgan Park Standard,



the Washington Heights Journal, and the Fernwood Herald soon began rolling off their press, and found acceptance in each of these three communities.

This happy and successful business association of Hamilton and Volp was suddenly terminated by the serious illness of Hamilton, which forced him to seek another climate. His interests in the firm were purchased by Wade Errett, who had been associated with the Chicago Newspaper Union. If the combination of Hamilton and Volp had been a very ideal and successful one, as indeed it had, the new partnership was not, to say the least. As Volp himself stated, "We just didn't hit it off." One of the reasons might have been the differences in ages, as Errett was a much older man. At any rate Volp soon sold out and at once started another publication, the Saturday Sun, which he soon renamed the Blue Island Sun. After some really tough going, especially during the financial panic of 1895, the Sun grew to become Blue Island's leading newspaper.

In 1918, due to a shortage of news print paper, the new owners of the Standard, Ray Phillips and Norris Quinn, sought to combine their publication with the Sun, under Mr. Volp. Thus our present newspaper, the Blue Island Sun-Standard, came into being. Two years later, Volp, Quinn, Phillips and a new associate, Morris Kammerman, formed the Blue

Island Publishing Corporation, taking over the publishing plant, the Sun, the Standard, and another publication, the Weekly Review. Quinn was named editor; Phillips, business manager; and Volp, publisher and general manager. Further expansion in 1923 saw the advent of the Suburban Star under the Volp banner. This paper was later merged with the Sun-Standard, under the mast head of the Suburban Star, with Hill Lakin and Selyn Otis as editor, Homer Clemmons and Arthur Voight in advertising, and Myron Jones as business manager. Volp himself had opposed the change in name, which was adopted to give the paper a larger field, but which, as he had argued, did not take well with the readers of the paper. His ideas proved to be correct, and, in 1934 the more popular name, the Blue Island Sun-Standard returned, and the paper resumed its leading voice in local affairs.

While the Sun-Standard was going through these growing pains and assuming its eventual leadership in the local newspaper field, it had quite a few rivals, but most of these enjoyed only brief success. Among these publications might be mentioned The Crucible, published for a short time in 1891 and 1892 by Christian Zachar; the Blue Island News, with Paul Worden as editor, in 1909; the Free Press, from 1932 until 1934; the Suburban Advertiser, discontinued in 1935; the Blue



Island Bulletin and the Suburban Shopper.

Early in the twentieth century Blue Island was blessed with the birth of another institution — one dedicated to the relief of suffering. This was St. Francis Hospital. Originally the hospital was only a wonderful idea in the mind of Father F. A. Rempe, but it very quickly received the backing of the doctors then practicing in the area, with Dr. Edward Doepp and Dr. R.L. James taking the leadership. The hospital, like many other worthy service organizations in Blue Island, began on a modest scale. A most fortunate association, made at the very beginning of the little hospital's life, did much to make the venture a success. The Sisters of St. Mary consented to come to this city and take charge of the infant institution.

The old Ulrich home, on the corner of Gregory and High Sts., was purchased for \$30,000, and alterations necessary for its use as a hospital were undertaken. Several of the Sisters arrived late in 1904, with Sister M. Alexia in charge. In March of 1905, Father Rempe blessed the new St. Francis Hospital, with the first patient being admitted one week later.

The first addition was an operating room, with others quickly following. Within a year the old home was enlarged to accommodate from twenty-five to thirty patients. This building existed for the next ten years as Blue Island's

hospital. During the latter part of this time, plans for a really modern hospital were in the making. A new building, to the south, was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1916, with the Most Reverend Geo. W. Mundelein (later Cardinal) in charge of the ceremonies. One of the most thoughtful touches of this ceremony was that Father F. W. Rempe, the former pastor who was originally responsible for the establishment of the hospital, delivered the dedication sermon.

The new edifice contained 100 rooms, plus modern operating facilities. In 1930 the silver jubilee was celebrated, with Mayor Frank Kasten and Dr. Edward Doepp, then senior member of the hospital staff, taking part in the program. The growth of the hospital was steady from that time on, with further details on its outstanding rank as a service institution to be detailed in the final section of this history.

Just as had been the situation in the Civil War, when Blue Island had suffered from being part of the area required to furnish more than its share of soldiers for that conflict, Illinois was supposed to supply more men for World War I than New York and Pennsylvania combined. Fortunately the error was discovered before the draft calls were fully supplied, and the Illinois quota was cut to correspond with that of other states. The response of the localities to this call to the



colors was prompt and gratifying. During the several appeals, 6,154 registered for the draft from the local district, and 588 were inducted into the service. Ahead of even these names must be listed those who volunteered. According to the Blue Island Sun-Standard of March 15, 1918, these following names made up the local Honor Roll:

### HONOR ROLL

(Blue Island's Honor Roll as printed in the Sun-Standard, March 15, 1918).

CAVALRY—Leland Newman, Gust Engstrom, Tony Pacholki, George Kazlowski, Louis Radwan, George Ludwig, Bernard Ciesielski, Frank Steffes, John Groszewicz, Calvin O'Grady, Arthur Kennedy, William Pahl, George Benton, Elmo Schugt.

NAVY—Al Friske, Arthur Boyd, Everett Downey, Wilbur Burno, Henry Link, Harry Withers, Ernst Karchiner, Theron Simkins, Jack Martin, Everett Lake, Fred L. Brewer, Homer J. Woods, George Ruff, Victor Ames, Russell James, Andrew J. Brouette, Arthur Bender, Victor Dahl, Fredrick C. Sammons, R.A. Walsh, Fred A. Nickel, Frank Millard, Martin Nelson, Frank Kapanka, Raymond Earley, Clarence Manson, Alwin Johnson, Mark Earner, Frank Ehrhart, Herbert Ehrhart, Frank King, Ray William, E. A. Etter, Lawrence Dagenais, Leonard Nylander, Oscar Hultgren, L. Gustafson, Harry

Isler, Harold McAley, Richard E. Sorgenfrei.

MARINES—Fred Nadler, Walter Crossland, Raymond R. Eames, Frank A. Thomas, David McKillip, James Cassel, M.A. Cassel.

ARMY — Howard Hohmann, Claude Colburn, Ernst C. Renaud, George Dornhecker, Norman Seim, Russel Robinson, Ben Ferrers, Edward Ennis, Morton Smith, Marcus T. Bauch, Arthur Edmunds, Walter Schott, Frank Ray, Willard Gibson, Rudolph Racine, George Kennedy, William Baumbach, William McGuire, Walter Mueller, Henry Ermschler, Ray Kauffman, John E. Frayne, John Ermschler, Chester Mitchell, Herman Hartman, Emmerson Eames, E.J. Lacy, Paul Stefek, James McQuire, Nels A. Ringquist, Edward Hall, Merrill Pronger, Hobart Angel.

OFFICERS—William D. McPherson, Harry M. Schlemmer, Louis K. Burno, Leslie W. Swett.

MUSICIANS—Clarence Cain, Oscar Carlson, Louis Wiessner, Walter Wiessner, Walfried Hogbloom, David Buissono.

SIGNAL CORPS—Edwin E. Stothard, Robert James, Jerry Cauty, Lee Quinn, Gilbert Mueller, John S. Tuomey, Chester Stanley.

AVIATION CORPS — Stanley H. Volp, Carroll Eversole, Robert Payton, William Lietzow, Geo. Roscoe, Arthur Fordtran.

ENGINEERING CORPS — Archie Sypneski, Bert Wyant, Harry Hume, Henry Weigand, Walter McDowell, Adolph Tuffanelli,



Leslie J. Hague, C. C. Cox, Harry E. Neff, M. Martin, L. O. Nelson, T. Vandoran, Harold Cates, Ralph Palmer, Carl Palmer, Otto Sommerfeld, Hugo Gersten, Leslie J. Rowe, Clarence O. Williams, Louis Robertson, Frank Kohart, Harry W. Babb, Lee O. Wilson, Fred E. Law, Fred Dougherty, Patrick McCoy, David Fleming, Ralph Sullivan, Roy J. Scuffham, Harry E. Shaw, F. J. Ludwig, George Harris, John W. Grimes, Robert Cates, A. C. Sorgenfrei, A. C. Rosenquist.

**HOSPITAL CORPS**—Franklin Cool, Miss Margaret Rudd, Howard Thomas, John Thomas, John Steinhart, Ralph F. Becktel, Chas. Morrill, Dr. W. J. Byford, Daniel L. Sinise.

**COAST DEFENSE** — Gilbert Boeber, Merwin Small, Edwin Hallinan, Berger Hogle, John S. Szczurek, John Brown, Leslie Morrill, Joseph Tragnitz, Archie Ely.

**ORDINANCE**—Joseph Denny, George Lietzau.

One of the most unusual contingents to be organized in this area was that of the 13th Engineers, made up solely of railway men. Blue Island citizens connected with the railroads running through their city really rallied around for this detachment, making up a goodly part of Company B. Enlisting from Blue Island were these men, all employees of the Rock Island: Harry I. Bailar, Claude C. Cox, Edward Ford, William Gilbert, B. Hamilton,

Henry Harbaugh, Leo Lay, Harry Neff, Leo Nelson, Walter McDowell, James O'Connor, Carl Palmer, Leslie Riwe, Otto Sommerfeld, Archie Syke, Adolph Tuffanelli, Thomas Wall, Albert Wyant, and Clarence O. Williams.

When it came to commemorating the names of those who paid the supreme sacrifice during this great conflict, Blue Island and its citizens did a most worthy job. First should be mentioned the impressive granite monument, now prominently located in Memorial Park, marked with a bronze tablet bearing the names of those who had lost their lives. These names and the circumstances surrounding their deaths, as far as is known, are as follows:

Private Raymond Eames, 96th Company, 6th Regiment, U. S. Marines. Severely burned with mustard gas and died June 29. Buried in American Cemetery at Suresness.

Stanley Fay died at Camp Mills, New York, on October 10, 1918, of influenza. Buried in Mt. Greenwood Cemetery.

Private Ernest Fischer, 14th Company, Coast Artillery. Died Sept. 29, 1918 of pneumonia. Buried in First Lutheran Cemetery on Burr Oak.

Albert Hecht died at Camp Travis, Texas, Dec. 9, of influenza and pneumonia. Buried in First Lutheran Cemetery.

Private Herman Klopp, 123rd Machine Gun Company, 33rd Division, killed by shell fire. Body



returned and buried in Lutheran Cemetery with full military honors.

Sgt. Antonio Louis, Company C, 47th Infantry, died in France on August 9, while in action. Body returned and interred in Mt. Olivet Cemetery. Military honors paid by American Legion Post Number 50.

George Ruff died at the U. S. Naval Hospital, Great Lakes. Interred in German Lutheran Cemetery.

Walter C. Schoenenberger died at Camp Grant on September 30, of pneumonia. Interred at Oak Hills Cemetery. Company M of the Illinois National Guard acted as military escort for the body.

Private Frank Steffes, Troop L, 12th Cavalry. Killed by a German prisoner of war while on guard duty at Hachita, New Mexico. Buried in St. Benedict's cemetery, with Company M of the National Guard acting as military escort.

Corp. Charles L. Weimar, Battery D, 339th Field Artillery. Died in a hospital at Rouen, France, Nov. 5. Body returned and buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery, with military honors being paid by American Legion Post Number 50.

Leon Walshon died at the base hospital, Camp Travis, Texas. Body returned and buried in St. Benedict's Cemetery.

Homer Woods died at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Norfolk, Va., of bronchial pneumonia. Interred in Mt. Hope with military honors.

Walter Wykoff buried in Arlington Cemetery, Washington, D.C.

Several additional memorials have been dedicated by various organizations to those from Blue Island who served in any branch of the armed services during World War I. Armistice Day of 1921 marked the formal presentation of at least three of these. The Current Topic Club planted a memorial tree on the lawn of the Blue Island Public Library, in honor of the soldiers, sailors, and marines who had served from this city in World War I. That same day, members of the Congregational Church planted three shade trees in front of their sanctuary on York Street, commemorating the services of thirty young men, members of families of the church. The city itself planted twenty maple trees in Central Park, to honor its hero dead. Each tree was specifically to honor one certain man, with an aluminum disc, bearing his name, rank, and company, placed on these trees in the park. The only one of these not previously mentioned on the above Roll of Honor as having been killed in action is Leo Lerch. Trees planted in honor of those who had died after the close of the war, due to injury or exposure suffered while in service, whose names were also missing from the Sun-Standard list, bear the names of William Burns, David Bussino, Frank Hopf, Andrew Olson, Otto



Swigert, Albert Wyant, and Albert Witt.

Other honors paid Blue Island men in service included the Community Service Flag, which was unfurled and hung across Vermont Street near Western on May 18, 1918. The flag was eight by ten feet, with the words "Blue Island" across the top, two gold stars, representing the two who had already died in service, and a single large star with the number 425, indicating the number of men then in service.

Perhaps the greatest honor paid anyone in Blue Island was given by the French government to Louis D. Holmes on July 16, 1923. He was awarded the Legion of Honor with scarlet ribbon, the highest honor conferred on heroes. Holmes was the first man of the 149th Field Artillery to shed blood on French soil, as his leg was torn off near his body by a German shell. Gen. Abel Davis was the only other American to be so decorated.

On the home front the efforts put forth by the various clubs and the citizens in general showed that their hearts were one hundred percent behind the war effort. Blue Island went over the top on every one of the five Liberty Loans, and in the Red Cross drive of May 20, 1919, Blue Island went \$2,000 over the quota of \$10,000, which had been set.

On Dec. 2, 1918 another striking tribute to the veterans was proposed by the actions of the

city council itself. They passed a resolution to buy the building and lot on the southeast corner of Greenwood and Oak. This structure, known as the Institutional Building had been used as the armory for Company M of the Illinois National Guard. The council proposed that it become city property, and be given over to the use of all veterans' groups, and other organizations of public benefit. For some reason or other, however, the resolution was not acted upon at this time.

One of the strongest proofs of the place of the service men in the hearts of this community and its inhabitants was the Veteran's Day celebration on November 11, 1918. The celebration, or rather, series of celebrations, began at five o'clock in the morning, when men, women, and children, some carrying lanterns and flashlights, started the day's rejoicing. What they lacked in organization, they made up in fervor and thanksgiving, for the dreaded war was over, and their sons - husbands - fathers - brothers - were coming home — really coming home.

As the day lengthened all business houses closed, even without advance notice, or any planning. Everyone in Blue Island paraded or watched the parades. Even the saloons of the city shut up shop about ten in the morning, and stayed closed for the rest of this blessed day.

Despite the lack of planning, everyone did something, and did



it well. Though the floats may have been hastily decorated, and the marchers may not have paraded in perfect order, there never was such a parade. Spectators and participants alike, all declar-

ed that the city had never had such a day before. In welcoming the peace, as in meeting the challenges of this terrible war, Blue Island and its Blue Islanders did themselves proud.



*Blue Island's City Hall*

## THE CENTENNIAL

Are the first hundred years of any community really the hardest? If they are, are they not also the most rewarding, the most productive, the most worthwhile?

Certainly the old timers of our city, as they nostalgically saw those happy, halcyon days they had known so well pass again before their eyes during Blue Island's Centennial Week, Sunday, September 1, to Sunday, Septem-

ber 8, 1935, were able to say with conviction, "Well, we did all right in those days." Those in their middle age there at Paul Revere Field, witnessing the engrossing episodes of the magnificent "Wings of Time" pageant, could certainly well have said, in admiration, "What men and women our ancestors were!" Even the babies of the community, featured in the doll and buggy parade featuring Friday's festivities,



seemed to delight in every movement of the week long celebration. Perhaps such adjectives as mammoth, colossal, stupendous, gigantic, gargantuan, and so forth, might seem a trifle shopworn and hackneyed after being punished so much by their overuse on the television screen, but each and every one of these could and should be applied to the Blue Island Centennial of 1935. One more quality should be added to describe the celebration of the city's first one hundred years. It was prepared and presented with the hearts and minds — yes, and the prayers — of every man, woman, and child in Blue Island, happy and proud to take part in this tribute to the city of their homes — one hundred years young on this occasion.

How did the idea of celebrating the hundredth birthday of the city originate? Well, as so often is the case, in the dreams and desires of a comparatively small group of men — in this case, the Blue Island Lions Club, or, to be exact, in the minds of two of its leaders, Henry G. Baumann and Dr. Frank Tracy. These two began thinking of the possibilities of some sort of celebration of the community's centennial over a year before the event.

"But this is the wrong time for any kind of a celebration," said the calamity howlers. "We're just coming out of a big depression, and a good many of us are still out of work. What we need is

more federal aid!"

Those hard headed (and great hearted) members of the Blue Island Lions Club thought differently, however. Yes, their city did need and seek federal aid. Something else even more important was needed, they reasoned, and this was a revival of the faith and trust that Blue Islanders had always had in themselves and in their community. It was true that, perhaps because of the hard times, civic pride had fallen to a new low. The city, as well as many of its citizens, had known and were still experiencing severe financial problems. All the more reason, the Lions argued, for all to get together, with good faith and great works, put their shoulders to the wheel, and by their own efforts, lift the city by its own boot straps back on the right road. Yes, a celebration to commemorate the city's first one hundred years should and would be the first step. It is an interesting note to add that, in the meeting at which this momentous decision was made, the Lions went almost two hours beyond their ordinary adjournment time to 3:00 p.m. but when they did adjourn, Blue Island had embarked upon the greatest celebration the city had ever known.

First of all that devilish question of where to get the money arose. Once again the Lions Club came up with an answer — proposing a limited public subscription of funds, to be used to get



the idea of the centennial off the ground, and to start the actual preparation. The Lions Club was the first to subscribe with \$200 and in this way \$2,000 was obtained for beginning this great event.

Next, who would have courage enough to spearhead such a tremendous undertaking? In March of 1935 three members of the Lions Club — Frank Kasten, the mayor of the city; Fred A. Rice, the city treasurer; and J. Floyd Smith, the postmaster, and president of the club at that time — were appointed as the steering committee to plan for the centennial.

This triumvirate, supported by the good wishes of the entire city, prevailed upon John H. Volp, the author of "The First Hundred Years," upon which this publication is based, to act as general chairman. His efficient and hard working committee, listed at the end of this section, was quickly gathered, and at once attacked the tremendous task confronting it.

With the issuance of "wooden nickels" this group hit upon a popular and very successful method for additional financing of the big affair. Fortunately if all the folks in Blue Island (and, for that matter, miles around) had ever heard of that old cautionary remark, "Don't take in any wooden nickels," they didn't pay any attention to it, and the wooden nickels were extremely popu-

lar. Once again, a good deal of the credit was due the Blue Island merchants. In the first place, they bought the nickels from the Centennial Association; then they gave them as change to their customers; and in the third, they accepted them in payment for their merchandise. It's a safe bet to assume that, even today, somewhere among the most treasured possessions of families who witnessed any part of the Centennial Week celebration are some of these wooden nickels — and it's another safe bet to say that these same loyal merchants would honor even today, twenty-seven years after the Centennial, these same "scraps of paper."

After getting the Centennial plans off the ground with such a novel means of financing, other work moved rapidly forward.

A contract for a pageant to be entitled "Wings of Time" was signed early in June with the John B. Rogers Production Company, of Fostoria, Ohio. The cast was to call for from 700 to 1,000 persons, and the play was to be staged during the Centennial Week on a stage erected on Paul Revere field. Centennial headquarters were opened at 13000 Western Avenue in June, and a contest to select a local queen to reign over the entire festivities was immediately opened.

Rehearsals for "Wings of Time" began on July 15, with Mr. and Mrs. Jack Geller, of the Rogers Company, in charge. The



collection of such properties as old time buggies, covered wagons, high wheeled bicycles, to say nothing of the horses and cattle needed for the pioneer scenes, began at once.

Centennial Week opened in a most impressive fashion, with over 2,000 people attending union church services at the pageant grounds. Protestants sat side by side with Catholics, in common worship of Him, the Maker of all. Dr. F. W. Tracy, chairman of these union services, made a short address of welcome, and introduced Rev. Frank Hancock, minister of the First Methodist Church, who presided for the program.

A mixed choir, assembled from every choir in the city, was directed by Rollin Pooler, director of music at Community High School. Rev. Benjamin F. Freese, pastor of the St. Paul Evangelical Church, read the Twenty-third psalm, with Rev. James Sopko, pastor of St. Peter and St. Paul Lutheran Church, reading the Scripture lesson. The main address of the evening was delivered by Father Theodore G. Gross, priest at St. Benedict. Short addresses by Rev. Aylesworth B. Bell, pastor of the First Congregational Church; Rev. Wayne A. Garrard, St. Aidan's; and Rev. W. J. Ferne, of the Evangelical Lutheran, followed, each dealing with some aspect of the history of religion in Blue Island.

Unfortunately the weather

proved very uncooperative for Monday, when the great parade had been scheduled. Because of the rain, this parade was postponed for some time, but it was finally decided that the thousands lining both sides of Western Avenue could no longer be denied. Over 2,500 people were in the line of march. Floats winning the prize trophies in the various categories included the St. Francis Hospital, in the business group; the Sons of Italy, with their reproduction of the Santa Maria, in the fraternal group; the Blue Island Liederkrantz, in the historical class; Dave Heimbach, in the individually designed and executed float category. The comedy class float prize went to Wiessner's Comedy Band; and the Rock Island Railroad won the industrial group trophy.

Perhaps the biggest day of the entire week came on Tuesday, Old Settler's Day, with prizes for the oldest settler present. Mr. and Mrs. Gottlieb Klein won the first prize, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Van Laningham, second. The old settlers couple coming the greatest distance was Mr. and Mrs. Frank M. McGregor, from San Mateo, California, winning first place in this category, with Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Lau from Gotha, Florida, coming in second. The prize for the oldest individual resident of Blue Island went to Mrs. Johanna Schmitz, who had lived here for eighty-seven years. Mrs. Louise Reuss-



now, a resident here for eighty-four years took second prize.

Bad weather returned on Wednesday to force the postponement of the Young American activities until the next Saturday afternoon. While this compulsory change did cut the number of participants, Boy Scout troops from the South Shore District of Chicago, and from the Southwest District put on a worthwhile show, with races and demonstrations of all sorts of scoutcraft. Troop number 728, with Scoutmaster J. M. Wilson, took first prize in the contest; Troop number 788, W. Gaboriault, scout master, was second; and Troop number 608, G. C. Primm, scoutmaster, placed third.

Thursday was Farmer's Day, and the Eagles Hall was thronged all day by interested spectators who came to see the great number of prize winning exhibits brought in and displayed by the farmers of the area. That night Mayor and Mrs. Fred Rice, on their fiftieth anniversary, were the principals in the pioneer wedding scene, the feature of that night's pageant. The Rices had come to Blue Island in 1898 and had been among the city's permanent residents since that time. The Rev. C. F. Schellhase, a former pastor of the Central Methodist Church, was the minister who re-united the happy pair, with Albert Stolz, Mrs. J. A. Roemisch, and Louise Rauch, as best man, matron of honor, and at-

tendant, respectively.

On Friday, baby was king, and the doll and buggy parade, with its antique carriages and costumes, as well as the carriages trimmed with a patriotic and modern motif, delighted the huge crowd of onlookers.

Choral numbers, sung magnificently that night by the Blue Island Liederkrantz and the Liederkrantz Ladies' Chorus, plus Noble Cain, director of the festival, and his Chicago A Capella Choir, were much appreciated by everyone in the vast audience. The Homewood Municipal Band, directed by J. Norman Beasley, also came in for spirited applause for its accompaniment.

Unfortunately the program planned for Sunday, which had been designated as American Legion Day suffered greatly because of the steady downpour of rain. The almost fifty units of drum and bugle corps could not participate in the competition which had been planned for them. This did not stop the Centennial committee completely, however, as it did provide entertainment and merriment for those Legionnaires who did show up in spite of the rain.

While the turn-away crowds of 1935 were ample testimonial to the success of the plans and the work of the Blue Island Lions Club and the Blue Island Centennial Association, those of us who were not fortunate enough to witness the great pageant and at-



tendant festivities should at least know of the men and women who worked so long and with such dedication to achieve this success, and to live, at second hand, those episodes that made the "Wings of Time" the tremendous success it was in reminding Blue Islanders of their illustrious past. The complete list of the Centennial Association members is:

BLUE ISLAND  
CENTENNIAL ASSOCIATION  
"Incorporated not for Profit"

OFFICERS

JOHN H. VOLP, President  
PHILIP SEYFARTH, Secretary; ALBERT STOLZ, Vice President and Treasurer.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
AND DIRECTORS

Mayor Fred Rice, Philip Seyfarth, Dr. F. W. Tracy, Rudolph Heitman, Floyd Smith, Postmaster; Louis Rauch, Albert Stolz, John H. Volp.

COMMITTEES

FINANCE—Albert Stolz, chairman; August Schreiber, Paul Klenk, Dr. L. O. Damm.

HOMECOMING DAY—Rudolph Heitman, chairman; Henry Baumann, Peter Heintz, Henry Duff.

PARADE—George Heatley, chairman; Barney Hammond, Wm. Juby, Richard Sorgenfrei.

FARMER'S DAY—Albert Stolz, chairman; Peter Heintz, co-chairman; M. E. Tascher, Harvey Adair, Jacob Ouwenga.

SONG FESTIVAL—Dr. F. W. Tracy, chairman; William Barthelman, Dr. Scanlan, Dr. Folkers, Ald. Rocco Guglielmucci, Mrs. Jepeway.

SUNDAY UNION SERVICES—Dr. F. W. Tracy, chairman; Ministers and Priests of all Blue Island churches.

YOUNG AMERICA DAY—Philip Seyfarth, chairman.

PUBLICITY—John H. Volp, chairman; Hill Lakin, Sun-Standard; Kevin McCann, Bulletin; Wesley Volp, Suburban Star.

PROPERTIES—Louis Rauch, chairman; Mayor Fred Rice, H. Shipman, Harold C. Volp, Phil Seyfarth.

AMERICAN LEGION DAY—J. Floyd Smith, chairman; Wm. Juby, Commander American Legion, co-chairman; Ralph Sullivan, Albert Depew, Harvey Antilla, Harry Burkhart, A. L. Davidson, Henry Langfield.

MARDI GRAS—Mayor Fred Rice, chairman; Phil Seyfarth, Dr. F. W. Tracy.

CENTENNIAL BALL—Mayor Fred Rice, Al Stolz, Mrs. George Borman.

BABY PARADE—Mrs. Don Boughner, chairman; Mrs. G. Klein, Mrs. C. O. Williams, Mrs. Claude Harvey, Mrs. Henry Kott, Mrs. W. Hazel, Mrs. G. Brockman, Mrs. Howard Huffman, Mrs. W. Gerstenkorn, Mrs. Harold C. Volp, Mrs. Howard Wright.

TALENT COMMITTEE—Phil



Seyfarth, chairman.

**TICKET COMMITTEE**—Don Boughner, chairman; Ed Martens, Herbert Gierman, Ed. Stothard, A. C. Selsdorf, Birt Frobish.

**RELICS COMMITTEE**—Mrs. Ed. Martens, chairman; Mrs. Albert Stolz, Mrs. Charles Gun-  
kle, Miss Sarah Noble.

Just as every member of the above Centennial Association deserves at least the honor of having his or her name repeated here, so does the brief synopsis of that magnificent pageant that featured the centennial. In addition, such a synopsis would undoubtedly be appreciated by those of us who were not fortunate enough to be present for the big event. Therefore, an outline of the prologue and the eighteen episodes of "The Wings of Time" follows:

### "WINGS OF TIME"

Historical Narrations

by Joe Cook

**PROLOGUE**—The blare of trumpets and the roll of drums by the American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps announces the appearance of Miss Blue Island, Queen of the Centennial, Miss Columbia, and her Forty-eight States; the Princesses of the Court; the Pages, and the Guard of Honor.

Miss Blue Island greets Miss Columbia and the Forty-eight States and requests them to join her in witnessing the unfolding of the colorful history of Blue Is-

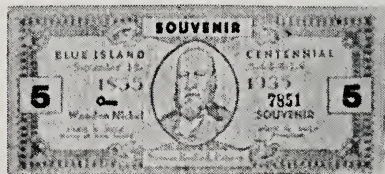
land in state from the Court of Honor.

**EPISODE ONE**—The Red Man.

Prior to the coming of the white man, this section of the present state of Illinois and the present site of Blue Island was occupied by a village of Pottawatomies, of the Algonquin tribe. We see the Indians making camp. In the center of the circle of teepees we see the chiefs and their warriors seated around a council fire; squaws busy themselves preparing food over the open fires, tanning the hides brought in from the hunt, making baskets and blankets.

**EPISODE TWO**—The First White Men.

Father Pere Marquette and Louis Joliet, with their small army of followers were the first white men to set foot on the "blue island." Marquette and Joliet followed the western shore line of Lake Michigan and then westward over the Calumet River in their search for the "Father of Waters," the Mississippi River. Father Marquette attempted to teach Christianity to the Indians as they wended their way through



*The Famous Wooden Nickel  
Every good citizen in Blue Island used  
these during our Centennial Celebra-  
tion.*



this savage territory; evidently they stayed here in 1674 before going to Palos to establish a mission.

More than 150 years later, in the summer of 1831, the Indians decided to leave this territory because of the incoming whites. The old chief, and one or two others, could not be persuaded to leave, and these few Indians were the only remaining red men when the white men started to settle this territory.

#### EPISCODE THREE—The Pioneers.

A hundred years ago many a wagon train came across the prairie on their trek westward in the hope of finding a more promising land. We see a group of these sturdy pioneers and courageous women as they follow the sun across lands inhabited by the savage Indian who resented this invasion by the whites. After a day's hard journey the members of the little wagon train make camp for the night; some prepare the evening meal as others do the daily chores of washing, making yarn, weaving, milking, churning; the men cut wood for the fires, hunt for food and game, take care of their livestock and keep a sharp watch for raiding Indians. Enduring many hardships, they continue on until they reach the fertile land on the shores of Lake Michigan.

#### EPISODE FOUR—The First White Settlers.

In 1835, Norman Rexford, a native of Charlotte, Vermont, drove by team to Chicago, arriving on

the 5th of June. He visited for a short time with his brother Stephen, who had preceded him and was located in Bachelors' Grove. A few months later Norman Rexford selected a site near the northern end of the "blue island" in a locality at that time referred to as the "long wood." Here he erected a four-room log cabin in which he kept a tavern. This venture evidently did not prove satisfactory for, in the fall of the following year, he moved four miles farther south into the territory which later was to become the city of Blue Island.

He selected a location on the southern brow of the hill, a spot which commanded a wide view of the surrounding lower country. Here he erected a combination residence and hotel building, the frame of which was hewn from native timber, and sided with boards brought by team from Pine Creek, Indiana.

This Inn became the stopping place for officers going to and fro between old Fort Vincennes in Indiana and Fort Dearborn at Chicago—for the Vincennes Road passed through Blue Island and connected the two forts. Rexford's inn was known as the "Blue Island House" and was the first building of a permanent character to be erected here.

When Rexford located here the one-room log cabin of Thomas Courtney was the only other habitation on the southern end of the "island." Courtney had come with



his wife and child from the East the year previous. He had built a small log cabin near where the First Lutheran church now stands. Beyond these few facts history is silent on any further reference to this man Courtney and his family.

#### EPISODE FIVE—The First Post-office.

A postoffice was established at Blue Island in 1838, with Norman Rexford as postmaster, in which capacity he served for a number of years. During that time, his son, Fayette — about nine years old — took mail from Chicago to Buncombe, Illinois (a distance of about 90 miles) each week. We see the stage coach arriving from Chicago with its cargo of passengers, mail and express; and then Fayette starts his long journey.

The official name of this post-office was "Worth" though the settlers preferred to call it Blue Island, which name was given to it legally in 1872 when the village was organized.

#### EPISODE SIX—The First Church Services.

Religious services were not dependent upon creed; but were, rather, community meetings, regardless of faith. A traveling Methodist preacher — a farmer near Kankakee — sometimes stopped over on his way to Chicago with produce on Saturday morning, bringing his Sunday clothes in a trunk. On Sunday he preached and again on Monday, went his

way to market. We see one of these gatherings which during the summer months, were often held under the shading trees.

#### EPISODE SEVEN—An Early School.

Many of the children of the settlers had their first schooling at home. In 1848, when there were thirty-two families in the village, an attempt was made to get educational facilities for the children. A one-story frame building was erected, this building being used as a town hall, where public gatherings of all sorts were held when there was no school. Wm. Hamilton, Daniel Barnard and Mary Perkins were the first teachers in this school. There had been, previous to this, a school for girls, conducted by Misses Elizabeth and Adelaide Periam in their home.

We see one of these early sessions where there were no desks, the scholars sitting on long benches; when it was necessary to use their slates, the students usually sat on the floor using the benches for desks.

#### EPISODE EIGHT—An Early Wedding.

One of the colorful events of the social life in 1850 was a wedding and most of the settlers came in their "Sunday-best" for the ceremony and the festivities which followed. We see the bride and groom united in marriage and then receiving the congratulations of their guests before they all join in a gay Virginia Reel.



## EPISODE NINE—The First Railroad.

The Rock Island Railroad was built into Blue Island in 1852, and the first train came in on Sunday, October 10th, that same year. The name of the locomotive was the "Rocket," which pulled six coaches. N. W. Wheeler was the conductor. The engine burned wood and at Blue Island there was a large refueling yard.

We see the men at work on the roadbed; laying ties and rails; and then, amid the lusty cheers of the populace, in roars this first "steam monster."

The Illinois Central Railroad extended its suburban service to Blue Island in 1889, connecting this city with the main lines of this great railroad service. Seven railroads converge at Blue Island today, four of them being trunk lines.

## EPISODE TEN—The German Settlers.

Many men and women of German birth or extraction came to Blue Island in the years between 1848 and 1860. Among the first were August Schreiber, Ludwig Krueger, Theodore Guenther, John Engelhardt, Ernst Uhlich, Charles Ellfeldt, and others. Being fond of music, a little group of men — Charles Ellfeldt, August Schreiber, Friederich Sauer-teig, August Schubert, Louis Brandt, August Bulle, Henry Schmitt and two brothers named Bode — got together that they

might sing songs of their Fatherland.

"Saengerbund" was the name under which they went for some time and Charles Ellfeldt soon became their leader. By 1853, they had decided to organize under the name "Blue Island Lieder-kranz."

We see a group that have met in Ellfeldt's "Lustgarden," which was patterned after the beer garden of the old country, for an evening's entertainment.

## EPISODE ELEVEN—The Ballet of Beauty and Fertility.

Blue Island and Illinois depend, to a large extent, upon the agricultural wealth of their land. Blue Island is famed for its onions, Illinois is known for its corn and wheat. We see these growing things merrily swaying in the breeze when along comes a driving rain and beats them to the ground. Following the rain comes the sun and sunbeams and again we see the green fields raise their heads as a beautiful rainbow forms its arch.

## EPISODE TWELVE—Civil War.

In 1861, when President Abraham Lincoln issued a general call for 75,000 volunteers to fight for the cause of the North, many men from Blue Island responded immediately.

We see the excited crowds as the first news of war is heard; the men leave their business, drop the plows, and enlist. The women are working feverishly on new uniforms and a beautiful flag which



was presented to the men just before they marched away.

#### EPISODE THIRTEEN — Incorporation of Blue Island.

When the postoffice was established in 1838, the official name of "Worth" was given to this community, but the settlers always favored the name "Blue Island."

The citizens were desirous of having the village organized and recognized as such. They petitioned the State, asking that they might have the question submitted to the legal voters. This petition was dated July 5, 1872, and sworn to August 13, 1872.

On August 22, 1872, Judge Wallace gave notice of an election for voting on the village incorporation to be held at Gottlieb Klein's home on Saturday, September 7, 1872. Christian Krueger, Henry Bertrand and Hart Massey were appointed judges of the election.

It was a memorable event, as there were many arguments between opponents, but the result was overwhelmingly for it.

We see the great celebration that took place in Blue Island that night; there was much rejoicing as the multitude, led by a small band, paraded the streets jubilantly.

#### EPISODE FOURTEEN—Spanish-American War.

Again in 1898, America heard the cry of war. Under the command of Col. Theodore Roosevelt these brave men pressed for-

ward with the slogan "Remember the Maine."

We see the bivouac scene; the soldiers are resting around a camp fire as a messenger brings the orders for an early morning attack.

#### EPISODE FIFTEEN—The Automobile Era.

About the time of the Spanish-American War high-wheeler bicycles and tandum bicycles made their appearance on the streets of Blue Island. And then, the "horseless carriage" is praised and ridiculed as it chugs along at the beginning of the twentieth century.

We see "young sports" as they try out the new two-wheeled contraptions; and listen to their jeers as the proud owner of the first automobile makes his appearance. And then the frightened horse nearly breaks away as the "gasoline buggy" bounces here and there.

#### EPISODE SIXTEEN—The World War.

War! War! Bleeding humanity of the Old World seeks help from young, prosperous America. Illinois' boys respond. What devastation! What horror! And finally what a victory!

#### EPISODE SEVENTEEN—Peace.

"If you break faith with us who died,

We shall not sleep,

Though poppies grow in Flanders Field."

#### EPISODE EIGHTEEN—The Grand Finale.

By land and sea, from all cor-



ners of the world, people come to Blue Island where patriotism changes all who enter into a great people — Americans.

This spectacle symbolizes the growth of America and will be climaxed by the "Wheel of progress" showing the Spirit of Blue Island in its ever-forward movement. "May Forward by your watchword — Perfection your goal."

#### THE END

Staged by

....Mr. and Mrs. Jack Geller  
Massed Choir under direction of

.....Mr. Rollin Pooler  
Music director

.....Mr. J. Norman Beasley  
Piano accompaniments by

..Mrs. Irene Hegner Jerstrom  
Makeup room

.....Mrs. George Joens,

..... Jule Shipman

So ended the greatest celebration known in Blue Island up to this time. It was a success in many ways. First, and certainly very important to its financial backers, who provided the money to get the idea behind the centennial under way, it was a monetary success. When the Lions Club undertook the idea, they were told by their "friends" that ninety-nine percent of such affairs were failures. The Blue Island effort proved the contrary. Every one of the original subscribers got his money back in full, and after all expenses were paid, there was a surplus of \$750. This money was used to benefit three worthy causes in Blue Island, as the Blue Island Public Welfare Bureau was given a third; the charity fund of the St. Francis Hospital a third; and the



*Pioneer Days  
One of the pageants of the Centennial Celebration*





*The Big Centennial Parade*

*Monday, September 2, 1935, despite the rain, a huge crowd crammed every inch of available space along Western Avenue, to witness this part of Blue Island's Centennial Celebration.*

Lions Club of Blue Island charity fund the final share.

Although such financial success was indeed heartening, it could not be declared the most worthwhile result of the Centennial. In Blue Island in the early 30's, community spirit and civic pride were low and financial affairs were unsteady. Here was a successful Centennial of which every man, woman, and child in the community could be proud. There was a city with an illustrious past, in which brave men and women

had made their livelihood, built their homes, and raised their families. They had seen their churches and their schools grow and guide them to a better life; their commerce and their industry prosper. Now came the great realization that, although the past had been glorious; in the words of the poet Robert Browning, "The best is yet to be." Truly, in their first one hundred years, Blue Island and its Blue Islanders had really come of age.

## IV AND HERE WE ARE TODAY

(1936-62)

With civic pride and faith in their future largely restored by the tremendous success of the Centennial, Blue Islanders were more than ready for better days, and certainly these were long overdue.

An auto parade on Western Avenue afforded local dealers an opportunity to show their new

models: Crist, the Buick and Pontiac; Witte, the Chevrolet; Bronson, the Chrysler; Pronger, the DeSoto; Fiedler-Mohr, the Dodge and Plymouth; Habich, the Ford; Esche, the Hudson and Terraplane; and Ward, the Oldsmobile. The Ford V-8, including bumpers and spare tires was listed at \$495 and the four-door sedan deLuxe with built in trunk



at \$655. The popular roadster with rumble seat sold at \$550. Oh, for the good old days — and especially their prices!

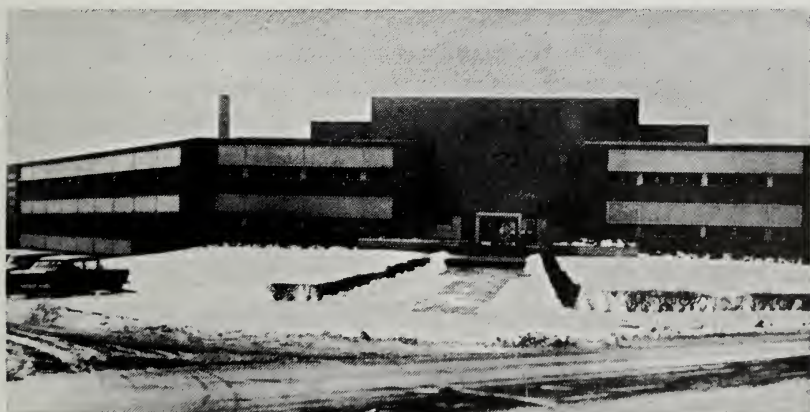
Already in that day there was a waterway meet in which it was decided to have three passing places for barges, and bids were opened for the work to be done. The first of these places was to be on the passing slips in the Cal Sag channel between Ridgeland and Crawford.

Western Avenue was getting the new look. Mrs. J. L. Zacharias erected a new building to make the business district more handsome and valuable. Henry I. Marks signed a lease for this new store and opened his Marks Store for Men, at 13047 Western. A rather sad note to some, however, was that Blue Island's last blacksmith shop at 12719 Western lost its character through the

building of a garage entrance. The old horseshoe doorway which had become a landmark to many people had been obliterated, for horseshoeing was now only a sideline to auto work. Most of Sacks and Carlson's time was now taken up in general blacksmithing such as axle work, bumper and fender repairing, radiator cleaning and repairing, tool forging, welding, and lawnmower reconditioning.

Harry W. Bettenhausen bought the building at 13118-22 Western to open an electric appliance store and Raymond Schwartz bought the Acme Service Station at 12447. There was a new structure built at 13011 Western to be occupied by the Schnitzelbank and Dr. Townsend, optometrist.

By this time, Libby, McNeill & Libby had become the largest pickle and condiment plant in the



*The Campus Building*

*When this building opened in 1950 Dr. Richards introduced the Two Two Plan of student housing, with juniors and seniors from all of District 218 attending here, and freshmen and sophomores going to Old Main. Later, two other buildings, located in population centers outside of Blue Island, were added for underclassmen of their districts.*



world. It made front-page news as a commercial canning industry which was supplying baby food for the Dionne quintuplets, on which the five little Canadian girls were thriving.

Many German craftsmen in our midst were employed in the wire and steel companies: Wireton (Gilbert & Bennett), Webco Steel Co., Rogers Galvanizing Co., and the Blue Island Iron and Wire Works.

Many father-to-son businesses flourished. Christian Krueger, carpenter and undertaker, made his own caskets; his son Robert, made the first hearse; and Robert, Jr. became an undertaker. Ed Blouin, with 43 continuous years as saloon keeper, brought in his son Jimmy; the Heim Brothers, in the florist business for 55 years, consisted of John Heim with his sons Charles and Edward, and George Heim's widow, and three sons. The Klein Elevator, operating since 1892, conducting a general business in flour, feed, hay, grain and salt — both retail and wholesale — was carried on by William & John Klein. The Henry F. Klein and Joseph Schroth meat wholesale firm is continued by the Klein, Schroth and Seyfarth families. R. Newhouse, coal dealer, also kept his business in the family, and Schreiber Brother, hardware merchants, continued under this pioneer name.

Policeman Harry Joens was busy keeping our community safe

as well as keeping one eye on the butter and lard hijacking that was going on in the area. In March, 1935, John McEvoy became police chief, with Richard Sorgenfrei as his lieutenant.

That Blue Island was one of the outstanding cities in church membership was revealed by a religious study done by the University of Chicago. Blue Island churches were flourishing. First, the city was blessed with a new church group when a small but devoted body of Christian Scientists organized in May of 1936 and held services the next month in the Masonic Temple. The Methodists had two churches at the time: the Central M. E. at Vermont and Western with the Rev. Leopold Schneider as minister, and the First Methodist at Burr Oak and Western, with the Rev. Frank Hancock as minister. R. E. McCloy began his long career as Sunday School superintendent at the latter. Rev. W. J. Ferne was pastor of the First Evangelical Lutheran at Grove and Ann, and the Rev. Emil Helm pastor of the Community Evangelical. Siloa Lutheran, with pastor Edward Stark and St. Paul Evangelical with the Rev. B. F. Freese were also serving the community. The First Congregational celebrated its 75th birthday, the Sunday School having been organized in 1849 and the church recognized in 1860. Rev. James Robert Smith, pastor over forty years previous to the celebration, was to preach.





#### *Eisenhower Dedicates Campus Building*

*In October of 1950, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, then president of Columbia University, brought Blue Island and the surrounding areas one of their really big days when he dedicated the Campus Building of the District 218 schools. Here to greet the famous visitors are County Superintendent of schools Simon Staes, Superintendent of Public Instruction Nickell, Henry G. Baumann, and Dr. Richards. Pinning on Ike's boutonniere is Gladys Nelson, then a junior at Community High School.*

Ruth Doermann, member of a family long active in the American Lutheran Church, was elected International Secretary of the Luther League of the American Lutheran Church.

The professional guide listed optometrists Harry G. Dare and Alan H. Fisher; physicians R. C. Aiken and Osbey Woods; attorneys Roy Massena, and the firm of Carlstrom, Klenk, Conway, Franklin and Turner.

In order to boost business on Western Avenue, one hundred business men gathered to talk

over a city bond plan to help pull all local firms out of the slump, but they insisted that this not be considered political action. The Lions Club once again came up with a worthwhile proposition: to sponsor semi-annual Dollar Day sales, which Ludwig Blum, manager of the local Kline's Department Store, promoted in conjunction with Market Day. Participants who went along with this business builder included Koehler Paper Company, Pronger Brothers Department Store, Adam Kranich Jewel-



ry Store, Michael Rubino's Men's Wear, Simon's Department Store, Reuss Brothers Grocery, Albert's Beauty Shop, Aulwurm's Grocery, and the Bettenhausen Radio Shop. Other activities listed in the business directory at this time included furniture by Straham, printing by the Melvin Press with H. R. Swanson, tailoring by Versteeg, and justice of the peace John H. Black.

The Federal Housing Authority was of great help to the community in that they made an official survey of homes as to whether or not repairs or remodeling were contemplated and loans needed. The banks were anxious to make FHA insured mortgage loans, and new or remodeled homes brought business to Schrieber & Hohman, paint; Nagel & Stolz, brick; John E. Steinhart, finance; and Henry Goesel, paint.

Paul T. Klenk, four times mayor of Blue Island and eight years assistant attorney-general of Illinois, later formed a new law firm with Franklin W. Klein as his partner.

The State Bank, which had been closed since the moratorium in March, 1933, re-opened with A. R. Floreen, President; Walter C. Bielfeld, Vice President and Cashier; Miss Esther Steinbach, Ass't. Cashier; and Henry L. Duff, Ass't. Cashier and Trust Officer. The board of directors, consisted of Charles Habich, F. J. Boyd, F. W. Tracy, Rudolph Heitmann, C. B.

Hutchins, W. C. Bielfeldt, John L. Synakiewicz, Samuel M. Havens, F. J. Van Overstraeten, Jacob Thoeming and Robert Dillman. In March also, William H. Weber became the new president of the First National Bank. Henry Seyfarth was appointed bank attorney, and John Zacharias and Ed Maroney, directors.

Other projects designed to stimulate business were the May Days, special sales endorsed by the Lions Club; and the two public works projects: an addition to the high school, which had tripled in attendance and a viaduct over the Rock Island tracks on Burr Oak, to cost in the neighborhood of \$400,000.

The County Highway engineers favored a concrete viaduct over Burr Oak Avenue and recommended the use of federal funds as it would be a relief measure to get men to their work faster, Burr Oak being a main artery eastward. Street improvement work would affect nearly every section of the city.

Community High School, Dist. 218, with John C. Joens as president of the board, hearing that government money was being offered for worthwhile public works, considered the possibility of getting federal funds for the building of a sixteen-room addition to the main building in Maple Avenue, plus an auditorium, a gym, and a natatorium. The District 218 board at that time consisted of Allen B. Knirsch, Emil





*Mayor Hart greets Eisenhower*

*The city's chief executive and the General seem to be considering a serious subject on Blue Island's big day.*

J. Blatt and Walter C. Anderson.

On June 5, 1935, word was received that the high school was approved by the North Central Association on a close margin, 29.5 pupils per teacher, and 6 classes per teacher being pretty close to a non-approved limit. It was estimated that from seven to ten more faculty members were needed.

Superintendent J. E. Lemon, who had served forty-two years retired, and H. L. Richards was elected to succeed him, to be in charge of a large school of 1150

students and a hard financial situation. Mr. Richards was chosen because he was the product of a military academy, was a good disciplinarian, and had had executive experience.

Lions Club President Henry Baumann presented illuminated framed testimonials, recognizing their public service, to John H. Volp, Rudolph Heitmann, Alderman Louis Rauch, Mayor Fred A. Rice, Dr. Frank Tracy, J. Floyd Smith, Phil Seyfarth, and Al Stolz.



Blue Island received the attention of the literary world when Margaret Ayer Barnes' new novel, *Edna His Wife* was published. Mrs. Barnes used Blue Island as the home locale for the book and made the heroine's father a Rock Island telegraph operator. The author was struck by the picturesqueness of Blue Island's hill on Western Avenue, approaching from the south, and the heroine, Edna, looks back to Blue Island days with longing from her penthouse in New York.

The park board voted a \$30,000 bond issue to acquire lots along Walnut Street and Highland Avenue for the completion of Memorial Park. A WPA loan of \$231,000 was to help make the park one of the finest when completed. It was to consist of a large administration building and field house with offices, a gymnasium, bathhouse, lockers, auditoriums, a 250 foot swimming pool, an athletic field, an outdoor stadium with 1000 seating capacity, and a terraced and landscaped lawn. The park board also bought property in the third ward for an eastside playground at Wood and Vermont.

Many Blue Islanders took part in Old Newsboy Day, a project sponsored by the Lions Club, to raise money for charity. George Engelland, pioneer newspaper dealer, retraced the route he served thirty-five years ago. Andrew L. McCord, vice-president of the First National Bank, Dr. Earle

J. W. Pronger, Dr. Clarence F. Folkers, dentist; Alderman Joseph W. Lentz, Samuel J. Eisendrath, who sold papers here in 1882; Edward Daugherty, Rock Island Railroad man; Emil C. Schaebes, building contractor; attorney Robert H. Gilson; Peter W. Heintz, realtor and insurance man; Henry Heinecke (the skating newsboy), plumber; Harry W. Bettenhausen, radio shop owner; Don Boughner, railroad clerk; N. R. Ramser, manager of the Woolworth store; Policeman Frank Jenner; Walter A. Eggert, superintendent of schools, District 130; H. L. Richards, Community High School superintendent; Homer B. Clemmons and Harold C. Volp from the Sun-Standard; and Al Tyler, railroader, all admitted they got their financial start as newsboys.

The vote at the city election was split between the People's Party which provided mayor Fred A. Rice and the Greater Blue Island Party whose Louis F. Schwartz became city clerk. The council stayed under control of the Greater Blue Island Party. The aldermen elected were: first ward, Louis W. Rauch (P); second ward, Henry Goesel (I); third ward, R. Guglielmucci (P); fourth ward, Joseph W. Lentz (G); fifth ward, Stewart Sandberg (G); sixth ward, Dr. Thomas J. Scanlon, and Harry W. Hottendorf (tied); and William J. Gerdes (G), seventh ward. The police magistrate elected was





*Home of the Blue Island Elks*

*This handsome structure was formerly occupied by the Illinois Bell Telephone Company.*

George E. Heatley (G) and the secretary, Charles Anderson. Rudolph Heitmann and Henry Schreiber were elected to the park board.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hamlin Burno celebrated their golden anniversary on October 28, 1935. Mr. Burno, a Rock Island Railroad man, was very active in the First Methodist Church, where he served as a trustee for twenty-five years. He also served on the school board.

Henry F. and Emma (Foss) Klein celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on December 6, 1935. The Kleins, a pioneer fam-

ily, are of the Klein and Schroth wholesale meat packing industry.

The city mourned the passing of Joseph Mateer Lobaugh, banker, commission man, attorney and real estate dealer. Mr. Lobaugh, a man who appreciated the problems of his fellowmen, founded the Blue Island State Bank in 1912 and served faithfully in many capacities.

Business changes of the time included the opening of a new office at 2427 Vermont Street by Henry L. Duff who began a trust and property management business. The Economy Coal Company continued service under manage-



ment of Mrs. Samuel Edwards with her son, Emlyn. Peter H. Krick was named bank director of the First National Bank. In October, Fred Hohman purchased August Schreiber's interest in the bookstore at 13016 Western Avenue, a business which had been established in 1910.

In 1936 our school authorities recognized the importance of a closer relationship between school and home and school and public. They called the attention of the public to the low per capita cost of Blue Island Community High School with sixteen other township schools. In spite of the overcrowded high school conditions, the school was approved by the North Central Association of Colleges, and the Lions Club favored a referendum to increase the tax rate in order that they might remain accredited.

A special election was called for July 18th to aid the schools and Superintendent H. L. Richards and the school board pressed for a government loan under the First Deficiency Act. A loan of \$104,000 and an additional grant of \$85,000 for construction of a seventeen room addition were approved by President Roosevelt. However, the government aid was almost lost because of the failure of Blue Island residents to pass an increase in the school tax rate.

Continued efforts on the part of Superintendent Richards and the board finally resulted in the addition of two identical two-

story wings providing eleven classrooms and two study halls, a band room, a lunch room and two nurse's rooms. More tax money would be needed to put Home Economics and Manual Training back into the curriculum. The increase was voted in a subsequent election.

Carl Caul, the local representative of the Chicago Motor Club, arranged for school patrol work at both the parochial and public schools. Boys in Sam Browne belts stood guard at crossings to protect boys and girls crossing the street. Fifty boys were given recognition for outstanding work in this project.

The First Congregational Church celebrated its 75th birthday in October, 1935. The Rev. James Robert Smith, pastor over forty years previous, was invited back into the pulpit to preach. The Sunday School was organized in 1849 and the group was recognized as a church in 1860. The Rev. Aylesworth B. Bell showed pictures of the 1865 church compared with the present church.

The First Methodist Church at Western Avenue and Burr Oak, with the Rev. Frank Hancock as pastor, observed its sixty-third birthday at a church dinner. It had grown from twenty-five members to over six hundred. A community room had been built, but, because of financial difficulties, it had been rented to the WPA during the depression. When the WPA moved into the Central Park



Fieldhouse in January of 1937, the church was put up for sale but would occupy the building until negotiations were completed.

The 75th anniversary of the founding of the St. Benedict parish was celebrated in a solemn high jubilee mass by veteran pastor, the Rev. Theodore G. Gross. The parish had been founded as a mission by the Benedictine Fathers in October of 1861. The membership had grown from 175 families in 1905 to more than 500.

On July 11, 1937, Gerald E. Ferne, the son of Rev. and Mrs. W. J. Ferne was ordained to the Holy Ministry at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church.

St. Francis Hospital, which had served the community for thirty years, received the approval of the American College of Surgeons.

Blue Island citizens, feeling responsible for the welfare of its unemployed, contributed two truckloads of clothing and food for distribution among the needy. These were collected at a motion picture party sponsored by the Lions Club and the Lyric Theater under the direction of H. B. Lund. Habich Brothers Motor Company donated a truck and Clifford L. Aulwurm furnished huge hampers for delivery of the merchandise. The American Legion also did its part by accumulating a sizable foundation for the Community Chest fund to aid the needy.

At this time the services of the

Blue Island Welfare Bureau under the direction of Mrs. Flowers, were intimate and varied. The home service department provided layettes for babies. Comforters and quilts were repaired and filled. An annual drive for funds was conducted under the leadership of J. Floyd Smith to relieve the sufferings of families as a result of fire loss, sudden illness, or death. The Welfare Bureau also added an employment bureau for young men nineteen years of age and over, providing such work as fall housecleaning, storm window placing, and other part-time work. They encouraged employment rather than relief in keeping with the American doctrine.

Blue Island citizens also contributed to the Red Cross for Texas flood relief, and Kline's Department Store turned over five per cent of its Saturday's sales to this project.

Ray Barthel was appointed superintendent of the Blue Island recreation project. The Recreation Center was open for men, women, and children every day but Saturday from 3:00 - 9:00 p.m. The gymnasium provided an opportunity to play basketball, volleyball, ping pong, and shuffleboard. An upstairs room was set aside for chess, checkers, etc. Various crafts, including art, metal and woodworking were taught.

Recreation handcraft classes, in cooperation with the American Legion, collected, repaired, and painted toys which made over a



hundred children happy for Christmas.

The city library was found full of studious youth doing research and reference work after school and evenings. This was a mighty fine place to meet friends, too! Additional books had been purchased through the aid of state funds, including such memorable titles as: Pitkin's *The Art of Thinking*; Van Loon's *Geography*; Steffens' *Boy on Horseback*, and Muzzey's *History of Our Country*, all popular books in that day. In order to stimulate the interest of adults the public library started a series of book reviews with two primary purposes: to provide an hour of entertainment for busy men and women, and to encourage them to come to the library to get acquainted with its new books and magazines, the purchase of which had been made possible through the Illinois Emergency Relief Fund. The first book review was given by H. L. Richards, who, having been a Social Studies teacher, naturally picked a historical novel, *Drums Along The Mohawk*, by Walter D. Edmonds. Mrs. J. E. Lemon was to provide the second book review.

In May, 1937, Edward C. Maroney, president of the Blue Island Park Board, made a special trip to Washington, D.C. to assure the allocation of an additional \$58,000 WPA grant to complete Memorial Park. The concrete outdoor stadium to seat 3500 persons was near completion. Concrete tennis

courts were planned, and a swimming pool was placed on the preferred list. The tennis courts and playgrounds were in daily use, and the grading and renovation of the baseball diamond at Centennial Park on the East side was also in progress.

An annual sport, well attended by local citizens, was the basketball game between the high school faculty and the graduates. Among those on the faculty team in 1937 were "Pop" Ewing, H. L. Richards, Birt Frobish, C. B. Price, C. L. Blunk, and Coach Eberhart. A cart drawn by a small pony brought the faculty players onto the floor. The old grads, some of whom needed to trim off a few pounds, consisted of Les Damm, Bill Berry, Les Muir, Cliff Aulwurm, Carl Sorgenfrei, Clyde Beard, and Bud Jacobs, were led onto the floor by Dr. Earle Pronger.

Soon after the beginning of the game, the faculty put on a sit-down strike and were offered ice-cream bars to entice them back into the game. Even so, or perhaps because of the added energy, the faculty won!

A number of projects with the assistance of the WPA were in progress. These included: streets and sewers, the surfacing of Burr Oak Avenue, the completion of Memorial Park and the addition to the high school.

Bids were received, contracts awarded, and work started on Blue Island's million gallon wa-



ter reservoir on January 11th, to be erected on property at 121st Place and Highland Avenue, and the B & O CT railroad. A Federal PWA grant and sale of water bonds were to make this possible. Neighbors were assured that the plot would never be used for anything but the tank, and the grounds would be landscaped and made beautiful. In October, the reservoir was filled with water for a test, the pumps were installed, and connections were made. The completion of this project provided a great addition to the city's water reserve and lessened the danger to water supply which had threatened Blue Island for the last few years.

Two viaducts were on the county program of highway improvements, one on Burr Oak Avenue over the Rock Island tracks at an estimated cost of \$300,000, according to the report of the county commissioner, Carl J. Carlson.

Canal widening to 160 feet was again being pushed. Alderman George F. Fiedler was appointed by Mayor Rice to follow all procedures closely because of the great changes such a widening would make in our city.

1937 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Blue Island Savings and Loan Association, one of the oldest of its kind in Cook County. One and a half million dollars had been invested in Blue Island homes on loans to people buying or improving their dwellings. Since home ownership was

hailed as one of the greatest of modern blessings, Blue Island could well pride itself on its high percentage of home owners, which was 70 percent. The city fathers gave credit to the association for helping to create a solid community of fine schools, churches, and homes, which had weathered the depression with flying colors.

The personal wealth in Blue Island ranked high according to the number of income tax returns filed in comparison with other south suburbs. The wealth was regarded as active, not static, as the city had such a large percentage of railroads, and the salaries of their employees fell into the income tax class. A city with such a high percentage of active income could handle a better grade of merchandise and could readily sell such items as medium-priced automobiles, radios and electric refrigerators.

In October of 1937, Edmond H. Bronson purchased a battery and tire station at 12814 Western Avenue, where he handled a complete line of Firestone products and also home radios and electric refrigerators. Bronson's father was the earliest auto dealer in Blue Island, having handled bicycles before the auto age and having opened his auto garage in 1905.

Harry W. Bettenhausen, the young proprietor of the leading electrical appliance shops in South Cook County, completed air-conditioning his store at 13118



Western Avenue, this being the first store to be so modernized in Blue Island. 15,000 people crowded into the store to admire the innovation.

The American Wire Fabrics Corporation re-opened giving employment to sixty-five people. The plant, producing screen wire, was modern and well equipped. Charles H. Hannagan returned as manager.

Al Schuemann and George Staes, well-known young Blue Islanders, opened a modern food store and market at 12734 Western Avenue. The fruit and vegetables were handled by Charles Staes, father of George, and the butcher shop by Al Schuemann.

Community Days were set for Feb. 18, 19, 20 and Western Avenue prepared for the biggest three days in history. The five cent bus fare on the South Suburban Safeway buses within the city limits of Blue Island made it possible for shoppers to ride buses from one end of the city limit to the other for only a nickel. The merchants were elated!

The Blue Island city tax, though slightly greater than the previous year, did not show nearly the increase that Chicago tax-payers had to dig up.

1937 marked the beginning of four-year terms for all city officials: mayor, clerk, treasurer, police magistrate, and aldermen.

The April election resulted in a complete victory for the Citizens' Party. John M. Hart was elected

for the new four-year term as mayor. He had taken his first job in a drugstore at twelve, and had worked his way through high school and the University of Illinois School of Pharmacy. Louis F. Schwartz, who had been a bookkeeper all his life, was elected clerk. Richard Seyfarth, a youthful attorney, became police magistrate, and August W. Schreiber, an accountant, the treasurer.

The aldermen elected were as follows: first ward - Louis W. Rauch; second ward - Henry J. Goesel and George F. Fiedler; third ward - Michael Guglielmucci and Gustav R. Lietzau; fourth ward - Joseph W. Lentz and Arthur C. Ladwig; fifth ward - Otto Kasch and George Sutton; sixth ward - Thomas J. Scanlon and Charles Dewar; and seventh ward - Clarence O. Williams.

Mayor Hart immediately announced that he would not run the mayor's office from the drug store and established office hours at the City Hall. The administration of the City of Blue Island was formally inducted into office on a flower-decked stage at Eagles Hall before an admiring throng of friends. A beautiful gold star set with a .66 carat diamond was presented to Mayor Hart by his numerous friends.

John McEvoy, known by hundreds of friends and neighbors as "Mac," took over the reins of the police department on May 15 as chief of police through virtue



of his appointment by Mayor Hart. The appointment won the 100 percent approval of the city council. Paul R. Schreiber, young attorney and son of city treasurer August W. Schreiber, was named to the position of city attorney, also with the unanimous consent of the council. Reappointed for other posts were: Wells Crockett, commissioner of assessments and tax commissioner, R. B. Hammond, supt. of public works; Allen L. Fox, city engineer; H. J. Schnurstein, building commissioner; and Dr. Albert J. Roemisch, health commissioner.

Mayor Hart appointed Edward H. Hopf as chairman of the civil

service board and Howard Heckler and Lowell Frasor as members of the recreation board.

In July, Floyd Smith resigned as postmaster. President Hoover had given Mr. Smith the commission in July, 1932. His term expired in 1936, but he was able to keep the position despite Democratic pressure which was a compliment to Mr. Smith. Anthony J. Lagod of the third ward was tendered a temporary appointment.

On March 1, 1936, a quality women's specialty shop, The Mayfair, was opened on 12956 S. Western by Henry G. Baumann. The store has grown to be one of Blue Island's leading establishments.



*Grace Methodist Church*

*After the two Methodist congregations in Blue Island combined, they occupied this beautiful edifice on Maple Avenue.*



In May, 1937, the Lions Club presented silk American flags to Community High School and the First Lutheran School. John E. Steinhart, head of the Americanization Department, made the presentation.

The Rotary Club saluted, instead of the "man of the month," the entire board of Community High School, who had overcome tremendous obstacles in their financial arrangements and building problems. That the addition to the high school was now completed was a great credit to the community. Saluted were: John C. Joens, Emil J. Blatt, Louis J. Biedenkopf, Allen B. Knirsch, and Clifford L. Aulwurm.

The high school had put manual training, cooking, and sewing back into the curriculum, and sixty-five members of the city's two service clubs, the Lions and Rotary clubs, were guests of the Board of Education in a tour of the new additions. John C. Joens, president of the Board, welcomed the visitors.

A larger faculty, more complete curriculum, and more elbow room made it possible to give better service to the 825 students in the senior high school and the 425 freshmen at the North building. Despite dour financial conditions there was a slight increase in teachers' salaries in order to keep up a high standard of faculty members. Though the attempt to increase the tax rate had failed, every effort was made to keep

the school on the North Central accredited list.

As a result of the construction work done in 1937, the city was to benefit a great deal. Three public improvements, at a cost of \$400,000, added much to the future comfort and pleasure of at least two generations of our citizens. These were: Memorial Park, the addition to the high school, and the new water works.

Several new stores were added, which enlarged the commercial activity. Factories were expanded, and one that had long been closed reopened. Frank Rauwolf was erecting a new store: the Jebens Hardware and the Melvin Service Station were added. The largest construction project was a new warehouse for the Equipment Manufacturing Company at 2829 Vermont.

The Blue Island Savings and Loan, which had celebrated its 50th birthday in 1937, held open house in its new building at 2429 West Vermont. The new structure was modern with terra cotta and glass-brick finish.

The assets were growing with the following officers in charge:

A. C. Miller, president; Peter H. Krick, vice president; Arthur G. Olson, secretary and treasurer; Emil J. Blatt, assistant secretary-treasurer; and Robert H. Gilson, attorney.

The directors were: R.V. Zach-er, John A. Lentz, A.J. Eiserstedt, and Carl Groskopf.

The merchants discussed a sales



crusade and adopted a slogan: "More sales mean more jobs." Employment picked up at the Libby plant, whose products are sold nationally. People were encouraged to buy Blue Island manufactured products and stimulate home industry. The wholesale distribution business amounted to over nine million dollars, and the manufactured products turned out were valued at six-and-a-half million.

It was established that the average citizen bought at retail in the home community. Our citizens were mostly railroad employees, workers in the wholesale and manufacturing establishments, city employees, school teachers, and commuters.

Retail distributors consisted of: sixty-seven food stores, forty-six eating and drinking places, twenty-two filling stations, eleven general merchandise establishments, ten auto shops, ten automotive repair shops, seven apparel shops, and six drug stores.

Two city landmarks disappeared during 1938. One of them was the seventy-five year-old South building of Jebens Hardware at 13311 Western Avenue. Some of the bricks on the back wall had been hand-made. A modern brick and stone building replaced the old landmark. Another landmark to disappear was the sixty-year-old frame Cavallini building at the southeast corner of Western and Vermont. The Italian-American restaurant was

replaced by a new brick building, housing four small stores on Vermont, a larger store in front. The corner was owned by the Zacharias interests.

An indication that Blue Island citizens were prosperous was shown by federal income-tax figures. Proportionately speaking, there were many more income tax payers in Blue Island than in two other large neighboring cities: The figures were:

902 tax payers per 1000 in Blue Island; 708 per 1000 in Chicago Heights; and 388 per 1000 in Calumet City. Unemployment was less than that in Harvey and our tax rate was the lowest of cities of comparable size and service to the public in the entire area.

Blue Island, as always, was interested in the welfare of its citizens. The American Legion gave an inhalator to the first aid squad in line with their record of community betterment. Thus the Blue Island Fire Department would be aided in saving the lives of drowned victims and those suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, gas asphyxiation, electric shock, or suffocation. It might also help save the lives of newborn infants.

Under the general chairmanship of Henry G. Baumann, there was a whirlwind drive for the Boy Scout movement. The zone leaders were: John E. Steinhart, J. Floyd Smith, Harry Lund, and Henry Duff.



The Illinois Commerce Commission issued an order "authorizing, permitting, and directing" the Cook County Highway Department to construct a new, modern viaduct on Burr Oak Avenue over the Rock Island tracks, the cost to be borne entirely by the county and the railroad. Mayor John M. Hart and Commissioner Carl J. Carlson led the fight. The city enlarged its street program under the stimulus of the federal government's new spending program. \$100,000 was spent for the paving and repair of the arterial streets.

Final landscaping at Memorial Park was rushed for the Memorial Day ceremonies. The park, an old pioneer cemetery, had been turned over as a place for memorial purposes and as a recreation center for the living. The \$85,000 pool had been approved. Edward Maroney, president of the park board, said the pool would be one of the finest in the country with a greatest width of 150 feet, and water from fifteen to twenty feet deep.

The Park dedication was a feature of Memorial Day with G. Frank Van Gorder the Patriotic Association head as the principal speaker. The committee consisted of representatives from three veterans organizations: Walter E. Edmondson, representing the Spanish War veterans; Alfred Thied, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Harvey Antilla, the American Legion.

The school enrollment figures in Cook County showed a trend toward a large increase in the secondary or high school level. Community High School faced the issue: either close the high school, cut it to a six-month session, or raise additional funds. Prof. Guy Fowlkes from the University of Wisconsin was called in to view the actual existing conditions. He made two public appearances to point out the need for a tax increase, stressing four points.

1. There was a lack of much-needed industrial arts, household arts, and music courses.
2. The number of pupils per teacher was too high.
3. The teachers' salaries were lower than those of other schools in the area; therefore the teacher turnover was too high, and it was necessary to employ inexperienced teachers.
4. Blue Island was spending less to educate each child than other schools of the same size.

Nevertheless, the special election to raise money for the high school failed.

The Board, with John C. Joens as president, decided to limp along. Their chief concern was how could they hold their rating with North Central?

In September the largest freshman class in the history of the school enrolled, 430 strong. A laboratory-history course, devel-



oped under Supt. Richards' direction, and known as "History of the West," attracted favorable comments from educators. Students were taught more about the trials of pioneer life, contrasting the disadvantages of earlier days with the many advantages of modern existence. Diversified English courses were taught to meet more nearly the special interests of the students: business, oratory, dramatic, writing. The Blue Island Lions Club voted to complete the vocational guidance program at the high school. Speakers from Northwestern and the Rock Island lines appeared on the program. A series of guidance booklets was presented to the school library.

H. L. Richards was chosen president of the Lions Club. The following committee joined him in work on the high school problem: Rev. A. C. Nesmith, H. E. Seyfarth, John Steinhart, and Al Stolz.

Dr. Leslie O. Damm was elected president of the grade school board, which consisted of Walter Anderson, Enger Anderson, Perry Hoag and Fred Hohmann. Fred Hohmann was also elected to the high school board with the express purpose of promoting articulation between the two school systems. The grade school board of District 130 appointed two physicians to conduct physical examinations and to approve or reject pupils in health matters. These were Dr. A. B. Snider and

Dr. Kenneth Smith. They also appointed two dentists to handle examinations and emergency dental work. They were Dr. C. E. Folkers and Dr. Taylor Bell. They hired a special teacher to instruct several crippled children in their homes as they were not able to attend school.

A number of Blue Island grade school children took honors on major exhibits at the garden show at Navy Pier in Chicago. They came home with a total of 136 ribbons, among which were a first prize for a bud and branch arrangement, a second prize for a conservation poster and a conservation map. The competition was state wide.

Air mail came to Blue Island in 1938. Pilot Schofield, in a Taylor Cub plane, landed at 119th, a mile west of Western, bringing 400 letters to Blue Island. He picked up 700 special letters from Blue Island for delivery to every state of the union.

Postmaster Lagod thanked many for helping bring this about during Air Mail Week on the 20th anniversary of the founding of the U.S. Postoffice Air Mail service.

The city looked proudly back upon the accomplishments of John H. Volp, who had been a life-long resident and the president of the Blue Island Publishing Corporation, publishers of several newspapers in this area, and who passed away in 1938. Mr. Volp grew nine dollars into a



\$50,000 firm during his colorful life. The smell of ink and the desire to "stick type" already became an obsession when he was in his teens. In the spring of 1884, when he was fourteen, he graduated from printer's devil to apprentice, and then from printer to reporter, from editor to publisher, and on to the top, using every opportunity to gain another notch. He was author and publisher of *The First Hundred Years*, a colorful history of Blue Island, upon which this book is largely based.

The Blue Island City Council, headed by Mayor John Hart, paid tribute to this leading citizen. In addition, the Blue Island Lions Club paid the following tribute: "John Henry Volp rendered valuable service in the furtherance of civic projects and activities, the most memorable of which was the Centennial Celebration in 1935, when he acted as general chairman to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of this community.

"In business as a publisher he was always unselfish in his devotion and generous in his contributions to the welfare of this community, the betterment of which was his constant goal."

Several leading citizens in the United States paid tribute to Mr. Volp: Kermit Roosevelt, the son of the nation's president, Theodore Roosevelt; Dr. John H. Finley, editor-in-chief of the *New York Times*; Gilbert T. Hodges,

member of the executive board of the *New York Sun*; and Grover A. Whalen, president of the New York World Fair of 1939.

The city also paid tribute to another favorite son, Rudolph E. Heitman, who had lived here since 1897 and had been in the grocery chain store management business, and then in his own store at 12401 Western Avenue. Heitman had been unanimously selected as chairman of the Blue Island Centennial Committee, but had been forced to decline this honor because of failing health. He was able, however to serve faithfully on this committee. He was a member of the park board and a director of the State Bank, was associated with Henry Duff in real estate and insurance, and was active in the Lions Club.

After first working up a large business at home, the Watland Brothers came into prominence at this time when they opened the Watland Camera Shop, a modern up-to-date photography store, with a full line of camera supplies and offering twenty-four hour developing and printing service. Photography had been a hobby of Arnold, who after graduating from Community High had gone on to obtain quite a reputation at the University of Chattanooga as a chemistry major and football player. His brothers, Vance, Keith, and Lester, joined him in his new venture, all working hard to achieve the success which the shop soon came to



make possible.

Rotary's January man-of-the month was Marvin Olmsted, the friend and instructor of hundreds of the city's youngsters as a music instructor who had worked patiently and zealously to better the school's musical units.

Dr. Ralph Diffenderfer converted the Christian Krueger home at 12840 Maple Avenue in order to establish his office there, following a current trend to have offices in residential rather than business districts. Dr. Robert Lee James, a physician here for forty-seven years as a general practitioner died in March. He had taken part in building the high school in this city by serving on the school board as president for fifteen years, during which time the modern school was erected.

The First Lutheran Church celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary, centering activities around the splendid old historical church edifice. The congregation consisted of 800 families, making it the second largest in the American Lutheran Church. The cornerstone was laid in 1863, and it was the oldest church in Blue Island which had been continuously used with practically no alterations. The interior had been left unchanged since worship during the Civil War. The stone used in the church had been quarried from near Blue Island and hauled by ox and horse teams to the church site. The chairman of the central anniversary committee was Ralph

Jebsen. Eleven sons of the congregation who had entered the ministry returned to participate in the services. The Luther League celebrated its 25th anniversary, stressing the importance of youth in the work of the church.

Firm faith in the future of our city resulted in the Blue Island Publishing Corporation's decision to remodel its premises, purchase new equipment, and expand its principal product, the Blue Island Sun-Standard.

Harold C. Volp, president of the concern, succeeded his father, John H. Volp. Homer B. Clemmons, a veteran newspaper man, planned the dummy sheets which served as a guide for the makeup men in placing the advertising. Lyman Massey was advertising manager; Walter Lysen, himself an athlete with a record of participation in many sports, was sports editor; and Hill Lakin was responsible for the news. Two linotype machines were in use daily. All straight matter was set by Anna D. Haas, who had worked for the firm for fifty years, with the help of H. F. Schifferl who had started in 1925. Richard "Smitty" Smith, master craftsman of the printing trade, was in charge of advertising and heading composition. The Blue Island Sun-Standard had been in the hands of the Volp family since 1876. Mrs. Viola C. Volp had quietly aided her husband in the expansion of the business and had served as guide and inspiration for her



sons and daughter, Alice, who carried on the business.

Blue Island automobile dealers George F. Fiedler and J. V. Bronson were elected to office in the South Suburban dealers' association, Mr. Fiedler as vice-president, and Mr. Bronson as secretary. Fiedler was also elected president of the Dodge dealers in the Chicago area. At the election meeting, optimism was expressed over the enthusiastic reception of the 1940 models of all makes. A new Pontiac organization, managed by M.L. Bowman, opened its doors at 12424 Western Avenue, having taken over the spacious quarters and salesrooms at that address.

Schreiber Brothers Hardware entered its 90th year in 1939, with its business still located on the same site on which it was established prior to 1849. It has been owned and operated by the same family, founded by pioneer settler August Schreiber, and now carried on by the third generation. The huge auxiliary warehouse and stock of the W. W. Koehler Paper Company was destroyed by fire, but Mr. Koehler rented an old laundry building to use as a storehouse and carried on business as usual.

The first trial run of a double diesel type of locomotive, just purchased by the Rock Island lines, was made on the Peoria line with engineer Ernest A. Browner of 2336 Florence Street at the throttle. Engineer Browner said the engine took the curves

at ninety miles an hour, drawing a train of three coaches and two express cars. It was so clean that all he had to do was wash his hands when he got back! Israel "Ike" La More retired from Rock Island Railroad service after 55 years' service. He had been nicknamed "Deadeye Ike" because of his hunting prowess. Ironically, it was because of failing eyesight in his right eye that he retired to go on pension. He had started as an engineer at the age of twenty and made a record for himself by working steadily for over half a century. In that time he estimated that he had run more than 2,900,000 miles.

In June, 1939, Walter Heide, a native Blue Islander, took over the duties as acting superintendent of the Rock Island lines. Mr. Heide was a member of a Rock Island family: his brother Edward was a towerman; his sister, Mrs. Emma Davies, was ticket agent at 119th Street; and another sister, Carrie Nielson, was ticket agent at 95th and Vincennes. Heide was born here in 1888 the son of Henry Heide, and began his railroad career in 1902 as a call boy.

Mr. and Mrs. John F. Stuebe, veteran grocery and meat market proprietors, celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Their grand-daughter, Lucille Steube, was wed to Louis Bettenhausen on their anniversary date. Besides a daughter, Edith Isler, the couple



had four sons: Fred, Louis, John and Arthur.

Chester P. Sutton, a local young man and graduate of local schools, moved into the residence at 2620 Burr Oak, vacated by Fred L. Zacharias, and established a funeral home. He had had former experience at the Blue Island Funeral Home.

Construction on stores and homes began early in the year and building inspector Schnurstein predicted a busy year. There were new homes going up in the sixth ward between Gregory and Washington, south of 120th St. On Western Avenue, the Pronger building was remodeled and the new tenant, the A and P received a modern front.

The old viaduct over the Rock Island tracks had to go to make way for the new one, on which the lowest bid was \$472,388.53. Yard 22, the largest of the Illinois Brick Company plants, was reopened for about a month's run, bringing employment to many Blue Islanders over the holiday season.

Figures of the Illinois Municipal League showed that our government cost under Mayor Hart was more reasonable than other cities of comparable size. Our expense was low compared with the cost of other municipalities in our vicinity, which ranged from \$5.30 per \$100 valuation in Blue Island to \$21.42 in Burnham and \$16.16 in Markham. New men in the council were:

Frank Britt, fourth ward; William Frey and Joseph Mausolf, sixth ward; and John Jones, seventh ward.

The city staged a clean-up, paint-up, repair, remodel drive. T.F. Easton, general chairman, was assisted by an executive committee consisting of Henry G. Baumann, E.J. Anhorn, Harold Richards, Emil Blatt, and L.M. Weir, who were able to secure the cooperation of the schools, churches, Boy Scouts, fire and police, and street and garbage departments.

Memorial Park's new swimming pool was filled with 38,000 gallons of water. The park board, with Edward C. Maroney as president; Joseph W. Lentz, secretary; A.L. McCord, treasurer; Paul T. Klenk, attorney; and Henry Schreiber, Dr. LeRoy T. Rowland, and Charles A. Ullrich, members; announced plans for the dedication of the entire park on Labor Day.

The 150 x 120 feet pool was pronounced one of the finest in Cook County, being completely floodlighted, and with the water purified and changed every eight hours by a process of continued inflow, filtration and outflow. It was a source of great pride to the community. The bath house could accommodate 1500; and the new community house was able to handle crowds of 300 people. The new fieldhouse was used by the Blue Island Garden Club for a flower show, arranged by a com-



mittee consisting of Mrs. Charles L. Van Wies, Mrs. Rudolph Heitman, Mrs. Ed. Henke and the club president, Mrs. R. N. Napier. The Memorial Park fieldhouse was also used for the first annual exhibition of the Blue Island Art Association. The exhibitors included several businessmen: E.J. Warner, Walter Hoffer, and Fred Kirsten. Mrs. Robert Pronger, Mrs. Rodney Davis, and Frederick Seyfarth, already well-known artists, also exhibited paintings.

The Welfare Bureau, then in its twenty-third year, was one of the oldest continuous operating relief organizations of its kind in the state. Mrs. Florie Flowers was and still is the salaried administrator. Through years of contact with the community, Mrs. Flowers could cut through red tape and grant speedy relief of the most variegated nature as problems arose: a bed for a very ill woman, clothing and books for needy school children and supply many other necessities.

In order to aid the Welfare Bureau, members of the Lions Club conducted a welfare movie, asking clean clothing and canned food as the admission ticket. The idea was conceived by Henry G. Baumann, general chairman, and he was aided by Lion President Harold Richards, Dr. O.A.T. Bell, Clifford Aulwurm, Al Stolz, and George Oetjen. The Boy Scouts helped canvas the city and picked up clothing and canned goods for the aid of the needy, in every

part of the city. Libby's donated approximately twenty cases of canned food.

The Woman's Auxiliary of St. Francis Hospital elected the following officers: Mrs. R.L. James, president; Mrs. Roscoe Zahniser, first vice-president; Mrs. Earle Pronger, second vice-president; Mrs. William Creighton, Recording secretary; Mrs. Ralph Diefenderfer, financial secretary; Mrs. Franklin Klein, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Joseph Lentz, membership chairman; and Mrs. L. J. Laydon, social chairman. Book service at the hospital was one year old. A cart load of books was wheeled from room to room and over 200 books were distributed each month. This was just one example of the increased usefulness of the city library.

Bryan B. Blalock, special representative of Lions International, praised the Blue Island club for establishing the new Riverdale-Dolton club and for spreading the spirit of Lionism.

Siloam Evangelical Lutheran Church, of the Augustana synod, observed its 50th birthday. There were only twelve Swedish families in Blue Island at the time it was organized in the fall of 1889. During the greater part of its history services were conducted in Swedish, but there had been a gradual transition to the English language. The Mission Covenant Church celebrated its 45th anniversary.



The five children of the late John L. Zacharias and his wife, the late Louisa Zacharias, gave to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in memory of their parents, the vacant property at the northwest corner of Burr Oak and Maple Avenues, upon which the congregation was to erect a beautiful new church.

In March, 1939, Community High School closed for lack of funds, to be reopened only if the vote for a tax increase was "yes." The vote failed by only sixteen votes.

The school's closing did not stop our band winners, who won five firsts, nine seconds and four third places at the district solo and ensemble contests.

The same group went on to win state honors against such competition as Joliet, Elgin, Aurora, and La Salle.

Harold C. Volp had an editorial entitled "For a Greater Blue Island" on the front page of the Sun-Standard in support of the schools. Clifford L. Aulwurm and Fred A. Hohmann were returned to the board, showing the confidence of the voters in the high school directors.

After investigation of a fact-finding committee, Dr. P.E. Belt-ing, state assistant superintendent of public instruction, sent in a report on the local high school showing that while industrial equipment was somewhat limited, the library was improving, the administration was excellent, the

records were properly kept, the teachers were well qualified, and the students were polite, well-behaved, and interested in their work. He pointed out, however, that since the majority of the students did not go on to college, it was unfair to have only college-preparatory courses and that the industrial arts should be extended.

Superintendent H. L. Richards turned down an appointment as delegate to the N.E.A. convention in San Francisco, with expenses paid, because of the school situation and the unprecedented teacher turn-over caused by the low salaries paid. He felt that his personal attention was needed here.

After six defeats, the proposition of increasing the tax rate for educational purposes of Community High School District 218 was decisively carried. A great many people had enough city pride to avert the tragedy of the school's losing accreditation with the North Central Association. Economy was still the policy as the high school planned for the future on an even more conservative budget than it had been pursuing. Superintendent H. L. Richards and the board set out to pay off the accumulated debts, buy the necessary equipment to build up the industrial arts and commercial departments. More library and science equipment was also considered a must. The new salary schedule was to be spread



over a three-year period.

The \$160,000 athletic field and stadium at 127th and Sacramento was a WPA project, but attorney Franklin W. Klein was hard put to try to re-arrange the bond structure so that money would be available for the board's share of the project. Henry S. Duff, local real estate man, with his thorough knowledge of finances and accounting was elected secretary.

The WPA adult education program provided free evening classes at the high school in the following subjects: bookkeeping, typing, shorthand, salesmanship, public speaking, and dramatics. The only restriction was that the students be over eighteen and not attending day school.

An important school board meeting was held in which four grade schools, five parochial schools and the high school met to discuss an exchange of facilities. Dr. Anderson from the Education Department of the University of Chicago came out to discuss problems common to grade and high schools and to promote articulation between the two. Dr. Leslie Damm, president of District 130, Dr. Frank Tracy, president of District 218, and Franklin Klein, school attorney, brought about an agreement by which the high school would use the Seymour-Whittier gymnasium in exchange for bus service for the grade school pupils.

Mayor Hart instituted a new

practice at council meetings: after each session he would call for suggestions "for the good of the community," so that matters of mutual interest or benefit to the city might be discussed. Alderman Lentz suggested that more effort be made to locate new industries in Blue Island. Mayor Hart pointed out that our low tax rate and our railroad facilities offer above average opportunities for new industries. During his administration Mayor Hart had accomplished the complete renovation and refurnishing of the city Council chambers, had maintained a pay-as-you-go method of handling city affairs, and had kept the city out of debt. With the help of the WPA several streets had been paved and new stop lights had been installed.

According to building inspector Henry Schnurstein, building had nearly tripled, and he had turned over to Blue Island construction and license fees of more than \$490. The total construction cost was \$64,000, including six new homes, three garages, the Montgomery Ward store alterations and twenty-eight other building operations. The extensive Rohrbach properties in 13000 block on Western Avenue were sold to a local group of buyers through real estate dealers Peter H. Krick and Son.

Partly due to the availability of FHA loans to prospective buyers, twenty-five new homes were built in the sixth ward. A huge



steam shovel excavated the entire block on the north side of 120th street from Gregory to Irving. It attracted wide attention because of the mass excavation of basements. Concrete forms for the whole block were poured at one time. Dirt from the excavation was used for terraces between the sidewalk and the front of the homes. The modern six-room homes, including landscaping, were to sell for \$7,000 complete.

The WPA building program allowed property owners to install sidewalks at 13c per square foot for materials while WPA paid the rest. City Clerk Schwartz and Mayor John M. Hart were making the arrangements between the property owners and the WPA.

One-hundred and twenty merchants participated in the eight-day Fall Festival sponsored by the Blue Island Business Men's Association, with E. J. Werner a chairman, Emil J. Blatt, president, Vera Bartle, secretary, and Adam Kranich, treasurer. The directors were: Lowell Weir, Arthur Rush, Clifford L. Aulwurm, Martin Fory, and Thomas Easton.

The Chayken Brothers, A. J. and Ben, opened their recreation hall and re-opened their bowling alleys.

A crowd of 3000 people witnessed the opening of the new ball park at 123rd and Western. The playground and recreation board consisted of Dr. Frank W. Tracy, president; Mrs. Hope Knirsch, secretary; Lowell Frasor,

Mrs. Ed. Heckler, Louis Lombardo and Ewald Kling, director. Swimmers jammed the Memorial Park pool during the summer and were vocal in their praises. Both children and adult attendance was very good. The bathhouse equipment was adequate and the roomy benches around the water were inviting to tired swimmers who wanted to rest. Many little tots passed the swimming tests. A first aid course was offered at the Memorial Park Field House, the Blue Island Park District co-operating with the American Red Cross to make it a success.

The Lions Club cleaned up the grounds at Maple Farm in order to aid refugees. Henry Baumann organized a committee to transport Boy Scouts to the farm to do the preliminary work. H. C. Volp, H. L. Richards, T. F. Easton, S. Bergland, and Don Boughner hauled the boys to the farm. Philip Schreiber supervised the work. The Lions Club also held a demonstration of the new \$88 stretcher for the first aid squad of the Fire Department. Allen Kollman was president and R. W. Bronson vice-president of the First Aid squad.

The Rotary Club donated a baby's iron lung to the community. It was kept at St. Francis Hospital and had been used four times almost immediately after installation.

The Woman's Club held its golden anniversary luncheon in October of 1940. The club had been



started by Mrs. Harry Robinson at a tea in 1890. Veteran members still active in the club were: Mrs. Emily Roche, Bertha Morrill, Mrs. Mary Voorhees, Mrs. Henrietta McGrath, Mrs. Harriet B. Longacre, Mrs. Sadie Napier and Mrs. Frances Krueger. Mrs. Irene E. Ewing was the club's president from 1937-1940. Its officers were: Mrs. Albert Stolz, first vice president; Mrs. John Kent, second vice-president; Mrs. Otto Kasch, recording secretary; Mrs. Birt Frobish, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Joseph Lentz, treasurer; Mrs. Roy Massena and Mrs. Arthur Minard.

The Blue Island Camera Club branched out to include a meeting place, a display room and a dark room at the Masonic Temple. The first competition was held at Watlands Camera Shop. In the beginner's class, Norman Blatt ranked first; Karl Goetter, second; Ed. Jebsen, third; and C. E. Ames, fourth. In the advanced class, Dr. Aaron Heimbach was first; Mrs. Heimbach, second; Donald Chadiwick, third; H. C. Barts, fourth, and George Engelland, fifth.

Dr. Edward A. Doepp, a Blue Island physician for fifty years, told of his trials and tribulations as a "country doctor." On April 14, 1890, he had driven to the top of Western Avenue and rented office space. He even pulled teeth in addition to relieving aches and pains, since Blue Island had no dentist at the time. His

covered rig became a familiar sight as he made his daily rounds to Matteson, Richton Park, Chicago Heights, Roseland, Harvey, Riverdale, Dolton, and Hammond. The trip was too much for one horse, so he had to maintain five saddle and buggy horses. He had one of the first automobiles, a "one-lunged" Oldsmobile. It was often necessary to get out and get under, so he concluded that the horse still had something that the auto didn't — he never had to push it up a hill. He bought a new four-cylinder air-cooled Premier in 1902, but had to give up tooth-pulling as he had ruined his dental equipment while making minor repairs to his "gas-buggy."

Billy Kirchner's hobby of marionettes developed into something more than that in 1940 as he made his own marionettes, staged and wrote his own scripts and put on shows at the Public Library's Children's Hour, under the direction of Bertha Lietzau. Don "Butch" Kolloway, a Blue Island athlete, was traded by the Oklahoma Indians to the White Sox. A. J. Eiserstedt retired after forty-four years' service with the Rock Island lines as foreman with the water service department. He came here to work for the Rock Island in 1896. Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Wilson celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Mr. Wilson was president of the Blue Island Lumber Company and past president of the Lions Club. Wil-



liam Busse was honored after fifty years of public service. He had served as deputy sheriff of the County Board of Commissioners. Richard E. Sorgenfrei, a native Blue Islander and policeman for ten years, was named acting lieutenant for the police until the position was filled by Civil Service.

Mayor John M. Hart was re-elected as head of the city for a second term. The Blue Island Progressive Party won a full ticket except for Ward I, where Louis Rauch, veteran alderman won over Edward J. Schaller of the Progressive Party. The other officers were: Edward A. Kordeck, treasurer; Louis F. Schwartz, city clerk; Richard B. Seyfarth, police magistrate. The aldermen were: Louis W. Rauch, Ward 1; Henry J. Goesel, Ward 2; Rocco Ziccardo, Ward 3; Joseph W. Lentz, Ward 4; Harry W. Sutton, Ward 5; Joseph A. Mausolf, Ward 6; Clarence O. Williams, Ward 7.

Other appointments were: Wells Crockett, commissioner of assessments and tax commissioner; C. A. Dewar, acting street superintendent; Dr. A. J. Roemisch, health commissioner and city physician; Frank Rogers, civil service committee member; H. W. Buhring, chairman of the board of appeals; Mrs. Hope Knirsch, playground board; Carrie Knickerbocker and Mrs. H. V. High, library board; L. F. Schwartz, city

collector; and Roy Bender, acting superintendent.

Harold L. Richards, a graduate of Pennsylvania Military Academy, who had guided the high school through a most critical financial period to an A-1 rating, was appointed defense coordinator by Mayor John M. Hart. He was considered well-fitted for the job which, however, carried no pay as there was no allowance for the position. Mr. Richards had been former commander of the American Legion and a former president of the Lions Club. His two principal assistants for defense were Mr. Creighton of the Legion and Mr. Flassig of the VFW. Other volunteers were: La Berdia, Antilla, Palmer, Schimmel, Ricks, Esposito, and city attorney Paul Schreiber.

In March of 1941, a new service club was added. The officers of the newly organized Kiwanis Club were: Wesley A. Volp, president; Birt E. Frobish, vice-president; Carl P. Caul, secretary-treasurer. The Board of Directors consisted of: Ed Harms, C. H. Youngdahl, Arthur H. Anderson, Arthur S. Newhouse, R. L. Huffman, and Fred C. Cauble. The local unit planned to devote its activities to personalized humanitarian work in Blue Island along the objectives of Kiwanis International.

The many friends of Homer A. Field regretted his sudden death by automobile accident on February 13. Mr. Field had been presi-



dent of the Board of Trustees of the First Methodist Church for sixteen years. He was a member of the Western Society of Civil Engineers, an engineer for bridges and buildings for the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and chief of their safety division. He was a former member of the grade school board during the construction of the Whittier school and gymnasium. He designed and built the large railroad bridge at 96th Street in South Chicago, described as the largest span of its kind in North America. He was survived by his wife, Joan, daughter Helen Field Aiken, and three sons: Dr. Homer B. Field, William Joseph and Dr. Robert E.

Thomas Easton of the Public Service company headed a drive to raise funds for the U.S.O. work in order to provide "A Home Away from Home" for the boys in service. Over \$2000 was collected.

In the Blue Island Art exhibit held at Memorial Park Field House, paintings were exhibited by: Warren Mavity, Mrs. P.W. Pickett, Mrs. August Muir, Mrs. Elizabeth Milosh, Mrs. Walter Aevermann, Mrs. Edith Stevens, Effie Ness, E. J. Warner, Mrs. Grace David, and Mr. and Mrs. Claude Breck. Mrs. L. C. Holt was exhibition chairman.

The officers of the Blue Island Business Men's Association were: Ed Warner, president; Martin Forey, vice-president; Adam Kranich, treasurer; and Vera Bar-

tle, secretary. The directors were: S. Bergland, Henry Herman, and Ludwig Blum. Their discussion at this time concerned itself with the desirability of keeping the retail stores open on Thursday nights. The accomplishments of the past year were listed as: Dollar Day promotion, sponsorship of the Fall Festival, and the Yuletide decorations and program. Lynn Burno had been placed in charge of the musical program which was given over loud speakers so that shoppers might enjoy their shopping for gifts both large and small in local stores.

### The War Years

The years 1942-45 may rightfully be called "The War Years" as the United States was at war with both Japan and Germany and their allies. Hence, Blue Island's history of those years centers around the city's active participation in helping her own sons, her state, and her nation to win the war.

Immediately in January, 1942, the Selective Service Board, District 14, was formed with Emil J. Blatt as chairman. The board was busy with selection of draftees and sending boys off for physical examinations. The suspense must have been great for Blue Island's draft age young men as the number which was to be called each month was kept a secret.

Those staying at home were busy with a multitude of activities, some for protection of civili-



ans, some financial, and some rationing goods. In 1942, Mrs. Fred Nichols, who was named head of Red Cross War Relief, set out to reach Blue Island's first quota of \$1,000 and established a free course in First Aid. With her, William Postweiler started junior first aid courses and gave of his time so willingly that in December, 1943, he was cited for his work with the American Red Cross. He was named First Aid, Water Safety and Accident Prevention Director for his 300 hours of volunteer service.

In January, 1942, Superintendent H. L. Richards of Community High School was appointed Blue Island Defense Coordinator and spoke to many civic clubs about the needs for protection of the community, while Dr. Earle J. Pronger became Civil Defense Casualty Director. Uncle Sam decided to change Richards' duties so with his call to the U.S. Army in February, 1942, William G. Schimmel became the new Civil Defense Coordinator and Mrs. H. L. Richards became acting superintendent of the high school.

While the home people needed to be prepared to protect themselves, restrictions were placed on them, too. The local rationing and price administration board began its almost endless and well nigh thankless work, with Henry Duff, chairman; Roy Fiedler, vice-chairman; Earle B. James, executive secretary; and members

Edward Bochman and Henry C. Baumann. Immediately necessary was a program to conserve cars, tires, and gasoline. Later in the year these men distributed sugar and canned goods ration books. Deciding who should get the six new cars given to Blue Island for the month of March, 1942, was just one of their minor headaches. Yet so faithfully and thoroughly did they perform their multitude of tasks that this local board, working even one year after the close of the war, received an efficiency rating of over ninety, one of the highest such ratings in the entire state. The group had the additional distinction of being one which preserved its original membership all during these trying years.

No part of Blue Island was left untouched by the war's demands, and everywhere those demands were more than satisfactorily answered. Miss Bertha Lietzau, head librarian at the Blue Island Public Library, was successful in getting Blue Islanders to bring in their books for the servicemen. In January of 1942, the citizens bought more than \$650,000 in defense bonds and stamps. A second drive was equally as successful, when a \$555,958.50 purchase oversubscribed the announced goal of \$450,000. To Blue Islanders a mere 100 percent was not enough. The Blue Island police station was named the center of Division 1, for air raid warning, and was responsible for alert-



ing Chicago Heights and Harvey.

The schools, too, were doing their part as Community High School under Mrs. Richards added new courses such as metal shop, printing, Spanish and new commercial courses to meet the war needs. One of the principals, Mr. C. B. Price, attended Air Raid Warden school and returned to open such a school in Blue Island to teach air raid wardens in the local community. To give these men a chance to try their newly learned techniques a mock air raid was staged in Blue Island, May 23, 1943.

The draft board and reserves continued to be busy as by June 11, 1942, 460 men from Blue Island were in the service. Blue Island citizens wanted to be sure that these boys, wherever stationed, would know their home town was back of them, so they organized the Blue Island Citizens Committee with twenty-two organizations represented. The president was Harold Frasor; secretary, Millard Rauhoff; and chairman of finance, Paul Klenk. In February, Mrs. Carrie Sidler was elected president of the women's division. With her, worked Mrs. Fred Krech sending cigarettes and Sun-Standard subscriptions to men in the armed services from Blue Island. Later Mrs. Frank Kasten headed this auxiliary. Nor were other servicemen forgotten as Thomas F. Easton headed the U.S.O. drive with its goal of \$3200.

Other committees with chairmen included War Loan Committee, Paul T. Klenk; Nurse's Aide Recruiting, Mrs. Frances Walton; Community and War Fund Drive, J. Floyd Smith; and Home Nursing courses, Mrs. Charles Kennedy.

To show early appreciation to our servicemen an Honor Roll for all Blue Island servicemen was dedicated at Memorial Park on Sunday, October 16, 1943. Mrs. Krech was in charge with Mayor Hart, Millard A. Rauhoff, Army Captain Vincent Nightengale, Navy Lt. Commander Howard Sigtenhorst, and Paul T. Klenk serving on the committee. The community also showed its willingness to sacrifice when 146 pints of blood were collected at the Mobile Blood Bank in August, 1944.

Perhaps one of the highlights of the year 1944 for Blue Island was the launching in December of the "U.S.S. Blue Island Victory" ship at Baltimore, Md. christened by Mrs. Virginia Matzen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Huffman, 2251 W. 121st Place, as sponsor.

That the tremendous efforts which Blue Islanders were sharing with this nation — in fact, with the entire free world — were bound to win success in our mightiest effort became evident early in 1945. The surrender of Germany marked the beginning of the end in April of that year. Although the word of the allies'



victory over Japan on Tuesday, August 14, was accepted with deep feeling and rejoicing, there were some who still felt that it might be too good to be true. According to the *Sun-Standard*, "The first impression was that the people were stunned and rather doubted whether or not this was really 'it,' but as Tuesday evening wore on, Blue Island got its stride and staged an impromptu celebration which lasted far beyond midnight." Blue Island and its citizens were happy to join the two day national celebration which had been announced by President Truman.

Blue Island contributions to the war effort included many, as just recorded. From a population of 16,638 in 1940, 2,193 men and women served in the armed forces from this community. "Of these the Gold Star list showed more than 70 casualties. (This list is given at the end of this section.)

"Blue Island Victory," the ship named for the city and christened December 28, 1944 by Virginia Matzen and Anne Christensen, it was learned, had been a mighty factor in winning the war, as it was used on one occasion to haul ammunition to General Patton's army in Europe among other duties, and was now a troop ship bringing G. I.'s back to the states. On the ship a daily paper called "The Blue Island Home Run" was published.

## BLUE ISLAND'S WORLD WAR II

### Gold Star Honor Roll

(As printed in the *Sun-Standard*,  
August 23, 1945)

### HONOR ROLL

#### Army Casualties

#### PVT. AURELIO ALVARADO

Died in fall from troop train  
in Louisiana, Sept. 19, 1944.

#### T/5 LOUIS J. ARCHAMBEAU

Killed in action in Luxembourg,  
Dec. 26, 1944.

#### PVT. RICHARD J. BARCAL

Killed in France, December,  
1945.

#### PVT. CORNELIUS BINK

Killed in action in Luxembourg,  
Dec. 30, 1944.

#### PVT. SAMUEL BRUNO

Died of wounds received in ac-  
tion in France, Aug. 11, 1944.

#### S/SGT. DONALD B. COX

Killed in action in Belgium,  
Jan. 9, 1945.

#### LT. BENJAMIN J. DOMINIK

Killed on maneuvers in Louisi-  
ana, March 22, 1944.

#### CPL. JESSE E. DRENNER

Killed in France, Jan. 31, 1945.

#### PFC. RALPH DUEY

Killed in action in Germany,  
Nov. 28, 1944.

#### SGT. VINCENT S. DYRCZ

Killed in action in aerial mis-  
sion over France, Aug. 26, 1944.

#### PVT. EDWARD W. EDWARDS.

Killed in action in Belgium,



Jan. 13, 1945.  
**PVT. ROBERT EISTERSTEDT**  
 Killed in action in Italy, Oct. 4, 1944.

**PFC. JOHN J. EKERT**  
 Killed in action on Jolo Isle in Pacific, April 9, 1945.

**PFC. LEONARD A. ENGSTROM**  
 Died of wounds received in action in Germany. Death presumably occurred in prison camp on Oct. 21, 1944.

**PFC. KENNETH O. ERICKSON**  
 Killed in action in France, Nov. 9, 1944.

**PVT. JOSEPH ERRICO**  
 Killed in action in Germany, March 22, 1945.

**LT. ERNEST F. EVANSON**  
 Died in plane crash, Dinjau, India, Nov. 27, 1943.

**PFC. FLORIAN M. FELISZAK**  
 Died of streptococcus and pneumonia at Camp Grant, July 8, 1945.

**PFC. LOYAL FLASSIG**  
 Killed in action in France, Nov. 14, 1944.

**CPL. ROY B. FOX**  
 Killed in action in Belgium, Dec. 20, 1944.

**PVT. JAMES FRUNDLE**  
 Died at Huff Gen. Hospital, Santa Barbara, Calif., July 12, 1942.

**PVT. EDWARD HAAKE**  
 Killed in action in France, July 30, 1944.

**LT. ROSS H. HALL**  
 Killed in aerial action over Germany, April 24, 1944.

**PFC. EDWARD V. HENSCHLER**  
 Killed in action in Holland,

Sept. 20, 1944.

**SGT. HOWARD G. HERZOG**  
 Killed in action on Luzon, P.I., Feb. 2, 1945.

**LT. RAYMOND HOCHHEIMER**  
 Died in plane crash, Wendover, Utah, Jan. 2, 1943.

**T/SGT. NORMAN B. HUEBNER**  
 Killed in aerial action in Rumania, May 31, 1944.

**PVT. NORBERT JAUCHZER**  
 Killed in Italy on drive on Rome, May 18, 1944.

**LT. KEITH M. JONES**  
 Killed in action in Germany, Nov. 27, 1944.

**LT. DONALD G. KASCH**  
 Bomber co-pilot, presumably killed by German machine gun fire in an air battle over Germany, March 8, 1944.

**T/SGT. ROBERT KRUEGER**  
 Killed in action on "D" Day in France, June 6, 1944.

**SGT. HAROLD P. KURUZAR**  
 Killed in action in Italy, Feb. 5, 1945.

**SGT. GEORGE LAIR**  
 Killed in action in France, July 11, 1944.

**PFC VINCENT LEJO**  
 Killed in auto accident, Ft. Knox, Ky., Jan. 21, 1945.

**PFC. EARL LEGG**  
 Killed in action in France, Nov. 28, 1944.

**T/SGT. ERWIN LUNN**  
 Killed in action in France, Aug. 10, 1944.

**PVT. RALPH PAUL MEAR**  
 Killed at St. Lo, France, August, 15, 1944.

**PFC. TRINO MENDEZ**



Killed in action in Holland,  
Sept. 25, 1944.

PFC. NORMAN R. MILLER

Killed in action in France, Nov.  
22, 1944.

LT. RUSSELL C. MORSE

Killed in action in Germany,  
March 20, 1945.

PFC. ANTHONY ORSENO

Killed in action in Germany,  
April 5, 1945.

FLIGHT OFFICER RICHARD W.  
PAULSEN

Killed in crash in Belgium,  
May 13, 1945.

HARRY EDWARD RITO

Killed in action on Okinawa,  
May 2, 1945.

PFC. NORMAN SANDS

Killed in plane crash near Peru,  
Mass., Aug. 15, 1942.

S/SGT. PETER SORIA

Killed in action in N. Africa,  
Jan. 23, 1943.

SGT. PAUL STEFEK

Died in a Jap Prison Camp,  
May, 1943.

PFC. ANDRES STERKOWITZ

Killed in auto accident in Aus-  
tria, June 14, 1945.

1st LT. GEORGE E. TRAGNITZ

Killed in action in Germany,  
Nov. 29, 1944.

SGT. ANTHONY TRELLA

Killed in action in Belgium,  
Dec. 16, 1944.

PVT. FRANK ULRICH

Drowned at Alpena, Michigan,  
July 21, 1940

SGT. PHILLIP J. WADE

Died in prisoner of war camp  
in Germany, Oct. 4, 1944.

LT. ROBERT C. WALLACE

Killed in action in Italy, Janu-  
ary 1945.

PFC. PAUL M. WEHLAN

Killed in action in Italy, June  
28, 1944.

PFC. ROBERT K. WILSON

Died of wounds received in  
action in Germany, Jan. 29,  
1945.

### *Navy Casualties*

ENSIGN CLIFFORD O. BAUSOR

A Corsair fighter pilot killed in  
action in Pacific area, July 24,  
1945.

WT 2/c EDWARD C. BUCZEK

Lost at sea during typhoon  
near Philippines, Dec. 18, 1944.

A.V.C. WILLIAM A. HILDAHL

Killed in plane crash at Hut-  
chinson, Kans., June 18, 1945.

RT. 1/c STEWART F. KAUF-  
MAN

Killed in action on board SS  
Rich, near France, July 11,  
1944.

S 1/c JOHN F. MOORE

Killed in explosion-fire on ship  
at San Pedro, Oct. 21, 1944.

AEM 2/3 JOHN CARLYLE RIE-  
GER

Lost at sinking of SS Bismarck,  
Battle of Leyte, Feb. 21, 1945.

### *Marine Casualties*

PVT. TOM J. ARTIST

Killed in action on Howie Is-  
land, March 13, 1944.

CPL. BYRON L. HIGGINS

Killed in action in SW Pacific,  
August, 1940.

PFC. CHARLES E. OETJEN

Killed in action at Tarawa,  
Betio Isle, Nov. 23, 1943.

PVT. HERBERT W. ULRICH



Killed in action on Iwo Jima,  
March 7, 1945.

**PFC. ALLEN E. ROLETTE**

Killed in action on Guam, in  
July, 1944.

*U. S. Coast Guard Casualties*

**LOWELL CLIFFORD GRIFFITH**

Killed by hit and run motorist  
in Harvey, July 23, 1945.

Thus with the end of World

War II, the community was ready to adjust its life to the post-war years. While the war activities had been taking much of the time of Blue Islanders, life was continuing on an even keel in city elections, clubs, school elections, and business, with some curtailment of the latter. Certainly the fact that even through these years, the Community Fund had continued to make its yearly goal is a great testimony that Blue Islanders had resolved to keep home efforts going, also.

In city government the Blue Island Police Department staged a benefit boxing show on February 27, 1943 to buy a city ambulance. This event has become an annual affair with funds now going to the police and city employees protective benevolent association fund. In February of 1943, a new librarian, Miss Dorothea M. Krause, was appointed by the library board, and in April, Mr. Edward C. Maroney, and Mr. Harvey Antilla were elected to the park board.

The city officials elected in April, 1945, were all members

of the Citizens Party except the alderman of the fifth ward, which position was won by Elmer Johnson. Others elected were Mayor, John M. Hart; City Clerk, Louis F. Schwartz; Police Magistrate, David J. Cullinan; and City Treasurer, Emil J. Blatt.

Blue Island churches were active in the war effort as many of the sixteen most prominent sent their priests or ministers to serve as chaplains. Other church activities included a celebration at St. Benedict's on April 23, 1942, when Father Gross was honored for twenty-five years of service at this church. This record made him, along with Rev. M. P. F. Doermann and Rev. R. Rempke, one of the pastors with the longest service to their respective congregations. On April 8, 1943 the First Methodist and Central Methodist churches merged and became Grace Methodist Church, while on Sunday, June 6, 1943, St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church celebrated its 50th anniversary, the church having been founded June 11, 1893. The pastor, Rev. W. W. Wilke presided at the services on Sunday, with Rev. William Rest speaker at the morning worship and Rev. Benjamin F. Freese, only living ex-pastor, at the evening. The only charter member living was Mr. William Kirchner. On Friday, June 11, 1943, all churches and people of the community were invited to a Community Celebration.



Blue Island received an additional blessing in December of this year when the Church of the Nazarene was organized, with sixteen charter members. Members of the Harvey Church of the Nazarene had been very helpful in getting this local group under way. At first the members had to meet in a store building, but so rapid was their growth that they were able to move into their own lovely brick building at 12815 Gregory Street in 1945.

Changes were taking place in both the elementary and high schools. School board members for District 130 elected in 1942 were President Leslie O. Damm, and members Fred A. Hohman, and Earl W. Jorgensen. In the same year the voters extended the term of office of the president to three years. The following year Perry Hoag and Wm. G. Schimmel were elected to the board. As part of the school expansion program for the elementary school, District 130, board members established a kindergarten for the first time in 1943. Community High School, District 218, also was expanded under the leadership of Mrs. Richards and the board consisting of President Dr. Frank W. Tracy, Clifford Aulwurm, Fred A. Hohman, Louis Biedenkopf, and Secretary H. L. Duff. In 1942, the high school began to expand its vocational courses educating children in mechanical and technical skills by adding metal shop, printing,

business machines; developed an expanded program in foreign languages by adding Spanish; and gave incentives to the honor students by establishing a chapter of the National Honor Society.

St. Francis Hospital by 1943 had 110 beds and in that year was approved by American College of Surgeons for residences or fellowships. It was also approved by the Council of Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association.

The Blue Island Business Men's Association was active, with Ed Warner as president and Lynn Burno as secretary in 1942. This organization saw old businesses remodeled with the opening of the newly remodeled Lyric Theatre on March 22, 1942, and new businesses develop. Three new industries which opened in 1943 in Blue Island were Wickwire Spencer Aviation Corporation at 2348 W. 136th Street; Cardox, manufacturers of fire trucks and extinguishers at 2940 Burr Oak; and Vapofier, manufacturers of high pressure steel plug valves used in making high octane gas, at 11957 Vincennes. Stephen T. Hoag, manager of the local Sears store, became the new president of the Blue Island Business Men's Association with Arthur Stuebe as vice-president, Vera Bartle as secretary, and Adam Kranich, treasurer. The First National Bank had recently elected officers with A. L. McCord, president; Ed Maroney, vice-president; Philip W.



Seyfarth, assistant cashier; and Fred L. Zacharias, cashier. On March 19, 1942, the Kiwanis Club of Blue Island observed its first anniversary with Birt E. Frobish as president, John Willis as vice-president, Carl Caul, secretary and treasurer, and Wesley A. Volp, immediate past president.

The Lions Club, the oldest and largest service organization in Blue Island, celebrated its twentieth anniversary with E.J. Warner as president, and John E. Steinhart as chairman of the celebration. The celebration banquet was held February 10, 1943 in the Elks Clubroom. Dr. Frank W. Tracy, one of the founders and the first president, spoke to an audience of 200 people. He was presented with a plaque honoring him for his part in founding the club. Another charter member, Mr. Peter W. Heintz, gave a review of the twenty years activities. Only two other charter members were present—William C. Hake, and Al Stotz. The club had started with fifteen members and in the twentieth year had grown to eighty-five members. Besides the club history, the group was entertained by a variety show of local talent. At this time, too, one of the Lions active members, and a past president, Henry Baumann, was again chosen finance chairman of Community Boy Scouts, and in 1944 vice-chairman of the South Shore District Boy Scout Committee.

Women's clubs, too, were active

in Blue Island during these war years, and the Blue Island Woman's Club which met in the Elks Club rooms was very fortunate in 1942, while under the presidency of Mrs. John Kent, to receive a valuable gift, the Myrtie J. Albee home which was left to the club in Mrs. Albee's will upon her death in June, 1942. The widow of Henry W. Albee left her lovely home at 13018 S. Maple Ave., all furnishings and \$2500 cash to the club for its club home. It was opened and dedicated October 27, 1942. This has been the home of the Women's Club since and has been well preserved and cared for during this time. Others who served as president during these years were Mrs. L. C. Holt, Mrs. Alden Klein and Mrs. E. V. Hill.

The Junior Woman's Club, too, was active during this time and was fortunate also to be able to share the future home of the Woman's Club. Presidents from 1942-1945 were Mrs. Dale Pryor, Mrs. Irving King, and Mrs. Justin Boyd.

The Blue Island Garden Club was still enjoying the beauty of Blue Island gardens when in June, 1943 they visited the Napier peony garden, one of the show spots of Blue Island, during the regular meeting of the club and re-elected Mrs. Rudolph Heitman as president.

The city government was the first agency to begin its adjustment to the post-war years as it





*St. Francis Hospital*

*Picture taken after addition of north section. A drive to add a six million dollar building, to the north and west of the present structure, was under way in 1961.*

saw changes in the fire department with a new chief succeeding John Link, who retired on July 30, 1945. A party was given in his honor by members of the department, who also presented him with an easy chair. Allen G. Kollman served as new fire chief and two new members, William Barzycki and Donald Uthe joined the department in August, 1945.

In September of 1945 Mayor Hart and the city council planned for the post-war improvements which included a new city garage, fire department and heating plant, and new street signs. This building project, while seeming like a dream, became a reality after

almost two years when on March 28, 29, and 30, 1947, the public was invited to an open house at the new city fire station and garage. The \$130,000 structure on Vermont near Greenwood was the pride of the city officials. Many persons had a share in the celebration as the three civic clubs—Lions, Rotary, and Kiwanis, presented kitchen utensils and cooking ware to the fire department.

The federal government appointed a new postmaster on June 1, 1946 when Daniel J. Boyd succeeded John Q. McDonald, who returned to postoffice clerk because of poor health.





### *New Apartment Buildings*

*Located on 119th street, below the hill, this apartment building is only one of the many attractive rental locations for new residents of the city.*

Blue Island was saddened by the death of one of its former mayors, Frank Kasten, who served in 1929, 1931, and 1933, who passed away in December, 1946. He had been International President of United Brick and Clay Workers of America.

In January, 1947, Alderman George F. Fiedler of the second ward announced that he would not be a candidate for reelection. He was dean of the Blue Island City Council, having served continuously for twenty-six years from 1921 when he was elected under Mayor Paul T. Klenk. He had also been president of the Police Pension Board since 1921. On April 28, 1947, Mayor Hart, the city council and other city officials who served with him gave a dinner in his honor.

On April 15, 1947, the follow-

ing aldermen were elected to serve in the city council: Ward I, Edward Schaller; Ward II, Rudolph J. Banovich; Ward III, Carl Jankowski; Ward IV, John Waugh; Ward V, Elmer Johnson; Ward VI, William Frey; and Ward VII, Arthur Schaller. Members elected to the park board were Chester E. Sutton and John Link, Jr.

As an experiment in city government, Community High School students ran the city government for a day on April 29. Three political parties at the school had been working on their campaigns and staged a mock election to choose those students who would fill the city posts. From the three parties these were chosen: Chairles Schumacher, mayor; Connie Myers, city clerk; George Greaves, police magistrate; Bob Gar-



rels, treasurer; Bob Hunter, city engineer; and Fred Leidolph, assistant engineer. Fourteen aldermen were elected and several other appointments were made by the officers elected. The group who felt they had the best experience were the policemen who delighted in placing tickets on cars, and the firemen who spent their day sliding down the pole, riding the trucks, or having lunch from the new refrigerator. In all, both the students and city officials whom they represented enjoyed the day, and it proved to be a valuable learning experience for all the students.

George H. Farning was appointed in April, 1948 by the Blue Island park board to be the new superintendent of Blue Island parks. Mr. Farning was to succeed Arthur Strutzenberg, who had served for over a quarter of a century. Also appointed was Mrs. Lois Link Fedor as secretary of the park board, a part time position which had been formerly filled by Leslie I. McCord.

In township politics, too, local officials were taking part in honoring one of their own citizens. On the night of October 13, 1948, a banquet was held in Eagles Hall honoring Earl F. Kistner, Calumet Township Republican committeeman and secretary of the Cook County Republican Central Committee. To show with what esteem Mr. Kistner was held in the state, both Governor Dwight Green and Senator C. Wayland

Brooks attended the banquet and spoke of the fine work Kistner had done. Mayor John M. Hart gave the welcome, while Frank A. Bella, president of the Calumet Township Republican Club, presided. Mr. Kistner was given a 1949 Mercury four door sedan by his admirers, with Governor Green making the formal presentation.

In 1945 changes were taking place in the churches with new churches being built and new ministers coming into some of the others. On July 26, 1945, construction began on the Church of the Nazarene at 12817 Gregory and the Methodists let the contract for the building of a new church structure in November, 1945 with plans to be completed October 1, 1946.

Also in 1945 Rev. E.W. Magnusson became pastor of the Siloam Evangelical Lutheran Church at Collins near Greenwood. Many Blue Islanders enjoyed reading Rev. Magnusson's column in the *Sun-Standard* called "The Wayside Pulpit," which he wrote during all the years he resided in Blue Island. The First Congregational lost its minister when Dr. Frederick F. Shannon left Blue Island.

The years 1946 and 1947 were highlights in the history of the Grace Methodist Church, which was to unite the two former churches of this denomination in Blue Island. While many worshipers of both former congregations had



helped in solving the problems of this union, and those of the building of a new church, there would be none who would deny a leading part in the building of the beautiful new edifice, and the happy merger of the two congregations, to Dr. T. Harry Kelley, who had served as the minister of the First Methodist Church. The Cornerstone was dedicated on Sunday, June 30, with quite a large crowd staying through the entire service while watching under umbrellas in a downpour of rain. On Christmas Eve, 1946, plans were made to hold a service at 11 p.m. in the new Grace Methodist Church, even though it was not completed. The first real service in the completed church was held on Sunday, August 24, 1947 when the church school marched over in a body from the old Vermont St. Church. Services were conducted at eleven a.m. by Dr. T. Harry Kelly, minister, assisted by Rev. Paul Sanger, and Rev. John Jochum. On Sunday, September 14, 1947, a week of special events for the official opening of Grace Methodist began at eleven o'clock with Bishop J. Ralph Magee preaching the sermon, assisted by the district superintendent of the Rock River Conference. Other services included one that evening by the Blue Jacket Choir from Great Lakes, with Dr. Roy L. Smith as speaker; a Masonic service on Monday; a banquet given by the ladies of the church when Dr.

George Fowler, pastor of St. James Church, Chicago, spoke, and a "Youth Night" with Edward Thomas, president of the local M.Y.F. presiding. Thus, a beautiful sanctuary was opened to the worshipers in Blue Island.

On September 4, 1947 Rev. W.H. Ruth was installed as pastor of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was a native of New York, graduated from Capitol University, and formerly held pastorates in Philo, Peoria, and Streator, Ill. as well as having served as a chaplain in the army in World War II. Pastor Ruth, as he was called by his parishioners, served as the minister of this church when it celebrated its 85th anniversary on Sunday, October 24, 1948. This church could well be proud of its membership, which in that year was 2,158 persons, with 1,683 confirmed, showing that one out of every ten persons in Blue Island was connected with the First Lutheran Church. The assistant minister during this celebration and for a number of years was Rev. Gustav S. Ide.

Community High school welcomed back its Superintendent, Harold L. Richards, from his service in the quartermaster and transportation corps of the U.S. Air Force. He had returned from 19 months in Iceland and as quartermaster at Stinson Field, San Antonio, Texas. Superintendent Richards resumed his duties Monday, August 6 taking over





### *First Steps*

*Some of the supporting uprights have gone in for the new elevation of the Rock Island. This view is looking north along Western, from about Broadway.*

from his wife, Mrs. Ruth Richards, who had capably served as acting superintendent in his absence.

A new president of the Community High School board of education was chosen July 18, 1946, when Henry Duff replaced Dr. Frank Tracy. Members serving this year were Leslie I. McCord, secretary; and members Elbert T. Smith, Fred Hohman, and George M. Peterson. The 1946 enrollments in all Blue Island schools were up between two and three percent over the previous year. There were larger kindergarten and first grade classes and increases in all classes of the high school.

By February of 1948 this growth of population in the high school district began to take on

such proportions that Superintendent Richards and the board asked Dr. William C. Reavis, chairman of field services for the University of Chicago, to make a study of the student growth expected in the next few years. The Reavis report suggested a new high school building, including a gymnasium and an auditorium. This report was the basis for Richards to suggest his now famous "Two Two Plan," dividing the student body in two groups, with freshmen and sophomores occupying Old Main, the Maple Avenue building, and the suggested new building, to be erected on property already owned by the board of education at Sacramento and Burr Oak, to be the future educational home for C.H.S. upperclassmen.



On October 1, 1946, the United States Post Office and Air Force initiated the use of helicopter service for the delivery of mail from Chicago to the suburbs. Two hundred persons were out to watch the helicopter land in Blue Island south of the Sag Canal near the fireman's experimental tower at Ann St.

Among these was Postmaster Daniel J. Boyd, Assistant Postmaster Clarence Davis; George F. Fiedler, senior alderman; Ben Helford, B.I. Business Men's Association; Chief of Police Sorgenfrei; and members of the Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions Clubs.

Businesses were expanding in several ways. The Rock Island commuters received a break in August, 1946 when the line planned for air-conditioned diesel-operated suburban trains to be put in operation in the near future. Equipment Steel Products, a division of Union Asbestos and Rubber Company, according to a talk given by C. L. Moorman, one of its executives, to the Lions' Club, was expanding. The company's Blue Island plant employed 150 persons in their work of fabricating refrigerator car equipment and other items for the railroads. At that time they had a backlog of \$4,000,000 in orders and were increasing their facilities by a \$300,000 addition which would add 40,000 square feet to shop and storage departments.

The savings and loan association as well as local banks were

also expanding during these years. On July 22, 1947, the Blue Island Savings and Loan celebrated its sixtieth anniversary. This organization, the oldest financial institution in Blue Island, was born in the office of The Standard on June 30, 1887. Its charter was issued July 22, 1887, and it was then known as the Cottage Building and Loan Association with offices located at the northwest corner of Grove and Western, which the association rented for five dollars a month. On June 29, 1920, the name was changed to the Blue Island Savings and Loan Association, and a new home was occupied at Vermont and Artesian June, 1926. This building later was torn down and a new home was erected at the same location. The new premises were formally occupied on October 15, 1938.

On Saturday, August 23, the First National Bank held Open House to show the community its newly rebuilt interior. This bank, too, like the savings and loan, is one of the early financial institutions of Blue Island, having been founded in 1896 as a private financial institution by John L. Zacharias, William H. Weber, and Oliver W. Bourke. In 1898 Andres McCord bought out Bourke, and it became Zacharias, McCord and Co. In 1906 it was called the Commercial Bank of Blue Island, and in 1925 became the First National Bank. The beautiful new interior of the bank



showed faith in the community and the desire to expand its financial institutions.

In the following year, on January 15, 1948, the State Bank elected Bartholomew O'Toole, realtor and banker, as its new president. Other officers chosen were Charles Habich, vice-president; Donald O'Toole, vice-president; Donald M. Carlson, vice-president and cashier; and Hilda Kollman, assistant cashier. On July 1, 1948, still another vice-president was added to the bank's staff when F. Joseph Butler, formerly a vice-president of the Chicago Stock Exchange, began his duties.

On July 21, 1948, Blue Islanders saw the first shovel of earth turned for the new addition to St. Francis Hospital. The first dirt was turned for the new \$500,000 hospital addition by Rev. Theodore G. Gross of St. Benedict's Church, followed by Dr. Edward A. Doepp, under whose leadership the hospital was brought to Blue Island, and Mayor Hart for the city officials. The service was witnessed by hospital employees, Sisters of St. Mary's and other interested citizens.

Blue Island civic, veterans and women's organizations were providing new homes, celebrating anniversaries, and planning new and unusual projects during these years. The Veterans of Foreign Wars started a campaign in November, 1946 for a new home.

The general chairman of this drive was Stanley Hill, with Ted Borek as committee member and Warren Mavity as commander. The American Legion Blue Island Post No. 50 celebrated an interesting occasion in April, 1947, when it honored one family with seven members in the post. The family of Alfred Reuss, Sr., included six sons, Alfred, Jr., Norman, Henry, Vernon, Richard and Melvin, and his son-in-law, Roy Roos, all of whom were members of this American Legion post.

On July 6, 1947, the Moose Lodge No. 314 dedicated a new hall. Those taking part in this dedication were Otto Meyers, regional director, Emmerson Spires, Governor of the Blue Island lodge and Mayor John M. Hart.

Two new projects planned by civic clubs included the presentation to inmates of Oak Forest Infirmary of 300 pairs of eye glasses by the Lions Club of Blue Island in January, 1947. This project was one of the first of its kind in the United States and was made possible by the club through its Sight Conservation Chairman, Clifford Aulwurm, who made the presentation and Dr. A. Tomlinson, who tested and tagged all the glasses.

The Blue Island Junior Woman's Club began a new and unusual project by establishing baby sitting classes. In July, 1947, twenty girls attended classes under the direction of Mrs. Donald



Crist. Mothers who wanted baby sitters were told to call Mrs. Elmer DeRuntz, Mrs. Clifford Backman, Mrs. Russell Beedy, or Mrs. Alden Schultz. This project was such a success and the demand for baby sitters was so great that the Junior Women's Club decided to use Kiddie Klothes at 12765 Western Ave., as headquarters for calls, so mothers were told to call there.

Two service clubs celebrated anniversaries during 1947. The Rotary Club observed its tenth anniversary on Wednesday, May 21, at the Elks Club. Mayor John M. Hart declared the week of May 18-24 as Blue Island Rotary Club week. At the banquet on May 21, the welcome was given by Martin C. Rohe, a charter member, while Chester Sutton acted as master of ceremonies. The principal speaker for the evening was Philip Lovejoy, General Secretary of Rotary International. Ellwood T. Leverenz was the president of the club, and Mrs. Earle James was chairman of the Rotary Anns who helped with the celebration.

On Tuesday, November 4, 1947, the Blue Island Lions Club celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with a banquet at Community High School, 12915 S. Maple. The general chairman for this event was Superintendent of Community High School, Harold L. Richards and the guest speaker was President of the Lions International, Fred W. Smith, Ventura, California, oil man and ranch

owner. The membership of the club at this time was ninety.

The Third District Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs brought honor to Blue Island by electing Mrs. W. T. Ewing as president in the spring of 1947. Mrs. Ewing had been active in women's club work for many years, having joined the Blue Island Club in 1913 and served as its president from 1937-1940. She had filled many chairmanships, both in the Blue Island club and the third district and well deserved the honor.

Another woman was honored the following year at the "Sweetheart Ball" on February 14, given by Blue Island ex-servicemen and their friends for Mrs. Florence Krech. This spontaneous expression of gratitude for all the services she performed for the Blue Island servicemen during the war was planned by a large committee with Roy Kennelly as chairman. The celebration was held at the VFW Hall, with no admission charge. The VFW donated the hall, food, orchestra and decorations, but was not alone in sponsoring the party. Persons of prominence who also wished to honor Mrs. Krech by their presence were Congressman Fred Busby and Alderman Ziccardo. Mrs. Krech received a beautiful diamond wrist watch presented by the group in appreciation for her many hours of untiring service.

The young people, too, were becoming more active in Blue Is-



land as Boy Scouting grew and developed at great strides. According to Henry Baumann, District Chairman of South Shore District, in 1943 there were only 150 boys in Blue Island registered in Boy Scouts. By September, 1947, 400 boys were receiving benefits from the program.

In sports, music and literature, Blue Island was making a name for itself. In March, 1946, Don Kolloway, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Kolloway, 2121 Grove Street, rejoined the Chicago White Sox baseball team after having served his country in World War II in the European Theater where he received the bronze star for bravery under fire. Don was such a popular player with the White Sox that on September 15, 1946, five hundred friends contributed to give him a new maroon Dodge sedan which was presented before 39,000 people at the White Sox-Red Sox game at Comiskey Park in Chicago.

The Liederkrantz Chorus made up of music lovers and singers from Blue Island until 1947 was under the leadership of Mr. Henry Kornemann. This group sang on many occasions both in Blue Island and Chicago and was very popular and in great demand. In February, 1947, Miss Esther Rehberg of Chicago became the new leader of this group, and it continued to be one of the leading choruses in the south suburban area.

An article appeared in the Blue Island *Sun-Standard* on August 28, 1947 under the heading "Blue Island in Novel." The article tells that Blue Island was the setting for some of the scenes in a new novel, "Gus the Great" written by Thomas Duncan. This book had been chosen as the Book of the Month Club selection for September, so would be read by many people throughout the nation. The book was of special significance to Hill Lakin of the *Sun-Standard* staff as he and Mr. Duncan were classmates at Drake University and Mr. Duncan had visited in Blue Island in 1928.

And so the immediate post-war years had shown that the citizens of Blue Island were very active in many ways and continued to make their community known to others and make history which would be followed for years to come.

The Blue Island Cab company celebrated thirty years in business in the city, and William Habich, secretary-treasurer of the company, did some reminiscing of unusual calls they had received. Most unusual according to Habich was a call requesting that a cab be sent to an address where a man was unable to tie his tie with the correct knot. Whether or not the driver was any more successful wasn't noted by Habich! Naturally there were calls from expectant mothers for transportation to the hospital, and the cab company managed to defeat Papa



Stork twice over that period of time.

February 9, 1949, marked the twentieth year for the Blue Island Junior Woman's Club, which was then under the leadership of Miss Mary K. Dewey. At the ceremonies commemorating the milestone was Mrs. E. V. Hill, president of the Senior Woman's Club. Mrs. Ruth Hegner Beck was the first president of the junior women of Blue Island.

Humanitarian projects have long been a part of the life of Blue Island, its people and its organizations, and one of the Kiwanis programs was a good example. They raised \$135 at a dinner-dance to buy a wheel chair for twenty-five year old Danny Musto, crippled since a baby. Kiwanis President Ed Stothard made the presentation to Danny.

Free Coffee! That's right. At the opening of the Kroger store in Blue Island at 12929 Western, on February 22, 1949, a free half-pound of coffee was presented to each customer.

Balloons and shopping bags were also given away at the newest grocery store to grace this bustling area.

Individual honors went to Carl Jankowski, alderman from the third ward, who was elected secretary of the Association of Lodges of Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen of Cook County. Another organization, the American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 50, celebrated its twenty-ninth year

on February 8. Mrs. Margaret Poutry was president at the time. Dr. Leslie O. Damm was in charge of the Red Cross drive in Blue Island, and he set a goal of \$6,500. For the first time in history of the organization, Chicago was the scene of the launching of the national drive.

Two auto dealers marked the growth of Blue Island as Napleton Motor Sales, headed by Edward W. Napleton, opened doors at 11939 Vincennes. Harry C. Schuldt and Carl P. Jochum formed the Blue Island Motor Sales, formerly known as Nash Sales. They were located at 12637-45 Western.

Dr. Dirk A. Vloedman, president of the school board of District 130, announced he would seek a second three-year term in the upcoming election.

Blue Island's city council was informed that the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry had asked the house appropriations committee in Washington for \$5,000,000 to be used to develop the Cal-Sag channel south of Chicago. This would greatly affect Blue Island and the city council was gratified to know of the request.

Two long-time residents of Blue Island celebrated fifty years of wedded bliss on March 8, 1914. Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Barr marked the happy day in their home at 2449 Cochran. Mr. Barr retired from the Rock Island lines





*Visiting Educational Leaders Congratulate Richards*

*In April of 1960, the entire community joined the high school staff in honoring Dr. H. L. Richards, to celebrate his twenty-fifth year as superintendent of Community High School. Shaking hands with Richards are Assistant Superintendent Dave Heffernan and General Superintendent Ben Willis, of the Chicago*

in 1939. He has resided in the city since 1896.

On March 31, City Engineer Allen L. Fox announced that Western avenue was soon to have a new street lighting system. Included in the system were mercury-vapor lights and an underground connection feature, and all new lightpoles.

Two members of the city ministerial corps announced their intention of leaving for new pastorates following Easter services in their respective churches. Reverend Leo Steininger would leave the Church of the Nazarene to assume pastoral duties at the

Church of the Nazarene in the Hawaiian Islands. Rev. Steininger came to Blue Island in 1943 and organized the local Nazarene church. Reverend Franklin R. Elliot concluded his pastorate at Easter sunrise services at the First Congregational Church. He joined the ministerial staff at the Winnetka Congregational Church.

One of the oldest continuous business houses in the entire area marked its 100th year in the same location in April of 1949. Schreiber Brothers Hardware, 13168 S. Western, still is operating, with two sons of the original founder connected with and active in the



business. Indians were still near Fay's Point when August Schreiber first established a tin shop on the corner of Western and James in 1849. August Schreiber died in 1893 but the operation was kept in the family by his sons Philip and Henry, both still in Blue Island in 1949.

Philip and Henry operated the store from 1893 until 1926 when Philip's son Valentine and Henry's daughter Irene (Mrs. Fred Koehn) became affiliated with the management. At this time (1949) another of Philip's sons, John, managed the business while Valentine had his own hardware store in Homewood. The Koehns were no longer active in the operation.

In 1896 expansion caused the Schreibers to add on the west side of the building since the part on Western was a buggy showroom. At the time of the rebuilding program bricks cost \$3.50 a thousand, and Schreiber estimated the construction cost \$3,700, other than the plumbing and hardware which the Schriebers handled themselves. Many items associated with the horse and buggy era were still stocked in 1949 because of a demand for them.

Before his death in 1956, Philip Schreiber would often reminisce about the Blue Island Liederkrantz which was founded in 1853. The Liederkrantz sang German songs, told legends and paraded on Western Avenue with a

beer keg in a wheel barrow and a snare drum. He also remembered the days when Christ Peters, Blue Island's only policeman, tended the kerosene lamps in the city, carrying a ladder with him so that he could reach the wicks. One of the favorite games of children of the era was Indians, not cowboys and Indians, because cowboys were unknown at that time.

Mrs. Henry G. Baumann, who is now associated with her husband in The Mayfair, was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Schreiber, as was Mrs. William Dusel. Many of the children in the family were born in the Schreiber building.

Continued building was evident in the city as Mother of Sorrows school held ceremonies May 1, in which the blessing of the cornerstone for the new addition took place. First Evangelical Lutheran Church began a one week celebration commemorating the eighty-fifth anniversary of the founding of its Christian Day School. The celebration began May 1, with special services in both German and English in the church. Also included was a reunion of all graduates. In addition to the anniversary of the school, Clara Damm marked her thirtieth anniversary as a teacher in the school.

First Lutheran Church revealed plans for a new church to be erected on the present site on Grove street. Cost of the new



building would be \$250,000. The original cornerstone was laid May 23, 1863, and the church was dedicated on July 3, 1864. Now there were 930 families with 2,158 members, according to Pastor Walter H. Ruth. He announced that the historic church tower would be preserved, and that the architecture would be Gothic style of stone construction.

The building committee consisted of Louis Brockman, chairman; Carl Sievert, vice-chairman; Bodo Schoebes, secretary; and members William Bauch, Harry Bochmann, Charles Brisch, George Damm, Arthur Grueb, Robert Koenecke, Martin Lohse, George Mangold, Louis Nagel, and Otto Summerfield. Others assisting the committee were Pastor Ruth, Herman Lohse, and church trustees Al Bowman, Clarence Boldt, Harry Voss and Henry Zibell.

World War II refused to be pushed into the background, as one of Blue Island's fallen sons was returned for burial. The remains of PFC Robert K. Wilson, son of Mr. and Mrs. August Wilson were received for final ceremonies. PFC Wilson was wounded in action January 28, 1945, and died the following day. He has also been wounded previously while serving in France in 1944. He was a member of the 301st Infantry, 94th Division, Patton's 3rd Army.

Progress would not be thwarted, as Mayor John Hart and City Engineer Allen Fox announced

that the city's \$104,000 water project was underway. The new system would alleviate the water shortages during the summer months.

Hart also commented on his return to office by the voters calling it "... a mandate to continue on our record and pay-as-you-go."

On another note reminiscent of World War II, the body of Lt. Richard W. Paulsen, of 12743 Greenwood, was returned for burial on Monday, May 23, 1949. Killed in a plane accident shortly after the end of the war, Lt. Paulsen had been a member of the 494th Bomber Squadron, and a 1941 graduate of Community High School.

Reverend William Donald McLean celebrated his 50th year in the ministry on Saturday, May 21. He was pastor at St. Aidan's Episcopal church. The Lions Club of Blue Island announced it was readying for the third annual community Fourth of July celebration. Committee chairmen were Stanley Hill, general; Lloyd Holmlin, parade; H. L. Richards and Arnold Watland, queen popularity co-chairmen. Long-time civic servant Captain William O. Hankey of the Blue Island police department hung up his cap for the last time on June 1, 1949. At retirement he was in charge of the station during evening hours. Hankey joined the force April 28, 1924, as a patrolman. Dr. John W. Holland, associated with Chi-



cago radio station WENR, was named as the feature speaker at Community high school commencement exercises. A class of 316 was scheduled to receive their diplomas.

Reverend E. W. Magnusson was set as the guest speaker at Memorial Day services in the city. Three bands had been lined up for the parade, and services were scheduled at the First Lutheran church.

Community High's basketball coach, George W. Porter, was honored in the Air National Guard by receiving his promotion to Major. Other individual honors on a local basis went to Arnold Watland and Ben Helford who were chosen as president and vice-president of the local Lions club.

Growth of Blue Island as a major south suburban community was further evidenced by letting of contracts for a new high school to be located at Sacramento and Burr Oak. Residents had approved the previous fall the issuance of bonds totaling \$1,500,000 for the construction of the new institution of learning. Charles W. Nichol was named as architect, and J. J. Duffy and Company would be general contractors. Officials said the new building would be ready for utilization by September, 1950. Academically, 40 classrooms would be built, while a gymnasium seating 3,500 would be constructed in conjunction with the school.

Pennsylvania Military College

announced plans to honor one of its more famous alums, H. L. Richards, superintendent of District 218. Mr. Richards was to receive an honorary Doctor of Science degree, and was described by his former commandant as "One of our keenest students." Mr. Richards was one of the few graduates of PMC to finish the academic program in three years. Subsequent to this announcement was that work on the new high school building would begin June 16.

The body of Sgt. Anthony Trela, killed in action in Belgium in December, 1944, was returned for burial in his native Blue Island. He was survived by his wife Erma and son Richard. Prior to entering service he lived at 12755 Hoyne. Trela was a member of the 771st Field Artillery, 1st Army.

Kline's Department store announced its 22nd birthday celebration would be held during the month of June. The store also honored Ann Briddick, head cashier, who was one of the original employees. Other long-time employees were Ludwig Blum, manager for the past 20 years; Irving King, assistant manager; Irving Martino, and Sidney Pollack. With one business house celebrating its longevity, another business said good bye to a long-time associate, as Mr. Henry Mohr of Fiedler-Mohr Auto Sales retired July 1, 1949, because of illness.



He had been with the concern for 28 years.

Continued growth was still more apparent as St. Francis Hospital announced a building fund quota of \$250,000. Dr. T. Harry Kelly, minister at Grace Methodist Church, was named chairman of the drive for funds. Mayor John Hart was named vice-chairman of the building fund.

Dr. Kelly announced that Dr. H. L. Richards had been named chairman of the speakers' bureau which would bring the story of St. Francis and its needs to potential contributors. The entire building program was set at \$650,000 of which the \$250,000 would have to be pledged and donated.

Three local organizations elected or named new leaders for the year. Burtus Overton was elected commander of the American Legion; R. A. Crawford, Rotary president; while Harold Fischer was named manager of the Blue Island Montgomery Ward store.

Another pioneer businessman passed from the scene with the death of William F. Hennig, founder of the firm now known as Van Florists. Mr. Hennig had retired recently, but before that time had worked for forty-five years with the floral company building up a large trade.

Community High School opened its doors for the fall with extremely crowded conditions prevalent. A total of 4,859 children were in all schools in the city,

both parochial and public.

Several pioneer residents figured in the news during the month of September, 1949, beginning with the death of Henry J. Schnurstein at 86. The former city official passed away at the home of his sister Mrs. Florence Ulrich. Mr. Schnurstein served as an alderman from 1917 to 1923, and as building inspector from 1925 until 1946. Carl Groskopf, of 2447 Oak Street, retired after fifty-five years on the Rock Island railroad. He had lived all of his seventy years in Blue Island, and was the oldest director of the Blue Island Savings and Loan Association.

Dr. Theodore H. Montague, 80, treasurer of the Blue Island Specialty Company, died in his home at 2704 Union. Dr. Montague came to the United States in 1895 from Germany, graduated from Northwestern University dental school in 1898, and later became treasurer of the specialty company. This was a position he held at his death. Robert Krueger, 57, the third generation in a business established in 1854, died suddenly in his home at 13050 Greenwood on November 22. Reverend Ernest W. Magnusson, recent speaker at city Memorial Day services, died November 19, in St. Francis Hospital, from the effects of a heart attack. Still another sad note was the announcement that Jackson's corner at Western and Vermont would be torn down to make way for a



more modern building. The building was originally erected in the late 1850's by John K. Polland. He later sold the building and business to Frederick Sauerteig in 1863, and it had served residents in varying capacities ever since.

On November 24, Dr. T. Harry Kelly announced that after extensively efforts on the part of the fund raisers and community, the \$250,000 goal had been reached. St. Francis Hospital would begin its addition soon according to the officials.

The year 1950 brought little joy with its first few months as Hutchins Lumber Company was virtually destroyed by a fire that hit the 11 acre site. Six families were burned out of their nearby homes, and five persons were injured in the blaze. Luckily there were no deaths in the holocaust. Employees dashed from the blazing building carrying what records they could salvage.

Activities, anniversaries and events of all kinds! 1950 was filled with both good and bad news for Blue Islanders.

On February 14, the American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 50 celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. Mrs. O. I. Poultry was presiding officer at the ceremonies. Two couples also marked fiftieth anniversaries of wedded life. Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Fenton and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Wodrich were married in 1900. The Wodrichs were married by Rev. H. K. G.

Doermann in the First Evangelical Lutheran church. Blue Islanders had strong feelings both for and against movie actress Ingrid Bergman and her starring in the Roberto Rossolini movie "Stromboli." "The whole Bergman-Rossolini affair is a shame," was a sample opinion. Many ministerial members recommended it not be shown in the Chicago area.

The fingers of the coal strike moved ever forward affecting more and more consumers, as dealers did their best to keep an adequately supplied public. George R. Willy distributed six diplomas to first graduates of Willy's School of Carburetor and Automotive Electricity. Graduates were Ogden Flanders, Ted Willy, Tony Fico, James Williamson, Robert Bolin and Jerome Pairie. Educators and parents noted the resignation of Dr. H. A. Perrin, superintendent of grade school District 130. Dr. Perrin said he would not retire from the educational field, however. Patrick T. Hallinan Post 3580, V.F.W., elected Ralph Sullivan, Jr., 27 of 2438 Collins, as its commander for the year. Attorney Paul T. Klenk, 56, former mayor of Blue Island died on March 29, in St. Luke's Hospital. He had been appointed city attorney in 1917, and became the youngest mayor of any Illinois municipality in 1921 at the age of 27. Allen G. Kollman, 50, of 2214 W. 123rd, retired as fire chief in Blue Island. He had been appointed in 1945 after the



retirement of John Link as chief. Everett Kerr, former superintendent of the Homewood schools, was named superintendent of District 130 by Dr. Dirk A. Vloedman, president of the school board. A. King McCord, son of Andrew I. McCord, president of the First National Bank, was named executive vice-president of the Oliver Corporation. Young McCord was born in Blue Island in 1904 and joined the Oliver Company in 1930. Kiwanis members observed the ninth birthday of the group. Of the charter members, twelve were still active in the club affairs. Those still active are Arthur Anderson, Arthur Carlson, Birt Frobish, James Hickey, Robert Huffman, Carl Jochum, William Mangold, Arthur Newhouse, Charles Odenthal, Harry Schuldt, Ivan and Wesley Volp.

Another top innovation of the day was the outdoor movie which was gaining in prominence as part of the American way of life. One sage comment culled from the files of the *Sun-Standard* about the advent of the outdoor movie was, "Outdoor movies are good for those with cars." Blue Island Postmaster Danial J. Boyd was chosen president of the Illinois Postmasters at their state meeting. The Elks club sponsored a "Wake Up, America" rally with Frank A. Bella in charge. Paul Harvey was named as the main speaker at the rally.

Blue Island Community High School held its final graduating



Everett F. Kerr  
Superintendent of Blue Island Elementary School, 1950—

class at "Old Main" as the move to the new school for the fall of 1950 seemed imminent. Dr. Carl S. Winters, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oak Park, was the speaker for the 285 who received diplomas. One highlight of the school year was the crowning of Blue Island's tennis team as state co-champions. The school district also marked up one year of progress in the construction of the new school.

Dr. H. L. Richards was named a member of the Third Annual Conference for City School Superintendents at the University of Colorado. The group was limited to the 35 top educators in the



nation, meeting to discuss problems of the secondary school.

Illinois Bell Telephone announced plans to erect a dial telephone office and business office at 2421-2433 Union in the city. Before beginning construction the company said it would spend \$500,000 improving the property at that site. W. G. Rowbotham, then manager of the Blue Island telephone office, said that the entire project would cost \$2,500,000 and would bring about the complete modernization of the system.

More progress shouts came from St. Francis Hospital as the 60-bed addition moved to completion. Officials announced that an open house would be held July 4, 1950 in the addition. Samuel Cardinal Stritch has been scheduled to bless and dedicate the addition in ceremonies on July 3.

Marked growth of the Blue Island trade area was recorded in 1950 figures released by Sales Management of New York in a survey of business activity. Retail sales registered a total of \$21,177,000 in the year, showing a market index of 130 or thirty above the previous year. The 1950 population was 17,580 compared to 16,638 in 1940, a 5.6 percent increase which was just under the population increase registered by the city of Chicago.

Lloyd C. Holmlin, general chairman of the Lions Club July 4 celebration, reported that a \$3,000 fireworks display had

been arranged. A record number of applicants for the parade had been reported. Sister Mary Florentine of St. Francis Hospital stated that more than 2,000 people visited the new sixty bed addition which now made the hospital a four story building.

U. S. Army troops took over operation of the Rock Island railroad at the order of President Harry S. Truman after the Switchman's Union of North America maintained its strike against the road, defying Truman's back-to-work ultimatum. Later, after the July 8, 1950 takeover by troops, the union called off the strike. At least 1,000 Blue Islanders were affected by the strike with the city suffering an economic setback. Loss in sales was estimated at \$40,000 to \$50,000 in the striking period.

Kline's department store began an enlargement program that would amount to \$120,000. Three stores would be removed to make way for the Kline expansion. Also three new stores were to be constructed on the east side of Western in the old parking lot, just north of Boyd's Store for Men.

Blue Island residents were polled on opinions of the Korean War after hostilities broke out in July. A summary of Islander opinion was "No one wants to go, but I'd sooner settle with the Russians over there than at home." Pvt. George J. Luscombe, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Nick Luscombe



of 2657 Collins, would provide residents with first hand information from the Korean front through the *Sun-Standard*. During July and August the city council studied the effects of rent control and debated upon continuance of such a program. During their August meeting they voted 10-4 against a resolution that would have allowed rent controls to continue. Finally in March, 1951, the council voted unanimously to terminate rent controls in the city of Blue Island.

Great Lakes Refining Company began erection of a new catalytic cracking plant for refining petroleum products. In addition a new barge slip was built, both designed to increase production and shipment of high octane gasoline. Despite an enormous building program, Blue Island schools were scheduled to open on time.

One of the first Korean casualties was Pvt. Adrian Kusiolek, of 12755 Lincoln St., who was reported missing in action in the Korean fighting. Last son of a pioneer settler, Herman W. Staffel, 82, resident of the Metro Hotel, died August 30. His father, John, settled in Blue Island in 1856 and was an early member of the board of trustees. A former alderman from 1926 to 1949, Clarence Oliver Williams, 60, died at his home on September 12. He was a yardmaster for the Baltimore and Ohio railroad.

Ground breaking ceremonies were held September 17, for the

new Evangelical Community Church, located at 120th and Irving. The present church is located at 120th and Gregory. Pastor George W. Knapp, Church Council President Raymond Foss and Building Committee Chairman Nick Splayt were present at the ground breaking. Planning for the new building began in 1944 under the leadership of Emil Helm who was pastor for 21 years.

Burtus "Bud" Overton, World War II veteran and former American Legion commander, was named director of defense by Mayor John M. Hart. An advisory committee was being formed with Dr. Howard C. Sigtenhorst as one of the first members. The appointments were made in conjunction with a national program of civil defense.

Samuel Cardinal Stritch dedicated the latest addition to Mother of Sorrows, the Mater Dolorosa Chapel and St. Juliana building on Sunday, October 1. The addition contained a chapel, choir gallery, rectory, auditorium, classrooms, playrooms, offices, visitor reception rooms and wardrobes.

First Congregational Church celebrated its 90th birthday. Located on York street, it was organized January 22, 1960. Some of the names on early church records included Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Young, Mr. and Mrs. P. Atkinson, Mr. and Mrs. Hart Massey, Mrs. Betsy Fox, Mrs. Elizabeth O. Sanders. The first



church was located in a log cabin on the southwest corner of Western at Grove street, and the first regular pastor was Rev. Lemuel Foster. He joined the congregation on April 1, 1863. Prior to the formal organization, the Union Sunday School served as the forerunner. It was organized in 1849 by Mrs. Benjamin Sanders and Mrs. Carlton Wadhams. Church services were held in the hall belonging to Mr. C. D. Robinson until June 4, 1865 when the first church was dedicated. The present church was dedicated April 4, 1901. Rev. Wallace Ault was the pastor at this time and Church School Superintendent was Stephen T. Hoag. Mrs. Robert F. Ryan was primary superintendent.

District 218 officials announced that General Dwight Eisenhower, president of Columbia University, would deliver the dedication address for Community High School located at 127th and Sacramento. The new structure was built at a cost of \$2,250,000. The General's speech would climax a two day program scheduled for October 22 and 23.

Dedication plans began over a year previous with Dr. H. L. Richards and the school board hoping for the district's biggest day. Working with Dr. Richards were Henry Duff, president; Leslie I. McCord, secretary; and members George M. Peterson, Elbert T. Smith, and Gilbert A. Roll. Kevin McCann, former editor of



*Henry G. Baumann, general chairman of the Lions Club of Blue Island 1962 July 4th celebration and Past President of the Lions Club of Blue Island.*

the Midlothian Messenger, was credited with securing General Eisenhower for the ceremonies. McCann had served as an aide to Eisenhower for a number of years. Henry G. Baumann, Blue Island merchant, served as chairman of the dedication committee, and Rollin Pooler was chairman of the faculty committee.

On the agenda was an alumni banquet with William Carlson, president, in charge. Dr. H. L. Richards delivered the main address on the opening day, October 22. On Students' Day, October 23, Mary K. Dewey was mistress of ceremonies and Henry L. Duff, board president addressed the assembly. On the dedication



program itself in the afternoon, Philip Maxwell served as master of ceremonies. Pastor Walter H. Ruth delivered the invocation, "Father Phil" spoke the prayer for peace and A. King McCord introduced the main speaker, General Eisenhower. Dr. T. Harry Kelly gave the benediction.

In his address General Eisenhower said, "The material sacrifice, courage and initiative displayed by you people here in creating this high school seems to typify qualities and concepts vital to the future of America — that is one of the reasons I was proud to accept the invitation to participate in the ceremonies here today." Despite cold, damp weather, more than 4,500 persons were on hand to hear Eisenhower speak from a platform on Community High's football field. Oldest alumnus present at the dedication was Mrs. James Noble, class of 1878. Blue Island residents unanimously called it "Our Proudest Day."

I.O.O.F. Harmonize Lodge No. 2 celebrated seventy-five years in Blue Island. The lodge was organized in October of 1875. Oldest member was John P. Wiessner, 78, who was initiated in 1895.

One of Blue Island's oldest residents, Mrs. Fannie Brown, celebrated her 100th birthday in her home at 12818 Honore where she had resided for 32 years. Mrs. Brown was a 70-year resident of the city.

Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated its fortieth

year from December 3 to December 10. The church is located at Maple and High streets. Rev. F. Sievers helped to organize Salem Evangelical. The church dedicated its original church on the site in 1910. Rev. Carl F. Selle was the current pastor, arriving in 1947.

Corporal Humbert Amriz, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Amriz, 2326 Vermont, was killed in action October 2, 1950, in Korea. Again memories of World War II were awakened when the body of Pvt. Tom J. Artist, son of Mrs. Josephine Artist, was returned from Los Negros Island where he was buried temporarily after being killed in action, March 13, 1944.

The Blue Island Bar Association submitted a resolution to the city council calling for the creation of a city court system through a special election. Leonard Carriere, Franklin Klein, Walter F. Briody and Maurice J. Schultz submitted the resolution. The city court would outrank the municipal court and speed the handling of litigations, in addition to being more convenient, according to the resolution. The following June, 1951, a motion was passed to set up the city court system.

Dr. Frank W. Tracy was honored by the Lions Club at a meeting in January, 1951, for his good citizenship and public service. The Lions presented a plaque to Dr. Tracy. Melvin Jones, founder of Lions International,



was present and paid personal tribute to Dr. Tracy. Just two months later in March, Dr. Tracy passed away at 71. He had served as chairman of the Blue Island Playground and Recreation Commission and founded the Blue Island Lions Club in 1922. He was president of the high school board of education for many years.

January commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Blue Island Lumber Company. It was formed in 1901 as the Chicago and Riverdale Lumber Company. S. M. Wilson, president and treasurer; E. H. Rumbold, vice-president; and John Lau, secretary were the first officers. Wilson's daughter, Edna, succeeded her father after his death in February of 1945.

Ground was broken in February for the \$2,900,000 telephone office that housed the dial system equipment. This serviced 10,800 phones in the area upon its completion. In March, the Evangelical Community Church held cornerstone laying ceremonies at 120th and Gregory.

Dr. H. L. Richards was recalled to active duty May 1, 1951, with the U. S. Air Force. Now Lt. Col. Richards, he was scheduled to serve at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. His wife, Ruth M., was again asked to take his place on a temporary basis at Community High School, as she had done during World War II. Civic and educa-

tion leaders also announced that they were behind a program for improvement of Blue Island public grade schools. They set a bond issue of \$725,000 for these improvements. Building continued to flourish as William J. Gerdes, building inspector, announced that a total of \$2,122,764 in construction took place during the past fiscal year. Of this, \$1,899,203 was new constructions as compared to the previous year's \$970,083. Blue Island Patriotic Association announced sponsorship of Memorial Day Program in the city. Commander Clyde Frack of the United Spanish War Veterans was parade marshal.

Rev. Orville Brummer, pastor of St. Paul Reformed and Evangelical church, celebrated his twenty-fifth year in the ministry. His congregation at the church presented a supper in his honor.

The *Sun-Standard* marked its seventy-fifth year in publication in July. Unfortunately, many of the original papers and files were destroyed by fire at the old location at Vermont and the Rock Island tracks.

By a ratio of five to one, voters of high school District 218 increased the educational tax rate from .74 percent to 1 percent of the assessed valuation. Voters also approved the city court system in a special election by a 16-1 margin.

Aulwurm Brothers Grocery and Market, located for sixty years at 13051 Western, was sold and the



brothers left the business. Their father, the late Henry C. Aulwurm, had established the store in 1892, and it eventually passed on to his sons, Ralph, Henry, and Lyle. Clifford, another son, began his own store.

Blue Island's Bright Light Night celebration which marked the turning on of the new street lights was held in September. Mrs. Caroline Boermel, 89, of 12950 Maple, was the senior citizen who pulled the switch lighting the lights.

Mass was said for Corporal Terence J. McNulty, son of Mr. and Mrs. John P. McNulty, who was killed in action in the Korean fighting. Another member of a pioneer family died October 15, when she was struck by a car at Burr Oak and Maple. Mrs. Frances McCord Krueger, 78, of 12703 Maple, was the victim.

Coach William F. Gutches' Community High School football team won the undisputed South Suburban League title for the first time after 27 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Reuss, well-known Blue Island couple, celebrated their sixty-fourth wedding anniversary in November. First Church of Christ Scientist open on the northwest corner of Burr Oak and Maple. The church's first service was presented in June, 1936, in the Masonic Temple on Western Avenue. Dr. H. L. Richards returned to duty at Community High School after a period of active duty with the

Air Force. He resumed his school duties in December. A new medical center opened its door at 13000 Maple to serve the medicinal needs of the people of Blue Island.

Dr. Frank Tracy week was proclaimed in January to further honor the late Blue Islander who helped found the local Lions Club. The week was proclaimed in conjunction with the March of Dimes drive for funds. Strides were made to form a Businessman's Association when 250 retailers were invited to an organizational meeting on January 17. Sheldon C. Westman, Community High School band director, was named to the National Committee of Music Educators at their National Conference. Attorney Maurice J. Schultz, a justice of the peace in Worth Township, was elected the first judge in Blue Island's newly formed city court, which has been approved by the voters in a special election. Norman Blatt was elected clerk of the court. The court heard its first case, a divorce action, in February. Judge Schultz operated the court daily from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Alderman Milton Shrader was appointed court bailiff. Lyle Ruggles, manager of the Blue Island Sears, Roebuck Store, was named temporary chairman of the newly formed Chamber of Commerce group. Arthur Heuser was chosen chairman of the nominating committee, and the members were Donald Dente, Ben Hel-



ford, Al Turner, and Tom Easton. The election committee was made up of Earl Jones, chairman, and Harold Volp and Walter Steinweg, assistants. The board of directors chosen for the new organization was separated into four sections. Retail: Lyle Ruggles, Ludwig Blum, H. Schuldt, Ben Helford. Miscellaneous: Max La Berdia, Robert Harmon, Thomas F. Easton, Arthur W. Heuser. Professional: Dr. Ralph C. Aiken and Walter Briody. Industrial: William Evans and H. J. Connelly.

Officers elected in the Chamber of Commerce were Lyle Ruggles, president; Max LaBerdia and Ludwig Blum, vice presidents; Robert Harmon, treasurer; and Lloyd C. Holmlin, secretary. St. Francis Hospital received notification that it had been approved by the American College of Surgeons. The hospital has now grown to 150-bed size. Daniel J. Boyd, postmaster since 1946, resigned to take a position with a New York realty company. Donald W. Fraser, a native of Blue Island and a 1935 graduate of Community High, was named acting postmaster.

The Chamber of Commerce announced that its new offices would be at 13104 Western, and that its installation of officers and charter night program would be held in the high school cafeteria on April 24. Frank A. Bella was elected Exalted Ruler of Blue Island Elks Lodge No. 1331.

P. T. Hallinan Post 3580, V.F.W. elected Frank S. DiNovo as commander.

Illinois Bell Telephone began converting more than 11,000 phones to the dial system. R. R. Rydberg was supervisor of a fourteen man crew that began the converting process, according to G. W. Rowbotham, manager. All numbers were changed. The new dial service building at 2427 Union was almost complete, being equipped with dial system by Western Electric.

Father Gross was honored for his fifty years in the priesthood at St. Benedict's. He had spent thirty-five years in the Blue Island community. Gifts sent to Father Gross were to be utilized for parish improvements.

St. Paul Evangelical and Reformed church dedicated its addition on June 1. Rev. Orville Brummer was pastor.

During the fiscal year of May 1, 1951 to May 1, 1952, seventy-two new homes were built in Blue Island, valued at \$900,350. Total building during the year was \$1,734,254.

Kline's Department Store celebrated its twenty-fifth year in the city. Ludwig Blum, manager, recalled that the first ad was placed in the Sun-Standard on June 23, 1927, and that the store had continued to advertise in each edition since that time. This first advertisement listed cigarettes, 11c; silk hose, 58c; soap, 5c; apron dresses, 48c; 81 inch by 90 inch



bed sheets, 77c. Employees with a number of years of service on hand to help with the anniversary were Irving King, twenty-four years; Mabel Bryan, twelve years; Ann Schultz, twenty-five years; Frieda Neiman, twenty-five years; Blum, twenty-five years; Irving Martino, fifteen years; Margaret Trier, fifteen years; Florence Wick, twelve years; and Frieda Wannamaker, eight years.

The First National Bank of Blue Island began work on the new drive-in facilities and the addition of 400 square feet of banking area. This would allow expansion of the bookkeeping department, customer banking, and would allow a dining room and lounge for employees. The First Evangelical Lutheran Church began a drive for funds that would culminate in a building program. The church and building committee set a goal of \$150,000. Carl W. Sievert was general chairman. The pastors were Rev. Walter H. Ruth and Rev. Clarence G. Meyer.

Blue Island's City Council voted to acquire a portion of the Klein property on the east side of Gregory from New to York street, for a city parking lot. The land was purchased for \$17,000. Engineers estimated \$15,000 for improving the land into parking facilities. William T. Clark was named manager of the Blue Island telephone office, replacing W. G. Rowbotham who had moved to

Gary. The working population of Blue Island had estimated net earnings for the previous year of \$34,466,000, a gain of over three million dollars in a year's time. Henry G. Baumann was chairman of the Lions Club July 4 celebration. More than 25,000 people enjoyed this parade in the afternoon and another estimated 20,000 persons enjoyed the entertainment and fireworks display presented in the evening. Arnold, Vance, Lester and Keith Watland announced the opening of their fourth retail camera store. They had started the venture in 1937 and had seen it grow to the large concern it had become. Michael Guglielmucci, 2342 Vermont, real estate and insurance broker, was elected Lt. Governor, Division 18, Illinois-Iowa District of Kiwanis International. He was the only Blue Island Kiwanian so honored up to this time. The Rock Island Railroad celebrated its centennial in Blue Island on October 10. The first Rock Island train ran from Chicago to Joliet, a distance of 40 miles.

Corporal Manuel G. Alvarado, United States Marine Corps, was killed in action August 13, 1952, in the Korean fighting. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Alvarado of 3011 Vermont, lost another son in an accident during World War II when he was returning after 28 months in the Pacific. Aurelio was killed in a train mishap.

Edward C. Maroney, president



of the Blue Island Park District, announced construction had begun on the park building in Centennial Park. Robert W. Harmon, 45, died in St. Francis Hospital from the effects of a cerebral hemorrhage. He lived in Blue Island and had his business located in the city as well. An insurance counselor, Harmon was a member of the Rotary, Eagles and Moose, and was treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce.

In conjunction with the Rock Island railroad centennial celebration, the original Rock Island Rocket was on display in the city. This was the first of the centennial events. Father and son teams manned the old Rocket as well as its modern counterpart which followed it on the trip to Blue Island. The engineer of the old Rocket was Walter Mollenhauer with Walter, Jr., serving as fireman. Henry B. Starr was conductor and his son William, was brakeman.

Following the old iron horse was Engineer George Peloquin and fireman son Robert. Howard L. DeVault was brakeman and his son Dan was collector. Another son, Dave, was conductor.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Habich celebrated fifty years of wedded life at their home, where they have lived more than half of that time. Habich was vice-president and director of the State Bank of Blue Island and was a pioneer auto dealer. Marks' Store for Men noted its twentieth year under

the ownership of Harold I. Marks. Charley Farren (deceased) and Martin Forry (moved) were associated with Marks when he first opened the store.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church held ground-breaking ceremonies on October 12, at Grove and Ann street. Congregation President Herman Lohse and Building Chairman Louis Brockman were present. Church services were held in the Lyric during the building of the new church. William J. Barzycki was named fire chief in Blue Island. Former chief Sigmund Dluzak was to remain in the department. Gilbert A. Roll died in his home at 12914 Elm. A lifelong businessman and resident, he also was a member of the high school board of education.

On December 6, 1952, dial phones went into use in 10 communities. All 182 telephone operators had been offered the opportunity of staying with the company. Mayor John Hart was the first to make use of the new dial telephone system at 11:59 p.m. Manager William T. Clarke was on hand to assist, but the Mayor's call to a friend came off without a hitch. In two seconds after dialing, his number was ringing.

PFC Charles W. Yates was killed in action in Korea on September 20, 1952.

At the outset of the new year District 130 reported a new school was erected, another build-



ing purchased, three additions built, and six structures modernized in less than five years. Roy Clark, assistant superintendent in the State Superintendent's office, said upon inspection of the district, "We found a district with facilities adequate for all areas of the city."

The Liederkrantz celebrated its 100th anniversary with a song fest. Current officers were Kurt Reichel, president; Marceline Vandenberg, vice-president; Clara Sieben, secretary; Catherine Boliski, treasurer; Selma Huebner, financial secretary.

Two anniversaries were noted during January — the Blue Island Lions Club marked thirty years with Arthur W. Hueser at its helm; and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Nagel, celebrated 63 years of marriage. They recalled the marriage in the old frame St. Benedict's church.

Rev. Theodore G. Gross, pastor of St. Benedict's church, died. Friends said that St. Benedict's parish stood as a living memorial to the 35 years of service Father Gross gave. First Lutheran Church laid its third cornerstone in 89 years. Individual honors went to George F. Fiedler, of 12021 Irving, when he was named to the Chicago Regional Port District Board. Fiedler also was president of Fiedler Motors. Evangelical Community Church held its dedication services during March at 120th and Irving. Rev. Oliver C. Hotz was pastor. The

church was built at a cost of \$85,000. Work on the improvement to the yards of the Indiana Harbor Belt lines was reported 30 percent complete. The project will cost \$3,500,000. Mayor Hart and his Citizens' Party won the city elections in April. Lawrence Witt defeated incumbent Alderman Fred Horwath in the only upset.

Widening of the Cal-Sag canal from sixty feet to 225 feet will be the fulfillment of Blue Island's destiny according to George Fiedler, Port District member, before a meeting of interested Blue Island citizens. Fiedler quoted from John Volp's book, "The First Hundred Years," in stating the plans of the Port district. Third Ward Civic club completed plans for joint dedication of the new field house and memorial monument in Centennial Park. Charles Ulrich, president of the civic club, made the announcement. Blue Island's City Clerk Louis Schwartz died in March. He had been city clerk since his appointment to the job in 1933. John C. Joens was named to fill his position. Joen's father, J. John, was one of the first aldermen after the city form of government was established. Richard E. Sorgenfrei resigned as police chief in June, on doctor's orders. George H. Farning was named acting chief. St. Paul's Church, Gregory and New, celebrated its sixtieth year in June. Rev. Orville Brummer was pastor. Dr.





*One of the Modern Blue Island Apartments*

*The young married couples looking for homes in our city now have their choice of many such fine apartments.*



*How the Prairie Has Changed!*

*These lovely homes on the north side of Blue Island emphasize a kind of living unknown to the pioneers.*



T. Harry Kelly, Grace Methodist pastor, for the past nine years, was transferred to Sterling, Illinois. He had headed the St. Francis hospital fund-raising program among his many other civic-minded projects. Rev. R.A.W. Bruehl was named to replace Dr. Kelly. Oldtimers looked with sadness upon school district 130's announcement that modernization plans called for demolition of "Old Seymour" school, a Blue Island landmark.

Henry M. Schreiber, 84, of 2625 York, died July 27, in his home. He and his brother Philip were joint owners of Schreiber Brothers hardware store, and both were life-long residents of the city. Widening of the Cal-Sag canal was reported stymied because of a lack of appropriations. The plans call for a 100 million dollar program. The cornerstone of the Seymour school, recently torn down as a part of District 130 modernization, was opened and the records were exhumed. Many of them were frayed or deteriorated because dampness and air had been able to reach them within the stone. Readable records revealed that Calumet Lodge A.F. and A.M. had been in charge of the cornerstone laying. Business cards of active businessmen that remained were Albert Meyer, chemist and pharmacist; Albert Schmidt, groceries; Boehl, Vienna bakery; W.E. Cordt, hair dressing; David S. Pride, attorney; Paul Klenk,

dry goods; W.H. Weber, chief clerk of the sheriff's office; J.L. Zacharias, flour, feed, grain and hay; Louis Luchtemeyer, watches; and Oliver W. Bourke, real estate.

Habich Brothers marked forty years at 13210 Western. Donald F. Habich, Charles Habich, Jr., and Howard Kolofer were partners in the business. October 18 marked the ninetieth anniversary of the First Lutheran Church. Rev. George W. Kurkop and Rev. Carl H. Amelung, sons of members in the congregation, were guest speakers at special services commemorating the event. A/2C John V. Hummel was killed in an air crash near Atlanta, Ill. Hummel was being transferred from O'Hare field to Scott Air Force Base at the time of the crash.

Henry Sutton, 73, 12610 Ann stree, died Friday, December 18. Sutton was a member of an old Blue Island family. G.A. Luchtemeyer, 77, owner of a jewelry store dating back to the 1850's, died in his home at 12710 Greenwood. Corporal George Bemis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Bemis, of Alhambra, California, formerly of Blue Island, was killed in Korea. Bemis died of a gunshot wound inflicted accidentally. Corporal Lawrence M. Mrotek, missing since 1951 in Korean action, was presumed dead by the government. His unit was overrun by Communists while delivering ammunition to the





*Greenwood near 111th*

*These homes, located in an older residential section give an air of quiet dignity to the entire city.*



*Homes — the Pride of Blue Island*

*Some of the beautiful and moderately priced homes*



front lines. Mother of Sorrows institution announced plans for a high school for girls. It would be operated by the Mantellate Sisters. Cal-Sag Waterways Development Committee was formed in April. Henry E. Seyfarth, Blue Island attorney, was elected chairman of the group. The committee dedicated itself to raising the necessary budget to finance the educational program that was developed the year previous.

The \$400,000 First Evangelical Lutheran Church was dedicated in April. Rev. Walter H. Ruth, pastor, and Rev. Clarence G. Meyer, associate pastor, were in charge of the ceremonies. The church was organized in May, 1883 with sixty-six voting members. Only eleven ministers have served in the pulpit in the first ninety years.

Girls from nine parishes were reported to be enrolling in Mother of Sorrows High School, 13811 Western, which set September, 1954 as its opening date. Only freshmen would enter with another class being added each year.

Per family earnings in Blue Island at the end of the fiscal year, were reported at \$7,272. The city rated high as a trade center in the state and Midwest, as per family earnings were higher than the national average. More than \$39,000,000 in net earnings were reported by Blue Island's 5,400 families in a study

release by Sales Management of New York. Lloyd C. Holmlin won individual honors for himself by being elected state director of Illinois Chamber of Commerce Executive Association. Illinois congressmen presented the Cal-Sag need directly to president Eisenhower in a progress report won by Henry Seyfarth's committee. This marked the culmination of its work.

St. Benedict's announced that parishioners would erect a monument on the grave of Father Theodore Gross. Henry Heimbach, forty-seven years as a grocer on the corner of Broadway and Western, announced his retirement in July. He was born in 1883. Also retiring with the close of Heimbach's Market was Ethel Nugent, a clerk. Former Fire Chief John Link, 83, died in St. Francis hospital. He had served as chief from 1907 to his retirement in 1945.

Officials of Grace Methodist Church announced plans to rename Wesley Hall to honor Dr. T. Harry Kelly, under whose pastorate the church building was constructed.

More than 350 Little Leaguers converged on Blue Island for the Section IV Little League tourney. This meant boys from Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and portions of Canada would be on hand.

Civic, business, industrial and labor leaders took a boat trip of the Cal-Sag to see evidence of



its industrial future. This trip for 85 leaders in the community and nearby areas was sponsored by the First National Bank.

Father William Donald McLean, rector of St. Aidan's Episcopal church, preached his farewell sermon in August. Father McLean had founded St. Aidans in 1916 as a mission church. He thus joined Father Gross, Rev. M. P. F. Doermann, and Rev. R. Reinke to make up a quartet of ministers who had served their respective churches for twenty-five years or more.

Rites were held in August for PFC Adrian Kusiolek who was killed in Korea. Mother of Sorrows opened its high school in September with a capacity freshman class, and immediately announced plans for a new addition. Sunday, October 3, opened a month of celebration marking the dedication of Siloam Lutheran church. The building at Greenwood and 121st was constructed at a cost of \$120,000. Rev. C. Daniel was pastor. Rev. Albert M. Marcis was installed as pastor of Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran church of Blue Island.

Auto sales in Blue Island were far greater than food sales in the city. The same study also showed that auto sales in Blue Island ranked high above the national average. A nine and three-quarter inch rainfall caused millions in flood damage in the South Suburban area during the second

week of October. Water in the Cal-Sag canal was reported to be 25 feet deep causing the canal to overflow its banks and almost forcing the Clark Refinery to close down. Other industrial concerns had equipment under water and many basements were reported flooded. Residents of the north side called the city council to ask for action to alleviate flood conditions.

Dr. E.A. Doepp, 88, in medical practice in Blue Island since 1890, died in St. Francis hospital. He had helped to establish the hospital in 1904. His name was known to thousands of Blue Island families.

President Eisenhower's budget message earmarked four million dollars for the Cal-Sag project. "We have promise of strong congressional support to sustain its place in the budget," said Henry E. Seyfarth. The 50th anniversary of St. Francis hospital was marked by the appearance of Samuel Cardinal Stritch. March 25, 1955, was the actual date but ceremonies were held in May.

Reverend Walter H. Ruth of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church was transferred to Florida after seven and a half years in Blue Island.

Senator Everett M. Dirksen gave the main address as the Elks dedicated the two story structure at 2417 York, formerly the Illinois Bell Telephone Exchange.

"Fission of human spirit is the hope of mankind in the atom



age," said Dirksen in reference to Elks' efforts in constructing the building.

Blue Island rejoiced as the house appropriations committee moved the \$4,000,000 needed for the improvement of the Cal-Sag. Everyone now had to wait for congressional action on the appropriation, which came soon after—approved.

Like the popular song, "June Is Bustin' Out All Over," business and industry in Blue Island truly seemed to be "bustin' out" in 1956, and not only in June, but throughout that year. Biggest news of all was made by the Clark Oil and Refining Company, which at that time was employing 1600 employees in its 367 gasoline stations and plants in the nine states where these were located. The Blue Island refinery, under the direction of John Crawford, vice-president of the organization, was shortly to institute a five million dollar expansion program, which would boost its production output here from 21,000 barrels a day to 30,000.

Here was another industry that had greatly benefited our city during its years of growth. In 1945 the Great Lakes Refinery had been purchased by the Clark Oil Company interests, but the name had not been changed until 1954. Even before that time, forward steps in improvement and modernization had been taken, with the first giant cracker installed in 1951. Installation of

the second cracker was part of the improvement and expansion noted above, and was accomplished under the leadership of Crawford, who came to the local plant as general manager in 1949, and was made vice-president and member of the board that same year. Since that time, the progress of the company has been steadily upward—and undoubtedly the Chief, self appointed hero of the company's advertising campaign, will claim every bit of the credit.

The Martin Oil Company was also expanding in these years. Coming to Blue Island in 1946 it had experienced a steady and profitable growth. Receiving and shipping oils and gasolines by truck, barge, and pipeline the organization had seen its stations grow from twenty-nine to 104, with by far the great majority company owned and operated. Its forty acres of tank farms along Kedzie Avenue have been increased by property to the west, for a barge dock and additional tanks. Blue Island is also fortunate to have the general offices of the organization.

Other aspects of growth in business and industry were additional signs that the city and its surrounding territory were looking increasingly prosperous, with an even brighter future ahead. National figures reported that 68.2 percent of the families living in Blue Island had incomes of over \$4,000 annually after taxes. This



was much higher than the national average of 51.1 percent over this figure. In figures kept over several years, the retail establishments of the city had increased their business by 78 percent, in comparison to figures released for 1950, only six years earlier. Payrolls had doubled in the same time, jumping from two to four million dollars. The importance of the Illinois Bell Telephone Company to the city was best seen when it reported that it had spent over two million dollars in Blue Island alone, including wages, taxes, and other expenses. Part of the phone company's expansion budget was allotted for a two story addition to the building on Union Street, which made it possible for an additional 1000 telephones to be used in Blue Island.

Another new business was welcomed when the Blue Island Forgings Company built its foundry and hammer shop at 13601 Sacramento. The management of the new concern had hopes of eventually employing 200 people. Later in the year the G and W Electrical Specialties Company began operations in its new plant on Burr Oak. This modern building had cost over a million dollars. The families of the 412 employees of the organization certainly did their bit to swell the income of Blue Island merchants, and to find new homes in the area.

After fifteen years of sterling

service to the students of Community High and the school district, Henry Duff retired as a school board member. He had been the board president since 1946, and was succeeded as president by Leslie I. McCord, who had been serving as board secretary. Mr. Duff was honored at a breakfast sponsored by the home economics classes at the high school, under the direction of Mrs. Carol Moderi. Another prominent citizen of Blue Island to be honored was Henry Seyfarth, then chairman of the board of the First National Bank here. Seyfarth was named one of the five foremost Chicagoans of 1955 by the magazine *Chicago*. He was cited because of his efforts and leadership as chairman of the Cal Sag Waterways Development Committee, which was instrumental in getting the channel widened, and would soon bring tremendous changes to Blue Island. The local "Who's Who" was further graced by the names of Vernon Haag, president of Haag Laboratories; and Winthrop Collidge, president of the Chicago Copper and Chemical Company, both of whom were named to "Chemical Who's Who" because of their achievements in this field. The requirements for their citations included having a degree from a recognized scientific school plus having given ten years of specialized work or service in the chemical industry.

One of the hardest working



church groups in the community saw their church dedicated on June 17, 1956, when appropriate ceremonies were held by the congregation and friends of the First Church of Christ, Scientist. They had made their new building completely free from debt in only five years. The First Lutheran Church of Blue Island was honored by being asked to be host for the fourteenth biennial International Convention of this body. About 300 delegates were in attendance. The Evangelical Community Church at 120th and Irving, approved the addition of a social hall, to cost in the neighborhood of \$135,000. Although the Orchard Street Christian Church was sorry to see its faithful pastor, Rev. J.L. Pennington leave for another charge, the membership there had prospered mightily under his leadership, having doubled since 1949. The Pentecostal Church of God got its start in Blue Island this year when Revs. Donald and Helene Romig came here after having been graduated from the Southwestern Bible College to find a warm welcome from this devoted group.

Unfortunately 1956 was not without its personal losses, each of which affected many of the old timers, as well as more recent inhabitants. Philip Schreiber, owner of Schreiber's Hardware and son of the pioneer merchant who established this business in 1849, passed away at the goodly

age of ninety. City Engineer Allen Fox, who had served the city in this capacity for thirty-seven years, and was assistant city engineer for three years before that, was another loss, as was Bartholomew O'Toole, chairman of the board of the State Bank. O'Toole started his Blue Island career in 1910, in the real estate business.

Blue Islanders began to realize how much the Cal Sag Channel development might mean to them and to this entire area when the Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation bought ninety acres on the north side of the channel at Crawford and 131st, early in 1957. It was reported that this purchase was to be part of a huge 500 acre tract to be developed by Union Carbide, with the first building to have an area of 300,000 square feet for warehousing purposes. Even more positive proof of what the channel development would bring was seen when it was announced in the fall of this year that construction would start the following spring on a series of new railroad bridges. These would have to be considerably wider than the old bridges, in order to span the canal, which would be almost four times its present width. The very pleasant rumor that almost thirty million dollars would be spent in Blue Island alone before the project was completed made both big and little businesses, as well as workers of all kinds, wish for a speedy beginning of work





*Mayor John M. Hart*

*Now serving seventh term as Mayor, and Honorary Chairman of 1962 July 4th celebration.*

on a large scale.

Even the city itself joined the expansion program. A tiny section of land, from 126th on the north and Sacramento on the east, going west about a block and then south to Minnesota Street, was brought into the city limits. The only other noteworthy expansion of property since 1935 had been made in 1949, when the high school property, running along 127th Street out west to Wireton Road, had been annexed.

Mayor Hart was re-elected to his sixth term of office, proving that his "pay-as-you-go" philosophy and practice had many friends in Blue Island. He had

guided the community through some rather tough times. The voters, remembering this, saw no reason to turn him down now that prospects seemed so much brighter. As the table of city officials listed later in this section will show, Hart's record as a vote getter had, up to the present (he is still in office) been excelled by only one man — Fred Hohmann, who had served both as village clerk and as city clerk for over thirty years, and Hart's record and popularity may make it possible for him to exceed this mark, if he wishes to make the race for mayor again in the future.

Elected at this same time was John Joens, city clerk; Emil Blatt, city treasurer; and Henry Gentile, police magistrate.

Two additional honors came to Dr. H.L. Richards. First, he was appointed to membership on the Illinois Citizens Committee, an advisory group charged with working with the president of the state university on matters relating to the welfare of this institution. The second came after Dr. Vernon Nickell had announced his retirement as state superintendent of public instruction. Governor Stratton contacted Richards, to urge him to become a candidate for this post in the forthcoming election. Richards declined this honor, stating that he wished to remain at Community High School, hoping to complete his ultimate goal here.



One fine forward step toward that goal was taken when the Southwest Building was added as a school for freshmen and sophomores in that area. This relieved some of the pressure of marked overcrowding from the Old Main Building, and expanded the Two-Two Plan of student housing. In 1950, Richards introduced this idea of housing all upperclassmen at the new Campus Building, and all freshmen and sophomores at Old Main. With more than a thousand students severely taxing the capacity of this venerable structure, relief was badly needed, and the new Southwest Building provided part of this relief. Located as it was, near one of the most heavily populated centers, it soon became a very popular community meeting place for adults, and gave Richards' plan of a divided student body an even better chance to succeed.

Later this year the high school received another much needed assist forward when a bond issue was passed, approving additions to Old Main and the Campus Building and the building of still another frosh-soph building, this time in the Northwest section of the district, for students near population centers there.

Prominent institutions and individuals observed important birthdays in 1957. The St. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, with Rev. John Siedem

as the pastor at that time. From an organization which had started with only fourteen families, its growth had been great, as well as good. The Luchtemeyer Jewelry Store marked its one hundredth year in business, with Mrs. Anna Luchtemeyer as owner at this time. A golden wedding anniversary was celebrated by Mr. and Mrs. John Parchem on September 8 at St. Isidore's Church.

A note of sadness crept into the city at that time when both Dr. Ralph Charles Aiken, staff member at both St. Francis and Ingalls Memorial hospitals, and senior member among the doctors operating the Medical Center; and Dr. Leslie Damm, chiropractor, and very prominent citizen of the community, passed away.

The congregation of the Evangelical Community Church was greatly blessed by a \$200,000 addition, increasing the seating capacity of their sanctuary from 175 to 425, and adding a classroom wing with twelve well equipped classrooms. A new minister, Rev. L.A. Houchins, came to the Pentecostal Church of God to replace the Romigs who left to enter the missionary field. The beautiful St. Philip's Lutheran Church, 2500 W. 121st Street, which had been dedicated in 1954, and changed its name from the Swedish Lutheran Siloa Church in 1956, had grown steadily under the pastorate of C. Daniel Anderson, and was becoming



known as one of the beauty spots of the north side.

Important milestones were observed by the Blue Island Public library and the St. Francis Hospital. In September the library celebrated its one hundredth anniversary. Dr. Preston Bradley, the well known minister and radio speaker, was the featured speaker, giving his address the intriguing title, "The Importance of Eggheads." The hospital held an Open House for the public, presenting its new facilities, including new quarters for the internes, maintenance shops, and a remodeled laundry and emergency transformer.

The fifth annual Blue Island Railroad Fair proved to be one of the most successful sales promotion programs that the city had ever seen, as well as one of the most enjoyable. Owners, managers and clerks seem to take delight in garbing themselves in railroad togs. Any stranger might have been considerably surprised to see a petite clerk at the banks or the department stores dressed as a railroad engineer, with peaked cap, red bandana, and even gloves!

The Mission Covenant Church took a great step forward in 1959 by celebrating its sixty-fifth anniversary with a ground breaking ceremony for a beautiful new church to be located on Collins and Greenwood. The previous sanctuary, at Greenwood and Cochran had been dedicated in

1897. One of the features of this ceremony was a church supper served for twenty-five cents a plate for adults and ten cents for children. At the anniversary dinner held in 1959, the only remaining charter member of the congregation, Ann Olson, was honored. Rev. Walter W. Johnson was pastor at this time, with Arthur Edlund as chairman of the church body, and Walter Carlson chairman of the building committee.

Definite expansion of both industry and business was noted this year. The Chamber of Commerce appointed a special industrial committee, charged with bringing additional industries here. Surveys were made, to help those already located here, as well as possible new firms. Such matters as wages, possible market, and other statistics of interest to business and industry were noted. At least one big firm moved out from Chicago, perhaps as a result of this activity on the part of the Chamber of Commerce. The Federal Sign and Signal Corporation, after enlarging the old American Radiator and Standard Sanitary plant, at 136th and Western, moved in, and employment possibilities immediately began to look better, as this concern would employ about 500 persons. Kline's Department Store undertook another expansion by remodeling the second floor of its building, which had formerly been occupied by



offices and apartments. One of the big innovations of this move was the installation of a self-operating elevator.

Perhaps the most positive proof of all-around growth in Blue Island and surrounding territory was given by the Illinois Bell Telephone Company. Since 1952, when the local exchange was serving 10,000 customers, the number of customers had jumped until 27,000 numbers were now listed. Three hundred employees called the expanded plant on Union Street their business home, and the management there announced that the recent improvements had cost in the neighborhood of one million dollars.

The "pay-as-you-go" policies of Mayor Hart were again greatly appreciated by Blue Island taxpayers, when the city council awarded a quarter million dollar street improvement contract, and paid for its entire cost out of cash then on hand. Most of the money went for street improvements in the southeast section of the city, with sections of Seely, Hoyne, and Canal being paved. The Western Avenue merchants were also greatly benefited when a parking lot, just back of the firms on the west side of Western, between High and York, was completed, providing space for 136 cars.

The schools of the city and the high school district went along with this expansion of business and industry. The elementary

schools added Nathan Hale, at 135th and Long, at a cost of \$400,000. Community High welcomed a third frosh-soph unit, the Northwest Building, located at 115th and Ridgeland, and serving students in these years from Worth, Chicago Ridge, and adjacent territories. So rapid had been the growth of the student body in that area, however, that the school almost became overcrowded its very first year.

Catholic women of the city were involved when the local chapter of the Catholic Daughters of America marked its fiftieth anniversary in '59. As a part of this celebration the Grand Regent of the state of Illinois paid tribute to the Blue Island group, the first in the entire state to mark its golden anniversary, as well as the largest chapter in Illinois. Honored were Mrs. Lillian Hickey, at that time Grand Regent of the local court, number 113, as well as Mrs. Nell Martens, first Grand Regent, and four of the original charter members: Mrs. Kate Kennelly, Mrs. John Landgraf, Mrs. George Martell, and Mrs. Sue Murphy.

Long time friends of Arthur J. Stuebe, veteran grocery store owner, mourned his passing this year. He had been chairman of the finance committee of the city council, and a member of the transportation committee.

One of the best measures of Blue Island's growth during the ten years culminating in 1960





#### *Tragedy Averted*

*Prompt action by the fire department prevented any loss of life when the Lyric Theatre burned in February, 1960.*

was given by William Gerdes, city building commissioner at that time. Seven hundred thirty-six homes, valued at a total of \$10,721,970 had been constructed in this period. In 1959 residential building alone totalled over three million dollars, including twelve apartment buildings. The only person who had witnessed continued growth such as this, and almost from the very beginning of Blue Island, was Mrs. Lawrence Fay, who celebrated her first century of life on February 20. After coming from England in 1872, her family first settled in Morris, Illinois. On a visit to Blue Island, she met her future husband, Lawrence Fay. After their marriage the two moved to a lit-

tle farm, located east of Ahsland between the Calumet River and Stony. Old timers still refer to this section of territory as Fay's Point.

Tragedy, both personal and financial, hit the city this year. Andrew L. McCord, senior citizen and financial influence in the area passed away leaving many friends who had known him for the sixty-two years of sterling service he had given the First National Bank in various capacities, culminating with his appointment as president in 1943. He had served continuously as treasurer of the park board, from the year it had been organized until 1958. He was active at the bank up to a short time before his death,



serving as vice chairman of the board of directors, and was a charter member of the B.P.O.E.

But for the grace of God, the ultra modern equipment possessed by our fire department, the capable leadership of Fire Chief Barzycki and the efficiency of our firemen, Valentine Day, February 14, 1960 might have been a day never to be forgotten. It was on this day, at 3:30 in the afternoon, the Lyric Theater was completely destroyed by fire! The date was a Sunday, and most of the audience of 700 were children enjoying their usual Sunday afternoon at the movies. Because of Chief Barzycki's quick thinking in going through the audience with the theater manager, William Hetzner, and very calmly telling the audience a fire drill would be held, the auditorium was quickly evacuated in a most orderly manner. This calmness and promptness was richly rewarded for there was no loss of life nor even a single injury! Few of the audience even realized it was a real fire until they got out of the building. Thirty minutes after the firemen had been summoned, the roof collapsed! The actual direct financial loss of \$200,000 might have soared into the millions had the firemen been unable to execute Barzycki's plan to contain the fire within the theater's four walls which remained standing. A strong west wind was blowing and St. Francis Hospital had begun to evacuate

its patients to lower floors for easier removal if that became necessary. For several hours it was feared both sides of Western Avenue would become ignited with ultimate results in such an event defying imagination.

From a very modest start many years before under the name of the Cottage Building and Loan Association, the directors, officers, stockholders, and customers of the Blue Island Savings and Loan Association again moved forward when they held a grand opening at their spacious new building, 11960 Western, in mid March.

One of Blue Island's favorite sons was honored by his friends from this entire area when Dr. H. L. Richards was recognized and feted for the twenty-five years he had served as superintendent of the District 218 schools. He had come to Blue Island in 1928 as an instructor of social studies and assistant coach. The board of education had named him as superintendent upon the retirement of Mr. J. E. Lemon in 1935, after forty-two years of dedicated service.

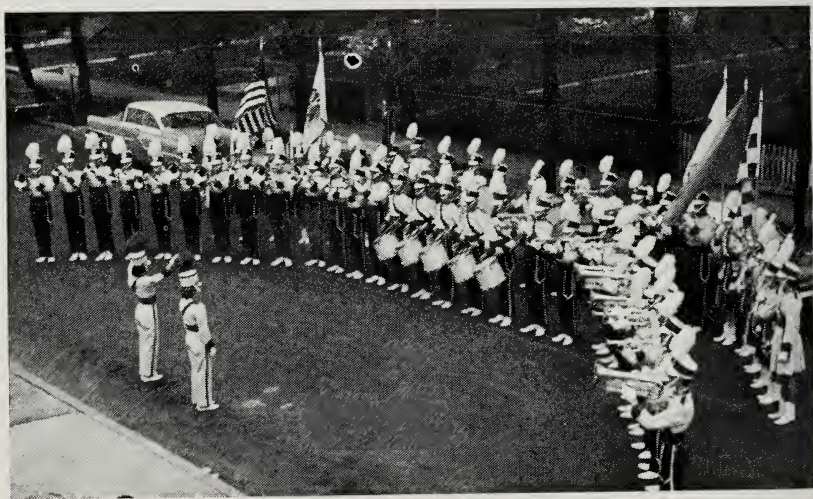
Friends, well wishers, and close associates witnessed the presentation of a bronze plaque, on behalf of the staff and student body of the school, by John Rush of the faculty. A beautiful sterling silver coffee and tea service was given to Dr. and Mrs. Richards by Leslie I. McCord, president of the board, on behalf





### *Blue Island's Bottleneck*

*Looking north on Western Avenue. The Cal Sag improvements did bring some temporary frustrations to Blue Island traffic, notably this cut-off, routing traffic around the Rock Island bridge at the bottom of the hill.*



### *The Royallaires Drum and Bugle Corps*

*Pride of the Patrick T. Hallinan Post Number 3580, VFW, Blue Island.*



of the citizens of the entire district. Richards was also honored by the "Breakfast Club" an informal organization of long time friends, with a special plaque bearing twenty-five silver dollars; and a beautifully bound book containing over 200 congratulatory letters and telegrams wishing him well on this auspicious occasion was also presented.

One of the best indications of good times and improvements to come that ever was given to Blue Island was reported by Mayor John Hart. He stated that over five million dollars were to be spent on canal improvements in or near Blue Island within the space of a few years. The projects to grace the city within this short time would include two new main line bridges for the Rock Island; Baltimore and Ohio crossings at Vermont Street, the Stony Creek bridge, and the subway near Francisco Street; a main line bridge for the Grand Trunk Western; and major adjustments to the Indiana Harbor Belt lines. While the entire city knew that this major project, with its many ramifications, would create some problems, all concerned felt that the final result would be to boost Blue Island, and were willing to stand even major inconveniences.

The growth of the city was manifest in another way, even though proof of this meant the city's loss through retirement of another good man. During the

twenty-one years of his life that Charles Dewar served the city as superintendent of public works, he commented the department had gradually grown to a present staff of twenty-eight men and a budget of around \$90,000.00 a year. Dewar had also served nine years as an alderman.

Mayor Hart, officers of all civic, service, and veteran's organizations—in fact the entire city—joined with the congregation of the First Congregational Church in celebrating its centennial in October. The solemn and impressive homecoming Communion service was held October 16, with the Rev. Edgar Ross delivering the sermon. On Women's Fellowship Day a pageant, "A Century Passes in Review" was presented, and on October 20, the entire city joined in honoring the church in a Centennial Community Night celebration.

Meeting in the Congregational Church, another group marked a milestone when the Kiwanis Club celebrated its twentieth anniversary. Officers selected at that time were Joe Johnson, president; Kenneth Streitmatter, first vice-president; Arthur Newhouse, second vice-president; Edwin Stoddard, secretary-treasurer; and Al Bauer, Jim Bronson, Bob Kough, Ed Fredette, Joe Lyznicki, and Ray Rauch, directors. During these twenty years the club had grown from its original twenty-seven members to a group of seventy.



Graduates of the high schools in this area were cheered to learn of the possibilities of a junior colleg. Argo, Blue Island, Evergreen Park, Homewood-Flossmoor, Lincolnway, Oak Lawn Reavis, and Rich high schools had all approved a survey to determine the needs of such an institution in the general area covering all of these districts. Committees with civic, private and school representatives met with Professor Merle Sumption, of the University of Illinois and Paul Cella, chairman of public relations for such a survey, to study the possibilities and plan further action.

Under the superintendency of Everett F. Kerr, who had come to Blue Island in 1950 to head the District 130 schools, all buildings had seen remarkable growth. From an enrollment slightly over 1500, when Supt. Eggert resigned in 1935, grade school enrollments had zoomed to over 2700 by 1960. The first year Kerr had been in office had seen the Horace Mann School open, and the junior high school and gym readied for student occupancy. The old Seymour School had been razed in 1942, and although it was declared, at that time, a hazard to children, many who had trod its ancient halls regretted its passing. That year also brought additions to both the Lincoln School and the junior high—to the latter only two years after its first occupancy. Fre-

quent additions to other buildings were demanded by the ever growing number of grade school children. The Greenbriar School was built in 1956; Paul Revere received an addition in 1956; Horace Mann in 1958; and the Nathan Hale School in 1959.

During all these years the schools had been receiving sterling service from board members, with Walter E. Anderson achieving the enviable record of twenty-seven years service as a board member when he retired in 1959. Presidents of the grade school board since Centennial Days have been Frank Van Overstraeten, 1935-37; Dr. Leslie O. Damm, 1938-46; Dr. Derk A. Vloedman, 1946-52; Karl W. Goetter, 1952-55; Carl E. Geppinger, 1955-1960 and George W. Dring, 1960—.

From 1873 to 1961—what a contrast in years! And how the city of Blue Island had grown in those years!

In 1873 the original village fathers had passed their first budget, providing for the little settlement's official expenses for the coming year. The sum they approved for that year was \$2,000—and this, we may be sure, posed a grave challenge. Contrast this sum to that budgeted for the year from May 1, 1961 to April 30, 1962—\$1,218,867.44!

This is not to say that the 1961 budget was out of line. Under the leadership of Mayor Hart, the council had run the city on a very conservative and business-





*Western Avenue in 1962*

*This view was taken looking north, from just south of Vermont Street. The new sign of the former State Bank had just been installed.*



*Church of Christ, Scientist — one of Blue Island's newest church buildings.*



like basis. Whenever there was money to be spent, they first were certain that that money was available. On the above budget, for example, they knew that there would be salary increases for the police and fire department personnel, and for clerical help. The city would owe Chicago about \$315,000 for water. The municipal building needed repairs; the library and the city playgrounds needed funds; \$225,000 would go to the city payroll.

In all probability the "pay-as-you-go" policy was responsible for another decisive victory for Mayor Hart and his party at the polls. He won his seventh term of office, and carried with him the posts of city clerk, city treasurer, and five of the seven aldermanic posts.

Important anniversaries and expansions marked the year as a good one for several institutions and businesses. After a year of thorough-going planning and preparation, St. Benedict Church celebrated its one hundredth anniversary in September. Lowell Frasor, banquet chairman, assisted by Mrs. James Hickey and Daniel J. Boyd, led off the festivities by organizing a dinner dance at the Martinique Restaurant. The youth of the parish likewise celebrated at the Palos Country Club. Solemn and impressive rites were observed on Sunday, September 24, with Cardinal Albert Meyer, Archbishop of Chicago, presiding at a High

Mass of Thanksgiving. The last two pastors who served the large congregation had been Father Theodore Gross and Father Howard Doherty, who came in 1953.

Later in the year, the St. Francis Hospital announced plans for a six and one-half million dollar expansion program, to build a complete new wing. Plans were for the addition to consist of a ten story building, accommodating 248 new beds, and providing a physical medicine department, a control supply department, an enlarged pharmacy, a staff room for doctors and personnel, and large administrative offices.

The Mission Covenant Church staged a double celebration in the early part of the year. On February 5 members observed the sixty-seventh anniversary by dedicating their beautiful new building, at Collins and Greenwood. Their former sanctuary, which had served them faithfully since 1897, was to be used as a Sunday School unit.

The entire city was happy to rejoice with the Volp family and their Blue Island *Sun-Standard* which began its eighty-fifth year. Today "our paper" is regarded as one of the outstanding quality weeklies in the state of Illinois, and is published in a modern, well equipped printing plant.

Two changes of business addresses, both for the better, hit the *Sun-Standard* headlines. The Enterprise Wire Company moved to the twenty-two acres and large





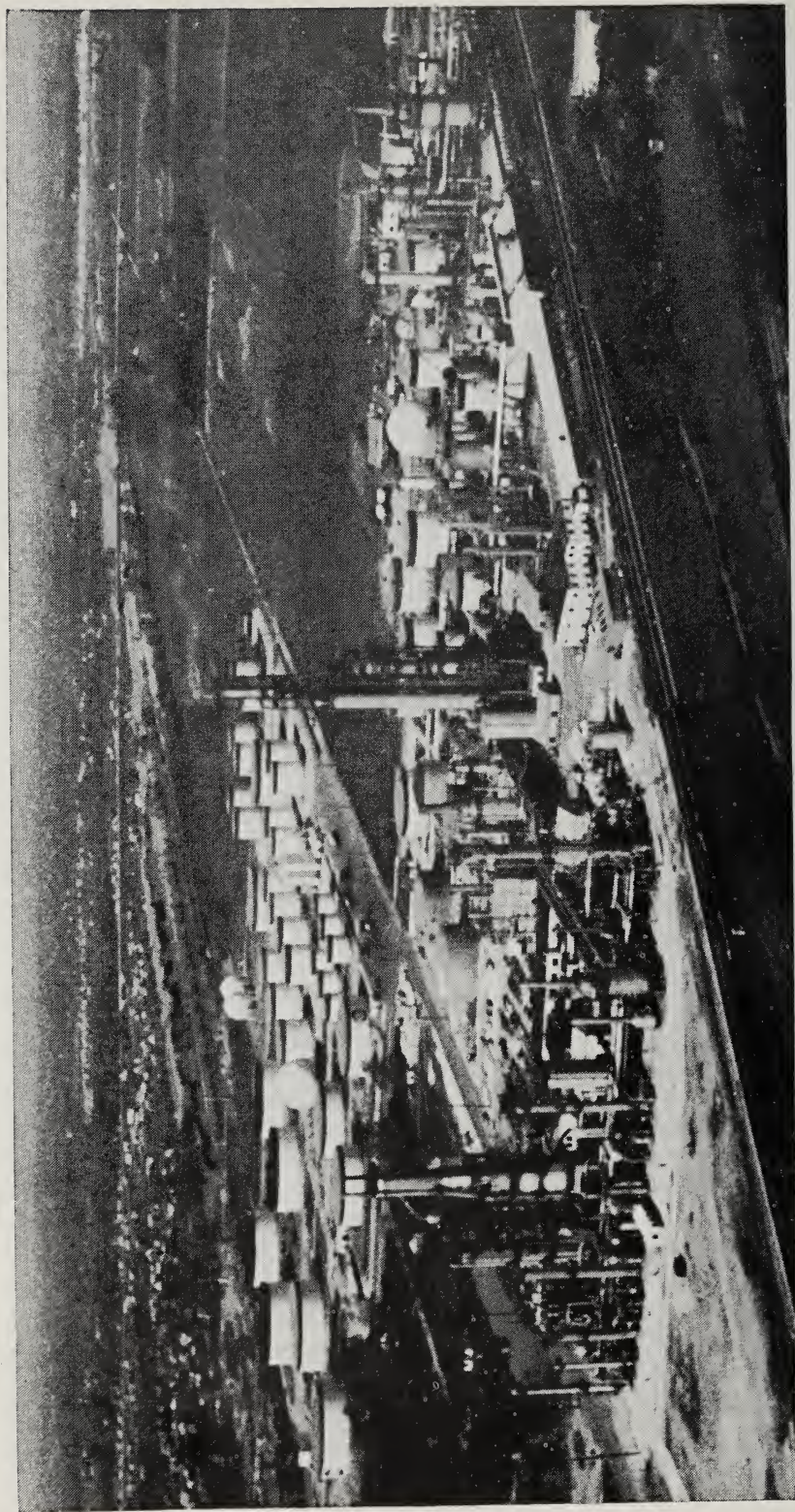
*Rock Island Railroad Bridge*

*Before this section of the canal was widened, showing some of the giant equipment used in working on this section of Blue Island's greatest improvement.*

plant formerly occupied by the Equipment Steel Company. The new property meant rail facilities and more room for the Wire Engineering Associates, Inc., a related organization, R. K. Wyant, president of the concern stated. After sixty-five years in business at 13122 S. Western, Emil J. Blatt

and Company, dealers in wall-paper, paint, glass, oil and associated products, purchased the former Blue Island Savings and Loan building, and moved their store there. Associated with Emil, the owner, and city treasurer, were his son Norman, and his grandson, Ronald.





*The huge Blue Island plant of the Clark Oil and Refining Co.*



## EPILOGUE

As Blue Island moves well into its one hundred and twenty-seventh year, its citizens can look back with pride upon their past accomplishments and face the future unafraid, no matter what its challenges. Perhaps at no other time during its years of progress have people of this nation confronted prospects which are, at one and the same time, fraught with both the possibility of the free world's utter destruction by the diabolical forces of communism, and yet so filled with the glorious possibility that mankind may at last be fully free. Through

the peaceful uses of the atom; through proper use of the leisure time suggested by the advance of automation; and, most of all, through a re-dedication to the principle that, under the Fatherhood of God, it is possible that the brotherhood of man may yet be realized. Sharing such a blessing as this, the people of Blue Island will know even finer days than those they have witnessed so far. With His guidance, and their continued faith in their homes, their churches, and their schools, all things are possible. Without Him, naught can prevail.



## APPENDIX

### ROSTER OF CITY OFFICIALS 1901 - 1961

Year 1901—John L. Zacharias, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; A. C. Boeber, Treasurer; George Guenther, Attorney; Emil Boehl, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Harry Rohrbach and John Neibert, First Ward; John Joens and Louis Groskopf, Second Ward; George Gobet and V. B. Schreiber, Third Ward; C. R. Foster and William Henke, Fourth Ward; A. Danielson and Max Gese, Fifth Ward.

Year 1902—John L. Zacharias, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; A. C. Boeber, Treasurer; George H. Guenther, Attorney; William H. Doolittle, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: John Neibert and George Engelland, First Ward; John Joens and Louis Groskopf, Second Ward; V. B. Schreiber and August Kern, Third Ward; William Henke and C. R. Foster, Fourth Ward; Max Gese and George Warren, Fifth Ward.

Year 1903—John L. Zacharias, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; C. J. Heckler, Treasurer; George H. Guenther, Attorney; William H. Doolittle, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Harry Rohrbach and George Engelland, First Ward; Anthony Heintz and L. L. Whitson, Second Ward; V. B. Schreiber and August Kern, Third Ward; William Henke and C. R. Foster, Fourth Ward; Max

Gese and George Warren, Fifth Ward.

Year 1904—John L. Zacharias, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; C. J. Heckler, Treasurer; George H. Guenther, Attorney; William H. Doolittle, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: George Engelland and Harry Rohrbach, First Ward; Louis Groskopf and Anthony Heintz, Second Ward; V. B. Schreiber and August Kern, Third Ward; C. R. Foster and William Henke, Fourth Ward; Max Gese, George Warren, Fifth Ward.

Year 1905—George C. Gobet, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; George H. Guenther, Attorney; Carl H. Schmitt, Treasurer; Alden P. Pierce, Police Magistrate; Max Gese, City Collector; Aldermen: George Engelland and John A. Lentz, First Ward; L. L. Whitson and Anthony Heintz, Second Ward; August Kern and August Marx, Third Ward; C. R. Foster and Harry Rohrbach, Fourth Ward; George Warren and L. C. Steinbach, Fifth Ward.

Year 1906—George C. Gobet, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; George H. Guenther, Attorney; Carl H. Schmitt, Treasurer; Alden P. Pierce, Police Magistrate; Max Gese, City Collector; Aldermen: John A. Lentz and George Engelland, First Ward; Anthony Heintz and John F. Klein, Second Ward; August Marx and John Ganzer, Third Ward; Harry Rohrbach and Jerry Jones, Fourth Ward; L. C.



Steinbach and Gustav Aschan, Fifth Ward.

Year 1907—George C. Gobet, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; George H. Guenther, Attorney; William Schreiber, Treasurer; Alden P. Pierce, Police Magistrate; Max Gese, City Collector; Aldermen: George Engelland and John Lentz, First Ward; John F. Klein and Henry Roll, Second Ward; John Ganzer and August Marx, Third Ward; Jerry Jones and Harry Rohrbach, Fourth Ward; J. P. Mossberg and Henry Groskopf, Fifth Ward.

Year 1908—George C. Gobet, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; George H. Guenther, Attorney; William Schreiber, Treasurer; Alden P. Pierce, Police Magistrate; Max Gese, City Collector; Aldermen: John A. Lentz and George Engelland, First Ward; Henry Roll and John Klein, Second Ward; August Marx and John Ganzer, Third Ward; Harry Rohrbach and C. R. Foster, Fourth Ward; J. P. Mossberg and Henry Groskopf, Fifth Ward.

Year 1909—Edward N. Stein, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; Thomas McGrath, Attorney; Harry Rohrbach, Treasurer; William H. Doolittle, Police Magistrate; Laurence Lusson, City Collector; Aldermen: George Engelland and John A. Lentz, First Ward; John F. Klein and Henry Clausen, Second Ward; John Ganzer and John Wolff, Third Ward; C. R. Foster and James Noble,

Fourth Ward; Henry Groskopf and Louis Steinbach, Fifth Ward.

Year 1910—Edward N. Stein, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; Thomas McGrath, Attorney; Harry Rohrbach, Treasurer; William H. Doolittle, Police Magistrate; Laurence Lusson, City Collector; Aldermen: John A. Lentz and Herman Jauchzer, First Ward; Henry Clausen and Louis Storz, Second Ward; John Wolff and Wm. Kruse, Third Ward; John Noble and Jerry Jones, Fourth Ward; Louis Steinbach and Henry Groskopf, Fifth Ward.

Year 1911—Julius A. Wessel, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; Judd H. Matthews, Attorney; John L. Beer, Treasurer; William H. Doolittle, Police Magistrate; Louis Staffel, City Collector; Aldermen: Herman Jauchzer and William Meyer, First Ward; Louis Storz and Ernst Kott, Second Ward; William Kruse and John Wolff, Third Ward; Jerry Jones and James A. Noble, Fourth Ward; Henry Groskopf and Walter Bruce, Fifth Ward.

Year 1912—Julius A. Wessel, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; Judd H. Matthews, Attorney; John L. Beer, Treasurer; James H. Carroll, Police Magistrate; Louis Staffel, City Collector; Aldermen: Herman L. Jauchzer and William Meyer, First Ward; Arnold Myers and Ernst Kott, Second Ward; William J. Kruse and John Wolff, Third



Ward; Jerry Jones and James A. Noble, Fourth Ward; Charles J. Olson and W. C. Bruce, Fifth Ward.

Year 1913—J. Jones, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; Judd H. Matthews, Attorney; Louis F. Schwartz, Treasurer; James H. Carroll, Police Magistrate; Louis Staffel, City Collector; Laurence Lusson, Business Agent; Aldermen: Herman Jauchzer and Alfred Koenecke, First Ward; Arnold Myers and Ernst Kott, Second Ward; William Kruse and John Wolff, Third Ward; James Noble and E. B. Bronson, Fourth Ward; C. J. Olson and Walter C. Bruce, Fifth Ward.

Year 1914—J. Jones, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; Judd H. Matthews, Attorney; Louis F. Schwartz, Treasurer; James H. Carroll, Police Magistrate; Louis Staffel, City Collector; Laurence Lusson, Business Agent; Aldermen: Alfred Koenecke and Ilo G. Ward, First Ward; Ernst Kott and Peter Maltry, Second Ward; John W. Wolff and William J. Kruse, Third Ward; E. B. Bronson and James A. Noble, Fourth Ward; Walter C. Bruce and C. J. Olson, Fifth Ward.

Year 1915—J. Jones, Mayor; Fred Hohmann, City Clerk; Judd H. Matthews, Attorney; Edward N. Stein, Treasurer; James H. Carroll, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Alfred Koenecke and Ilo G. Ward, First Ward; Louis C. Groskopf and Peter Maltry, Second Ward; John W. Wolff and Wm.

J. Kruse, Third Ward; James A. Noble and E. B. Bronson, Fourth Ward; Henry A. Groskopf and Charles J. Olson, Fifth Ward.

Year 1916—J. Jones, Mayor; Louis Staffel, City Clerk; Judd H. Matthews, Attorney; Edward N. Stein, Treasurer; James H. Carroll, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Ilo G. Ward and Alfred Koenecke, First Ward; Arnold Myers and Louis C. Groskopf, Second Ward; Edward E. Hansen and John W. Wolff, Third Ward; E. B. Bronson and James A. Noble, Fourth Ward; Charles J. Olson and Henry A. Groskopf, Fifth Ward.

Year 1917—Edward N. Stein, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; George J. Roll, Treasurer; Paul T. Klenk, Attorney; Peter W. Heintz, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Henry J. Schnurstein and Ilo G. Ward, First Ward; John Mangold and Arnold Myers, Second Ward; William M. Hartzel and Edward E. Hansen, Third Ward; Charles J. Schrage and E. B. Bronson, Fourth Ward; Charles Adams and Charles J. Olson, Fifth Ward.

Year 1918—Edward N. Stein, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; George J. Roll, Treasurer; Paul T. Klenk, Attorney; Peter W. Heintz, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Ilo G. Ward and Henry J. Schnurstein, First Ward; Arnold Myers and John Mangold, Second Ward; John Wolff and William M. Hartzel, Third Ward; E. B. Bronson and Charles J.



Schrage, Fourth Ward; Charles J. Olson and Charles Adams, Fifth Ward.

Year 1919—Edward N. Stein, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; Walter N. Crossland, Treasurer; Roy Massena, Attorney; Peter W. Heintz, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Henry Schnurstein and Ilo G. Ward, First Ward; John Mangold and Arnold Myers, Second Ward; William M. Hartzel and Rocco Guglielmucci, Third Ward; W. T. Davis and E. B. Bronson, Fourth Ward; J. P. Wiessner and Charles J. Olson, Fifth Ward.

Year 1920—Edward N. Stein, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; Walter N. Crossland, Treasurer; Roy Massena, Attorney; Peter W. Heintz, Police Magistrate, Aldermen: Henry Schnurstein and Robert Atkinson, First Ward; John Mangold and Arnold Myers, Second Ward; William M. Hartzel and Rocco Guglielmucci, Third Ward; W. T. Davis and E. B. Bronson, Fourth Ward; Charles J. Olson and J. P. Wiessner, Fifth Ward.

Year 1921—Paul T. Klenk, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; Harvey L. Melvin, Treasurer; Henry Buhring, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Henry Schnurstein and Robert Atkinson, First Ward; George F. Fiedler and Arnold Myers, Second Ward; Charles Andersen and Rocco Guglielmucci, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and E. B. Bronson, Fourth Ward; Edward Hopf and

J. P. Wiessner, Fifth Ward.

Year 1922—Paul T. Klenk, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; Harvey L. Melvin, Treasurer; Henry Buhring, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Alfred L. Koenecke and Henry Schnurstein, First Ward; Arnold Myers and George Fiedler, Second Ward; Rocco Guglielmucci and Charles Andersen, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and Charles F. Schrage, Fourth Ward; Edward Hopf and J. P. Wiessner, Fifth Ward.

Year 1923—Paul T. Klenk, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; George J. Roll, Treasurer, Henry Buhring, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Harold C. Volp and Alfred L. Koenecke, First Ward; George F. Fiedler and Arnold Myers, Second Ward; Charles Andersen and Rocco Guglielmucci, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and Charles F. Schrage, Fourth Ward; J. P. Wiessner and Edward Hopf, Fifth Ward.

Year 1924—Paul T. Klenk, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; George J. Roll, Treasurer; Henry Buhring, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Alfred L. Koenecke and Harold C. Volp, First Ward; Charles Mosel and George Fiedler, Second Ward; Rocco Guglielmucci and Charles Andersen, Third Ward; Charles Schrage and Joseph W. Lentz, Fourth Ward; Edward Hopf and J. P. Wiessner, Fifth Ward.

Year 1925—Paul T. Klenk, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; Willis W. Whitfield, City



Treasurer; Millard A. Rauhoff, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Alfred L. Koenecke and Harold C. Volp, First Ward; Charles J. Mosel and George Fiedler, Second Ward; Rocco Guglielmucci and Louis Brockman, Third Ward; James A. Noble and Joseph W. Lentz, Fourth Ward; John P. Wiessner and Alfred Brunner, Fifth Ward.

Year 1926—Paul T. Klenk, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; Willis P. Whitfield, City Treasurer; Millard A. Rauhoff, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Harold C. Volp and Alfred L. Koenecke, First Ward; George Fiedler and Charles Mosel, Second Ward; Rocco Guglielmucci and Louis Brockman, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and James A. Noble, Fourth Ward; Alfred Brunner and John P. Wiessner, Fifth Ward; Charles Lorenz (1 year term) and A. B. Jerrain (2 year term), Sixth Ward; C. O. Williams (1 year term) and William Gerdes (2 year term), Seventh Ward.

Year 1927—Paul T. Klenk, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; J. P. Wiessner, City Treasurer; Millard A. Rauhoff, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Harold C. Volp and Alfred L. Koenecke, First Ward; Charles Mosel and George F. Fiedler, Second Ward; Rocco Guglielmucci and Louis F. Brockman, Third Ward; James A. Noble and Joseph W. Lentz, Fourth Ward; Alfred Brunner and Rudolph Swanson, Fifth

Ward; A. B. Jerrain and Charles H. Lorenz, Sixth Ward; William Gerdes and C. O. Williams, Seventh Ward.

Year 1928—Paul T. Klenk, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; J. P. Wiessner, City Treasurer; Millard Rauhoff, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Harold C. Volp and Alfred L. Koenecke, First Ward; George F. Fiedler and Charles Mosel, Second Ward; Louis F. Brockman and Rocco Guglielmucci, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and James A. Noble, Fourth Ward; Rudolph Swanson and Alfred Brunner, Fifth Ward; Charles H. Lorenz and Charles A. Dewar, Sixth Ward; C. O. Williams and William J. Gerdes, Seventh Ward.

Year 1929—Frank Kasten, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; Edward H. Hopf, Treasurer; Carl J. Carlson, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Harold C. Volp and Alfred L. Koenecke, First Ward; George F. Fiedler and Charles F. Mosel, Second Ward; L. Brockman and Rocco Guglielmucci, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and James A. Noble, Fourth Ward; Rudolph Swanson and Fred C. Schroeder, Fifth Ward; Charles H. Lorenz and Charles A. Dewar, Sixth Ward; C. O. Williams and William J. Gerdes, Seventh Ward.

Year 1930—Frank Kasten, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; Edward H. Hopf, Treasurer; Carl J. Carlson, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: A. L. Koe-



necke and Harold C. Volp, First Ward; Andrew Myers and George F. Fiedler, Second Ward; Rocco Guglielmucci and L. Brockman, Third Ward; James A. Noble and Joseph W. Lentz, Fourth Ward; Fred C. Schroeder and Rudolph Swanson, Fifth Ward; Charles A. Dewar and C. H. Lorenz, Sixth Ward; Wm. J. Gerdes and C. O. Williams, Seventh Ward.

Year 1931—Frank Kasten, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; John H. Ganzer, Treasurer; Carl J. Carlson, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Harold C. Volp and Alfred L. Koenecke, First Ward; George F. Fiedler and Charles F. Mosel, Second Ward; L. Brockman and Rocco Guglielmucci, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and James A. Noble, Fourth Ward; Rudolph Swanson and Fred Schroeder, Fifth Ward; Charles H. Lorenz and Charles A. Dewar, Sixth Ward; Clarence O. Williams and William J. Gerdes, Seventh Ward.

Year 1932—Frank Kasten, Mayor; George J. Landgraf, City Clerk; John H. Ganzer, Treasurer; Carl J. Carlson, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Alfred L. Koenecke and Harold C. Volp, First Ward; Andrew Myers and George F. Fiedler, Second Ward; Rocco Guglielmucci and L. F. Brockman, Third Ward; James A. Noble and Joseph W. Lentz, Fourth Ward; Fred C. Schroeder and Rudolph Swanson, Fifth Ward; Charles A. Dewar and Charles H. Lorenz, Sixth Ward; William J. Gerdes

and Clarence O. Williams, Seventh Ward.

Year 1933—Frank Kasten, Mayor; Louis F. Schwartz, City Clerk; Fred Rice, Treasurer; Carl J. Carlson, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Louis Rauch and Alfred L. Koenecke, First Ward; George Fiedler and Andrew Myers, Second Ward; Charles A. Ulrich and Rocco Guglielmucci, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and James A. Noble, Fourth Ward; Stewart W. Sandberg and Fred Schroeder, Fifth Ward; August G. Zavadil and Charles A. Dewar, Sixth Ward; Clarence O. Williams and William J. Gerdes, Seventh Ward.

Year 1934—Frank Kasten, Mayor; Louis F. Schwartz, City Clerk; Fred Rice, Treasurer; Carl J. Carlson, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Carlton C. Cook and Louis Rauch, First Ward; Henry J. Goesel and George F. Fiedler, Second Ward; Rocco Guglielmucci and Charles A. Ulrich, Third Ward; Arthur Ladwig and Joseph W. Lentz, Fourth Ward; and Fred C. Schroeder and Stewart W. Sandberg, Fifth Ward; Charles A. Dewar and August G. Zavadil, Sixth Ward; William J. Gerdes and Clarence O. Williams, Seventh Ward.

Year 1935—Fred A. Rice, Mayor; Louis F. Schwartz, City Clerk; Charles J. Andersen, City Treasurer; George E. Heatley, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Louis W. Rauch and John M. Tichan, First Ward; George F. Fiedler and



Henry J. Goesel, Second Ward; Rocco Guglielmucci and Charles Ulrich, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and Arthur C. Ladwig, Fourth Ward; Fred C. Schroeder and Stewart W. Sandberg, Fifth Ward; Thomas J. Scanlan and Harry W. Hattendorf, Sixth Ward; William Gerdes and C. O. Williams, Seventh Ward.

Year 1937—John M. Hart, Mayor; Louis F. Schwartz, City Clerk; August W. Schreiber, City Treasurer; Richard B. Seyfarth, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Louis W. Rauch and Thomas Hayes, First Ward; Henry J. Goesel and George F. Fiedler, Second Ward; August Lietzau and Michael Guglielmucci, Third Ward; Joseph W. Lentz and Arthur C. Ladwig, Fourth Ward; Harry H. Sutton and Otto A. Kasch, Fifth Ward; Thomas J. Scanlan and Charles A. Dewar, Sixth Ward; Clarence O. Williams and William J. Gerdes, Seventh Ward.

Year 1939—Aldermen: Thomas Hayes, First Ward; George F. Fiedler, Second Ward; Gus Lietzau, Third Ward; Frank J. Britt, Fourth Ward; Otto A. Kasch, Fifth Ward; William C. Frey - Joseph A. Mausolf (special election Sept. 1939), Sixth Ward; John E. Jones, Seventh Ward.

Year 1941—John M. Hart, Mayor; Louis F. Schwartz, City Clerk; Edward J. Kordewich, City Treasurer; Richard B. Seyfarth, Police Magistrate; Louis W. Rauch, First Ward; Henry J.

Goesel, Second Ward; Rocco Ziccardo, Third Ward; John W. Lentz, Fourth Ward; Henry H. Sutton, Fifth Ward; Joseph A. Mausolf, Sixth Ward; Clarence O. Williams, Seventh Ward.

Year 1943—Aldermen: Edward J. Schaller, First Ward; George F. Fiedler, Second Ward; Gus Lietzau, Third Ward; Frank J. Britt, Fourth Ward; Otto A. Kasch, Fifth Ward; William C. Frey, Sixth Ward; John E. Jones, Seventh Ward.

Year 1945—John M. Hart, Mayor; Louis F. Schwartz, City Clerk; Emil J. Blatt, City Treasurer; David Cullinan, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Fred J. Horwath, First Ward; Charles F. Mosel, Second Ward; Rocco Ziccardo, Third Ward; Arthur J. Stuebe, Fourth Ward; Elmer E. Johnson and Harry H. Sutton, Fifth Ward; Joseph A. Mausolf, Sixth Ward; Niles Erfft and Clarence O. Williams, Seventh Ward.

Year 1947—Aldermen: Edward J. Schaller, First Ward; Rudolph I. Banovich, Second Ward; Carl Jankowski, Third Ward; John Waugh, Fourth Ward; Elmer E. Johnson, Fifth Ward; William C. Frey, Sixth Ward; Arthur L. Schaller, Seventh Ward.

Year 1949—John M. Hart, Mayor; Louis F. Schwartz, City Clerk; Emil J. Blatt, City Treasurer; David Cullinan, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Fred J. Horwath, First Ward; Charles F. Mosel, Second Ward; Rocco Zic-



cardo, Third Ward; Arthur J. Stuebe, Fourth Ward; Harry H. Sutton, Fifth Ward; Joseph A. Mausolf, Sixth Ward; Niles Erfft, Seventh Ward.

Year 1951—Aldermen: Harry A. Jebsen, First Ward; Rudolph I. Banovich, Second Ward; Milton O. Shrader, Third Ward; John Waugh, Fourth Ward; Elmer E. Johnson and Andrew Baird - (Special election 5-28-51), - Fifth Ward; Nicholas J. Splayt, Sixth Ward; Arthur L. Schaller, Seventh Ward.

Year 1953—John M. Hart, Mayor; Louis F. Schwartz, City Clerk (Passed away 5-25-53) and John C. Joens, appointed as City Clerk 6-8-53; Emil J. Blatt, City Treasurer; Henry J. Gentile, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Lawrence H. Witt, First Ward; Charles F. Mosel, Second Ward; Rocco Ziccardo, Third Ward; Arthur J. Stuebe, Fourth Ward; Burtus Overton, Fifth Ward; Joseph A. Mausolf, Sixth Ward; Niles Erfft, Seventh Ward.

Year 1955—Aldermen: Harry A. Jebsen, First Ward; Salvatore Ruffolo, Second Ward; Milton O. Shrader, Third Ward; Louis D. Lombardo, Fourth Ward; Elmer E. Johnson, Fifth Ward;

Nicholas J. Splayt, Sixth Ward; Arthur L. Schaller, Seventh Ward.

Year 1957—John M. Hart, Mayor; John C. Joens, City Clerk; Emil J. Blatt, City Treasurer; Henry J. Gentile, Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Lawrence H. Witt, First Ward; Charles F. Mosel, Second Ward; Rocco Ziccardo and Joseph T. Swalec, Third Ward; Arthur J. Stuebe, Fourth Ward; Norman Lindstrom, Fifth Ward; Joseph A. Mausolf, Sixth Ward; Niles Erfft, Seventh Ward.

Year 1959—Aldermen: Harry A. Jebsen, First Ward; Salvatore Ruffolo, Second Ward; Joseph T. Swalec, Third Ward; Louis D. Lombardo, Fourth Ward; Robert N. Roegner, Fifth Ward; Nicholas J. Splayt, Sixth Ward; Arthur L. Schaller, Seventh Ward.

Year 1961—John M. Hart, Mayor; John C. Joens, City Clerk; Emil J. Blatt, City Treasurer; Earl S. Ebers, Jr., Police Magistrate; Aldermen: Lawrence H. Witt, First Ward; Arthur G. Colatz, Second Ward; Salvatore Rende, Jr., Third Ward; Mervin Beattie, Fourth Ward; Robert N. Roegner, Fifth Ward; Joseph A. Mausolf, Sixth Ward; Niles Erfft, Seventh Ward.



## OUR THANKS TO ALL

The Lions Club of Blue Island freely acknowledges that any list of committee members could not fully credit all those who are helping to make our 1962 Fourth of July Celebration the great success we hope it will be.

Listed below are the chairmen and vice-chairmen, in that order, of committees heading our project. Each man gladly joins our general expression of thanks to the hundreds who are working together for the greater good of our community.

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*Honorary Chairman*

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Walter Briody

### *JUNIOR PARADE*

Leonard Bartle  
James Kennedy

### *FINANCE*

Lester Catlin  
E. J. Anhorn

### *THE B.I. STORY*

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Harold Volp

Henry G. Baumann  
*General Chairman*

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Henry Van Westrop  
Tom Laydon

### *TRAFFIC*

Edward Marcinski  
Earl Rousseau

### *GROUND*

Ray Termunde  
Thomas Schoeneck

### *EVENING PROGRAM*

Dr. D. L. Doornkaat  
Lynn Burno

## SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Further, we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to the following men and women, all members of the Community High School faculty, who have contributed so very much of their time and their talents in writing "The Blue Island Story": Clyde W. Blanke, Mary K. Dewey, Kathryn A. Haebich, Marcel E. Pacatte, and Joseph Ziemba.

The Lions Club of Blue Island



# Lions Club of Blue Island

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Immediate Past President .....	Thomas Laydon
First Vice President .....	Edward Klocke
Second Vice President .....	Leonard Bartle
Third Vice President .....	Henry vanWestrop
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Treasurer .....	Frederic C. Madsen
Lion Tamer .....	Edwin C. Hempel
Tail Twister .....	Dr. C. E. Folkers
Chaplain .....	Rev. C. A. Chamberlin
Initiating Officer .....	Lloyd Holmlin
Pianist .....	Lynn Burno
Song Leader .....	George Porter

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Henry G. Baumann	George Porter
Edward Marcinski	Harold Volp

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Program .....	Edward E. Klocke
Bulletin Editor .....	Leonard A. Bartle
Attendance .....	Henry vanWestrop
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Lions Information .....	Thomas Laydon
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Exceptional Children .....	Russell J. Colvin
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