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# HONOR CELEBRATE BUILD

*An historical overview of Champaign, Illinois*

edited by Dan McCollum



**Our Best Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow**  
Champaign's 150th Anniversary Celebration

SALES & SERVICE 300 Carriage Center Court | Champaign, IL 61820 | 217/352-0462 | [fordcityusa.com](http://fordcityusa.com)

[champaign150.com](http://champaign150.com)

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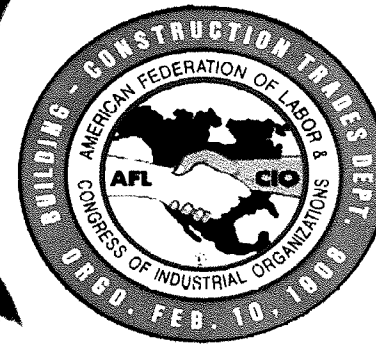
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- Glaziers #1168
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- Ironworkers #380
- Millwrights #1051
- Operators #841
- Painters #363
- Plumbers #149
- Roofers #97
- Terrazzo #218
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SP21023



The City of Champaign is celebrating its 150th Anniversary from March 2010 thru March 2011. I hope you will share in the excitement as we journey through the years paying tribute to Champaign's best yesterday, today and tomorrow.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the 150th Steering Committee members and subcommittee members for their hard work and time spent planning the many upcoming events. A special thanks also to Dannel McCollum for his energy and enthusiasm in putting together this historical magazine and to the News-Gazette staff for their assistance and layout expertise in the production.

I encourage you to join the fun and excitement throughout the year - watch for the upcoming activities and become involved by visiting our website at: [Champaign150.com](http://Champaign150.com)

Gerald J. Schweighart  
Mayor, City of Champaign

We stand today on the shoulders of yesterday with hope to build a great legacy for tomorrow

## CHAMPAIGN 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION STEERING COMMITTEE

Since April 2008, a number of community members have dedicated their time and talents by meeting regularly to plan the 150th celebration. Committee volunteers include representatives from many community groups, including the Champaign Park District, The News-Gazette, WILL, Parkland College, the University of Illinois, Unit 4 School District, current and former elected officials, City of Champaign staff and others.

**Robert Dodd**, Mayor 1983 - 1987 (Co-chair)

**Bobbie Herakovich**, Executive Director, Champaign Park District (Co-chair)

### ELECTED OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES

**Gerald J. Schweighart**, Mayor

**Michael LaDue**, Deputy Mayor

**Dannel McCollum**, Mayor 1987-1999

**William Bland**, Mayor 1975-1979

**Virgil Wikoff**, Mayor 1967-1975

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Robert Dodd**, Co-chair

**Bobbie Herakovich**, Co-chair

**Gerald J. Schweighart**

**Dorothy Ann David**

**LaEisha Meaderds**

**Fred Stavins**

**Mable Thomas**

**Peggy Wade**

**Joan Walls**

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

*Historical Committee:* **T.J. Blakeman**, Chair

*Fundraising Committee:* **John Frauenhoffer and Richard Schnuer**, Co-chairs

*Marketing Committee:* **Jeff Grant and Dena Schumacher**, Co-chairs

*Volunteer Committee:* **David Genty**, Chair

*Special Events Committee:* **Joe DeLuce**, Chair

*Legacy Fountain Committee:* **Craig Rost and Kathryn Foster**, Co-Chairs

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If you would like to get involved or learn more, go to [www.champaign150.com](http://www.champaign150.com)

Produced by The News-Gazette. John R. Foreman, Publisher



# Champaign celebrates 150th with three signature events

## Honor Yesterday. An Historical Tribute

March 19-April 7, 2010

Take a walk through time to experience the rich diversity that exemplifies our heritage. From the founding of Champaign to the 150th year tribute, an historical exhibit will chronicle Champaign's story through magnificent narratives and artifacts. The three-week exhibit is free and open to the public and provides group tours for schools, civic groups, churches, service clubs, and others. Call 403-8710 to schedule your tour.

- Monday-Friday: Group Hours 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Public Hours 4 to 8 p.m.
- Saturday: Public Hours 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sunday: Public Hours 1 to 5 p.m.

## Celebrate Today. Champaign Music Festival

July 9 & 10, 2010

A birthday salute to our community's success will play out in this downtown Champaign Music Festival weekend celebration. Join us as we celebrate with great music during a music crawl through Downtown Champaign on Friday night and then enjoy musical acts on three entertainment stages on Saturday.

- Friday: 6 to 11 p.m.
- Saturday: Noon to 11 p.m.

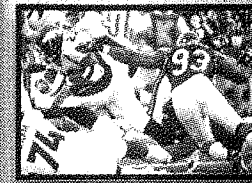
## Build Tomorrow. A Legacy Dedication

March 11, 2011

A gift to future residents of Champaign, a legacy project celebration culminates the year's events. This celebration, held at the Historic Virginia Theatre and Downtown Plaza, includes attendance of elected state officials, recognition of pioneer families, a time capsule dedication, legacy fountain ceremony, and an art exhibit by Champaign youth.

- Monday-Friday: Group Hours 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Public Hours 4 to 8 p.m.
- Saturday: Public Hours 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sunday: Public Hours 1 to 5 p.m.

**We look forward to celebrating Champaign's 150th with you.**



2002 • Chicago Bears play season in Memorial Stadium

2007 • Special census, Champaign population 75,254



2008 • (January 6) Third Champaign public library opens



• (November 7) Metropolitan Building destroyed by fire

• Memorial Stadium renovation completed at cost of \$116,000,000

2009-2010 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois (UIUC) 39,786

• Completion of Boneyard Phase II, University Ave. to Scott Park.

# Notable people and pioneering families sought

Many notable people were born in Champaign or spent significant time here, advancing the community in some substantial way, or bringing honor through outstanding achievement.

Pioneer families have contributed in some substantial way to the well being of the community as a whole, and throughout generations. They will be recognized at the

end of our yearlong celebration on March 11, 2011.

We have begun to compile a list at [www.champaign150.com](http://www.champaign150.com)

If you know of more Champaign pioneering people and families that should be on this list please contact us at [info@champaign150.com](mailto:info@champaign150.com)



Joan Severns, elected first female mayor of Champaign, 1979  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

ahead on its own. Then two years later, in 1857, the Depot incorporated separately as the Village of West Urbana. The fears of the Depot residents were totally unfounded as the population of the Depot area quickly exceeded that of Urbana.

Urbana, according to Cunningham, struggled during those early years. Rather than doing what Homer had done about the same time, and later, St. Joseph, Urbana refused to move to the tracks. Instead, it struggled to build its own branch line, crossing the Boneyard on the historic stone arch bridge. It also successfully fought off an effort to move the courthouse west to what is now West Side Park in Champaign. As part of that effort, West Urbana moved to incorporate as the City of Champaign. The first incorporation vote was held in 1860. It was voided by the State because no charter had been issued. The locals

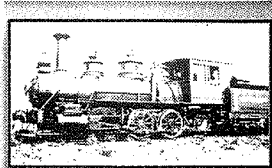
still proceeded to act like a city with a new name and the city seal to this day bears the date 1860. A year later, the citizens got it right with a charter and a second vote.

#### A UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Thus began the joint journeys of Champaign and Urbana. Following the coming of the railroad, the next big development was the coming of the Illinois Industrial University. While agitation for Federal land grants to support colleges had been around for a number of years, it was not until the presidency of Abraham Lincoln and the absence of the congressional delegations from the Southern States that the idea became a reality. However, it was not necessarily fore-ordained that such an institution would come to Champaign-Urbana.

The State Legislature accepted the land grant for the University; then came the contest as to where it should be located. At least two legends have come down through the years related to the location of the institution. The most common one was that Jacksonville got the School for the Deaf and Champaign-Urbana got the University. The other (more local) was C-U got the University and Danville got the Veteran's Hospital. Both are untrue. The latter is clearly wrong in that the University

Continues on page 8



1854 • (July 24) First train reaches Urbana Station

1855 • Census: Champaign County, 6,565; West Urbana, 416

• (March 2) West Urbana P.O. established

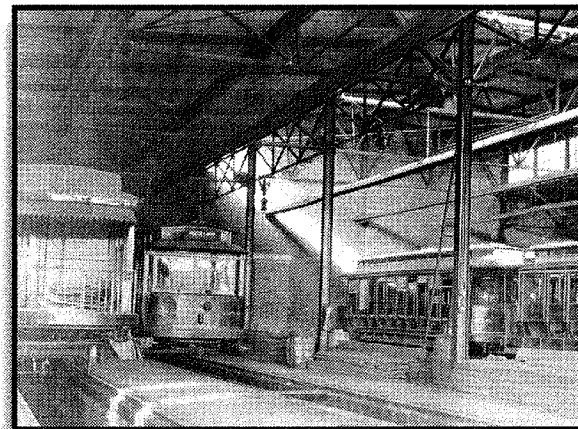
1856 • (June) The first telegraph line was completed to West Urbana

• First Congregational (Goose Pond) Church completed; it served as an important meeting place for the new settlement at the Depot

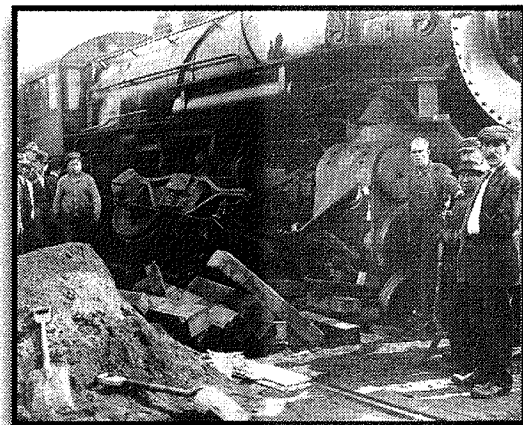
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Illinois Industrial University old dormitory  
Photo courtesy of University of Illinois Archives



Hickory Street Trolley Barn 1910  
Photo courtesy of Champaign County Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois



Train derailment at University Ave. 1902  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

1998 • (September 21) Champaign City Council approves historic preservation component in the zoning ordinance; the first in the area

1999 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois 1999-2000 (UIUC) was 36,690



• Boneyard Phase I (Campustown reach) completed

• City forgives loan to Virginia not-for-profit as theater is transferred to the Champaign Park District

2000 • Census: Champaign County, 179,669; Champaign, 67,518; Urbana, 36,395

• Expanded Police Station at University and First completed

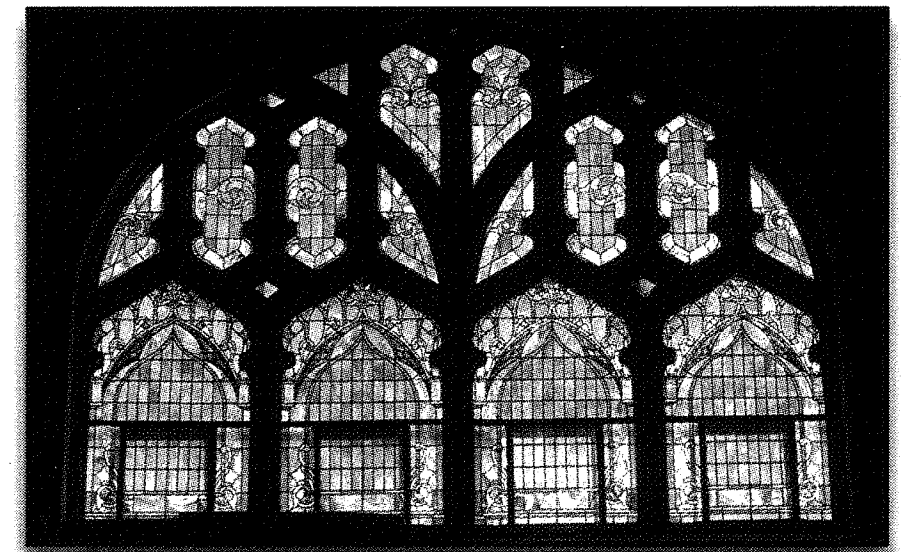
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# Champaign Churches sought

This is only a partial listing of Champaign churches based upon those who responded to a recent mail survey. To include your church on this

list for future publications, please contact us at info@champaign150.com or call us at 403-8715

Church Name	Year		Year
Community United Church	1843	St. Andrew's Lutheran Church	1945
First Presbyterian Church	1850	Temple Baptist Church	1950
St. John's Lutheran Missouri Synod	1855	First Christian	1953
First United Methodist Church	1856	Hessel Park Christian Reformed	1955
St. Mary Catholic Church	1857	Westminster Presbyterian	1956
Bethel AME Church	1863	Faith United Methodist Church	1959
First Baptist Church	1864	Seventh Day Adventist	1961
St. Peter's United Church of Christ	1865	Garden Hills Baptist Church - Southern	1962
Salem Baptist Church	1866	First Church of God	1963
Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church	1870	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church ELCA	1963
University Place Christian	1883	Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox	1964
Salvation Army	1889	St. Matthew Catholic Church	1965
Sinai Temple	1904	Faith Baptist	1976
Grace Lutheran Church ELCA	1911	New Hope Church of God in Christ	1976
Holy Cross Catholic Church	1912	Alpha and Omega Church of Jesus Christ	1979
University Baptist Church	1912	Grace Community Church	1980
Mt. Olive Baptist Church	1916	Meadowbrook Community Church	1980
First Church of the Nazarene	1923	Champaign Church of Christ	1983
Pilgrim Missionary Baptist	1925	Friendship Lutheran Church of Joy	1991
Jehovah's Witnesses	1928	Mattis Avenue Free Methodist	1992
Stratford Park Bible Chapel	1930	Restoration Urban Ministries	1993
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	1941	New Horizon United Methodist Church	1996
University Lutheran Student Missouri Synod	1941	Prairie Zen Center-	1996
		Chabad Center for Jewish Life	2003
		Unity Baptist Church	2004
		All Soul's Presbyterian	2007

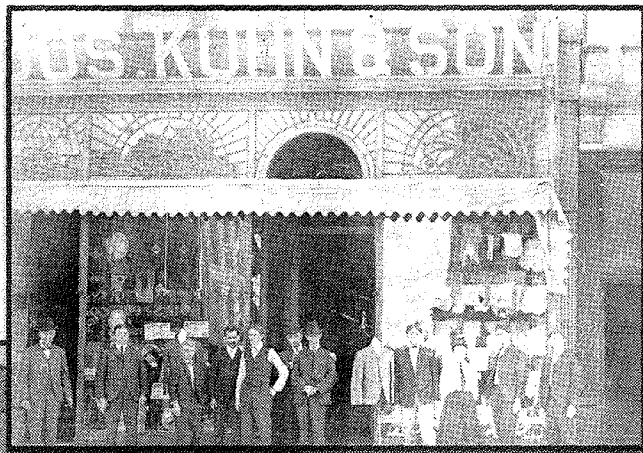


Church windows, First Methodist Church  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

Joseph Kuhn  
1925-1935



Joseph Kuhn & Co. clothing store located at 33 - 35 Main Street, Champaign.  
Recent photo by Charles Webster



1995 • City Council loans \$500,000 to a not-for-profit to purchase the Virginia Theater

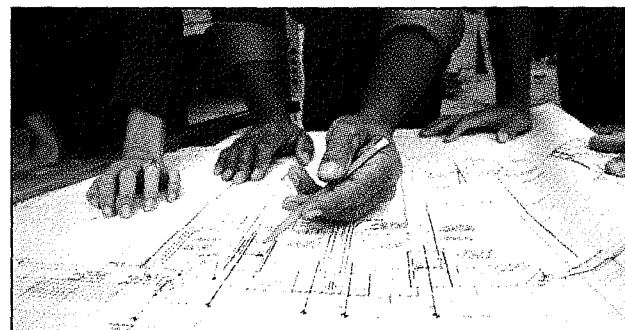


1998 • Stratton and Barkstall elementary schools opened



(January 28) President Bill Clinton visits Champaign

Continues on Pg 59



Congratulations to the City of Champaign on its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!  
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If your family size is:	And your family income is at or below:				
	\$21,660	\$24,909	\$29,241	\$32,490	\$43,320
1	\$21,660	\$24,909	\$29,241	\$32,490	\$43,320
2	\$29,140	\$33,511	\$39,339	\$43,710	\$58,280
3	\$36,620	\$42,113	\$49,437	\$54,930	\$73,240
4	\$44,400	\$50,715	\$59,535	\$66,150	\$88,200
5	\$51,580	\$59,317	\$69,633	\$77,370	\$103,160
6	\$59,060	\$67,919	\$79,731	\$88,590	\$118,120
7	\$66,540	\$76,521	\$89,829	\$99,810	\$133,080
8	\$74,020	\$85,123	\$99,927	\$111,030	\$148,040
You receive a discount of:	100%	75%	50%	25%	-
If your family income is below 400% of federal poverty level, your Carle Foundation Hospital out-of-pocket medical expenses are limited to 40% of gross income.					
% of Federal Poverty Level	200%	230%	270%	300%	400%

Additional discount options:

- Regardless their level of income, all uninsured patients who pay their bill within 30 days receive a 25% discount.
- Uninsured patients who meet certain income, asset and residency requirements may qualify for an uninsured discount of 57% to 100%.

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was a state decision made in 1867, whereas the latter was a 1898 Federal pork barrel project of Joseph G. Cannon, the House of Representatives member, and later Speaker (1903), from Danville.

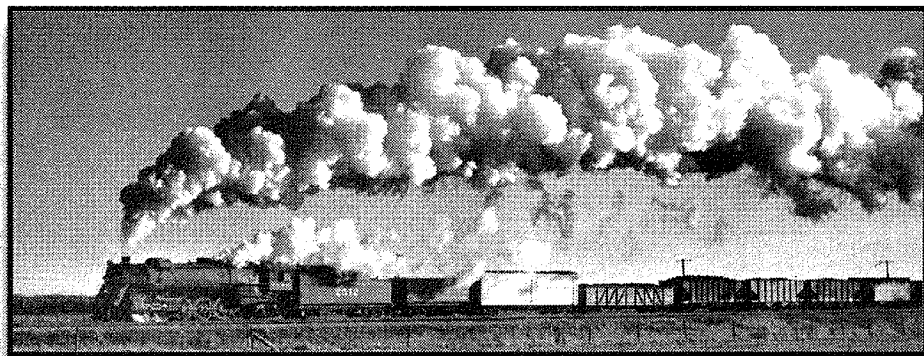
The fact is, the University came to Champaign County because the lobbying effort generalled by Clark Robinson Griggs was superior to those of Logan, McLean and Morgan counties. But what made this county even a contender was a failed real estate development just east of Wright Street. Jonathan Stoughton, a promoter, sold investors on a land development scheme with a large "Seminary" as an amenity. A large building was indeed constructed facing what came to be

known as University Avenue. With no plan as to its use, it sat vacant until someone came up with the great idea of offering it to the state as part of a bid for the location for the Industrial University. The scheme worked.

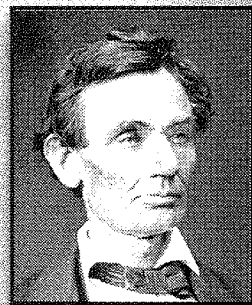
Without question, the railroad and the University have made Champaign what it is today. The answer to the question of where the place would be today without the latter is, it would be a place like Paxton. Not that there is anything wrong about being Paxton, it would just be very different and obviously very much smaller.

And the difference extends to the character

Continues on page 9



Illinois Central freight train 1947  
Photo by Charles Webster



1856 • (June) Abraham Lincoln speaks at the Goose Pond Church (photo courtesy Boston Museum)

1857 • (April 27) Village of West Urbana incorporated, population 1,202

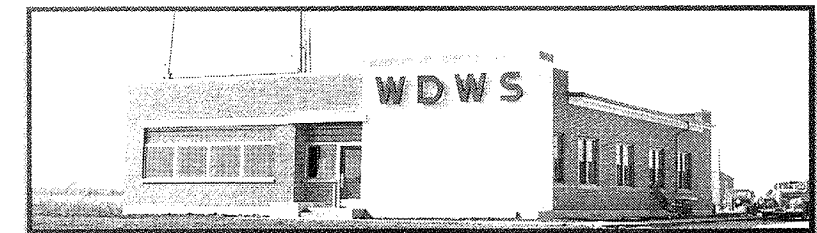
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1990 • (February 14) The great ice storm  
• (February 17) Robeson's Department Store closes

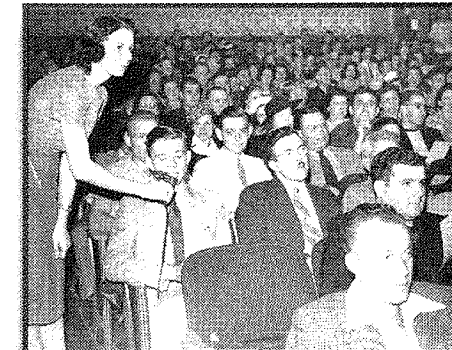


1994 • Bonnie Blair wins 5 gold medals in the Olympics making a total of 6

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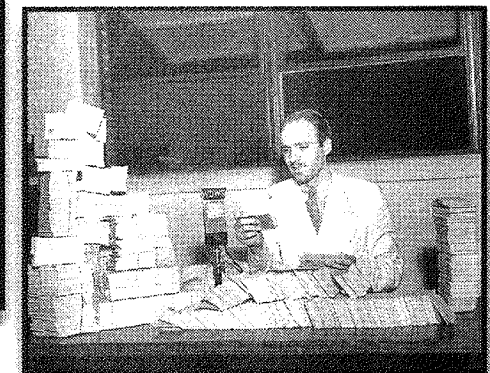


WDWS  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



Louis Schmitt staff announcer holds the mike during a WDWS audience participation quiz show at the Virginia Theater in 1939 or 40

Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



WDWS announcer  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

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1952-1975



Dick English  
Vice-President  
1952-1975



Ed Hynds  
President  
1975-2002



Michael Hynds  
President  
2002-Present

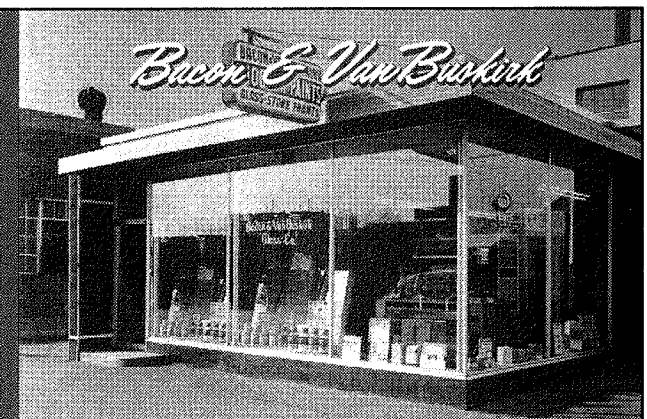
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CHAMPAIGN'S 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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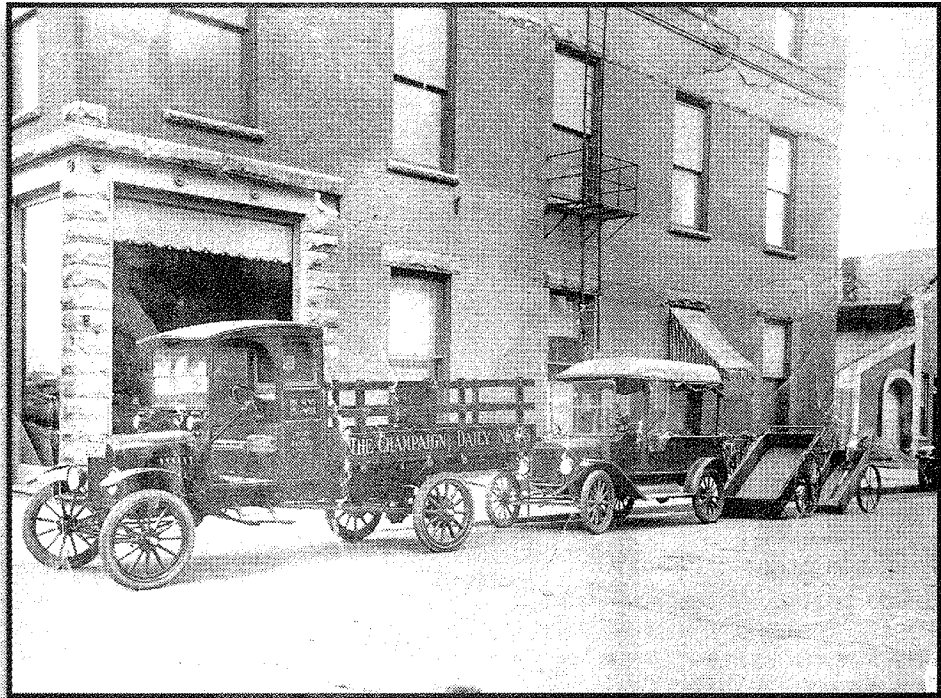
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CHAMPAIGN'S 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



The Champaign News-Gazette in 1919. Only one floor of the building was in use at this time. The stable in the right background was torn down in 1938 and also the 3rd and 4th floors were removed.

- 1986 • Pedestrian Mall removed, Neil Street reopened, becomes one-way south
- 1987 • (December 27) Downtown fire destroyed the One Main block
- 1989 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois 1989-90 (UIUC) was 35,032
  - Sale by city of Burnham Hospital to Servantcor (Mercy Hospital)
- 1990 • Census: Champaign County, 173,025; Champaign, 63,502, Urbana, 36,344

Continues on Pg 57



- 1857 • Cattle Bank opens (closed 1861)
- 1858 • Census: West Urbana, 1,298



- (Sept. 23) Stephen A. Douglas at the Depot en route to the fair grounds

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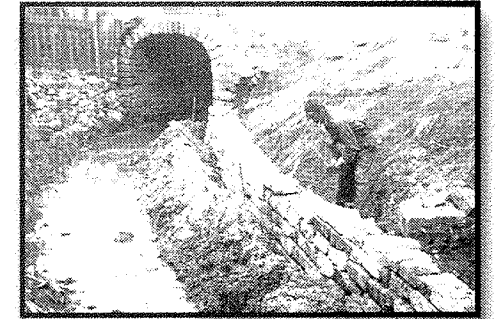
of the twin cities of Champaign and Urbana. The presence of the railroad guaranteed that Champaign would become the business center of the community. The University's impact has been more pronounced on Urbana, hence the "gown" orientation of that community.

It is often said how great it is to live in a university community, especially when the students are not around. No doubt this relates to the contrast between the amazing cultural amenities versus the congestion of having the city overrun with tens of thousands of students. But one is just not possible without the other.

#### THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE WAR

During the late '20s, the gilded age was fast drawing to close. University salaries were not high, but they were steady. Compared to most places, it was not a bad place to be during the Depression. Although housing construction ceased for the most part, the Public Works Administration helped to keep things going. During this period, Champaign got a new City Building, the school district a new junior high school (now Central High) and the University a

Continues on page 10



WPA worker improving Boneyard 1935  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois



WPA storm drain improvement at Prospect & Vine  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

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(still growing strong with you at 177 years)

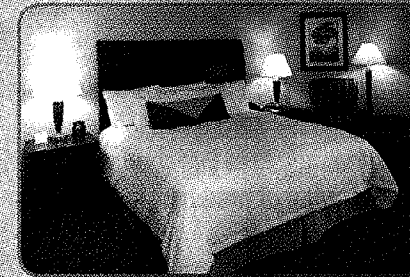
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from the  
Urbana Park District

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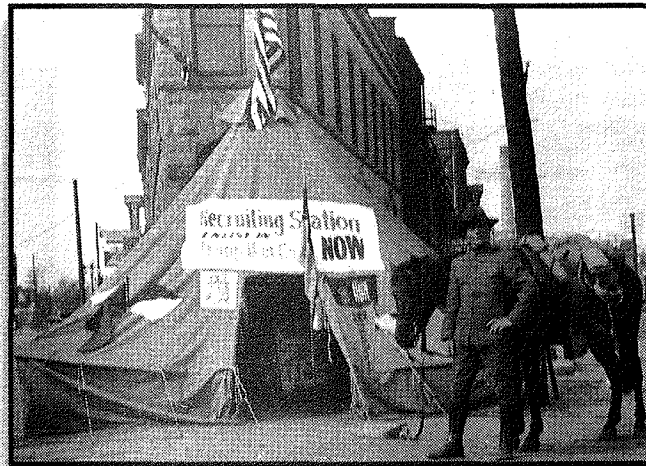
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Union Building. Employment remained relatively high. The coming of World War II, brought the economy back. What most long time residents, especially those who grew up during the Depression, remember was that for the years 1929 to 1945, little changed, first because of the economic collapse, second because the resources of the nation went into the war effort. It was



**Calvary recruiting station in front of Flat Iron Building in WW1**  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

also during those war years that blacks were first admitted to the Crystal Lake Park Swimming Pool, the only public pool in the twin cities — 'bout time.

Earlier in the 20th century, subdivisions began to be platted and developed outside, either at or near the city limits. Most were gradually annexed as residents wanted city services, especially fire protection. Unfortunately, many had substandard infrastructure, streets, sidewalks etc. The largest of these was centered a short distance south of the city around the Illinois Central station of Savoy. Initially, Champaign provided fire protection to the development in anticipation of ultimate annexation to the city. When it became clear that Savoy had no intention of annexing to the city, fire protection was withdrawn and Savoy, in 1956, incorporated separately somewhat complicating the urban scene.

Continues on page 11

- 1858 • (Sept. 24) Abraham Lincoln at the Depot en route to the fair grounds
- 1859 • (Fall) Township system of local government approved by county voters
- 1859 • Union (predecessor of the News-Gazette) moves to West Urbana
- 1860 • Census: Champaign County, 14,629
- (April 20) First election to create Champaign City (voided by State)

CONTINUES ON PG 11

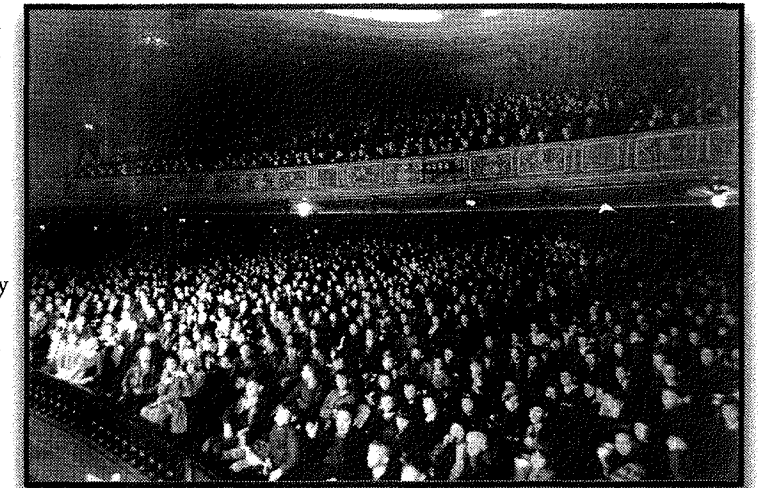
- 1980 • Census: Champaign County, 168,392; Champaign, 58,391, Urbana, 35,978
- Second merger vote to unite Champaign and Urbana (failed)
- 1983 • (June 20) New Police Station at University and First open for business
- 1985 • Dedication of the MLK Subdivision in former Oak Ash Area
- (September) Farm Aid Concert held at Memorial Stadium

Continues on Pg 56

beautiful theatre with a rich link to our past.

In addition to hosting great performances, and live music, the Virginia Theatre still offers movies on a regular basis, providing community members an opportunity to watch new releases or classic favorites on the big screen in this historic facility. The theatre is also home to many performing arts groups including Champaign Urbana Theatre Company and Champaign-Urbana's Dance Arts Program as well as EbertFest, the annual festival hosted by local favorite, Roger Ebert, recognizing his picks for films he thinks have been overlooked by the film industry. This event brings thousands of people to the community from all over the world.

Now nearing its own 100 year anniversary, the Champaign Park District currently holds



**Children's Christmas show at the Virginia Theater, 1934**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

60 parks totaling over 600 acres and serves area residents with over 1200 programs and special events each year. With specialty facilities like the historic Virginia Theatre, the Sholem Aquatic Center, Prairie Farms and the Tennis Center, the Champaign Park District has something for everyone.

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financial responsibilities and is governed by 5, local residents who are elected into office for 6-year terms

In 1966, the Champaign City Council transferred the functions of its Playground and Recreation Board and the special tax related thereto to the CPD. Since that time, the those functions have been vastly improved and expanded upon.

One of the first projects for the new board was the acquisition of nearly 80 acres of land that would later become Centennial Park. This park was planned cooperatively with the Champaign School District which owned 40 acres of property adjacent to the land. The result would become a unique integration of facilities on both properties.

In 1985 the Champaign and Urbana Park District joined forces to create what is now known as the Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation Program. The resolution that passed provided the district the authority to "levy and collect a tax of not to exceed .02% of the value, as equalized or assessed by the Department of Revenue of all taxable property in said Park District for the purpose of funding the District's share of the expenses of jointly providing, with the Urbana Park District, recreational programs for the handicapped under Section 8-10b of the

Park District Code of the State of Illinois." The program currently serves nearly 400 special needs residents every year, providing them with quality recreational opportunities with the assistance of specially trained staff.

The Champaign Park District also maintains pieces of history in some of the facilities it owns. The Springer Cultural Center, located in the heart of downtown Champaign, was originally constructed as a post office in 1904 and was later listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. The architectural design represents the Renaissance Revival style with its aesthetics emphasizing simplicity and order. Springer is currently the main location for cultural arts programs within the District and houses cultural, recreational, and educational programs for all ages as well as workshops, lectures, exhibits, and performances.

Another historical facility located in downtown Champaign and owned by the Champaign Park District is the Virginia Theatre which has been part of this community's history and quality of life since 1921. Built in the tradition of great vaudeville-movie palaces of the 1920's and early 30's and now on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia is a

Continues on page 55

1970s • City of Champaign begins the Oak-Ash Urban Renewal clearance project

1979 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois 1979-80 was 32,658



• (May) Joan Seaverns becomes the first female mayor of Champaign

CONTINUES ON PG 55

1860 • (April 28) Post Office name changed to "Champaign"

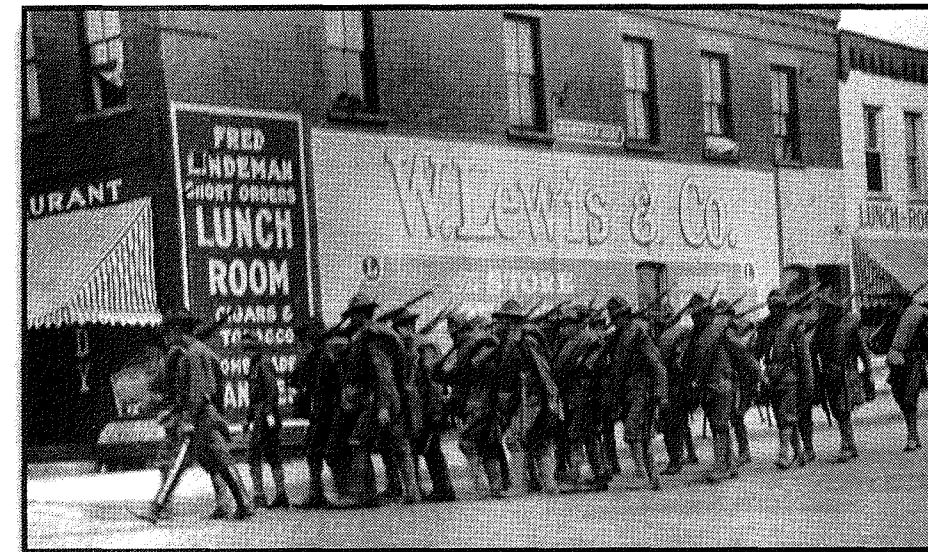


• (November 6) Celebration at the Doane House of Lincoln's election

1861 • (March 25) 2nd election voters approved charter for City of Champaign

1862 • President Lincoln approves the Morrill Land Grant College Act

CONTINUES ON PG 12



World War I soldiers in downtown Champaign on Chester Street, turning north onto Neil Street.

Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

### THE LAST HALF-CENTURY

Following World War II, Champaign saw great changes. Many downtown buildings were given new facades to look new. Many were torn down either for parking lots or in one case, for a new department store (Grants). New housing

developments pushed city limits north, west and south. In 1953 and again 1980, referenda were held to merge Champaign and Urbana; both times the measures were rejected in both

Continues on page 12

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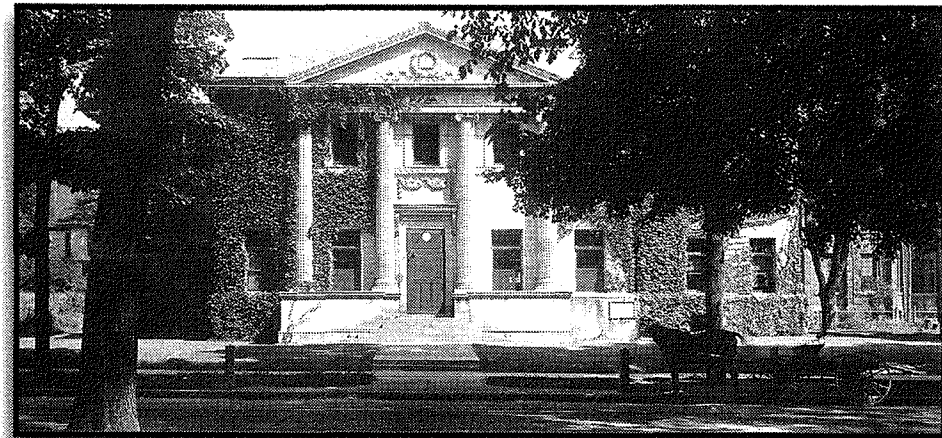
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**Burnham Athenaeum**  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

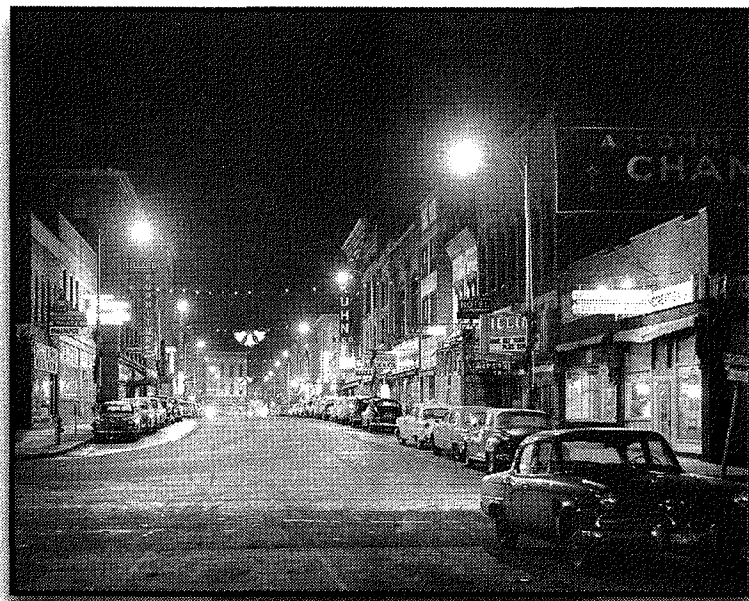
cities. Champaign voters did approve a change from commission to council-manager form of government.

The latter half of the last century also saw a major expansion of city facilities. The Burnham Athenaeum was replaced by a modern, though flawed, library building on Green Street. The Fire Department vacated the City Building for a new main station on Randolph Street. Next to go was the Police Department which moved to a new facility on First Street. During this period, a new public works facility was built. At the end of this period, the fine art deco City Building was given a thorough overhaul without compromising its classic integrity. Faced with growing debt, the City sold Burnham Hospital in the early '90s, the

oldest such institution in the county.

It was a time of great losses of vintage buildings which triggered serious concern over what was left. The council acted to preserve what remained of the historic brick streets and the vintage street lights of the near west neighborhoods. In its major revision of the zoning ordinance, the city council included a historic preservation component.

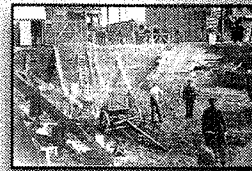
At the beginning of the 21st century, the Champaign citizens have yet a newer library without many of the limitations of its predecessor. They look to the future with considerable optimism in a city in which it is comfortable to live and work, with big city amenities and a smaller city feel.



**Main Street at Christmas**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

1863 • The Urbana Railroad Company line completed from West Urbana to the courthouse

1865 • Census: Champaign County, 21,124



1865 • B.F. Harris founds First National Bank

• (October 10) Champaign County voters approve \$100,000 in bonds for an agricultural college. The funds were pledged to purchase the Urbana and Champaign Institute, acquire a farm and meet other expenses required to obtain a state college for Champaign County.



• Joseph Kuhn opens his clothing store

CONTINUES ON PG 13

1976 • Sears and Pennys move to MarketPlace from downtown Champaign



• (March 6) President Gerald Ford visits Champaign

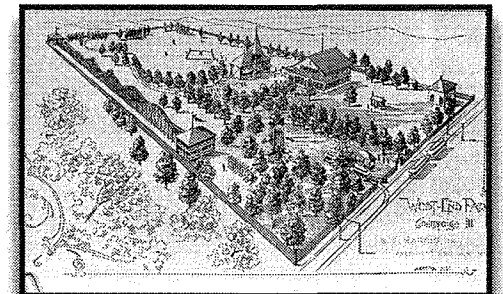
1977 • (November) Second Champaign Public Library opens

CONTINUES ON PG 54

in the late 1800's and it was from there where concerts and other events were held. One of the most notable events was a speech given in 1912 by Presidential candidate Theodore Roosevelt. The fountain, sculpture and bandstand were the beginning of a now much celebrated sculpture and monument program within the Champaign Park District.

The Champaign Park District (CPD) actually first organized as a Township Park District in 1911. It had limited taxing power and depended on donations of land to establish the park system. The majority of Champaign's current parks were acquired through donations and in the mid 1920's parks that were owned by the City of Champaign were transferred to the Park District. Since then all public parks have been held by the District. The first tax levy was made in 1912 and collected in 1913. Of note, the Wabash and Big Four Railroads interposed tax objections at the June term in 1913.

In 1951 a new community center was opened and would serve as the launching pad for Champaign's first structured recreational programs. Located on North Market Street, the building was the former site for the Church of the Brethren. Activities in those first years included adult square dancing, social clubs, drama club for grade school aged children and neighborhood



**Architect's drawings for proposed West End Park Amusement Center**  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

night programs. The building was purchased through a public subscription drive and much of the rehabilitation was completed by volunteers.

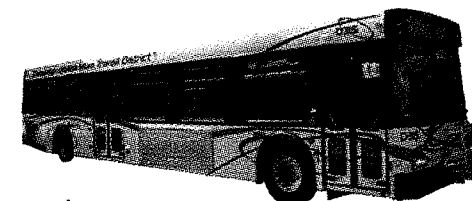
By the middle 1950's it became evident that due to the exploding growth of the community and the limited taxing powers of the Township Park District, the current structure was inadequate to meet the needs of residents in the community. Therefore in 1957 The District was reorganized as a General Park District by a referendum of voters. The CPD has since been a local unit of government with its own legal and

Continues on page 54

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**Farmer's Market**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



- 1974 • Construction begins on Market Place Mall. (Photo from Gleissmann Studios)
- (May 19) Open house at new permanent Parkland campus



- 1975 • Neil Street Pedestrian Mall from Church Street to Logan opens

CONTINUES ON PG 53

# TMAH

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- 1867 • (February 18) The Urbana and Champaign Railway, Gas and Electric Company was incorporated. It was the precursor of the Illinois Power Company
- (February 28) Gov. Richard Oglesby approved bill incorporating the Illinois Industrial University
- (February 29) Illinois House approves Champaign County site for the Industrial University by a vote of 77-10. Several days later the Senate agreed, 18-7.



- A volunteer fire company organized in Champaign
- 1868 • (March 2) Illinois Industrial University admits first class of 77 students
- (April 28) Champaign Library Association formed

CONTINUES ON PG 14

## The end of a divided city: raising the tracks

By Dannel McCollum

When the Chicago Branch of the Illinois Central was built, it traversed a virtual wilderness. The rails brought people; stations became towns such as Paxton and Champaign. These towns quickly expanded to cover both sides of the tracks. As the tracks were laid on grade, both towns were effectively divided by passing trains. With the increasing pedestrian traffic, the growing prevalence of automobiles, and the need for access across the tracks for public safety reasons, especially for fire-fighting, as well as

convenience necessitated a strong need to deal with the situation.

This was addressed by a massive project in 1924. To create grade separation between the trains and surface traffic, the railroad excavated a trench through Paxton, lowering the tracks well below street level with bridging over the tracks. The massive amounts of excavated earth were transported by rail 30 miles south to Champaign where it was used as fill to elevate the tracks, creating the underpasses at University Ave.,

Continues on page 14

## What's in a name?

By Dannel McCollum

There is only one municipality in the United States with the name of Champaign. Contrast that with 19 Springfields, 10 Danvilles, nine Decatur, and seven Bloomingtons. There are four Urbanas and one Urbana. There are even two Peorias. There is only one municipality named Champaign. The name Champaign first appears in the U.S. as the name of a county in Ohio. That county, in its original form, was established in 1805, just two years after Ohio statehood. The town of Urbana was laid out there in that same year. By the 1820s, Urbana, Ohio, had become the county seat.

In 1833, those names were to jump a state to land in East-Central Illinois. At that time residents of the Big Grove area petitioned to have a county formed from an area to the west of Vermilion County, Illinois. The person approached was John Vance, the state senator from Vermilion County. It just so happened that John Vance hailed from Urbana, Champaign County, Ohio. He had come west to manage the Salt Works in Vermilion County and when that was no longer profitable, he went into politics. Vance was amenable, asking only the honor of

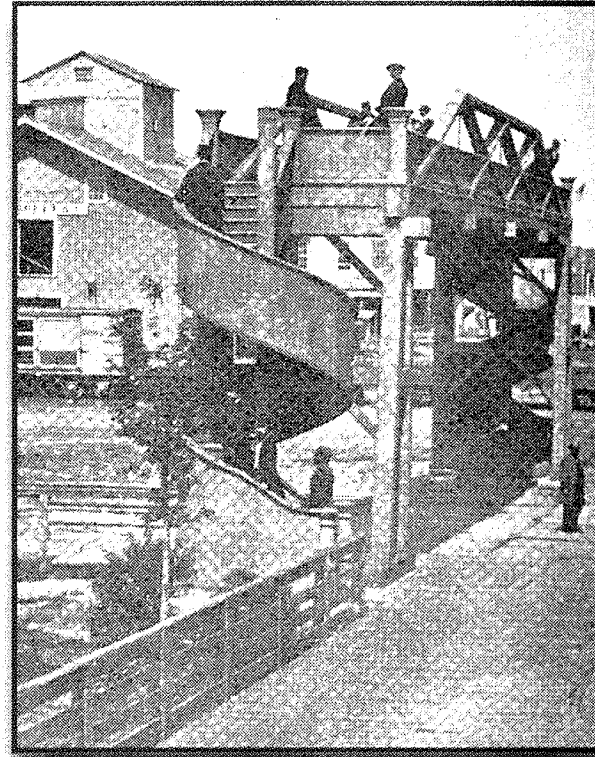
naming the county and county seat after his home in Ohio. The new county took the western ten miles from Vermilion County, which instead received a six-mile strip to the north.

When the Illinois Central Railroad came through in 1854, it missed the county seat by over a mile. A settlement grew up around the tracks which came to be named West Urbana after the its new post office. The following year, an effort was made to incorporate the entire area, the hamlet of Urbana and the settlement by the tracks into a single municipality. Opposition from the depot area caused Urbana to incorporate separately. In a very short time, the population of the settlement by the tracks exceeded that of the old town.

The first plat west of the Railroad Addition had a two block area set aside for a "public square," now the east half of West Side Park. It would seem that the developers anticipated getting the courthouse relocated from Urbana. The idea gained momentum in West Urbana and a vote was taken in the village to change the name to Champaign, presumably to forward the enterprise. Older residents of the county defeated the courthouse move, but the new name of "Champaign" stuck.

Logan, Springfield and Green Streets.

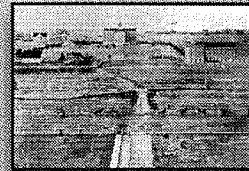
The project did not stop there. In that same year, the existing brick railroad station was put on rails and pulled north 114 feet. An elegant new station was built utilizing a portion of the imprint of the old station and much more. Certainly the student traffic to the University of Illinois in part justified the new station, but the large crowds drawn from Chicago to attend football games at the then new Memorial Stadium was also a factor. Red Grange inaugurated the new facility by running wild against Michigan to baptize the new stadium. Where is Red today when we need him?



**Old bridge over Illinois Central tracks**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

1868 • Fire in the downtown destroys 28 buildings in block bordered by Market Walnut, University and Main

1869 • Arrival of the Indianapolis, Bloomington and Western Railway



1869-70 • Enrollment at the Illinois Industrial University was 180

CONTINUES ON PG 15

1971 • (August 2) The Mass Transit District took over operation of the bus line from the private corporation

1973 • (September 11) First classes at permanent campus of Parkland College

• NW Diversion Structure from North Branch of Boneyard to Saline

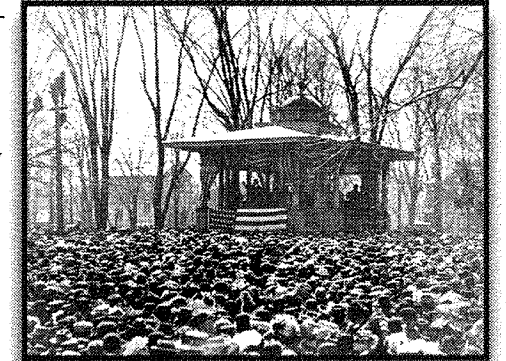
CONTINUES ON PG 53

# Champaign Park District history nearly as old as city

By Laura Auteberry

Champaign's parks have been a main part of the city's fabric nearly as long as the city has been in existence, with land for Champaign's first park made available in 1854. This property was originally laid out as a public square and possibly as the site for the county court house. However in 1859 the 12.7 acre property became the first park in Champaign County and was named White Park in honor of the man who made the land available. Known as the "Commons", the two square block space was put to work by settlers as a cow pasture in 1861 when the city council adopted a motion "to permit calves to be turned into the City Park at \$.35 per month."

In the late 1800's an Illinois Central Railroad executive named Benjamin F. Johnson, in his will designated \$10,000 to the city for construction of a fountain and bandstand in White Park. The fountain was constructed with a bronze statue on top which was renowned sculptor



**Teddy Roosevelt in West Side Park**  
April 8, 1912

Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

Edward Kemeys. The Prayer for Rain statue and the Johnson Fountain were dedicated in 1899. The bandstand was also added to the park

Continues on page 53

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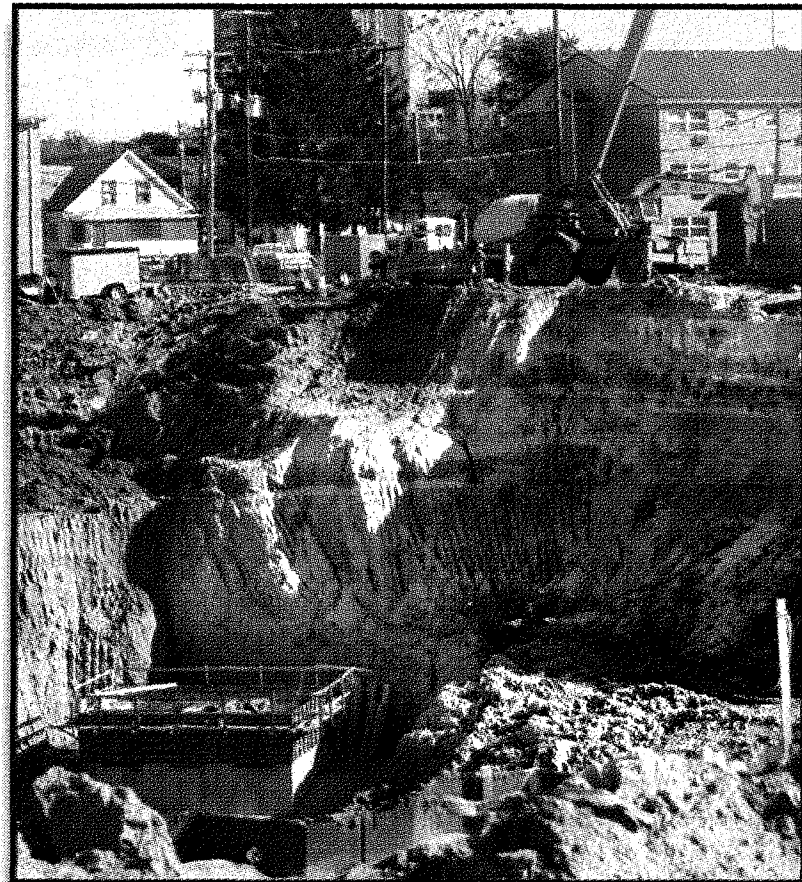
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situation.

It all seemed simple enough. The resolve was there, but the City did not control the stream which, under a former agreement, was the responsibility of the Urbana and Champaign Sanitary District (UCSD). The District wanted to get rid of its responsibility, so it sounded like an easy deal. But before Champaign was ready to take over responsibility for the Boneyard and the huge attendant costs, it wanted something from the UCSD—a requirement that all new sanitary hookups had to annex to the city. The UCSD trustees, appointed by the County Board, wanted the County Board's approval to such an agreement. It took an undue amount of time and sales tax rebates to the County from city-annexed properties before an agreement was reached. Then there had to be boundary agreements with the adjoining municipalities of Urbana and Savoy, also served by the UCSD, a Boneyard maintenance agreement with Urbana, and approval of the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

The first phase of the project, beginning in the mid '90s, involved two elements: the first was a 65' deep detention basin occupying a four square block area roughly between the IC tracks and First Street and Springfield and Green streets. The second was the stretch of the stream between First and Sixth streets which was put under ground with a linear park over the top. That portion of the project was dedicated in 1999. Lake Campustown is gone, hopefully never to reappear. The elimination of the water has led to major redevelopment Green Street in Campustown and the total elimination of flooding in University buildings.

Phase II was begun in 2009. It involves the north branch of the Boneyard between University and Springfield avenues with improvements to Scott Park. It is slated for completion in 2010. When done, the project will provide protection for up to a hundred year storm for the entire lower Boneyard basin.



**Working on the Boneyard**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



1967 • Robert Tatman is second Champaign Police officer to die in line of duty

1969 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois 1969-70 was 31,267

1970 • Census: Champaign County, 163,281; Champaign, 56,532; Urbana, 33,147

• (July 17) Ground broken for permanent Parkland campus



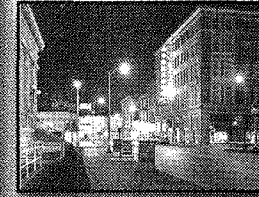
• (November 24) Voters in the Twin Cities approved a referendum to establish a Mass Transit District

1970 • Champaign adopts Home Rule in accordance with 1970 Constitution

Continues on Pg 51

1870 • Census: Champaign County, 32,737, Champaign, 5,354; Urbana, 3,336

• First female students admitted to the Illinois Industrial University



1874 • Robeson's store established

1876 • (September) The Library Association conveyed its property to the City on condition that the latter appropriate \$1,000 annually toward its support

• Champaign Art Club formed



1879 • Lewis and Company establishes store in the downtown

1879-80 • Enrollment at the Illinois Industrial University as 434

CONTINUES ON PG 16

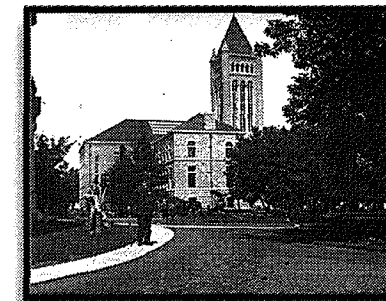
# The University of Illinois

By Maynard Brichford

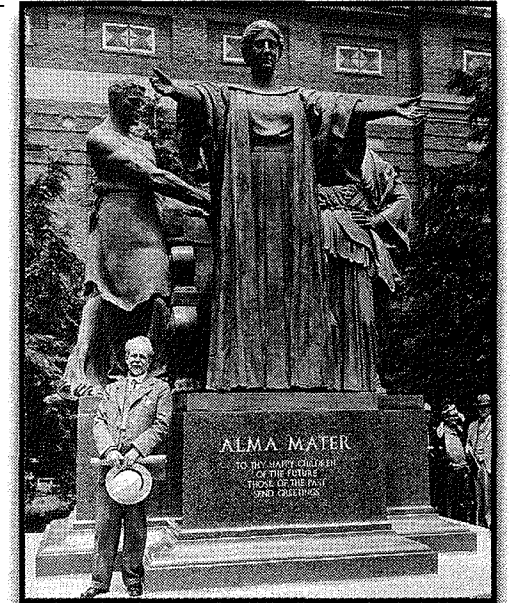
Champaign was less than ten years old when the Illinois Industrial University was chartered. The secession of the southern states in 1861 enabled a Republican majority to pass the Morrill Land Grant College Act in 1862. Freed from the bitter political wrangling over the admission of western states and routes of western railroads, the new party embraced the American tradition of land development and speculation. Earlier, the Chicago Branch of the Illinois Central Railroad had passed a mile west of Urbana providing access to the area. In 1867, a vacant three story seminary building between Urbana and Champaign became part of the package that Champaign County offered for the public university. When the Industrial University opened in 1869, Champaign became the university's station on the railroad from Chicago to Cairo.

John Milton Gregory, the first regent of the university, organized the institution as the "West Point of the working world". He devoted thirteen years to fashioning a university on the muddy prairie. Instruction in the liberal arts aroused the hostility of legislators and champions of "industrial education". Attempts at agricultural education proved premature. Most early graduates took the engineering curriculum or entered business. Gregory experimented with student government and brought an academic culture to the Illinois prairie. Most students came from nearby counties and lived in rooming houses in Champaign and Urbana.

The 1880s brought financial hardships. In 1885, the name of the university was changed to the University of Illinois to indicate the aspirations of faculty and alumni and avoid confusion with schools for delinquents. Regent



Altgeld Hall



Alma Mater statue with sculptor Lorado Taft on left

Selim Peabody struggled to maintain academic standards and sell the university's lands. His strict policies came under vigorous attacks by students and developing alumni groups. In 1891, the Board of Trustees forced him out of office. Chosen by popular vote after 1887, and representing interested alumni groups, the trustees sought a strong, yet progressive administrator. While they searched, the university began a period of rapid growth under the capable guidance of acting regent Thomas J. Burrill. Fraternities, intercollegiate athletics and liberalization of regulations reflected the special values and interests of students.

In President Andrew Draper, the trustees found an aggressive exponent of American values, who was schooled in the politics of the state of New York. A successful disciplinarian and legislative lobbyist, Draper continued a building program begun in 1892, hired an able faculty and broadened the university's offerings by adding schools of law, library science and medicine. In 1889, the enrollment, courses and departments began a rapid increase. The agricultural (1888) and engineering (1904) experiment stations brought federal support and called public attention to the university's research interests. In

Continues on page 16

1899, Dean Eugene Davenport mobilized the state's agricultural interests to put the College of Agriculture on firm footing with a \$150,000 appropriation for a building. That same year saw an electric railway running from the Illinois Central in Champaign, past the University campus, to Urbana.

Illinoisian, Edmund J. James became president in 1904. In sixteen years, he made a major contribution to the growth of the university. A master of public relations and legislative tactics, he secured an outstanding young faculty and won significant new state appropriations. By 1909, the library was on track to become one of the largest university libraries in the nation. Thirty-five percent of the faculty and staff lived in Champaign and 65% lived in Urbana; 72% of the commercial businesses and 79% of the restaurants were in Champaign, beginning the town-gown cleavage which persists to this day. Class rivalries and Bob Zuppke's winning football teams boosted campus morale.

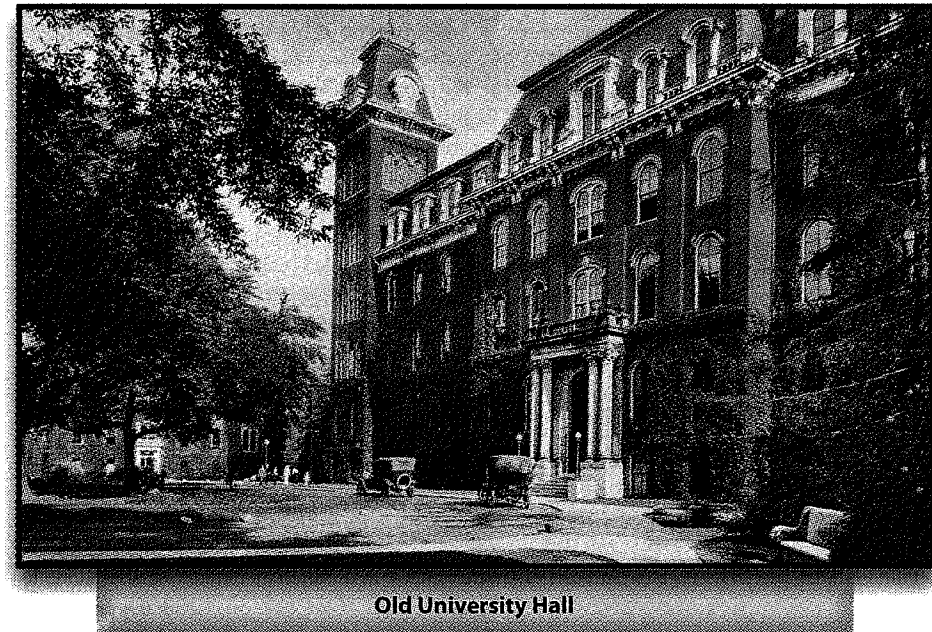
Long-time administrator, David Kinley served as president from 1920 to 1930. He was a zealous champion of the university, which a visiting orator regarded as "an oasis of intellectuality in a desert of fertility". A legislative approved building program accommodated increased enrollments. The university became one of the strongest fraternity campuses in the country. An American approach to social, housing and governance problems in mass higher education, the fraternity system reached a peak under the guidance of Dean "matriarchal, patriarchal" Thomas Arkle Clark. A 60,000 seat football stadium in the

then southern reaches of Champaign provided employment, publicity, visitors and profits.

From 1934 to 1946, a severe economic depression and conservative management nearly halted building construction during Arthur Willard's presidency. Exceptions were the first men's dormitories in southeast Champaign and the Illini Union. The end of World War II and the GI Bill for veterans opened the way for unprecedented growth. The percentage of the state budget allocated to higher education had fallen from 14% prior to World War I to 3% before World War II. The "architect" of the new university was George D. Stoddard. He appointed young deans who soon came into conflict with veteran faculty and conservative community influences. A series of crises eventually resulted in his dismissal by the Board of Trustees in 1953.

In 1956, the trustees chose David D. Henry as president. With a professional presence and administrative skill, he accelerated the building program and presided over a period characterized by the rapid growth of the Graduate College and increased federal support of ear-marked funds for scientific and technological research and development. The university remained the preeminent state-supported institution for graduate work, but its proportion of the higher education tax dollar dropped from 78 percent in 1948 to 49 percent in 1968. The state continued to supply two thirds of the university budget, but the federal government provided nearly 90% of the funds for research. As the campus grew,

Continues on page 17



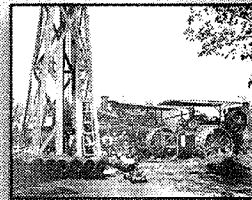
Old University Hall

1880 • Census: Champaign County, 40,869; Champaign and Urbana, (not available)



1881 • Central Telephone Co. opens in downtown, 65 customers the first day

1884 • Main Street paved, the first pavement in the city



• A coal shaft sunk just north of Urbana, struck water at 160 feet and could be dug no further; the plant for the Union Water Supply Company was completed the following year.

• William McKinley founded the Champaign and Urbana Gas and Light Co.

CONTINUES ON PG 17

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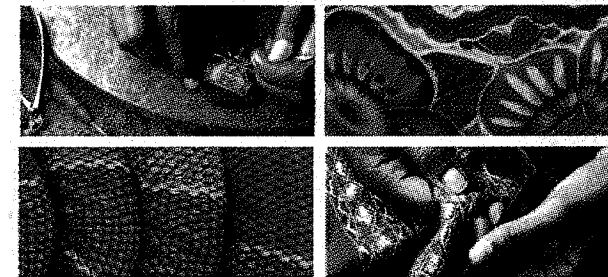
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becomes the  
University of  
Illinois

• Seven miles of  
water mains  
completed in  
Champaign

1886 • First electric  
streetlight  
erected at  
corner of Main  
and Walnut

1887 • Champaign-  
Urbana Street  
Railway begins  
operation

1889 • First Champaign  
City Building  
completed  
at northeast  
corner of Neil  
and University

CONTINUES ON PG 18

the Wright Street  
division separated  
the academic  
teaching and  
research activities  
in Urbana from  
the administrative,  
commercial  
campus-town and  
entertainment  
facilities in  
Champaign.

In 1959, 42% of  
the faculty and staff  
lived in Champaign  
and 58 percent  
lived in Urbana a  
major factor in the  
perceived town  
gown character  
dividing the two  
cities. The 1960s were  
characterized by increasing  
student and faculty unrest over governance and  
social priorities. In 1963, the Assembly Hall  
provided indoor facilities for public and student  
entertainment in southeast Champaign. In 1967,  
the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts



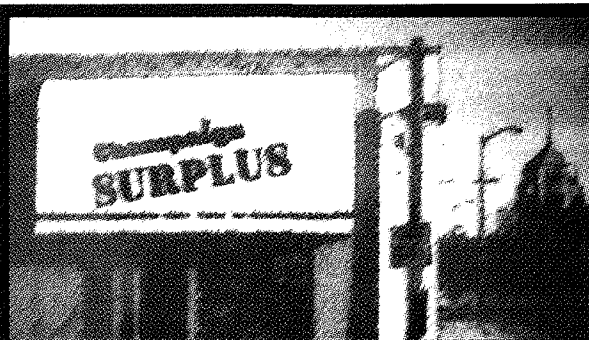
Students walking on the boardwalk west of the  
Auditorium

Photo by Charles Webber

became a major cultural addition to the Urbana  
campus.

From 1979 to 1995, under Stanley  
Ikenberry's leadership and genial persuasion

Continues on page 18



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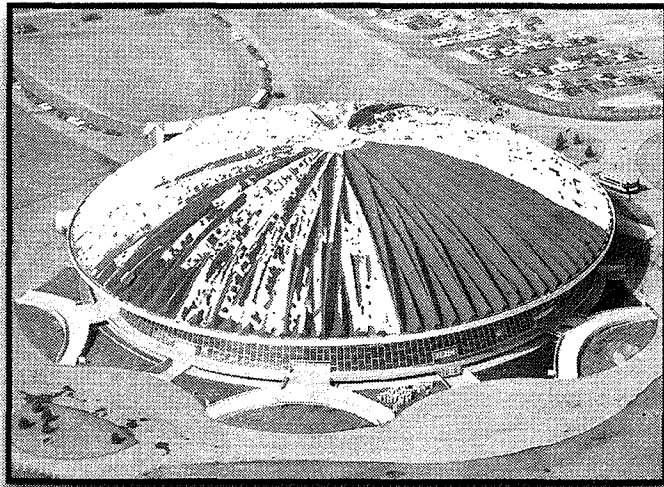
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the university located private funding to offset fluctuating state appropriations. Substantial increases in federal and private grants, gifts and contracts "built bridges" to business, began the development of the North Campus scientific research center, and secured millions for supercomputers. He improved alumni relations, appointed respected faculty as chancellors, and merged the Chicago and Springfield campuses.

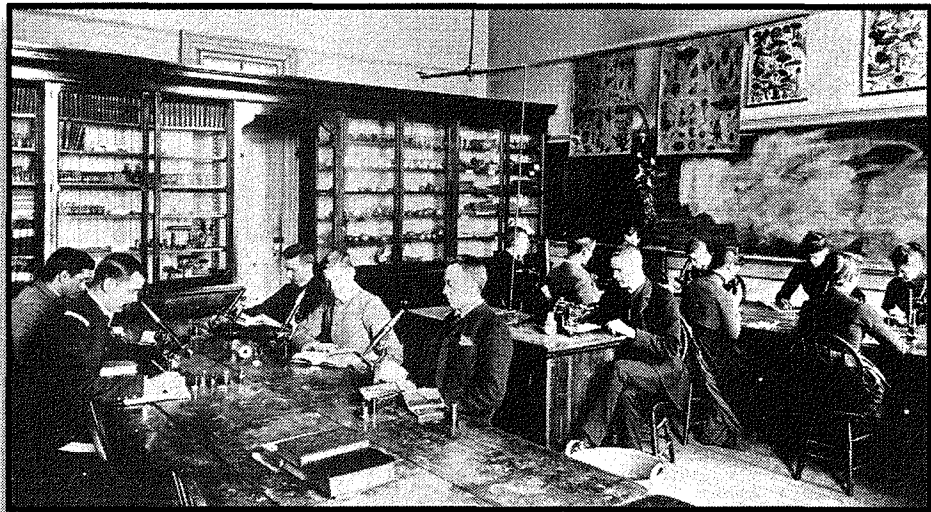
About 700,000 people have studied, taught and worked at the university. The university is a democratic, land grant institution and one of the larger state universities, with a current enrollment of 41,918 students, including 18,775 from Cook County and its collar counties. Currently, 4,574 come from east and south Asia. The university employs 12,291 persons and is the major employer in Champaign and Urbana.

In 1990, 42.7 percent of Champaign's population held a college degree. Once described as "the worst of the best" and a "sleeping giant" unable to overcome the problems of



**Assembly Hall, March 11, 1967**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

numbers, it has emerged as a highly selective "multiversity," with over 25 percent of its students in graduate or professional programs. It has been a force for social mobility and has demonstrated an ability to meet changing social needs. Students, faculty, administrators and non-academic staff have shaped its character. Outside influences have been the state legislature, trustees, benefactors, alumni, parents, employers and the media. It should go without saying, the presence of the university has been largely responsible for what Champaign it is today.



**Dr. Burrill's university class in 1888**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

- 1889-90 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois was 469
- 1890 • Census: Champaign County, 42,159; Champaign, 5,839; Urbana, 3,511
- 1890 • William B. McKinley assumes the presidency of the Urbana and Champaign Railway, Gas and Electric Company
- 1892 • Lincoln Elementary School (closed 1972)
- 1893 • West Side High School Fire (Current site of Champaign Central H.S.)
- West End (amusement) Park --now Eisner Park, opens



- 1895 • ( March 5) Julia F. Burnham Hospital opened (Photo by B. A. Strauch)
- 1896 • Beardsley Hotel Opened
- (December 17) Burnham Athenaeum, Champaign's first library building opens

CONTINUES ON PG 19



**Our Best Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow**  
Champaign's 150th Anniversary Celebration

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# The end of boneyard flooding

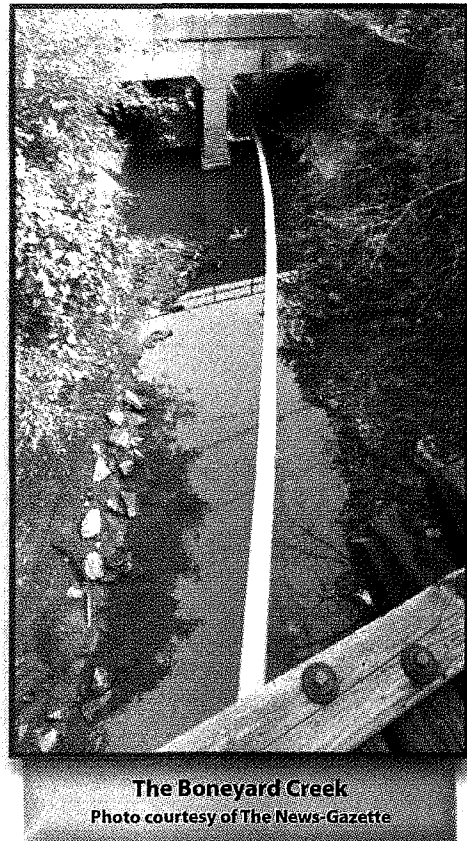
By Dannel McCollum

Building a city in an area that is flat and where there is considerable rainfall has its consequences. Hardened surfaces occasioned by streets, sidewalks, driveways, roofs and parking lots greatly decrease the area where precipitation can be absorbed. Consequently, the water runs off quickly collecting in the lowest areas available. People and businesses that happen to occupy those locations are consequently subject to flooding. Does this situation sound like Champaign?

The historic drainage feature of Champaign-Urbana is the storied Boneyard Creek. Two branches make up its headwaters. The North Branch rises just east of the old K Mart store (now The Home Depot). It flows east to Neil Street. At that point, in 1961, the waters were diverted to the northeast in a 2,000' box culvert directly to the Saline Creek. Past Neil, the original channel goes under the Illinois Central tracks, then south past the MLK Subdivision, where the City has developed a detention pond. A block and a half west of First Street, the stream flows under University Avenue to Scott Park. It is in this latter stretch that a major effort is currently under way to create even more detention for floodwater. Just beyond, the North Branch joins the West Branch of the creek.

The West Branch rises just east of Westview School in Champaign. Before the area was paved and drainage was put underground, it flowed in an open swale to the east essentially along where John Street is today. The flow continued under the IC tracks and on east just beyond Second Street where it joins the North Branch. The combined flow continues on east through Campustown, the University campus and Urbana.

With the buildup of West Champaign, flooding problems developed at Neil Street, due to inadequate openings under the tracks. During storm events the water from the West Branch ponded, creating what was affectionately dubbed "Lake Neil." In 1972-73, the City addressed the problem by constructing twin, 5' by 5' box

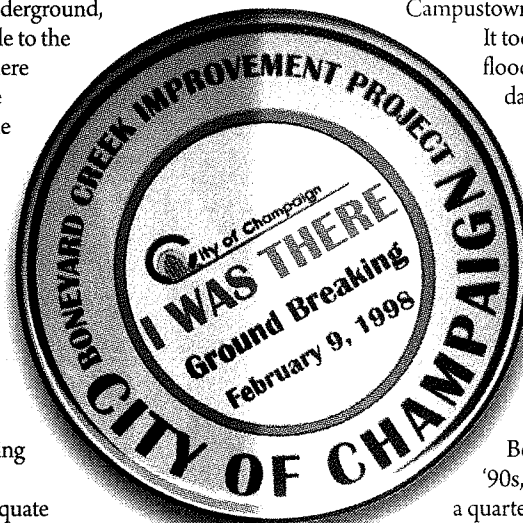


The Boneyard Creek  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

culverts under the tracks to move the water through. Lake Neil quickly became "Lake Campustown."

It took a series of massive floods doing major damage to businesses along Green Street in Champaign and across Wright Street to University of Illinois Buildings to prompt the most massive public works project in the history of the city. Beginning in the early '90s, the City set aside a quarter of the revenues from the then newly imposed home rule sales tax to fund drainage improvements, initially focusing on the Boneyard

Continues on page 50



CHAMPAIGN'S 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



1967 • (January 2) Wm. Staerkel begins as president of Parkland College

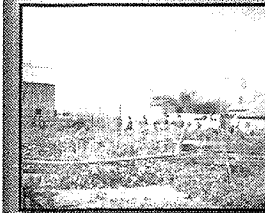
• (February 23) Downtown Champaign selected as site for temporary campus of Parkland College

• (September 25) Parkland offers first classes in temporary facilities in downtown Champaign; enrollment was 1,338



• Robeson Elementary School  
• Champaign Centennial High School opens

Continues on Pg 50

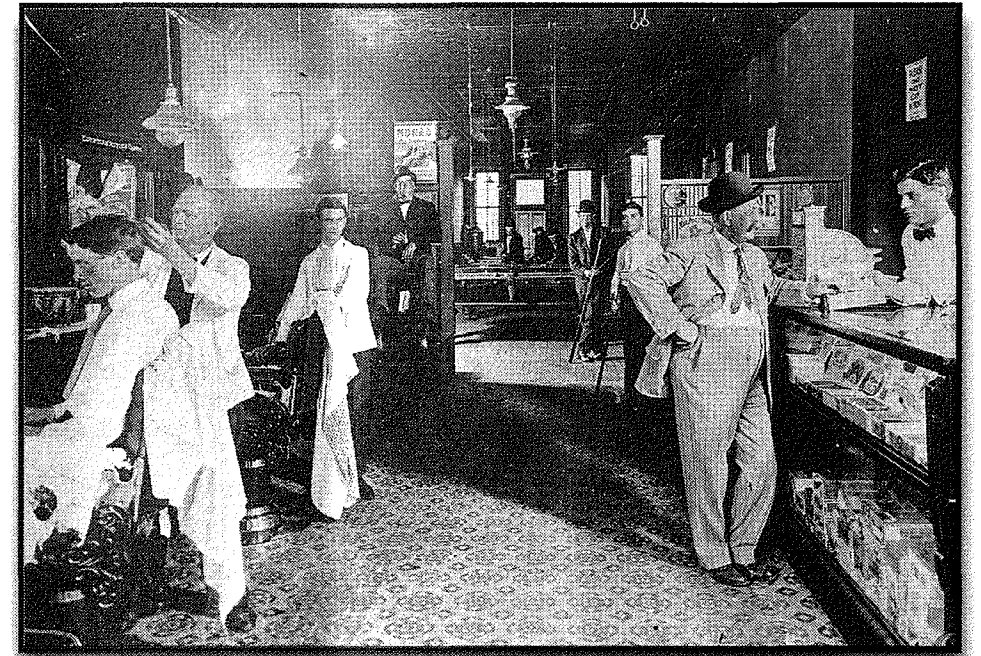


1898 • (July 12) The Doane House destroyed by fire

• Gregory Elementary School

1899 • (May 1) The Johnson (Prayer for Rain) Fountain dedicated in West Side Park

CONTINUES ON PG 21



Barber shop, cigar store and pool tables in the back room of the Congress Cigar store on Neil Street.



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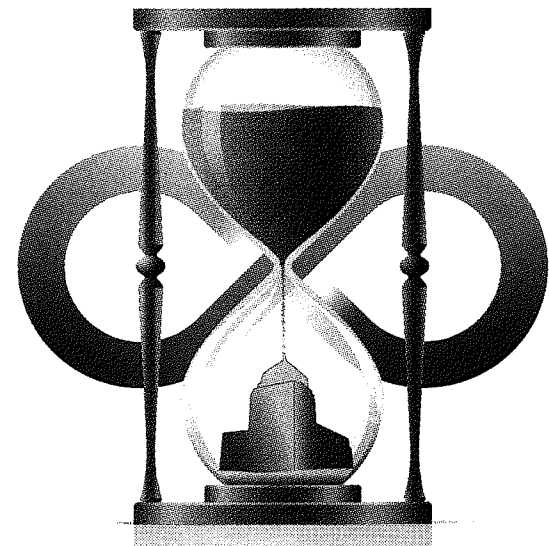
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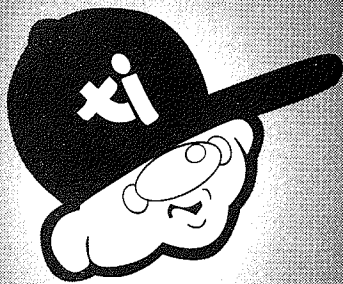
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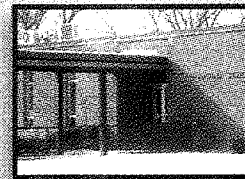
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- 1963 • Kenwood Elementary School
- 1964 • Centennial High School opens as an annex
- 1966 • (March 12) Area voters approve referendum to establish a junior college centered in Champaign County

CONTINUES ON PG 46



Looking east on Green St. from Sixth and Green Streets, about 1930 - 1935  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

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## Happy Anniversary to the City of Champaign

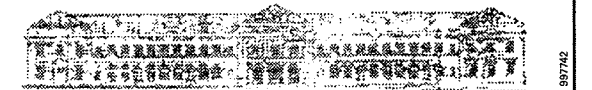
Zimmerly, Gadau, Selin and Otto, has roots going back to 1949 when Philip C. Zimmerly graduated from the University of Illinois Law School in 1949 and established a practice in Champaign County. In 1952, Mr. Zimmerly practiced with the legendary John Appleman until 1964 when Mr. Zimmerly started the firm of Zimmerly, Price and Johnson, the Johnson being Lawrence Johnson, who went on to become Champaign County States Attorney in 1968. Mr. Zimmerly continued in practice with various associates until October, 1980, when the currently existing firm was established. Mr. Zimmerly died in 2006.

Partners in the firm now are John Gadau, in his fifth term as Champaign County Bar Association President; Paul E. Selin and John H. Otto. The firm has been working for Champaign County residents for more than 50 years.

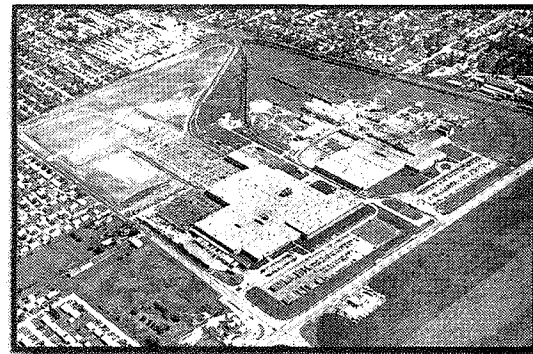


left to right: Paul Selin, John Otto and John Gadau

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**Kraft Humko, September 8, 1969**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



**Items confiscated during Prohibition raids**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

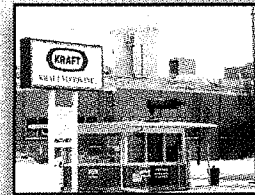


**Downtown Champaign Fire**  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

1963 • K Mart at Prospect and Bloomington Rd, Champaign's first national chain discount store



• Assembly Hall opens



• Kraft opens its largest plant

CONTINUES ON PG 45

1899 • William McKinley consolidates utilities into the Champaign-Urbana Railway, Gas and Electric Co.

1900 • Census: Champaign County, 47,622; Champaign, 9,098; Urbana, 5,728

1901 • The Danville, Urbana and Champaign Railway Company, formerly the Urbana and Champaign Railway, Gas and Electric Co; was granted a franchise to build a line connecting Champaign and Danville

• (Fall) the fifth Champaign County Court House was completed

• Willard Elementary School (closed 1970)

• First Champaign auto speed ordinance limits speeds to 10 mph

1902 • (December 6) the Illinois Traction System (the McKinley Line) officially opened service between Urbana and St. Joseph

CONTINUES ON PG 22

# Parkland College looking back and moving quickly forward

By Jody Littleton

On March 12, 1966 area residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of a Class I Junior College and Parkland College and District 505 were born.

Until Parkland College's permanent campus opened in the Fall of 1973, classes were held in downtown Champaign at temporary sites. The first semester, Fall 1967, the line for registration extended out the door, as 1,338 students registered for classes. These students paid \$4.50 per credit hour for tuition. One year later Parkland College graduated 20 students who had completed one-year certificates in career programs.

Twenty different sites were proposed for the location of Parkland's permanent campus. Because of its central location on the district map, the present site on Bradley Avenue in Champaign was selected for the permanent campus.

Ernest Kump, the architect of the campus, was from a firm based in Palo Alto, California. Kump referred to his design as an "educational village" and recommended subdued lighting to give the feeling of a living room. In 1979, Parkland College was featured in an exhibit at the New York Museum of Modern Art to highlight outstanding architectural designs.

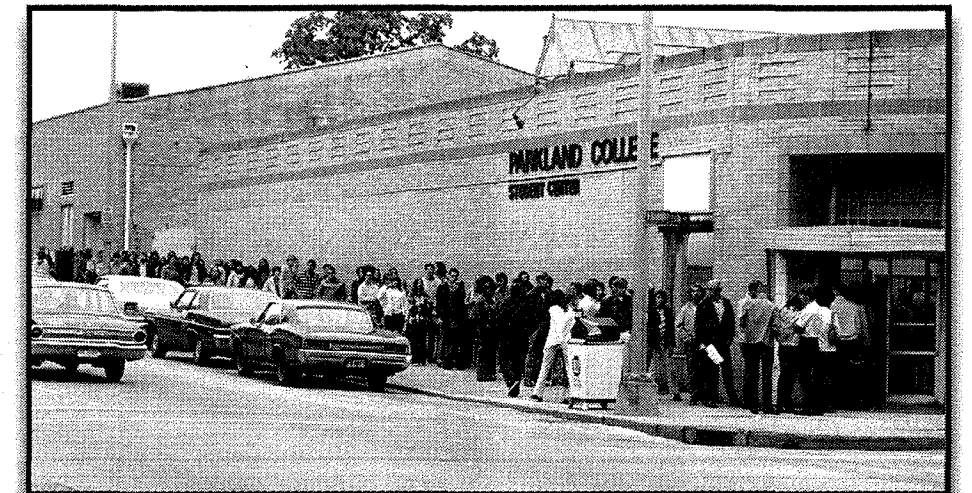
Groundbreaking for the permanent campus began in July 1970 and Parkland's permanent

campus officially opened three years later in Fall of 1973. Later additions to the campus included the Physical Education Building in 1976, playing fields in 1980, the South Building in 1983, the A Wing in 1984, and Parkland's Theatre and the William M. Staerke Planetarium in 1987. In 1995 the Child Development Center facility opened, accommodating 85 children of Parkland students, staff and community members. In 2001 the Tony Noel Agriculture Applications Technology Center and the D wing of the college were completed.

Today Parkland College is again in a growing phase. The Parkland College campus was constructed in 1973 to serve about 9,000 students a year. Today, it serves more than 21,000, creating a shortfall of usable space for programs and services. These space deficits were noted as far back as 14 years ago during a national organization's evaluation of the campus. Because of these deficits Parkland President Dr. Tom Ramage and the Parkland Board of Trustees updated the College's Master Plan in 2008 and are actively pursuing funding for several new buildings and renovations to the existing campus.

One of the new buildings currently in the preliminary planning stages is the Applied Technology Center. The auto collision repair program has increased by 26 percent with 411

Continues on page 22



**Registration line for Parkland College in September 1967**  
Photo courtesy of Parkland College

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RAM DODGE The Truck Jeep

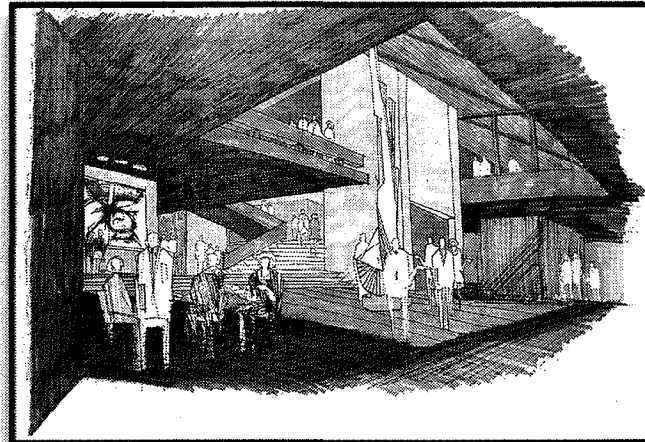
FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1942

**1906 MORELAND BLVD. • CHAMPAIGN • (217)352-4273**

enrollments in fiscal year 2007 and the Ford Asset automotive courses have seen a 53 percent increase with 208 enrolled during the same period. Parkland has accommodated this enrollment growth by housing classes in temporary or inadequate on-campus structures or off-campus leased space. Thus, the construction of the Applied Technology Center will eliminate approximately 28,800 square feet of temporary space, which is old and inefficient to operate, and will consolidate the programs, which increases the educational benefits to the students and decreases the operational expenses to the college.

Also being planned is a Student Services Center. In addition to adding valuable classroom space, the new facility would create a one-stop student success center, centralizing and streamlining all aspects of student services from recruiting and placement testing to graduation and transfer counseling.

Other projects in the plan include a Fine & Applied Arts addition, Theatre addition and many deferred maintenance projects such as roof replacement, elevator and laboratory upgrades. For more information on the Parkland Master

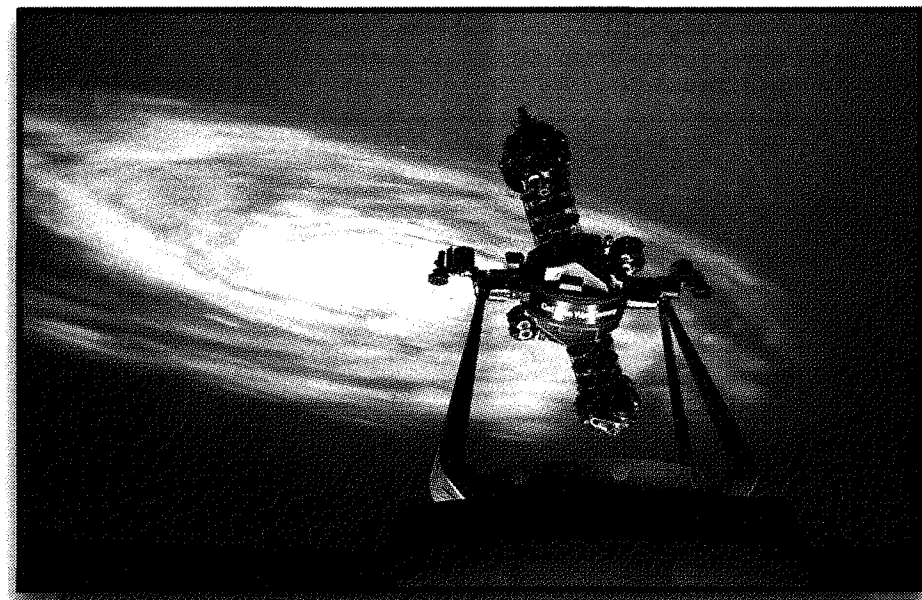


**Parkland College sketch**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

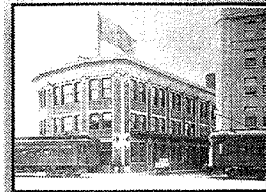
Plan and building updates go to <http://www2.parkland.edu/masterplan/index.html>.

Parkland has delivered vocational-technical and academic instruction to more than 230,000 students since its classes began in 1967, according to 2009 data. The majority of these students continue to live and work in the East Central Illinois area after graduation. Parkland College will continue to work closely with local businesses and community members to fulfill its mission and meet the needs of the local community.

Thank you to Parkland College Library Archives for photos and content for this article.



**The Zeiss model projector at Parkland's William M. Staerkel Planetarium**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



1903 • Electric Railway (Interurban) established between C-U and Danville (Friedman Collection)

1904 • (April 30) Retail Merchant's Association of Champaign organized; it became the Champaign Chamber of Commerce  
• Champaign County Country Club established

1905 • Col Wolfe Elementary School (closed 1964)



• Columbia Elementary School (now closed)  
1907 • Lawhead Elementary School (closed 1959)  
• Current Jos. Kuhn & Co. building completed

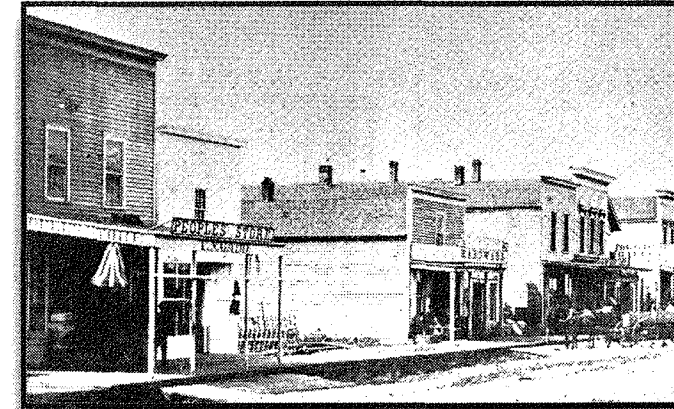
CONTINUES ON PG 23

1961 • NW Diversion Structure from the North Branch of Boneyard to Saline



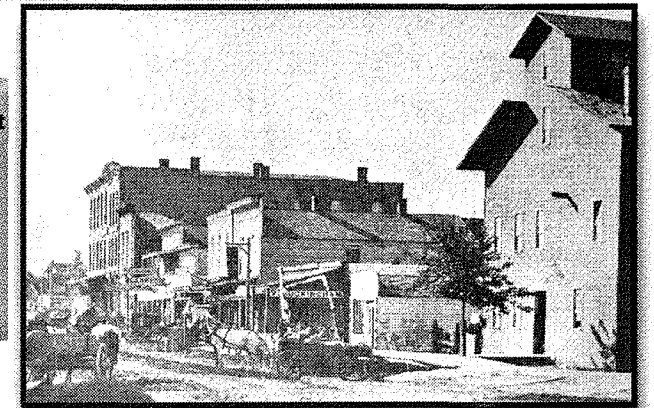
1962 • Ken Stratton becomes the first black elected to the Champaign City Council  
• Champaign linked to Interstate 57

CONTINUES ON PG 44



**Main Street, 1860**  
Photos courtesy of The News-Gazette

**North side of Main Street looking northwest from Walnut St. In the middle of the photo is the site of The News-Gazette's current office**  
Photos courtesy of The News-Gazette



## Owens Funeral Home



*Circa 1955*

Owens Funeral Home was founded in 1925 by William H. (Old Bill) and Geneva Owens, and was originally located on West Hill Street in Champaign. They purchased the current location (101 N. Elm St.) in 1940 and converted the private Trevett residence to a funeral chapel.

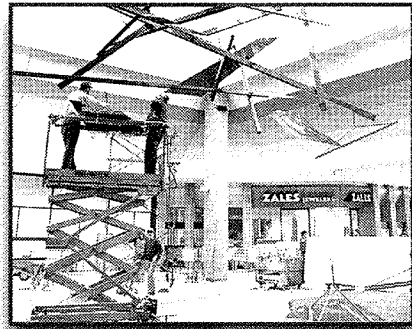
Old Bill died in 1962 and his son, Bud Owens, continued the family tradition with his mother, Geneva, until her death in 1974. Bud and his wife, Dorothy, owned and operated the funeral home until his death in 1986. Jim and Judy (Owens) Yost, daughter and son-in-law of Bud and Dorothy, purchased the funeral home in 1987.

Jim and Judy continue to operate the funeral home in the spirit and with the traditional values that the

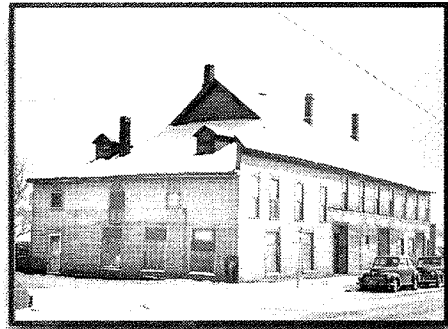
Owens family felt so strongly about. They are proud today to have their children, Jay Yost and Julia Yost Hersom (great grandchildren of Bill and Geneva), working with them...creating the fourth generation of the Owens family dedicated to serving their community.



*Founders Geneva and Bill Owens*



**Market Place Mall preparations**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



**St. James Hotel**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



1960 • Candidate John F. Kennedy speaks on steps of the Auditorium (AP file photo)

- Interstate 74 opens between Champaign and Danville
- Jefferson Junior High School

CONTINUES ON PG 43

**Champaign Fire Department Engine Number 1**  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



1908 • First National Bank (now National City) first steel reinforced building in Champaign

1909 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois 1909-1910 was 4,288

1910 • Census: Champaign County, 51,829; Champaign, 12,421; Urbana, 8,245

- 205 automobiles in Champaign-Urbana
- Dr. Howard Elementary School

CONTINUES ON PG 24



Looking west on Church Street toward the Park Theater, which later became the Art Theatre  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

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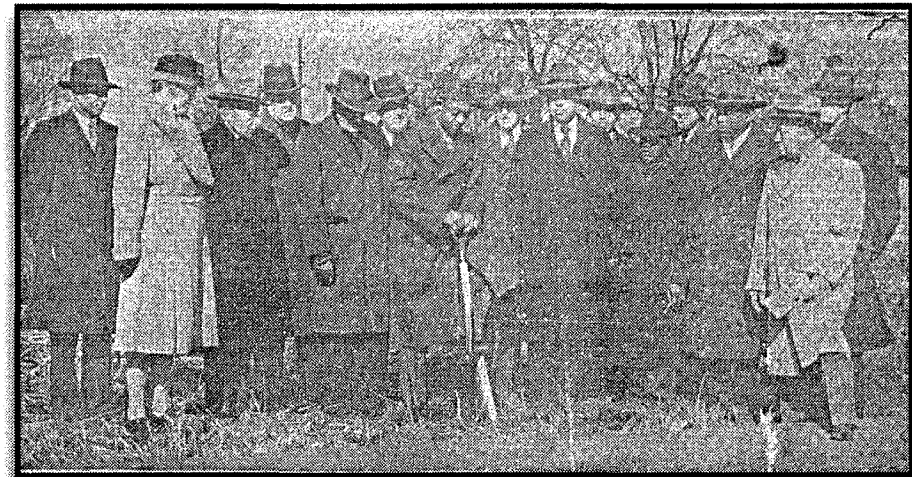
# Champaign public schools started with 'The Little Brick'

Compiled by Lauren Smith from school histories written by: Helen Levin, Michael Markstahler and Charles Renner

The first school in Champaign County was held in a log cabin, located on the Sangamon River, about a mile south of Mahomet. Children from five pioneer families attended this early school. In 1853 a private school was built in Hensley Township. The school started the following year and boasted an enrollment of twelve students with each student required to bring his/her own seat and desk. The tuition was

building was also destroyed by fire the following year. When this building was rebuilt in 1872, it was known as East High School, later changing its name to Marquette.

Reorganization of the two districts occurred in 1890, resulting in a single district, Union District No. 6. Rivalry between East and West High Schools was eliminated and students from both districts were housed in West Side, which became known as the Champaign High School. In 1892, "Little Brick" was burned to clear ground for a new high school, known as Central School, to accommodate the large number of students.



Douglas School groundbreaking

\$13 per month. These and other "pay schools" were supported by the patrons and generally operated from three to six months of the year. The advent of public schools in Illinois had to wait until 1855, when the State passed a law creating basis for a general system of schools.

In accordance with the new law, Champaign was divided into two school districts: District 1, west of First Street and District 2, east of First Street. The first public school, known as "The Little Brick" was built at a cost of \$4,000 on the corner of Randolph and Hill streets in District 1. District 1 erected a second building in 1868 at Lynn, University and Park Streets and it was called West High School. It was a brick structure, three stories high, that cost \$80,000. The first District 2 school was built in 1860, but was destroyed by fire the following year. A second

In this same year, the West High School building burned and a new elementary school, The Avenue School was built. Lincoln Elementary was added in 1894, followed by Willard and Gregory in 1898.

At about this same time, football had become a very popular sport in the nation as well as locally. The game was first introduced to Champaign High School in 1891 by a man from Albion College in Michigan. During this first year, the school played a game with the University of Illinois Reserves, playing without goal posts or yard lines and with a very hazy idea as to the rules of the game! The game ended in a 4-4 tie. Champaign's football team quickly became one that was feared by the largest schools

Continues on page 25



1911 • (February 11) President William Howard Taft visits the University

1912 • Theodore Roosevelt speaks to crowd in West Side Park



1913 • Thomas Dodsworth becomes the first Champaign police officer to die in the line of duty

• The Park (now the Art) Theater opened

1914 • Champaign High School on Green Street opened (now Edison Middle School) with enrollment of 585

CONTINUES ON PG 25

1959 • The Dunn and Bradstreet Reference Book reported 1,517 businesses in Champaign County; Champaign had 724, Urbana 320, Rantoul-142, Homer-32, Fisher-29, Mahomet-29, and St. Joseph-21

1960 • Census: Champaign County 132,436; Champaign, 49,583; Urbana, 27,294,

• Champaign celebrates its centennial

CONTINUES ON PG 42

Krannert Center For the Performing Arts, which is one of the top five performing arts spaces in the world. Artists who matriculate through or work at the University of Illinois live in both cities. Champaign artists go out to the world and bring what they've learned in the world back. The perks of this geographical fluidity are that Champaign's art scene isn't closed to outsiders.

It has no creative boundaries.

## IT'S FUN.

Champaign's art scene has an exuberance that makes it irrepresible. This is a scene that turns away the trendy, pompous, and overly self-important away, leaving it lively and exciting — a reflection of the City itself.



The Orpheum, now a Children's Science Museum

Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

## Congratulations Champaign on 150 Years Parkhill Motor Sales

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## HAPPY 150TH ANNIVERSARY CHAMPAIGN!

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# Art scene lively, exciting

By M. S. Dodds

It's easy to start talking about art in Champaign, but hard to stop. Just beginning with the weekly entertainment guides in *The News-Gazette* and the *Daily Illini*, the 217.com, 40N/88W's *Champaign County Culture Guide* and 40north.org, the Convention and Visitor's Bureau's *Visitors Guide*, *The Pulse* and then folding in the myriad e-mails, ads, handbills and Facebook/Twitter notifications, could take all day. We don't have all day. Plus we'd still leave someone or something out. There's just that much going on.

Boiled down to a few (admittedly opinionated) points, the standout qualities of Champaign's Arts scene are these:

## IT IS WIDE-RANGING.

While music in Champaign has the longest nationally-recognized history, the last 20 years have seen an explosion of art. Writers, poets, chefs, architects, illustrators, designers, sculptors, musicians of all stripes, theatre groups ranging from youth through developmentally disabled and community to improv, painters, photographers, dancers, storytellers, street performances...you name it, Champaign has it. And we have it at all levels: obscure to famous, experimental to classical, amateur to professional, "needs a little more work" to Grammy-winning.

## ARTISTS SUPPORT EACH OTHER, AND THE PUBLIC SUPPORTS THE ARTISTS.

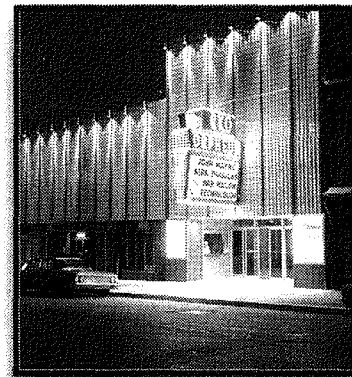
Champaign has several major festivals each

year: The Boneyard Arts Festival, Ebertfest, Artists Against Aids, Downtown Festival of the Arts, Pecha Kucha Nights, Pygmalion, Ellnora Guitar, and C-U Folk and Roots Music Festivals. But it also has a cafe culture, gallery owners, restaurateurs, and retailers who actively support artists. Artists go to each other's shows, dances, openings, stores. So does the public, which supports the arts through its Arts Council (40 North), the Park District and its presence.

## IT'S BOUNDLESS.

Art moves fluidly from Champaign to Urbana and back again. It's nearly impossible to talk about "Art in Champaign" without mentioning museums that happen to be located in Urbana, or

Continues on page 41



**Orpheum Theater**  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois



A crowd waits to enter the Virginia Theater during the seventh annual Ebertfest  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

- 1957 • (August) Cole Hospital opened in the former B.F. Harris II home
- (September) University Avenue and Church Street were made one-way east and west respectively, to connect city with I-57

- 1958 • Champaign Human Relations Commission established
- Carrie Busey Garden Hills and Marquette elementary schools



- Country Fair Shopping Center opens, Champaign's first

- 1959 • (April 24) WICD TV, originally channel 33, now 15 telecast its first program
- Enrollment at the University of Illinois 1959-60 was 22,381



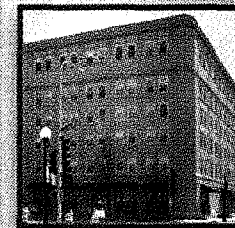
- Centennial Park opened

CONTINUES ON PG 41

- 1914 • The Orpheum Theater (now the Children's Museum) opened
- 1915 • (Mar. 17) Lewis Store Fire at the corner of Neil and Park



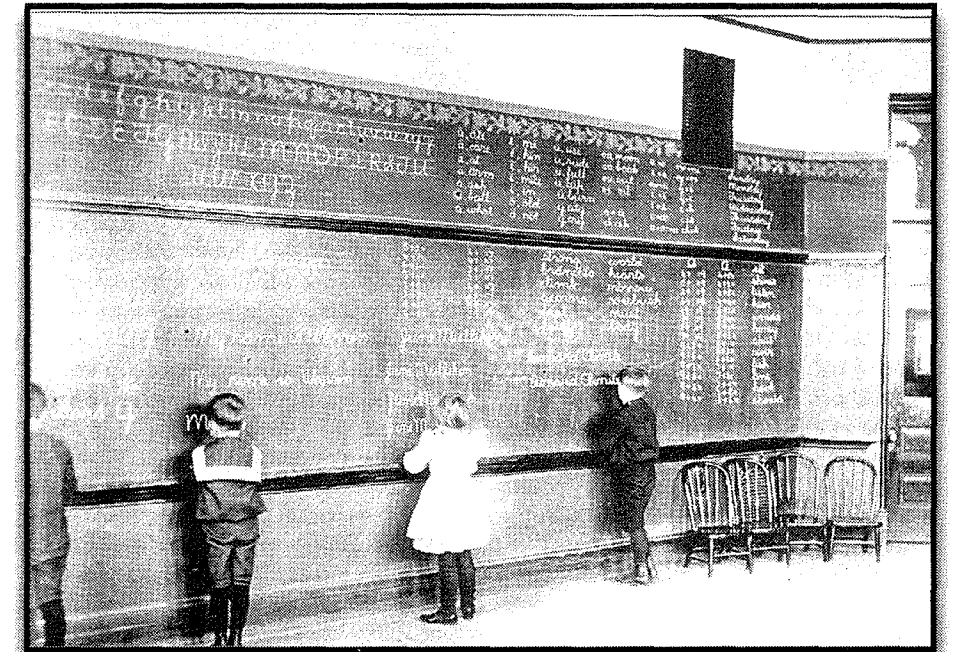
- The News-Gazette purchased by D.W. Stevick



- The Inman Hotel (now an assisted living facility) opened

- 1916 • City of Champaign Township established
- The Champaign Post Office (now the Springer Recreation Center) completed

CONTINUES ON PG 26



**Children in Avenue School**  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

in the state. In fact, Champaign won its first State Championship in 1897. Other sports programs were also gathering strength, and soon baseball and track were also regarded as major sports. To this day, the athletic programs at both Central and Centennial continue to be strong and offer opportunities in many different sports.

In 1901, the district's name was changed to Champaign District 71. School was now in session for approximately 175 days. Elementary pupils were in graded classes and had instruction in Art, Music and Domestic Science (girls only!). Reading, Spelling, English, Physiology and Hygiene, Physical Training, Observation Work (or Plants and Animals), Geography, Arithmetic, History, Public Speaking, Vocal Music, Art and Handwork were all listed in the curriculum for grade schools. The high school program of that day was organized into five curriculums: Latin, German, Latin Scientific, German Scientific and English. Manual training and domestic arts were required in ninth grade. In 1908, the curriculum was revised and was much closer to current day curriculum. It included: Foreign Languages, Biological Science, Commercial and English classes.

The major problem confronting the school Board from 1900 - 1935 was increasing enrollments. A building frenzy was soon underway. In 1905 Columbia and Colonel Wolfe Schools were built, followed by Lawhead

in 1907 and Dr. Howard in 1910. In 1914, the Senior High School on Green Street (currently Edison) was built and planned to house 1,000 pupils, although there were only 585 at the time. By 1925, it was filled to capacity. The "old" high school, Central school, was converted to an elementary school when the new high school was built. Two more grade schools were added; Southside in 1924 and Lottie Switzer in 1927. In 1935, a Junior High School was built on the site of the old "Avenue School" which had been torn down. (This is currently Central High School.) With this new school, it was possible to relieve the load on both the high school and the elementary schools, as well as secure the advantages of a specialized junior high school program for grades 7-9. Prior to building the new middle school, the eighth grade had been concentrated at Central School in order to provide some specialized training. Once the junior high was completed, the major part of the Central Building (Randolph and Hill) was no longer used as a school and was leased for business purposes.

After World War II, the state legislature took measures to encourage the reorganization of school districts into more efficient operating units. Champaign District 71 and twelve former one-room districts in the surrounding area were

Continues on page 26



consolidated into Community Unit District No. 4 in 1948.

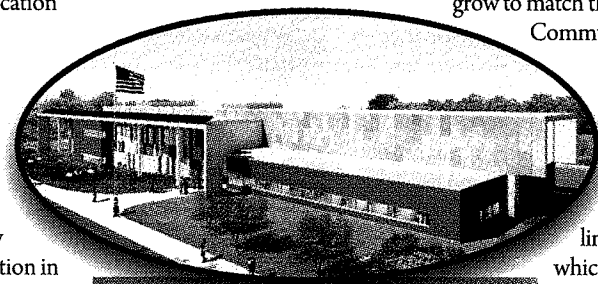
The post-war elementary enrollment boom in Champaign once again required more schools. Westview and BT Washington Schools were opened in 1951. Following close behind the elementary enrollment boom was a junior and senior high enrollment jump. This resulted in the new Franklin Junior High, which opened in 1954 and the conversion of the High School on Green Street to Edison Junior High in 1956. The old Junior High at Lynn, University and Park was converted, with a major addition, to Central High School.

The growth in Champaign continued and three more schools were added: Bottenfield Elementary in 1955, Carrie Busey in 1957 and Garden Hills in 1958. Then in 1961, the district built Jefferson Junior High, later converted to a middle school, and shortly thereafter the school board decided a new high school would be needed. Building on "The Annex" began in 1963, and it served as supplementary classrooms for Champaign High until its completion in 1965. The new High School was officially named Centennial High School after the adjacent park. At this same time, two more elementary schools were added. Kenwood opened in 1963, and Robeson opened in 1967 to help keep pace with rapidly expanding southwest Champaign.

Suddenly the rapid enrollment boom began to reverse. A study done by two University professors predicted a rapid decrease in the number of school age children beginning in 1971. This led to the closing of a number of older schools in the district including Hensley, Bondville, Colonel Wolfe, Gregory and Lincoln. Two more elementary schools were closed in 1977 and 1978—Savoy and Switzer. Southside was scheduled to be closed in 1978 only to be delayed until 1982. It was briefly used by the Champaign Park District until it was reopened in the fall of 1989.

In 1968, as the result of a recommendation of the Equal Education

Opportunities Committee, the school district's elementary boundaries were reorganized to provide a racially balanced population in all elementary schools. In 1977-78 the Unit 4 School District adjusted



Architect's drawing of new Booker T. Washington School  
Photo courtesy Bailey Edward Architecture

its attendance levels to K-5, 6-8 and 9-12, and the three junior highs were converted to the middle school concept, complete with team teaching. At the same time, the school board briefly considered a re-merger of the two high schools, to be located at the Centennial-Jefferson campus. However, according to Dr. Peter Shoresman, president of the Board of Education at the time, "The board perceived that the community as a whole was not in favor of one high school." Combining the two high schools would have resulted in an enrollment of over 3,000 students and would have meant decreased opportunity for student participation in sports and other activities.

As the Champaign population continued to grow in the southwest neighborhoods, Barkstall school was built in 1998. Stratton School was also built in 1998 on land just south of Columbia to provide more north side seats for Unit 4. During the 1970's, 80's and 90's several schools, including Columbia and Franklin, were closed, reopened and restructured for different uses. As times continue to change and the population in Champaign fluctuates, the Board will once again face difficult decisions. Just this year, the current high school boundaries were changed to equalize the enrollment between Central and Centennial.

These changes will go into effect in the fall of 2010. As a result of the Consent Decree, BT Washington will be torn down and rebuilt to accommodate more students. (BTW staff and students will move to Columbia during this time.) BT Washington is tentatively scheduled to reopen in the fall of 2011 as a Magnet School with a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math theme. At the same time, Garden Hills Elementary School will be expanded and become a magnet school with a Primary Years Programme (International Baccalaureate Curriculum), which will include foreign language, and a secondary emphasis on the arts. As the future unfolds in Champaign, Unit 4 schools will continue to change and grow to match the needs of the Community.

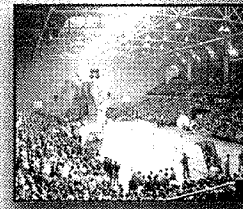
In addition to the public school system, there are a number of private schools located within the city limits of Champaign which also serve the primary and secondary educational needs of the community.

1917 • (February 20) Champaign voters adopt change to commission form of government

• Chanute Air Force Base opened

1918 • Influenza claims 310 lives in Champaign

1919 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois, 1919-20 was 7,102



• Illinois State Basketball tournament begins at Huff Hall; continues until 1996 at the Assembly Hall

1920 • Census: Champaign County, 56,959; Champaign, 15,873; Urbana, 10,244

• Burnham Hospital becomes Burnham City Hospital

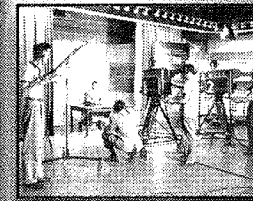
• Robesons moved into new store at Church and Randolph

1921 • Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District formed by referendum

CONTINUES ON PG 28



1952 • Presidential candidate Dwight Eisenhower stops at IC station



1953 • (November 14) WCIA television goes on the air

• First merger vote to unite Champaign and Urbana, failed in both cities

• Franklin Junior High School

1955 • WILL Television goes on the air

• Champaign adopts council-manager form of government



1956 • Bottonfield Elementary School

CONTINUES ON PG 40

hospital operation. After prolonged negotiations, the City Council approved the sale of Burnham Hospital to Mercy Hospital just across Wright Street in Urbana. A little more than a year later, Mercy, by then renamed Covenant, closed the Burnham facility. There were more than a few wet eyes to see this venerable institution close.

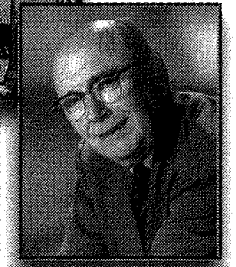
What became Mercy Hospital opened in 1920 as a 14 bed facility in a house at the corner of Fifth and White streets. It was initially called St. Mary's, after the parish. In a short time, it was replaced by a 50 bed structure at the corner of Park and Wright streets in Urbana. Early on, it came to be operated by the Sisters Mercy of the Holy Cross, hence the name Mercy. Additions were made in 1941, 1949 and 1963. While physicians at Christie Clinic generally admitted their patients to Mercy, they also had privileges at Burnham, which as time went on, again with the growth of the group practices, lessened the viability of the latter institution. With the sale of Burnham to Mercy, the name of the combined institution was changed to Covenant. In a 1997 consolidation with a number of other Catholic health providers, the name became Provena Covenant Hospital.

In 1929 doctors C.W. and J. M. Christie created Christie Clinic. Prior to that time, professional medical services were provided by doctors acting as individuals. Initially, it was located on the top floor of the Lincoln Building in

Downtown Champaign. Running out of space, in 1936, the Clinic purchased the building at the corner of Clark and Neil to which the group added two stories. In 1937, the group practice moved in. Christie Clinic has been a mainstay in downtown Champaign ever since.

Across Wright Street, starting with a gift of \$40,000 from Margaret Burt Carle Morris and the donation of the Simeon Busey Homestead by their heirs, the Eastern Illinois Sanitarium was established in the early 1920s. Using both the Busey home as well as a new structure, the "Y" building the short-lived institution got started. The institution closed its doors June 30, 1930. The following year, at the initiative of an Urbana attorney, two Mayo doctors, J.C. Thomas Rogers and Hugh Davison took over the failed facility and established what became Carle Memorial Hospital and related Carle Clinic, eventually establishing facilities in Champaign and elsewhere.

In an effort to provide adequate care for the underserved, the Francis Nelson Health Center was established in Northeast Champaign. After many years operating out of an old house and its subsequent expansion, in 2006 the clinic moved to completely renovated facility on Bloomington Road. All this has not only served Champaign well, but made the community a regional health mecca.



Christie Clinic, August 29, 1937, erected at a cost of \$170,000, surrounded by the four Christie brothers: JB (Pat) upper left, Thomas, upper right, James, bottom left, Thomas, bottom right  
Photo courtesy of Champaign County Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

# Healthcare business healthy

By Dannel McCollum

Next to higher education, the largest economic activity in Champaign-Urbana is the provision of healthcare. With two large hospitals, two clinics and a low income health center in the Community, the area is well endowed. There have been medical doctors here since shortly after the founding of the county in 1833. A county medical society was established in 1859. It was not, however, until 1893 that a serious thought was given to the creation of a hospital. The driving force for the project was Julia F. Burnham and the Champaign Social Science Club. Julia died before her dream could be realized, but her husband, Albert C. Burnham, in memory of his wife, initially donated \$10,000, a sum he later substantially increased, towards his wife's goal. The hospital became a reality on east Springfield Avenue in Champaign. The facility, with a capacity of 25 beds was dedicated on March 5, 1895.

In 1904, the hospital established a school of nursing which continued for 68 years. A bond referendum with federal assistance led to a major expansion of the hospital to the north of the original building in 1935. The final expansion of the building occurred in 1966-68 which replaced the 1895 hospital building. In 1920, the hospital was given to the City of Champaign. It was administered by a board appointed by the mayor and city council. Although the city owned

the hospital, in 1976 the City Council decided that public subsidies would end. Competition among local hospitals began to erode the economic vitality of Burnham which tended to serve the independent physicians, a diminishing force in the face of the rise of the two large group practices, Christie and Carle.

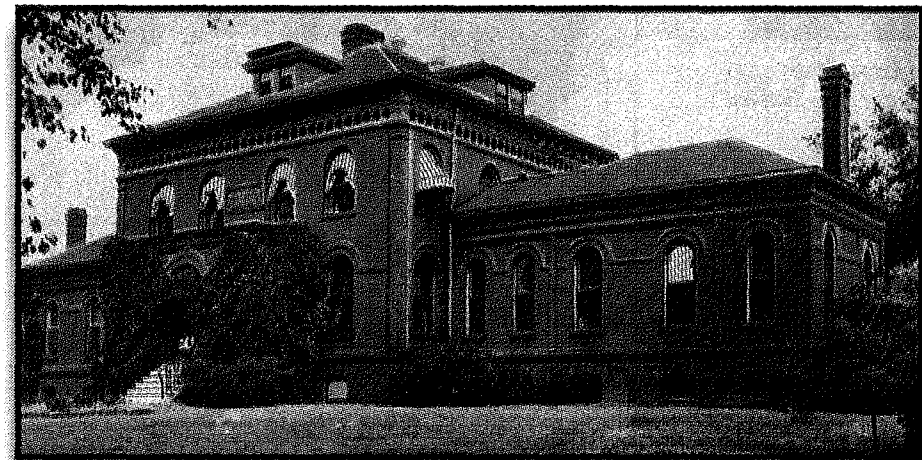
In the late 1980s, the hospital board



Julia Burnham Nurses School Class of 1943  
Photo courtesy of Champaign County Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

approached the City Council to back a \$3,000,000 bond issue to build a new energy system for the hospital. With some reluctance, the council agreed, but the debt load and annual operating losses ultimately led the City to remove itself from being responsible for a regional

Continues on page 39



Julia F Burnham Hospital  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



1948 • (March 8) U.S. Supreme Court decision in the McCollum Case, 8-1 in her favor

• Work begun on the C-U Comprehensive Development Plan (completed in 1950)

• Dutch elm disease begins, ultimately claiming over 12,500 trees

1949 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois was 22,012

1950 • Census: Champaign County, 106,100; Champaign, 39,563; Urbana, 22,834

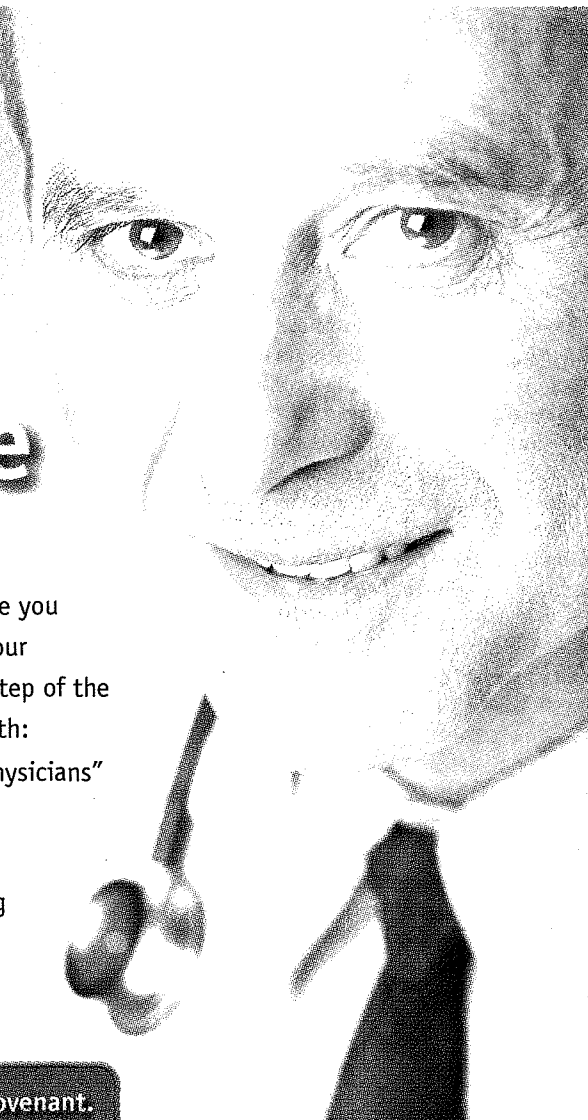
• Hensley Elementary School (closed 1969)



1951 • B. T. Washington and Westview Elementary schools

CONTINUES ON PG 39

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# C. V. Loyde, one of Champaign County's oldest businesses

By Dannel McCollum

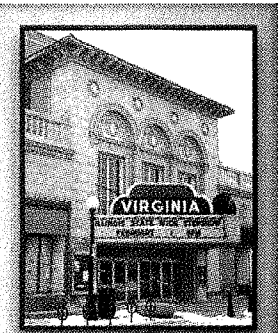
The C.V. Loyde Music Center dates from 1867, the same year that the University of Illinois was chartered. Its downtown storefront has changed locations several times over the years, but all have been within three blocks of the intersection of Neil Street and University Avenue. Founded as the Loyde and Peterson Book and Music Store, the ownership changed when D.H. Loyde bought out Peterson.

In the early 1940s, the music and book operations were separated, with C.V. Loyde Sr. taking charge of the latter. Both operations, however, continued at the same location at 103 N. Neil for a period of time. C.V. Sr. was absent in military service during the latter years of World War II, leaving the management of the store to Margaret Flesher.

Upon his return, Loyde moved the business to 313 N. Neil adding pianos and sheet music. After five years, Loyde again moved to

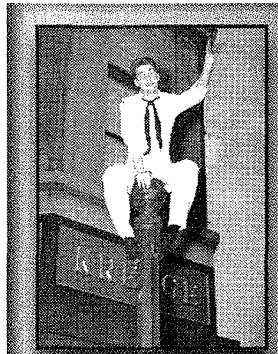
321-323 N. Neil and adding electric organs and records to the offerings of the business. When C.V. Loyde Jr. joined his father, the ever expanding business added electric guitars, amplifiers and brass instruments.

Around 1960, the business moved to its present location at 102 N. Neil. In the 1980s, under the management of C. V. Jr., the business became known as the C.V. Loyde Music Center. The business currently does major work for the University of Illinois, installing sound systems in the Assembly Hall, Stadium and other sports venues. With the entrance of Stephen Morris, the business is expanding still further into video and digital system integration and control.



- 1921 • The Virginia Theater opened
- 1922 • (September 29) the hard road connecting Champaign-Urbana and Danville was opened
- Urbana and Champaign Sanitary District established

CONTINUES ON PG 29



- 1945 • (Aug. 14) VJ Day
- (September) McCollum trial begins
- (October 26) University of Illinois Airport dedicated
- 1946 • Champaign High School wins the state basketball championship

CONTINUES ON PG 38



Goose Pond Church, where Lincoln once spoke, is now the site of the Champaign Police Department.

Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

Established in 1967. Moved to current location in 1999.

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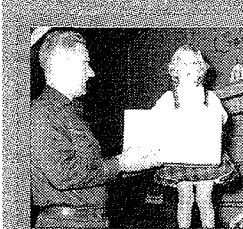
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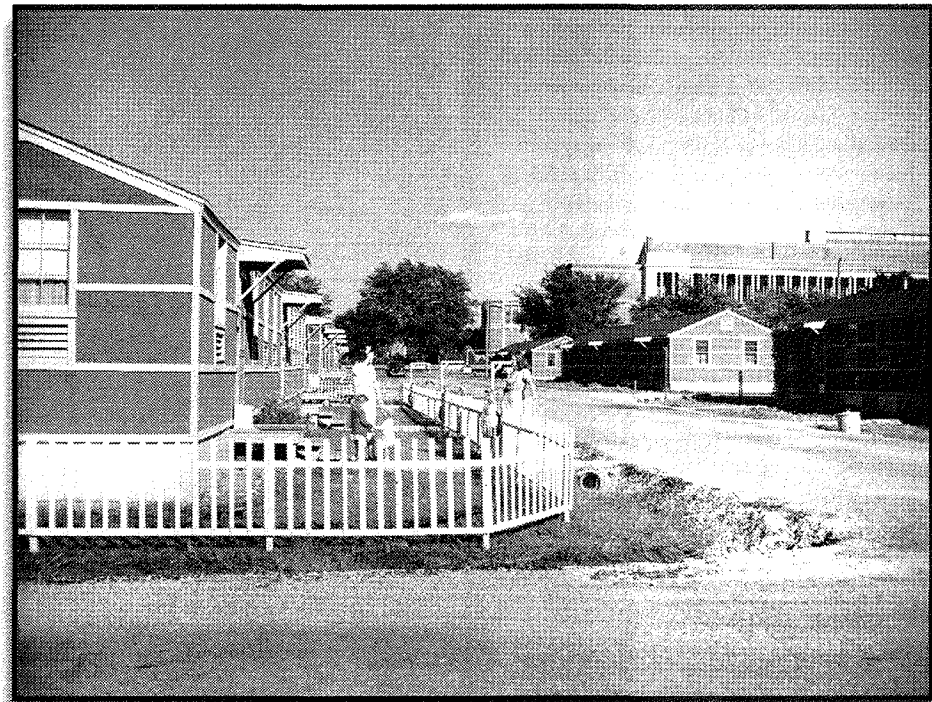
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CHAMPAIGN'S 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Stadium Terrace 1947  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

1942 • (August) A group of black teenage girls integrate Crystal Lake Pool

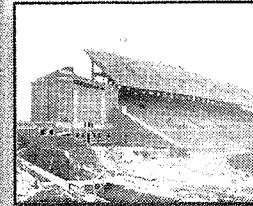
1945 • (May 8) VE Day



• (June) McCollum Religious education suit filed in circuit court

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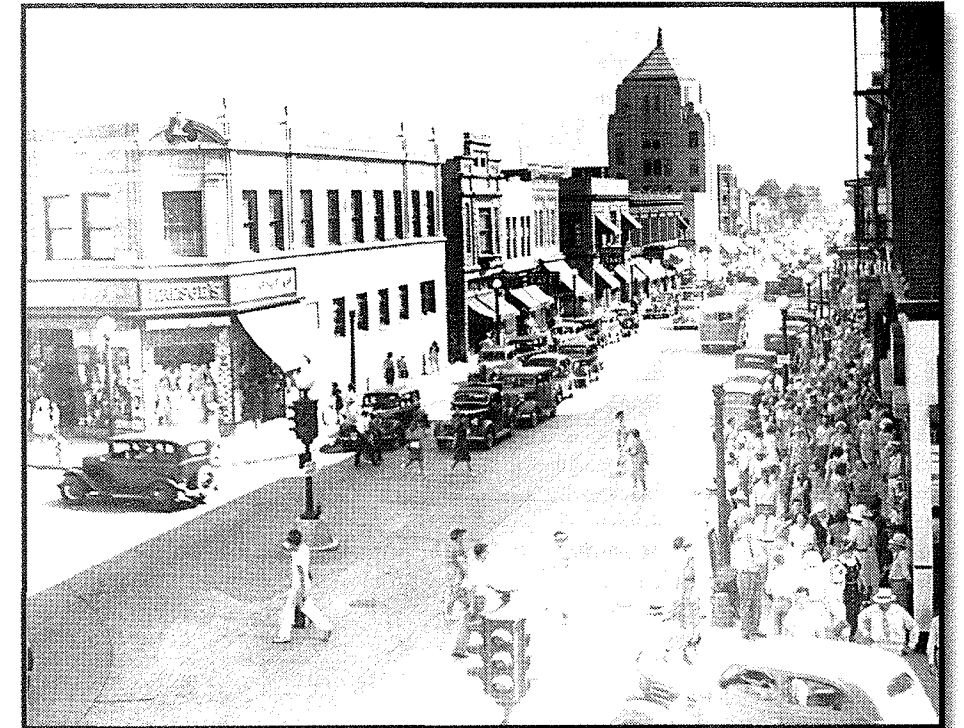
1923 • The McKinley utilities become Illinois Power and Light Co.



• Construction of Memorial Stadium completed—cost \$1.86 million

1924 • Major improvements in the Illinois Central Railroad: grade raised creating new underpasses, new station

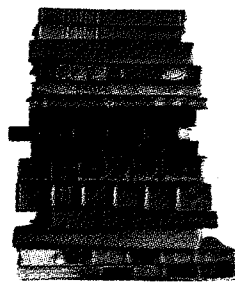
CONTINUES ON PG 30



Neil Street looking south from Main Street  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette

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# Historic preservation ensures glimpses of where we were

By Dannel McCollum

The idea of saving some of the physical past was late in coming to Champaign. Its incubation began with the Boneyard Creek Commission—a local response to the nation's bicentennial celebration—in which the Champaign Park District was a participant. One of the members of the Park Board, Bill Helms, took a special interest in a decaying structure that crossed the Boneyard near the northwest corner of Springfield Avenue and Second Street, the Stone Arch Bridge. While a number of the stones had fallen into the creek, much of the bridge remained, albeit in a precarious state. The span had been built in 1860 to carry the tracks of the Urbana Railroad Company, a spur from the newly-built Illinois Central Railroad to the courthouse in Urbana. Under the leadership of Helms, the District acquired the site and with volunteers from the Bricklayers Union, the Stone Arch Bridge was restored.

In 1971, fire damaged the Heimlicher's Store at the corner of University and First Street. Built in 1857 as the Cattle Bank, it was the oldest structure in the city, and after the raising of the Jacques house in Urbana, the oldest documentable building in the county. Recognizing its historical significance, efforts were initiated to save the structure. The cause was



Joseph Kuhn & Co.  
Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette



The Virginia Theater  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

taken up by Champaign Mayor, Joan Severns, whose husband John, an architect, donated his expertise. Ultimately, the building was saved and redeveloped by two businessmen, Ed Haas and Leon Jeske. Today the structure houses the Champaign County Historical Museum.

The earliest pavements in the city were laid around the outset of the last century. Over the years, concrete became the pavement of choice. The brick streets endured, albeit pockmarked with utility patches. Beginning mid century, the city began overlaying the old bricks with asphalt. Realizing the charm and durability of the brick pavements, the City Council enacted the "Brick

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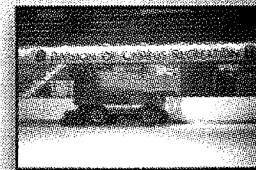
Orpheum Mural Painting  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

- 1924 • South Side Elementary School
- 1927 • Lottie Switzer Elementary School
- 1929 • Drs. C.W. and J.M. Christie form Christie Clinic
- Enrollment at the University of Illinois, 1939-49 was 13, 123



• Robbery at the B.F. Harris mansion

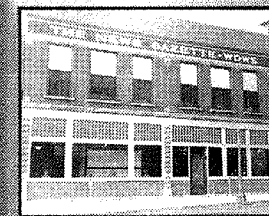
- 1930 • Census: Champaign County, 64,273; Champaign, 20,348; Urbana, 13,060



- 1931 • University of Illinois Ice Rink opened; at the time it was the largest, artificially refrigerated indoor rink in the world
- 1933 • The Champaign City Garage was built on North Market St. with labor paid for out of Federal emergency relief funds

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- 1935 • First Champaign City Building razed; construction begins on new City Building, a WPA project
- Champaign Junior High School (now Central High School) opened
- 1936 • The electric street railway shut down; National City Lines begins bus service in the Twin Cities
- 1937 • Christie Clinic moved into building at Clark and Neil
- (October) The new City Building opened for business



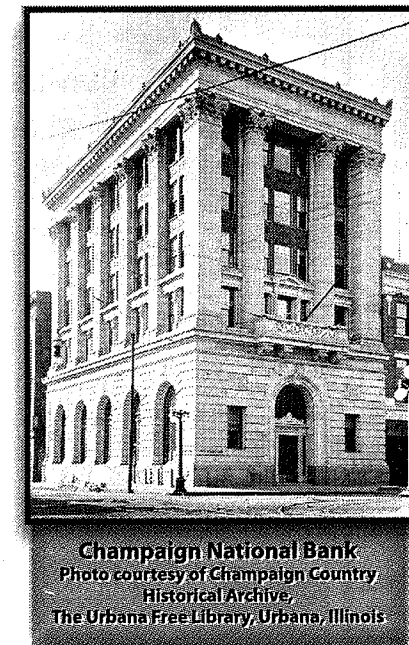
- WDWS begins broadcasting
- 1939 • Enrollment at the University of Illinois 1939-40 was 15,276
- 1940 • Census: Champaign County, 70,578; Champaign, 23,302; Urbana, 14,064
- 1941 • (December 7) Japanese attack Pearl Harbor

CONTINUES ON PG 36

Street Preservation District" in the near west area of the city and today some nine and a half miles of restored streets remain. In much the same area, in 1999, the Council authorized the complete rehabilitation of the early street lighting system, thus preserving the vintage cast iron light poles.

The grandest theater ever built in the Twin Cities, outside of the University of Illinois, the Virginia, opened in 1921. Built and owned by A. H. Stoolman, the theater had long since passed out of family ownership. It closed as a movie venue in the late 1980s, but was kept open by David and Sharon Wyper as a venue for live performances. The facility became a city concern for two reasons. While in fairly good condition for a building that had stood for three quarters of a century, it failed to satisfy modern life-safety codes. It was also a concern to city officials that if the building were shut down, it would become derelict like the Orpheum and fall into further disrepair. As a result of pressure from the city, the owner agreed to sell the facility for \$500,000, half of his original asking price. The City Council agreed to loan that sum to a not-for-profit entity to acquire the facility.

The not-for-profit struggled and finally merged with the Champaign-Urbana Theater Company. The theater was still too much for the combined resources of the new entity. Building upon a generous grant from the State of Illinois, and the willingness of the City to forgive its loan, the theater was taken over by the Champaign Park District in 1999. Since that time, extensive restoration has occurred, with the theater



Champaign National Bank  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois



Remains of Lewis Building after 1915 fire  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois



Lewis & Company Department Store  
Photo courtesy of Champaign Country Historical Archive, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana, Illinois

hosting live performances and movies. The *News-Gazette* which restored the projection system sponsors a classic film series. More recently, the Virginia has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the mid 1990s, amid growing concern about the loss of vintage building stock in the downtown, the City Council authorized the Mayor who also serves as the liquor commissioner to issue "A" licenses in excess of permitted numbers to entrepreneurs willing to renovate older buildings while preserving their historic character and satisfying life-safety code standards. This program has led to the upgrade of a number of downtown structures in the past decade, allowing the historic business area to again become a major evening venue

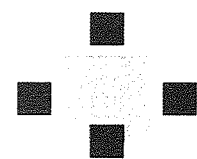
To ensure ongoing attention to historic preservation, the City upgraded its zoning ordinance in 1998. Included in the new legislation is a historic preservation component, the first in this area. Among other things, the new legislation created a process for official recognition of historic structures and a commission to review such applications as well as to advise the Council on related preservation matters. While much has been lost, much of the historic character of the City will survive to be appreciated for generations to come.



# Congratulations to Champaign on your 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary

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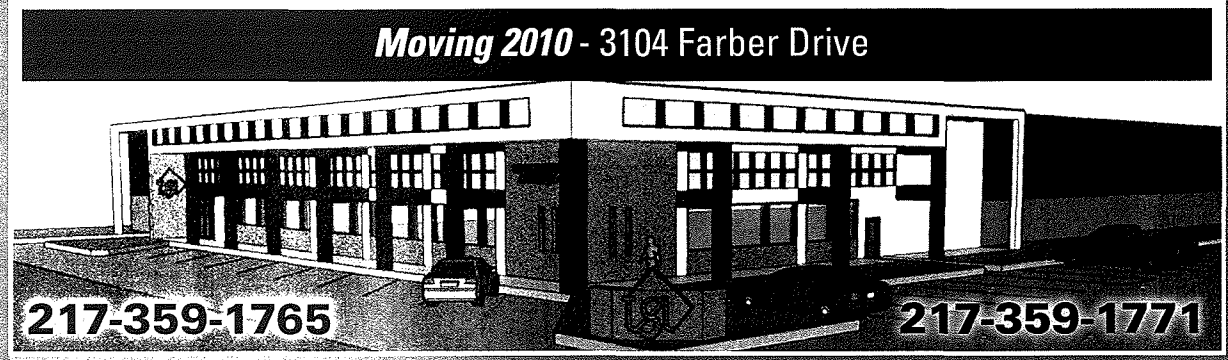
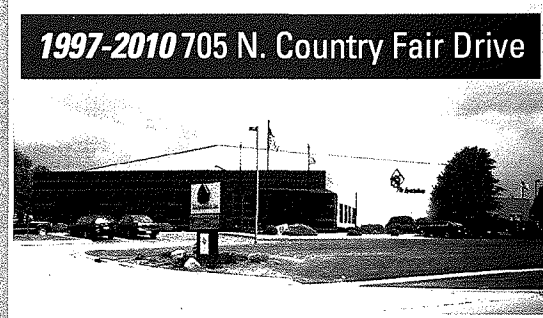
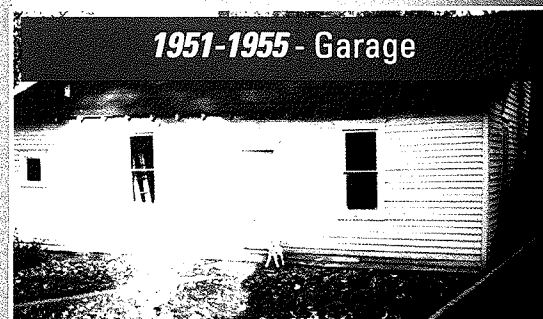


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