

**Peru, Illinois centennial May 25-26, 1935 : commemorating one hundred years of Peru's existence.**

[Peru, Ill. : Historical Committee, 1935.]

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Peru Centennial, 1835-1935

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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY





1835

PERU

CENTENNIAL

1935

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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

# PERU ILLINOIS CENTENNIAL • MAY • 25 • 26 • 1935 •



COMMEMORATING  
ONE HUNDRED YEARS  
OF PERU'S EXISTENCE





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Ill. Hist. Surv.

## FOREWORD

In compiling this article, the Historical Committee has endeavored to give a picture of the development of Peru. It is necessarily brief. Some of the material has been taken from early histories of the city, county and state. Much of it has been volunteered by various citizens, to whom the Committee extends its thanks for their cooperation.

Every effort has been made to achieve accuracy, but to compile a complete history in so short a time would be impossible.

META F. WALDORF	MABEL DELANY NOON
ORVILLA HACKMAN	REV. J. LAUER, O. S. B.
W. J. STANTON	LUCY WALDORF
FANNY SNYDER	LISZT LENZEN
MARGARET POPPE	JEROME KOONS

*The Historical Committee*

## THE STORY OF PERU

THE ILLINOIS RIVER and its valley were first explored by white men in 1673. Louis Joliet, a fur trader, "strong of build, dark of eye and beard, alert, with intelligent face and energetic gesture;" and Pere Jacques Marquette, of the Society of the Jesuits, "smooth shaven, delicate of frame, his eyes deeply sunken," explored the Mississippi and the Illinois in two canoes, with five Canadian voyageurs at the paddles. One history\* places the date of their visit to the vicinity of Peru as between the fifteenth and twentieth days of August.

Father Marquette in his journal said that they had seen nothing like the Illinois Valley, "the fertility of its soil, its prairies and woods, its cattle, elk, deer, wildcats, bustards, swans, ducks, parquets, and even beaver." He also said the river was wide, deep and still, and spoke of the Indian villages on its banks. One of these may have been here, as it is known that the site of Peru was once occupied by an Indian village. It is said that two Indian burial grounds lay within the early limits of the city.

The first record in America of the finding of coal, the natural resource which played so large a part in Peru's development, is shown on Joliet's map made on this trip. A map made by Hennepin, another early French explorer (1689) shows a "cole mine" on the Illinois River above Fort Creve Coeur, which was near the present site of Peoria. This was probably an outcrop of a vein lying near the surface, and may have been somewhere between Peru and Ottawa, as suggested by Conger & Hull in a history, "Illinois River Valley," published in 1932. It is quite as likely to have been farther down the river, between Bureau and Peoria, where today many such mines can be seen.

By 1816 the American Fur Company, owned by John Jacob Astor, had established trading posts throughout most of Illinois, some of which were located in what is now La Salle County. This business flourished for ten or fifteen years.

The first white settler in Peru was John Hays who, with his wife, four sons and one daughter, came here from Tennessee in 1830. They built a cabin near the present site of the Peru Products Company, and farmed a piece of land on the river bank. For ten years they ran a ferry across the river, near the spot which later became the mouth of the canal. The street now called Adam, which runs from Fourth to Water Streets, just west of the present Lincoln School, was in Peru's early days called Ferry Street, which would seem to show that it led to the ferry.

The Hays' nearest white neighbors were at Dixon's Ferry on the north; at Princeton on the west, "except perhaps the Hoskins family near the Bureau;"\*\* at Cedar Creek on the south; and at Utica or Ottawa on the east. The nearest mill was at Bloomington, seventy miles away.

About a year after the Hays family came to Peru, Simon Crozier, who had previously settled near Utica, came to Cedar Creek and built a mill there. At that time he was postmaster for this part of the country, and carried the mail to and from Peoria once a month. In 1836 a regular post office was established in Peru, the mail coming from Peoria by boat.

When trouble with the Indians broke out early in 1831, Hays and his neighbors, two of whom, Lapsley and Burton Ayers, are named in an early history, started to build a fort on the present site of La Salle. However, danger was nearer than they had thought, and abandoning their fort, they took to canoes and went to Hennepin. It was May, planting time, and after a few days two of the Hays boys, Harrison and Jonathan, took a canoe and came back to their farm to finish their corn planting. Next day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the steamer Caroline came up the river with Capt. Wilbourn's Company of Volunteers on board. When the captain of the boat saw the boys at work in the field, he fired off a cannon, rounded to, and sent off a boat to take them on board.

The Caroline went up the river as far as the mouth of the Big Vermillion, where she lay all night, anchored in the middle of the stream, with steam up, and soldiers with loaded muskets promenading the deck. Next morning the troops were landed on the south side of the river, where they started to build Fort Wilbourn.

The Caroline was the first steamboat ever to come up the river beyond Beardstown. One historian tells us that many of the settlers along the river did not know what a steamboat was, and some of them fled in terror, while one man took his gun, called his dog, and pursued the boat up the river as he would wild game, until it outdistanced him. From the mouth of the Vermillion a pilot named Crozier, (probably our Cedar Creek postmaster) took the Caroline to Ottawa, an undertaking that required considerable skill.

\* Chronology of Father Marquette's Journeys to the Illinois Country.

\*\* "The History of Peru" Henry S. Beebe.

During the Black Hawk war in 1832, after the Battle of Stillman's Run, settlers rushed to the nearest points of safety, one of which was Fort Wilbourn. On May twentieth the Indian Creek Massacre occurred. Shabbona, Chief of the Pottowattomies, tried to warn the settlers, but they did not pay sufficient heed to his warning. Sixteen white people were killed by the Sacs, under Black Hawk, one of whom was the daughter of John Hays.

A company of soldiers, among them the twenty-three year old Abraham Lincoln, arrived at Fort Wilbourn in June, 1832, but was mustered out on June fourteenth by Lieutenant Robert Anderson.

#### TOWN LAID OUT

An early act of the legislature set aside Section Sixteen in every township for school purposes. Therefore, when more settlers came to Peru in 1834, the School Commissioners laid out and sold the southwest quarter of Section Sixteen, and called it "Peru." This is said to be the Inca Indian word for "wealth." The original Town of Peru extended from Water Street to North Street, (now Fourth,) and from West Street to East Street, (now known as Pine Street,) which runs south from the present Andrew Hebel residence to Water Street.

In 1834 Ulysses Spaulding and H. L. Kinney built the first building, (this must mean the first business house, excluding the cabins of the settlers,) and opened a store of which T. D. Brewster was given charge. The Pottowattomies, under Shabbona, made Peru a stop-over on their way to their Western reservation, and did some trading at this store.\*

The act incorporating the Illinois and Michigan Canal, to terminate at or near the mouth of the Little Vermillion, was passed late in 1835. The first shovelful of earth was excavated on July Fourth the next year, but it was not until the following spring that any great number of people settled in Peru.

In 1836 the legislature passed the "Internal Improvement Act," incorporating the "Central Railroad," which was to have run through Peru. However, after much work had been done on this road, the course was changed to that of the present Illinois Central Railroad.

Ninawa Addition, extending approximately from Water Street to Sixth, and from West Street to Calhoun, was owned by Lyman D. Brewster, who died in the fall of 1835. It was platted and recorded in 1836 by Theron D. Brewster.

In 1837-8-9 Peru thought pretty well of itself. A good many more people were added to its population, amongst them Fletcher Webster, son of Daniel, who practiced law here for three years, and John P. Tilden, who was employed by Daniel Webster to manage some of the Webster farm land, part of which was located within the present boundaries of Peru.

Peru's first industry, a saw mill located near the lower coal banks, was started in 1837.

At midnight on March 29, 1838, Father Raho and Father Parodi, Catholic Missionaries, arrived

in Peru by boat. A crowd consisting of practically the entire populations of Peru and La Salle awaited them, in a flood of light from five hundred torches. As they disembarked the air was filled with the shrill whistling of the steamer, the roll of drums, and the welcoming shouts of a happy people. They were to be entertained at the home of William Byrne of La Salle, who had the contract for the construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. When they were mounted on horses brought for them by John Cody, the escorting band struck up "Garry-owen," and the whole assemblage followed them to the Byrne cabin, where they listened while Mr. Byrne's small daughter read an address of welcome to the ambassadors of Christ.

Peru's first church was built by the Methodists in the fall of 1838, facing on what is now Third Street, between Fulton and Peoria. In 1854 this church was sold to the German Methodists who had organized a few years before. The building still stands, a paintless, forbidding-looking frame structure in the middle of the block on the north side of the street. For a number of years while Mr. F. E. Eckenfelder was actively engaged in the furniture and undertaking business, he used it as a warehouse.

After selling this church, the Methodists erected a larger edifice on the site of the present Central School. Being unable to support this church, the society sold the building to the School Board, who remodeled it and opened the Peru High School therein.

"In December, 1870, the Methodist Society re-organized, with twenty-four members, and met for worship in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, which they afterwards purchased."\* This church was on the corner of Plum and Bluff Streets.

A group of Presbyterians who had organized a church in Rockwell in 1837, came to Peru two years later, and very soon joined with the Congregational Society.

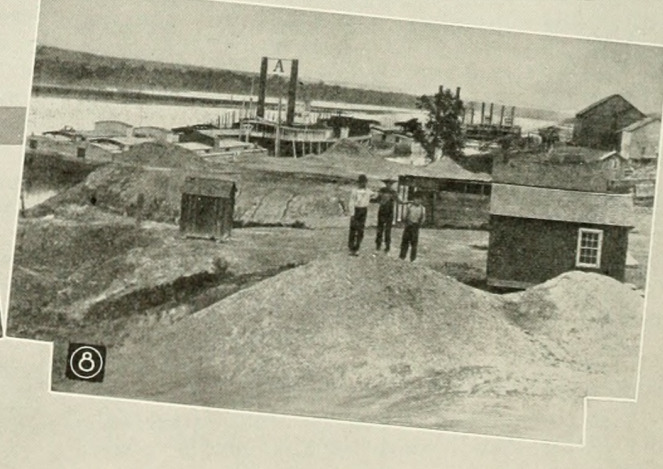
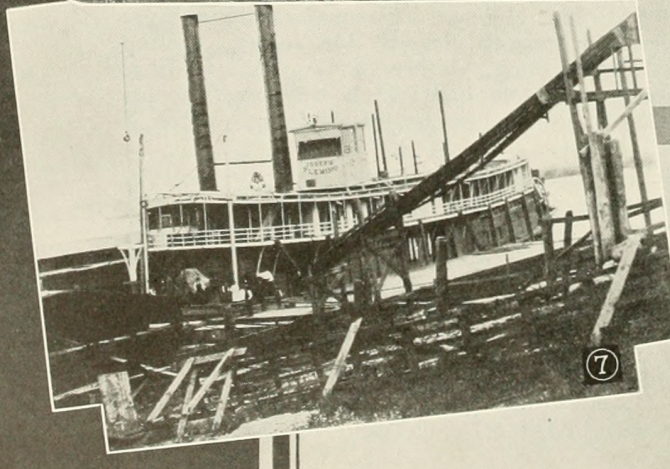
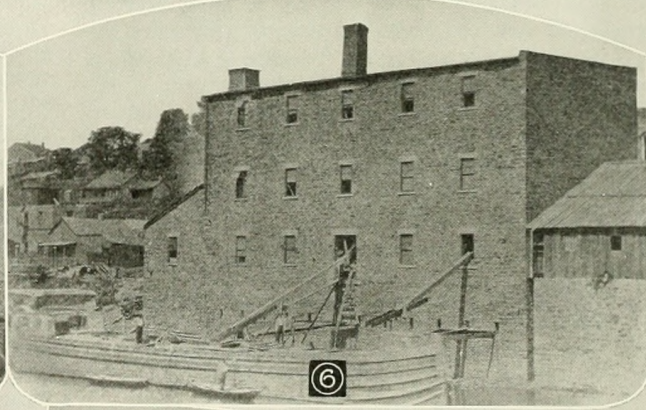
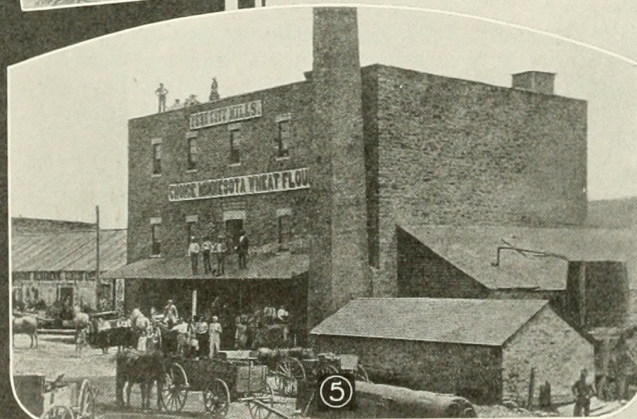
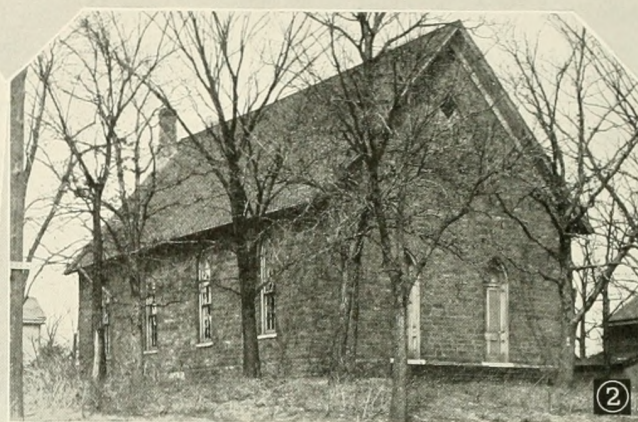
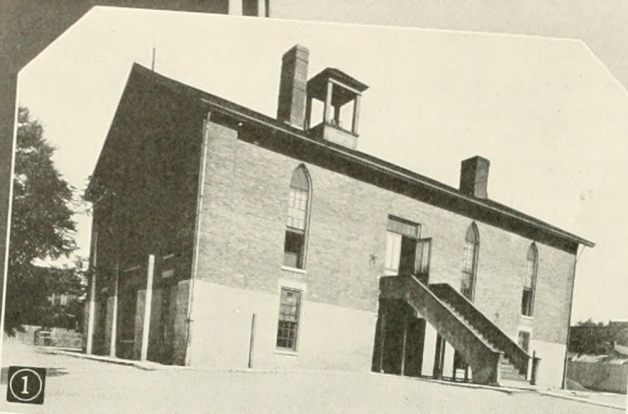
In 1841 T. D. Brewster, in addition to building his own home, which is now owned and occupied by The Young Men's Athletic Club, built the town's second church, a small, substantial stone edifice on the north side of what is now Second Street, between Peoria and Putnam, probably a little west of the present Strohm residence. This was built for the use of the Congregational Society. Mr. John C. Coffing of Salisbury, Conn., father of Churchill Coffing, donated a valuable bell which was used in this church, and removed to the present church, where it is still in use.

The church on Second Street was later used for a number of years by the Episcopalians.

The Zion Evangelical Church was founded in September, 1852, and its edifice, on the northeast corner of Sixth and Grant Streets, was built in 1866. The same church, altered and improved, is still in use.

The original St. Joseph's Church in Peru was erected as a mission church in 1854, and was attended

\* The Past and Present of La Salle County, Illinois by H. F. Kett & Co.



1. METHODIST CHURCH AT THIRD AND PUTNAM STREETS, AFTERWARDS THE PERU HIGH SCHOOL, KNOWN AS THE "BIG BRICK"
2. METHODIST CHURCH AT THIRD AND PUTNAM STREETS, AFTERWARDS THE PERU HIGH SCHOOL, KNOWN AS THE "BIG BRICK"
3. THERON D. BREWSTER'S HOME AT SECOND AND PEORIA
4. FLETCHER WEBSTER'S LOG HOUSE, WHICH STOOD ON GROUND NOW OWNED BY ST. BEDE COLLEGE
5. & 6. TWO VIEWS OF THE PERU CITY MILLS, ON THE RIVER FRONT
7. THE JOSEPH FLEMING, AN EARLY RIVER BOAT
8. THE JOSEPH FLEMING, AN EARLY RIVER BOAT

by Vincentian Fathers from St. Patrick's until 1864 when St. Joseph's was made a parish church and the first resident pastor was appointed. This church was on the site of the present St. Joseph's Church, the southeast corner of Fifth and Schuyler Streets.

In August, 1867, Rev. A. J. Pettit came to Peru to organize the English speaking Catholics into a parish which was called St. Mary's. The lots on which the present church, rectory and convent now stand, on Sixth Street, between Plum and Rock Streets, were purchased, and a frame church was erected and ready for services on Christmas day of the same year.

On July 29, 1890, St. Valentine Society purchased four lots and a small home, between Syracuse and St. James Streets on Pulaski, for the purpose of building a church. In 1892 the Rev. A. M. Sikorski was appointed first resident pastor.

St. John's German Lutheran Church organized in 1884, and nine years later built a church on North Calhoun Street. St. John's English Lutheran Church was formed in 1919, and the two bodies combined. Their present church is at the southeast corner of Seventh and Fulton Streets.

In 1913 First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Peru, Illinois, had its beginning as a Society, which was incorporated under the laws of Illinois in 1924. In 1931 steps were taken to become a church and the present name was adopted. The church edifice, purchased in 1924, is located at the northeast corner of Third and Grant Streets.

#### BOROUGH ORGANIZED

On December 6, 1838, Peru's inhabitants met at the tavern of Zimri Lewis, and voted to take preliminary steps to organize as a borough. The population then was 426, 175 of whom were males past twenty one. The vote cast on December fifteenth carried the proposition, 40 to 1. On the same day M. Mott, F. Lebeau, C. H. Charles, Z. Lewis, and O. C. Motley were elected Trustees, and they elected Z. Lewis, President; T. D. Brewster, Clerk; Z. Lewis, Jr., Constable; and James Myers, Assessor.

In June of 1839 Daniel Webster, accompanied by his daughter, made a tour of the West, and came up the river from St. Louis to visit his son Fletcher, who lived in a log house a mile and a half west of Peru. The Fletcher Websters were regarded as the town's "best people," and gave many parties in their home. Naturally, the visit of so distinguished a man as Daniel Webster to a favorite citizen created great excitement in the town, and the people of the surrounding country were out to welcome him. They gathered at the Webster cabin and made a night of it, with songs, stories and champagne. The wild enthusiasm is shown by the fact that one of the two boats which made the trip from St. Louis was burned to illuminate the town.

Simon Kinney, at that time President of the village of Peru, was a warm friend of the Webster family. On this trip Daniel Webster visited him, and presented him with a fine pair of dun colored mares, much better stock than was then common

here. When he left Peru, Henry L. Kinney, a son of Simon, took him to Chicago by carriage.

The tract of 659 acres adjoining the present township of Peru on the west, was held by Webster as long as he lived, and was bought from the executors of the Webster estate in 1852 by Tilden Ames and J. P. Tilden. It was cut up into small tracts, and changed hands a number of times. The Webster cabin with two hundred acres of land was bought by Christian Dingler in about 1877, and sold by him in 1889 to the order of Benedictine Monks. It is now the site of St. Bede College.

In 1839 Peru was drunk with prosperity. Large forces were employed on the Canal, and on the "Central Railroad," which was still expected to run through Peru. Numerous other projects were talked of, all planned to bring added population and capital to Peru.

A Mr. Ford joined with Geo. W. Holley to start a newspaper, the *Ninawah Gazette*, with Mr. Holley as editor. This was a weekly, the second paper to be published in this part of Illinois. It ran for about two years here, and then the press was moved to Lacon. Because there were no railroads, air mail, telegraph, telephone or radio in those days, news was slow in getting from one part of the country to another. News from Europe was usually five weeks on the way, and Atlantic Coast happenings were rarely known here in less than two weeks. Harrison's death, for instance, was reported as a rumor twelve days after it occurred, and confirmed a week later. Most metropolitan news was taken from the St. Louis papers, which came in by boat. The few local happenings were supplemented by poetry, essays and stories which filled a large part of the paper.

In the flush of prosperity Peru's first brick building, a three story structure, was erected. Part of this building was occupied in 1855 by the *Peru Sentinel*, a weekly newspaper published by J. L. McCormack and Guy Hulett. In August of that year the building was destroyed by fire.

In 1840 the bubble burst. Foreign capitalists refused to lend more money. The state had been borrowing to build railroads, prisons, hospitals, asylums and State Houses. Counties borrowed to build court houses and jails. Although millions had been squandered, not one public enterprise had been completed. Every State in the Union was in practically the same condition.

Probably what hit Peru the hardest—and no place suffered more—was that the Canal was being built on borrowed money, and since there was no money to proceed, the work was stopped and the laborers thrown out of employment. Henry L. Kinney must bear his share of the blame. He had taken contracts for a large amount of the work on the canal, and was unable to meet his obligations. He left town, but many of the people who had come here at his instigation, and had either lived on his bounty or been employed in his enterprises, were ruined by his failure.

Money was so scarce that the raising of a quarter was an enterprise, and the spending of one was

not lightly undertaken. In those days postage was not prepaid, but was collected at the post office when delivery was made, and during this time people did not call for their mail, simply because they did not have the money to pay the postage. Even the governor of the state was unable to claim official letters, since neither he himself nor the state had sufficient money.

In order to avoid payment of freight, the one Peru merchant who was able to keep his business open took wheat, (accepted from farmers in payment of debts,) to Chicago by wagon, where it brought about fifty cents a bushel. This supplied a little money and enabled the merchant to buy goods. The Illinois soil was fertile, and no one was in actual danger of starvation, but the depression was so severe that there was competition among citizens for the honor of being the poorest—poverty was just as fashionable as it was in 1930.

Things continued bad for three or four years, but must have improved to some extent, at least during the summers, since Peru was the western terminal of the Frink & Walker stage line. A great many people traveled between New York and St. Louis or New Orleans by way of the lakes and rivers. Sometimes five or ten four-horse coaches would leave Peru for Chicago, Springfield, Dixon and Pontiac at the same time.

Winters probably were pretty dull, for the arrival of the first steamer in the spring was eagerly awaited, all of the population watching it pull up the river, and speculating on its identity. The news of its arrival would soon spread through the country, and people would come from as far away as Ottawa, ostensibly on business, but really to see the steamer, and learn what news it had brought.

The four-horse stage coaches also attracted much interest as they dashed through the streets. The guard would blow the horn, and people would run out to watch them much as they would a circus parade. The stage coach stables were located about where the Peru Lumber and Coal Co. yards are now.

Our old friend the Canal, both the hero and the villain in Peru's early history, stepped in again in 1843 to improve conditions. The legislature passed "An act to provide for the completion of the Illinois & Michigan Canal, and the payment of the canal debt." When work began, new people came to town, warehouses and workshops were built, and things began to look bustling and business like.

By 1845 the town had achieved prosperity undreamed of three years before. A large trade had gradually been built up. Farmers would come from a distance of sixty, eighty, or a hundred miles, their wagons loaded with produce, sell their wares here, and return with loads of merchandise. Frederick J. Denny, the veteran weighmaster of the Peru City Scale House, who came to Peru in 1841 with his parents, is quoted as follows:

"I remember when the levee was loaded with merchandise. At that time the roadway and wharf sloped from the sidewalks down to the river. There were two large white warehouses on the river front,

and almost any day in the week you could see two or three, and sometimes more, boats unloading their cargoes of merchandise and taking on a load of grain. The farmer would bring in a load of grain and take away with him a load of groceries or other supplies. The grain was taken to St. Louis, or sometimes as far as New Orleans."

In May of 1846 Peru's second weekly newspaper, *The Beacon Light*, was started by Nash and Elliott. The name was later changed to *Junction Beacon*. The paper ran for two years.

Peru's first attempt at a fire department does not seem to have been as successful as her later venture. On December 5, 1846 an ordinance was passed authorizing formation of a Hook and Ladder Company, and \$35.00 appropriated for implements, which historian Beebe tells us were never available for use in cases of emergency, although Peru had many serious fires. Members who enrolled were exempt from jury duty. The Minutes of the Town Board, December, 1846, list the original members of the Hook and Ladder Company:

ISAAC D. HARMON	GEORGE LOW
CHAS. S. HUNTOON	LUCIUS RUMRILL
JOHN S. COATES	ISAAC ABRAHAM
DENNIS DUNNAVAN	THERON D. BREWSTER
DAVID PERRY	DAVID DANA
OZRA MCKINSIE	EDWIN R. KERR
SAMUEL W. RAYMONDS	ISAAC DAY
WILLIAM PAUL	JOHN WHITE

On March 26, 1852, members of the Hook and Ladder Company presented a petition to the City Council asking for the increase of the company from twenty to thirty, although it seems to have been organized with sixteen. The petition was granted, and that seems to be the last that was heard of the Hook and Ladder Company.

In 1847 the city purchased land for a cemetery, and had it laid out by a board of trustees. The People's Hospital now occupies a part of this tract. The property was owned by Theron D. Brewster, and was sold with the condition that the city kept title only so long as the land was used as a cemetery. When part of the property was wanted for the hospital, it had to be re-purchased from the Brewster heirs.

#### ICE BUSINESS AND BOAT YARDS

1847 saw the beginning of Peru's ice business, which for many years was the most important of Peru's industries. The development evidently was rapid, for an historian of 1858 writes: "The ice trade, (packing and shipping to a southern market,) is a very important business here. Three hundred men are employed during the winter, and seventy during the summer."

For years the business grew and prospered, reaching its peak about the middle seventies. At that time Peru's boats were known not only all along the Mississippi and the Illinois, but on the Tennessee, the Arkansas and the Red Rivers as well. The decline started in the late seventies. The harvesting and shipping of ice was discontinued about 1890. The decrease in the business was due largely to the de-

velopment of ice making machines and the perfecting of large mechanical cooling units.

The pioneer in the industry was Capt. John Lowery McCormick, who came here from Pennsylvania in 1847. He had a number of interests, among them farming and trading in stock. He built some valuable buildings along Water Street, as well as his residence which was erected in 1848. His principal interest was in shipping, in which he had been engaged in the east, and as he had had some experience in the ice business there, he was quick to see its possibilities here. Others soon followed his lead, among them the Huse and Loomis Ice & Transportation Co., the Crescent City Ice Co., and the Memphis Co., consisting of Bohlen, Huse and Graves.

Some ice houses were located on the south bank of the lower slough; others near the canal cut; some on the north bank of the river in the west end of town; and others west of Peru on the banks of small bayous.

A few of the tow boats in the industry were: The Alps and S. C. Baker owned by the Crescent City Ice Co., Capt. Peter Bowers, Manager; the Joe Fleming, Polar Wave, Jack Frost and Jim Watson owned by the Huse & Loomis Ice Co., and the Petrel owned by J. L. McCormick.

Mr. McCormick also had the packet Prairie Bird. This boat was one of the Five-Day Line, the deluxe line of its time. The line took its name from the fact that its boats required five days for a round trip between Peru and St. Louis.

About sixty-five barges owned by the various companies were used in transporting ice. Most of the barges were wintered in nearby sloughs. They were loaded with ice in winter. The capacity of barges ranged from 600 to 3500 tons. One of the old river barges of 3500 tons capacity held as much ice as could be packed in 105 of the present day box cars.

Some years, in addition to filling all the houses and the barges, ice was stacked in large piles. Some of these were roofed over with boards; others simply covered with straw. It is estimated that over 100,000 tons of ice were harvested some winters.

When conditions were favorable in the ice business there was work for all. The hours were from 7 a. m. to 6 p. m. The pay per day for men was \$1.50 to \$1.75; boys from 75c to \$1.00; a team and driver, \$2.50. Often thirty to forty teams would be needed to clear away heavy falls of snow.

As soon as the river opened in the spring the tow boats and barges would start for the South, the tow boats soon returning with empty barges. The loading and transporting of the ice usually required several months. The work gave employment to a large number.

It took a man of skill to pilot a boat and tow of barges. The pilot's job was by no means a simple one, for he had to know every snag, shallow place and turn in the river, and to be constantly alert for changes in the channel.

Closely allied to the ice business was that of building and repairing boats and barges. The boat-

yard in the southwest end of Peru, which for many years was operated by the Huse & Loomis Co., was built about the middle fifties. The first boat caulkers came from Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit and other eastern cities. Caulkers were considered the most skilled mechanics of their time. Some of the earliest can not now be ascertained but a few working here in the late sixties and the early seventies were Geo. Munn, Patrick Stanton, Martin Cullen, John Porter, and a Mr. Holmes.

The Huse & Loomis yard was one of the best in the west. It was equipped to build and repair the largest of river craft. It employed about seventy caulkers and about fifty laborers.

The Memphis Co., also called the Bohlen Co., and the Crescent Ice Co., also called the Bowers Co., operated small yards where they built and repaired their own barges. Sawyer & Stanley had a small floating dock used principally for canal boat repairing.

The boat yards were successfully operated for many years. As they were closely allied with the ice business, the fortunes of both were inter-twined, and the yards passed out of existence on the decline of the ice industry.

The closing of the boat yards and the extinction of the ice industry were symptomatic of the lethargy into which all river traffic had fallen, so that, with the exception of pleasure craft, few boats were seen on the Illinois during the early decades of this century.

In 1848 the Canal made its last major appearance as a factor in Peru's development. The work was completed in the spring, and thereafter Peru gradually lost her importance as a shipping point and junction, as much of the grain which had been brought here was now shipped from other points on the Canal.

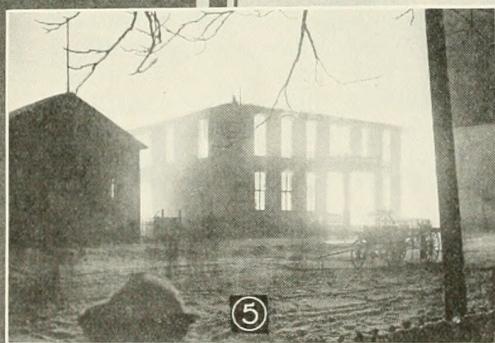
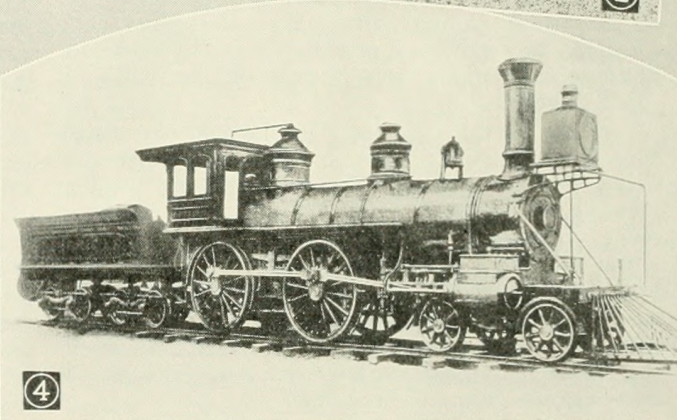
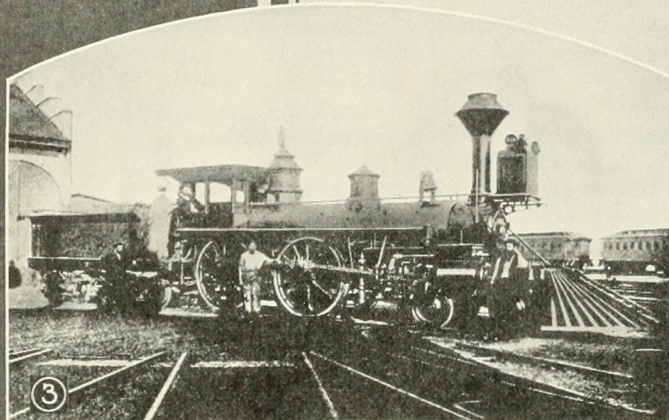
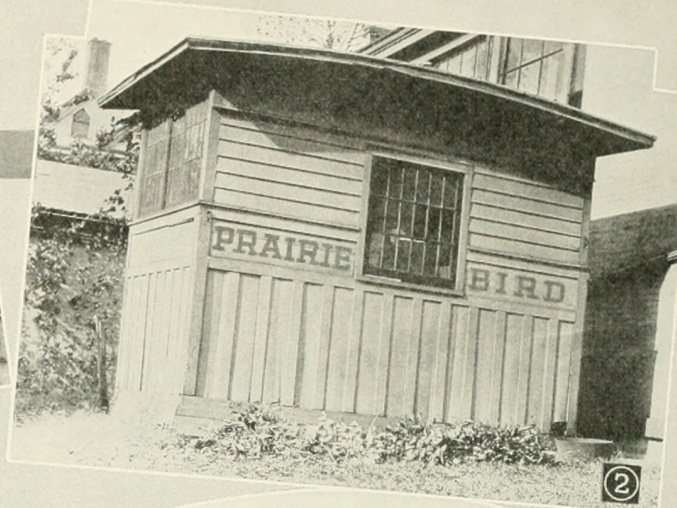
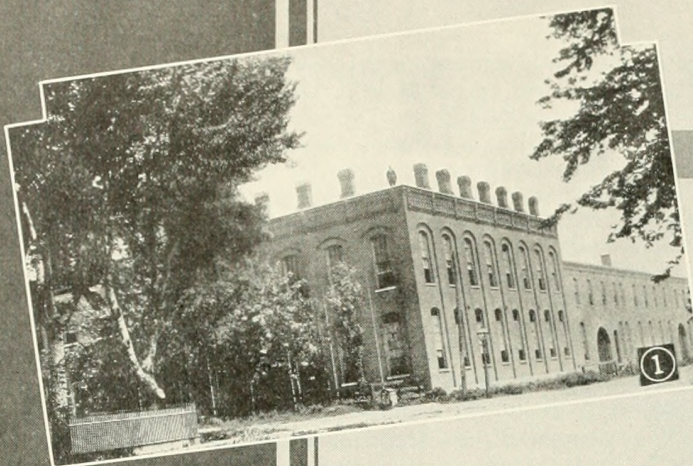
The first loaded boat through the Canal was the Goldona, A. J. Hobart, Captain. It cleared Chicago with a load of lumber, and reached Ottawa at 2 p. m. on a Sunday afternoon. People saw it coming, and ran to meet it, cheering all the way.

Peru's third weekly paper began publication in October of 1848. It was the Peru Telegraph, owned by Holbrook and Underhill. The first substantial stone warehouse in town was erected in the same year by T. D. Brewster, directly on the river bank near the foot of Putnam Street.

#### FLOOD AND CHOLERA

In the Spring of 1849 this part of the Illinois Valley suffered the worst flood known since the settlement of the country. Heavy rains in January raised the river out of its banks, overflowing the bottom. The weather turned cold, and the water froze into a huge lake of ice, which extended as far up the river as Utica. A heavy snow fell. About the first of March there was a sudden rise in temperature, accompanied by heavy rains. Every creek and run, every ravine and slough, contributed a flood of water to the swelling river, which on March ninth was twenty-five feet above low water.





1. TULLER, DODGE & PITTS PLOW WORKS,  
SECOND & GRANT STREETS  
2. PILOT HOUSE OF CAPT. J. L.  
McCORMICK'S PRAIRIE BIRD

3. FIRST ROCK ISLAND ENGINE TO REACH PERU  
4. "AMERICA," THE SILVER ENGINE  
5. TURN HALL, BURNING, 1892

6. EARLIER PICTURE OF TURN HALL, SHOWING  
BANDS COMPETING IN A TOURNAMENT  
7. NORTHWESTERN LIGHT GUARD BAND

The river's sudden rise loosened the ice sheet without breaking it up. Beebe says, "One of these came down, miles in length and breadth, entirely filling the space between the bluffs, and crushed everything in its course." Evidently when his history was published about ten years later, some of his fellow townsmen thought he had told rather a tall tale, for in a foreword he says, "for 'length and breadth' the reader will please substitute 'extent'—this is positively all the abatement that can be made." But why spoil a good story? It must have been a phenomenal flood, sweeping away huge trees, and whatever else got in its way. Mr. Beebe says it crushed the Brewster warehouse, built the year before, and occupied by Brewster and Beebe, "like an eggshell." Although this was the greatest flood since the white settlers came to the Illinois Valley, the Indians had related to the earlier settlers accounts of even higher waters.

Cholera followed the flood. In April and May several citizens fell victim, and in June it suddenly assumed a malignant and virulent character. Hundreds died in a few weeks. Citizens were panic stricken, and many fled. Old timers still tell weird and gruesome tales of those days—of how the crews of the river boats (many of them negroes) died, and of how, when the boats docked here, their bodies were laid in rows on the river bank and hurriedly buried at night. There was no time to provide caskets for any of the cholera-dead, but for those who were citizens and had families here, some sort of coffin, or at least box, was contrived. In the case of river employes, a trench was dug and the bodies placed directly in it. When the excavating for the hospital and the surrounding streets was done, many bones of those so buried were found.

Of course, there were no funerals. The disease was so virulent, and the people so terrified by it, that burial was made as soon as possible after death. It seems that in cholera, death is often preceded by a catalepsy, or suspended animation, and tales are told of people about to be buried when some friend observed signs of life and rescued the victim.

Perhaps the reason for the panic was that up to this time Peru had been unusually free from disease. From the arrival of John Hays until the appearance of the cholera in 1849 there had been practically no sickness, with the exception of a few cases of bilious fever in 1838-39. For one whole year there was not a single death from natural causes. No wonder the appearance of so devastating a contagion as cholera filled the townsfolk with deadly fear.

They were evidently brave enough in the face of dangers they could see and fight. Many stories are told of wolves in the surrounding country, and actually within the limits of the town itself. One family driving over the river on the ice, to have dinner with friends living on the Silver Spoon Road, between here and Granville, were pursued by a pack of wolves and were obliged to throw out their buffalo robe to distract attention from themselves. On their return, their host sent an armed man on horseback to escort them to the river.

One citizen tells us that after the Hoffman

House burned the corner where it stood was allowed to grow up to brush, and provided shelter for wolves. A former Peruvian recalls that even after the river bridge was built there were wolves in the woods south of town. When animals died during the winter the bodies would be dragged across the river and left on the ice, and on moonlight nights the wolves would be seen eating the carcasses. The people who were so terrified of disease seemed to accept wild animals as a matter of course.

The cholera seemed to stop as suddenly as it had started, and though for the next two summers it continued its ravages in all the surrounding country, Peru escaped until the summer of 1852, when it came back with a vengeance. It was estimated that between five and six hundred people died—about one-sixth of the population. No place in the United States had a higher death rate. But this time there was less panic and excitement. People had learned to face disease with the courage with which they braved the other perils of pioneer life.

After the second siege of the cholera, the city again became a healthful place to live. No major epidemic occurred until the early sixties, when for three or four winters Peru was swept by smallpox. People did not realize the necessity for quarantine in those days. Neighbors "ran in" to help care for the sick, and seem not to have connected that action with the fact that they or their families come down with the disease.

#### CITY INCORPORATED

In August of 1850 Peru had its first serious loss by fire. The largest and best building in town, the National House, owned by Zimri Lewis, was destroyed.

Peru's fourth weekly newspaper was started in October, 1850, by Hammond and Welch. The Peru Democrat soon became one of the leading papers of interior Illinois.

The Township of Salisbury was organized April 2, 1850. A few years later it was re-named "Peru."

On Nov. 9, 1850, a resolution passed the Board of Trustees authorizing the town to subscribe \$25,000 toward the capital stock of the Rock Island and Peru Railroad, on condition that the road should make its eastern terminus on Section Sixteen.

On March 15, 1851, the town of Peru was incorporated as a city. The territory incorporated embraced, approximately, the land between Water Street and Eighth, and between Calhoun Street and Peru Street, the present eastern limit of the city, also the land between Water Street and the north bank of the river, east of Pine Street, extended. In February, 1857, the City Limits were extended to include all of Sections Sixteen and Seventeen, which took in the land between the Cemetery and Shooting Park Roads on the north, and the south line of Water Street, and between the present eastern and western limits of the city.

The city as incorporated in 1851 was divided into two wards. The chief reason for the incorporation was that it would enable the city to issue

bonds to cover its subscription for railroad stock.

The first city election was held in April, 1851, resulting in the election of T. D. Brewster, Mayor; George W. Gilson and Jacob S. Miller, Aldermen for the First Ward; and Erasmus Winslow and John Morris, Aldermen for the Second Ward. 196 votes were cast. This Council appointed Churchill Coffing, Clerk; P. M. Kilduff, Treasurer; F. S. Day, Assessor; A. Roberts, Marshall; Z. Lewis, Street Commissioner; and James Cahill, Collector.

The question of issuing bonds to pay for subscriptions to the stock of the Rock Island and La-Salle Railroad, (the charter having been amended to continue the road to Chicago,) was submitted to a vote of the people on May 17, and the result was unanimously affirmative.

During this year a new survey of the town was made, since conflicting claims had arisen out of discrepancies between former surveys. This year also saw the start of the town's first major manufacturing industry, a Plow Works established by Tuller, Dodge & Pitts. This occupied the greater part of the block on which the American Nickeloid Company is now located—the block bounded by Second, Grant, Third and West Streets. In 1855 it became the property of August Guibor, who sold it in 1858 to T. D. Brewster. In common with most of Peru's early buildings, this factory burned, but it was rebuilt, and continued for some years in that location. Later the plant was moved to Water Street, and the buildings on Second Street were razed.

In February, 1850, the Peru and Grandetour Plank Road Company had been organized. Among the first directors elected were the following Peruvians: T. D. Brewster, J. H. McMillan, William Paul, and J. L. McCormick. By September of 1851 the road had been completed far enough that the company was permitted, under the charter, to collect tolls. It was later completed as far as Arlington. The tollgate in Peru was on the southwest corner of Twelfth and Peoria Streets. Mr. Peter Gillette was the tollmaster.

The Plank Road was laid like a double track railroad, a track on the east for northbound traffic, and one on the west for southbound. 12" x 12" timbers were laid lengthwise of the road, for stringers, and three-inch planks laid across these.

It was thought that this road would be a great advantage to the town and to the country through which it passed. For a number of years it made possible heavy traffic which could not have got through without it. Funds were lacking to complete it, however, and the builders soon found that they couldn't afford to keep it in repair. It began to wear out before they had completed it. Railroads were beginning to operate through the country, and grain was no longer hauled so many miles to market. The road was allowed to run down, and the planks removed. By 1858 it was impassable for loaded teams, and very nearly so for any vehicle. Thus it became almost as much of a detriment to the town as it had at one time been an advantage.

Probably everyone in Peru has heard of Peak's

Tavern, and the Peak's Tavern Road, but regrettably little real information can be unearthed about it. It was one of many such taverns which studded the main highways of the country, much as "hot dog" stands and filling stations do today. It stood two and a half or three miles northwest of Peru, where the Peak's Tavern Road enters the Plank Road. It was a large, unpainted frame building which contained a barroom and sleeping quarters, and was one of the stations at which the stage changed horses. Since the stage took six fresh horses at every change, Peak's Tavern needed a large stable. Sleeping quarters did not need to be so commodious, since many travellers stopping there, and requiring shelter for their horses, were quite willing to roll up in a blanket on the ground.

During the life of the Plank Road, Peak's Tavern probably prospered. Just when it was built, or how long it ran, nobody seems to remember. That it was often a lively place, sometimes the scene of violence, and occasionally the home of the bizarre, no one seems to doubt.

On February 22, 1852, the people of Peru voted on the question of issuing bonds to cover a \$40,000 subscription to railroad stock, including the \$25,000 previously authorized. In the meantime the railroad charter had been amended a second time, the name now being the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad Company. In spite of strenuous efforts to defeat the subscription, there were 280 affirmative votes to 16 negative. \$40,000 worth of ten percent bonds were issued, and that amount subscribed to the stock of the railroad, upon which much work was done that fall and winter.

In the same year the Five Day Line was organized to run between St. Louis and La Salle. The boats were owned by individual companies, and each was run on its owner's account. Some of the fastest boats of that day were engaged in this trade, among them the Prairie Bird, owned by Capt. John L. McCormick. When this boat was retired from service the pilot house was brought up the bluff, with some difficulty, and placed in his yard just south of the house, where it may still be seen.

For a time Capt. McCormick also owned and operated a saw mill a mile or two west of Peru, on the river bank. It was a large frame building which he later floated up the river on barges, took up Marion Street hill, now the foot of Putnam Street, on rollers, and west to the ground on which his residence stands, where it served as a barn.

Early in 1853 there was a serious fire on Water Street which destroyed two large, three-story stone stores, with most of their contents. One was occupied by E. Higgins & Co. as a hardware store, and the other by J. H. McMillan & Co. as a dry goods store.

On March twenty-first the first Rock Island passenger train arrived in Peru from Chicago. The citizens of Peru celebrated the event enthusiastically. About a year later the line was opened as far as Rock Island, which was then expected to be its western terminus. This extended service did not have

the beneficial effect upon local business for which the citizens had hoped.

By the spring of 1869 the Rock Island tracks had been laid into Council Bluffs, and in June the "Silver Engine," known as "America" started on its first trip from the Great Lakes to the Missouri. Later this engine, by its speed, won a mail contract for the Rock Island, and was put into regular service. Many Peruvians will remember it. It was an "eight-wheeler," its boiler covered with a jacket of German Silver; its trimmings, handles, whistle, pump, flag staffs, headlight brackets, were of pure silver. It was shown at the International Exposition in Paris, France, in 1867, and later purchased by the Rock Island.

Peru's fifth weekly newspaper began publication on March 1, 1853. It was the Peru Weekly Chronicle, published by J. F. & N. Linton. They continued it for three years, and for ten months of that time also published Peru's first daily paper, the Daily Chronicle, which was, Mr. Beebe says, "in all respects creditable to them and to the town."

On August twentieth the issue of \$5,000 in ten percent bonds was authorized. The money was to be used to build a City Hall, and for current expenses. These were never issued, but instead \$10,000 in seven percent bonds were authorized in September.

#### TURNVEREIN AND MUSICAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Peru Turnverein was organized in 1854. It was inactive during the Civil War, and when it reorganized in 1865, was re-named the Peru Turngemeinde. About this time it built a gymnasium on the corner of Ninth and Peoria Streets. This building was moved to the northwest corner of Fourth and Fulton Streets in 1874, and two years later a frame hall was added.

In 1892 the building was completely destroyed by fire. The present Turn Hall was built the following year at a cost of \$45,000, a staggering sum in view of the fact that the whole country was in the grip of a depression.

For many years the Turn Hall served as a gymnasium and community hall. It housed all the "turning" activities, including the annual exhibitions of skill and strength. The nicest dances, public and semi-private, were held there. An event of special interest was the Annual New Years Eve Masquerade given by the Turners. It also served as a theatre, some of the best talent available appearing on its stage.

The love of the German people for music, particularly choral music, was responsible for the existence and success of the early singing societies. The earliest of these, of which we have any record, was the Maennerchor, established as a branch of the Peru Leseverein, on September 29, 1863. It met for a number of years in the Apollo Hall, built by Mr. Gerhardt Seepe, on the northwest corner of Second and Pike Streets. This hall later burned.

Another singing society, under the direction of Mr. Louis Briel, was organized in 1866. Early in 1870 it was taken into the Turngemeinde in a body,

and called the Turner Gesang Section, after which it held its meetings in the Turn Hall. When this burned, the society lost all its song books and sheet music in the fire. No wonder they stood sadly in the ashes and sang, "Stille Ruht die Erde" (Silent Rest the Earth.)

When the new Turn Hall was completed, the society reorganized under the name, Singing Society of the Peru Turngemeinde, and continued until 1917, when it disbanded.

The Philharmonic Society of Peru, consisting of a mixed chorus and orchestra, with a total membership of approximately seventy people, was organized in 1876. Mr. David Fackler, who came to town about this time and started the "soda factory" on North Peoria Street, conducted the orchestra.

In 1880 a singing society called the Saengerlust was organized, and met weekly in a building at the corner of First and Church Streets. About the same time another singing society, the Mozart Club, was organized under the direction of E. J. Lenzen, and held its meetings in the Joseph Schmitt building on Fourth Street.

These societies took part in many public celebrations, sang at funerals of their members or of prominent citizens, and gave public concerts. In 1900 and in 1912 saengerfests, or singing competitions, in which all of the singing societies of Central Illinois took part, were held in Peru.

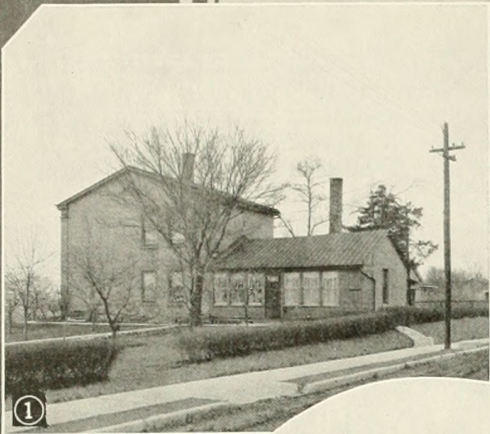
Another musical organization was the Northwestern Light Guard Band, originally called "Union Cornet Band of Peru, Ill.," which consisted of brass and reed instruments. It was organized in 1877 under Mr. E. J. Lenzen, who was both leader and teacher. It was regarded as one of the best bands in this part of the state. In connection with the Light Guard Band, Mr. Lenzen also led the Northwestern Concert Orchestra, of eighteen pieces.

A later musical organization was the Peru Symphony Club, organized in January, 1905. It was a study club composed of a number of women who were accomplished musicians. Its chief claim to prominence is that it sponsored Maud Powell's first concert appearance in Peru.

Madame Powell was born in 1867 in the Capt. Henry Hicks house, now known as 1112 Bluff Street. Her father, W. B. Powell, was superintendent of the Peru Schools, and her mother, whose parents were cholera victims, was a foster daughter of Wm. Paul.

Maud Powell's first concert here was on February 16, 1908. About four hundred people made their way to the Turn Hall, through the worst snow storm and blizzard of many years, "to hear Peru's own daughter, and one of the world's greatest violinists, play her magnificent Guadagnini with the hand of genius." All seats had been sold, but many were vacant because people from out of town could not get here. Train and street car service was stalled by the storm, and only horse-drawn vehicles could get through.

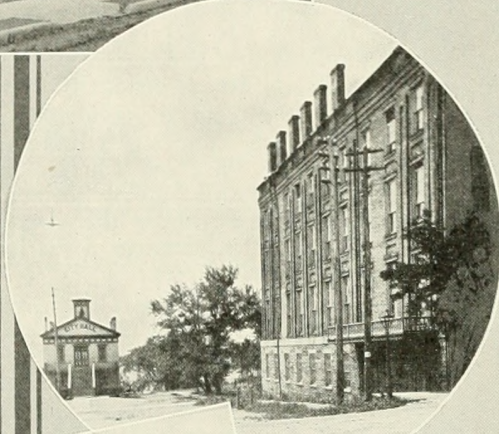
Not a musical organization, but a society which flourished for many years, was the Ancient Order of Hibernians, organized in 1852.



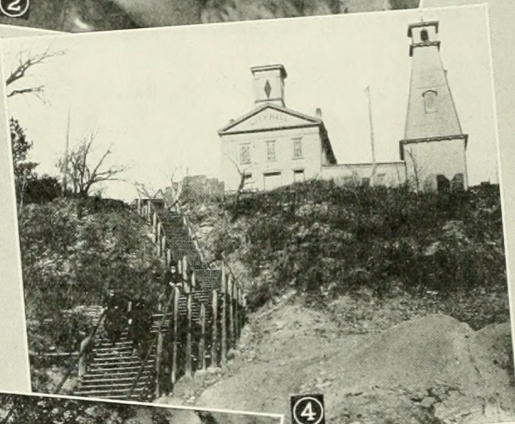
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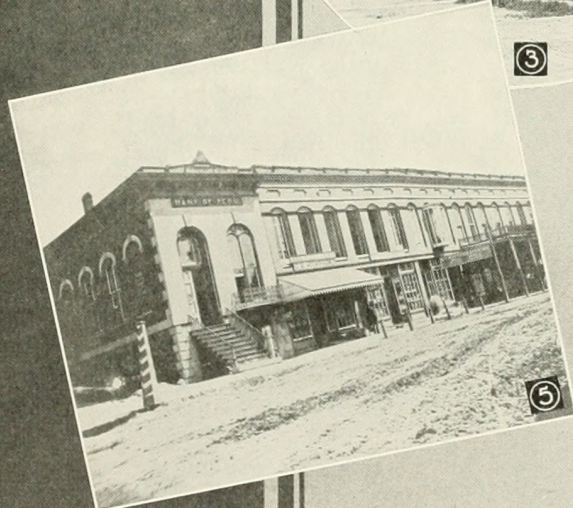
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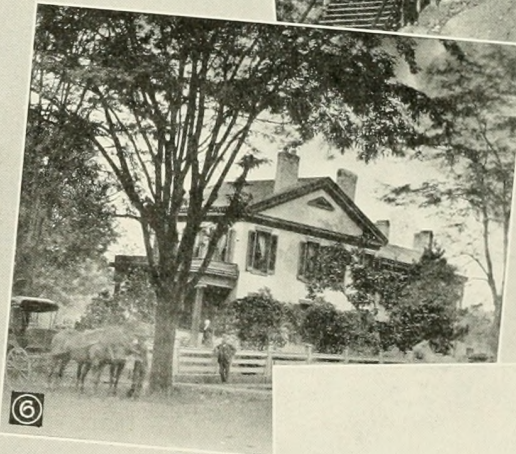
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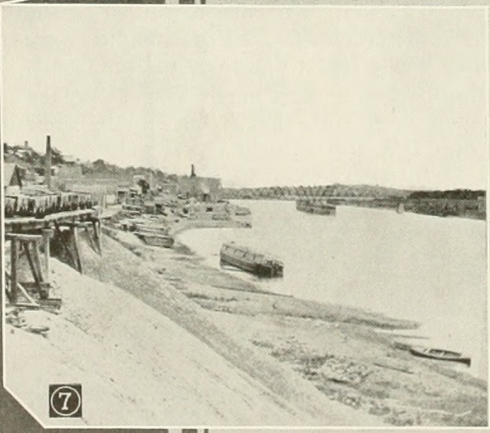
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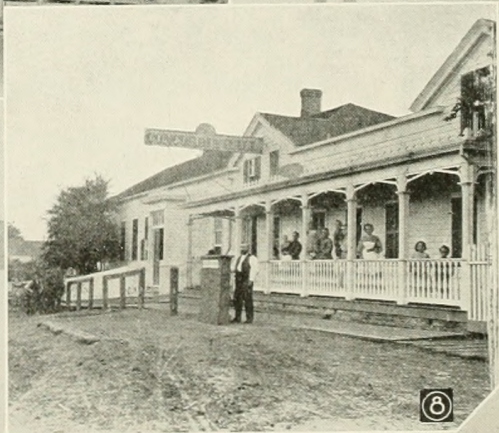
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1. MAUD POWELL'S BIRTHPLACE, 1112 BLUFF ST., KNOWN AS THE CAPT. HENRY HICK'S HOUSE. BUILT BY A MR. DANA.
2. MAUD POWELL, PERU'S CELEBRATED VIOLINIST
3. THE CHAMBERS HOUSE, WITH CITY HALL IN THE BACKGROUND
4. "BIG STEPS" ON WEST STREET, SHOWING THE CITY HALL AND HOSE TOWER FROM THE SOUTH
5. BANK OF PERU, ON WATER STREET
6. CAPT. MCCORMICK'S RESIDENCE, AT SECOND AND PEORIA STREETS
7. THE MERRICK MINE, LOOKING EAST.
8. CONCORDIA HALL, SIXTH & PEORIA STS.

An applicant for membership in this society had to furnish proof that he was a Catholic, of good moral character, and that he was a citizen, or had signified his intention of becoming one.

The Peru unit, known as local Division No. 5, was the first division in La Salle County, and it very soon had a membership of over one hundred.

Division No. 5 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians held its meetings in Bart Denny's hall. The big event of the year to them was St. Patrick's Day. The society would begin its celebration of the day by attending Mass in a body, the members attired in the full regalia of the order: scarfs and baldrics of emerald green, fringed with silver and ornamented with stars, shamrocks, and harps, bearing the letters A. O. H. There would be a stirring sermon by the priest on St. Patrick and his works.

The next event was a parade to some central meeting place, where a program was held, consisting of addresses and songs. Some of the songs usually sung were: "The Harp of Tara," "Kathleen Mavourneen," "Killarney," and "Wearing of the Green."

The speaker was usually an orator of ability who would urge his audience to continue the unselfish patriotism that has always been displayed by the Irish race, from the time of General Stephen Moylan, of Washington's staff, who was the first president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

This patriotism was shown in the contribution of five hundred thousand dollars to Washington and his army by the Hibernian Society. Washington himself made "St. Patrick" the password of the American army on the day of the evacuation of Boston.

The St. Patrick's Day celebration would end with a dance.

The local Division No. 5 aided in the establishment of a Division in Spring Valley, and later of three in La Salle, but as membership in Peru's division dwindled, it gradually was absorbed by the La Salle Divisions.

#### CHAMBERS HOUSE AND CITY HALL

The Chambers House, a four-story brick building on the southwest corner of Second and West Streets, was built by a stock company in 1854, at a cost of \$24,000. Back of it were large stables for the stage horses. In its day the Chambers House was the scene of community social functions. Many brilliant balls were held there, which must have been gorgeous and colorful affairs.

The Chambers House was not alone in that. An invitation has been discovered to a "Cotillion Party" held on the first of October, 1858, at the Moore Hotel, which was on Marion Street, north of the Rock Island tracks. On the night that the Hoffman House burned plans were under way for a party commemorating the Victory of New Orleans. Any number of cakes had been brought in, and when the fire broke out, these were carried to the neighbors. The story does not tell whether or not any of the hotel furniture was saved.

The Chambers House was built with a large

basement which provided for the barroom, kitchen, baggage department, and the like. On the first floor there was a small office, a large parlor, and a spacious dining hall that could be used as a ballroom, or for banquets. Upstairs were the guest rooms, not so many in number, but roomy and with high ceilings.

The building was torn down in 1895, but had been condemned and unoccupied for some little time before.

In January of 1855 the new City Hall and Market House was completed. On February nineteenth \$2600 worth of 8% bonds were issued to pay the balance due the contractors. The total cost of the building was \$12,000.

The City Hall, which still stands at the foot of West Street, between First and Second, contained a Council Chamber, a public hall for meetings, lectures, concerts and like entertainments; a room for market stalls, and a calaboose or jail. In the years that followed its erection, many well-known performers appeared there. Some of our older citizens tell us that one of them was Adelina Patti, who sang there when she was a young girl, before she returned to Europe to study. Among others were Jenny Lind, Fanny Janauschek, (a very well known actress, who gave excerpts from her best-known plays,) Tom Thumb and Blind Tom, (a blind negro who was a remarkable pianist.)

On May 19, 1855, the Matteson Guards were organized, with James H. Coates, Captain, and fifty-nine men. Not a great deal of information can be obtained about this organization and its purpose. However, two years before there had been serious trouble with the men working on the Illinois Central Railroad, and outbreaks of labor trouble and strikes were frequent. Joel A. Matteson was governor of Illinois from 1853 to 1857, so the organization may have been named for him. However, the governor was a well-hated man in this part of the state, having interfered to grant clemency to men concerned in the murder of a La Salle citizen, and having been burned in effigy when he later visited La Salle. Possibly the title was ironic, suggesting him as the person who made this organization necessary.

What is definitely known is that George W. Gilson, a member, built an armory for the Matteson Guards just west of his dwelling, which stood at the northwest corner of Rock and Van Buren (since re-named Sixth) Streets. Here the Guards drilled and kept their arms and uniforms. Eugene G. Ransom, nephew of Gilson, who attained the rank of brigadier-general during the Civil War, drilled them.

The bank of Peru was established in the summer of 1855, in order to facilitate exchange business. In 1864 it was merged into the National Bank. The only previous bank of which we have a record was the Illinois River Bank, which was in operation as early as 1852. It was run by Taylor & Coffing. One of its purposes was to facilitate payment of the "Salisbury Plank Road" bills. This is a concern we haven't heard of before, but it may have been another name for the Peru and Grandetour Plank Road Co.

In common with many so-called "free-banks" of

the period, (probably this meant privately owned and free from inspection,) the Illinois River Bank issued "shin-plaster" money. This was in the form of bearer notes against the Salisbury Plank Road Company, whose charter allowed it to issue such notes.

While many of the banks issuing money of this sort later repudiated it, all issued by the Illinois River Bank was honored in full by payment of other bank bills, or paid in gold and silver with a discount of one percent.

#### FIRES IN THE EARLY DAYS

In August of 1855 the Peru Sentinel was started and in the same month its office was destroyed by fire. It survived however, and in 1858 was fighting valiantly for Douglas. It was, of course, a Democratic organ.

1856 was a good year for fires. Mr. Louis Lauber tells us that the city had no fire-fighting equipment, and the only means of combating a blaze was to form a bucket brigade, passing buckets of water from hand to hand until they reached the fire, by which time the firemen were drenched, and the fire scarcely sprinkled.

On January seventh the Hoffman House, "substantially built of wood," burned. It stood at the northeast corner of Second and Putnam Streets. In May the round house of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad was destroyed by fire.

On September twenty-sixth the chair and furniture factory owned by George B. Willis, a blind man, burned, with a loss of about \$20,000. It was located across the street east from the present Rock Island Station, and north of the tracks. For many years the chimney remained standing.

On October 11, 1857, the Foundry & Machine Shop of Fitzsimmons and Beebe was destroyed by fire; loss, \$16,500.

On the night of the twentieth of August, 1858, the Hon. Stephen A. Douglas was a guest in the home of Capt. J. L. McCormick in Peru, being a friend of the family. The memorable Lincoln-Douglas Debate at Ottawa was held the following day. Capt. McCormick drove Douglas to Ottawa in the McCormick coach, Mrs. McCormick accompanying them. Mr. Douglas presented Mrs. McCormick with a large steel engraving of himself upon which he wrote:

"Presented to Mrs. McCormick  
by S. A. Douglas,  
Aug. 20th, 1858."

This still hangs in the living room of the McCormick home at Second and Peoria Streets in Peru.

Contrasted to this is the fact that in the fall of 1858, during the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Abraham Lincoln was an over-night guest at the home of John P. Tilden, on the north side of what is now known as the Cemetery Road, a short distance west of the City Cemetery. Mr. Tilden had a small house and a large family. We are told that Mr. Lincoln slept on the floor.

In 1858 three newspapers started in Peru. One of them was the Commercial, published every Thursday in the Post Office Block, by C. W. Kirkland. Another was a German paper, the Volks Freund, also published every Thursday, on Water Street, near West. P. A. Cramer was its editor. No copies of these papers have been discovered.

The third was the Herald, started by H. S. Beebe. In 1860 Mr. F. M. Sapp purchased it; the following year he bought what was left of the defunct German paper, and two years later the presses, type, etc., of the Chronicle. From 1863 until his death in 1870 the Herald was edited by Mr. Noah Sapp. Gallagher and Williams succeeded Sapp, and continued the publication until 1876, when Mr. W. B. Tapley purchased the Herald. In 1884 he sold it to Mr. H. S. Corwin.

The News, a five column, four page semi-weekly, was established by H. S. Corwin in 1879. When he bought the Herald in 1884 the two papers were combined under the name of the Twin City News-Herald, with H. S. Corwin editor. This paper was issued weekly until about ten years ago. In 1885 Mr. Corwin began publication of the Daily News Herald, which he edited until his death, and which his sons continued to publish. About two years ago the paper was sold to Ira J. Williams and James H. Skewes.

A census taken in August, 1858, showed Peru's population as 3652, an increase of 616 since the previous local census had been completed on June 1, 1854. In 1858 the town had seven public schools, six churches and three fraternal orders.

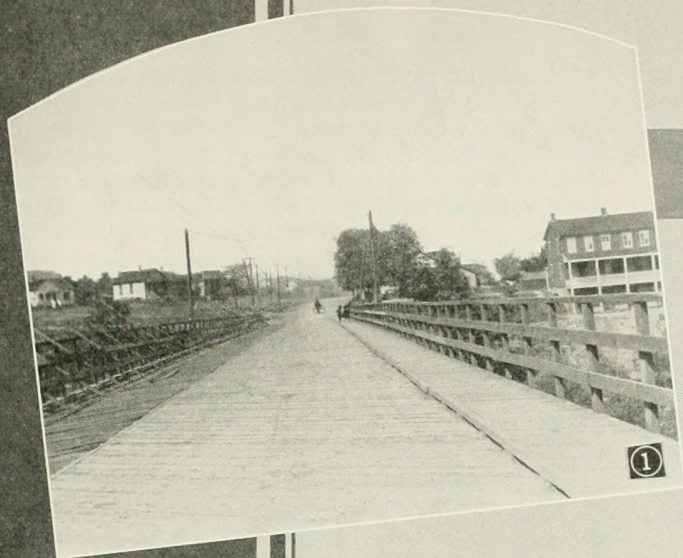
The town's first coal mine had been sunk near the western end of town, on the river bank about one hundred yards southwest of the Star Union Brewery. This shaft was owned by the Peru Coal Mining Co., Wm. Chumaseo, Secretary; T. D. Brewster, President; A. J. Whitney, Manager. The coal from this mine was analyzed and tested at many gas works, and found to be unequaled by any coal yet found west of Ohio and north of the Ohio River for steam generating power, and for freedom from sulphur, and tendency to clinker.

This mine employed two or three hundred miners, but was never very prosperous. It was taken over and run for a time by a Mr. Merrick, but it was just a little ahead of the times. Wood was still plentiful and was burned even by the railroad. Two or three of Peru's citizens conducted wood cutting businesses, employing quite a few men.

The mining rights of this early venture were restricted, and it was finally abandoned. Other shafts were soon sunk in the eastern end of town, employing the men from this mine, and more.

In spite of this early failure, Peru probably owes her continued existence to her coal deposits. If it had not been for the excellent coal available, probably none of the industries which were responsible for Peru's development would have come here.

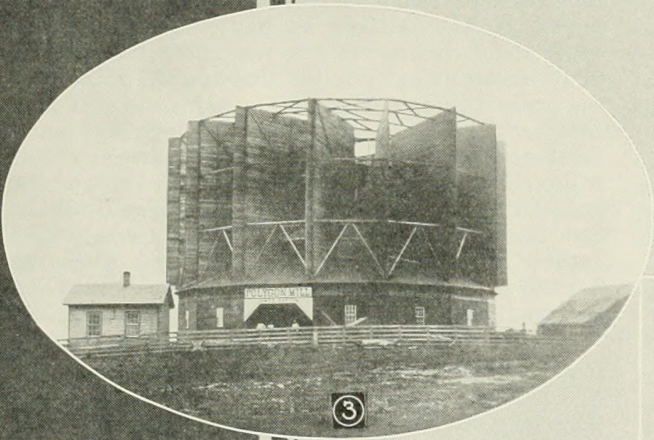
The debt of the city in 1858 was \$63,600; \$40,000 for Chicago & Rock Island Railroad bonds; \$12,600 for City Hall and Market House; the re-



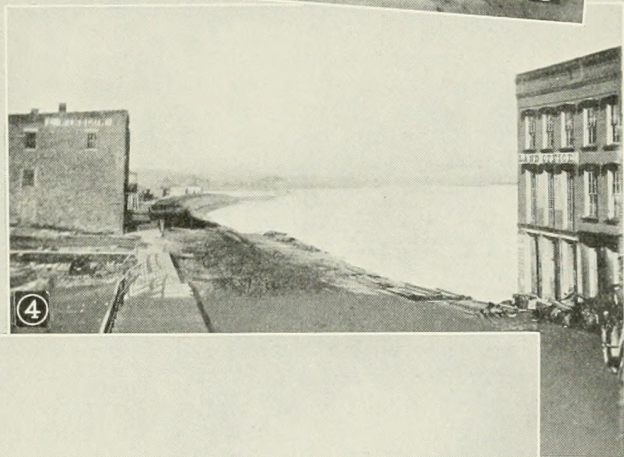
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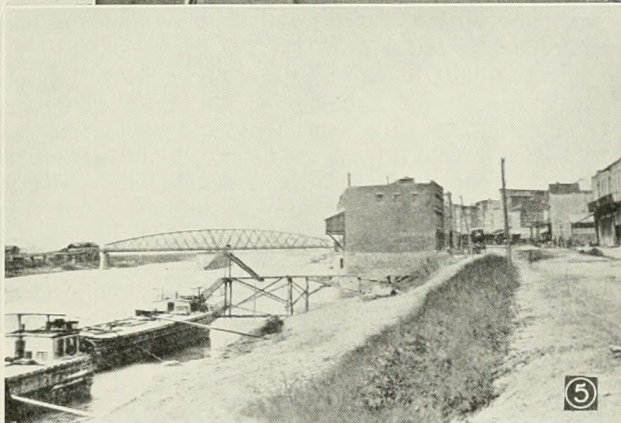
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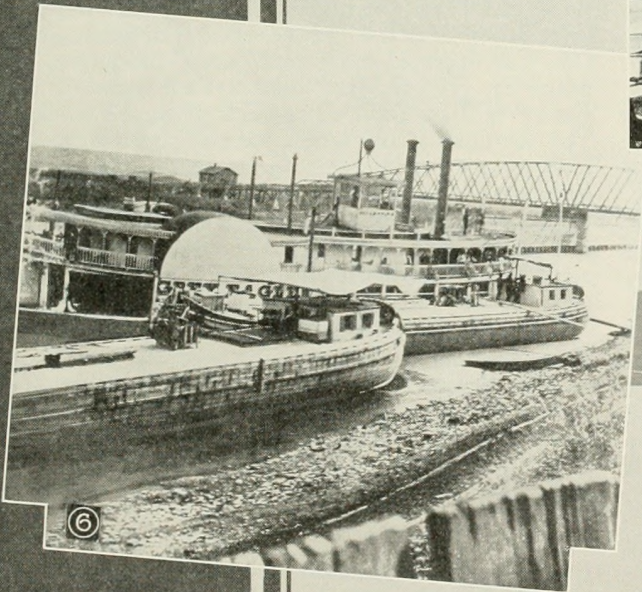
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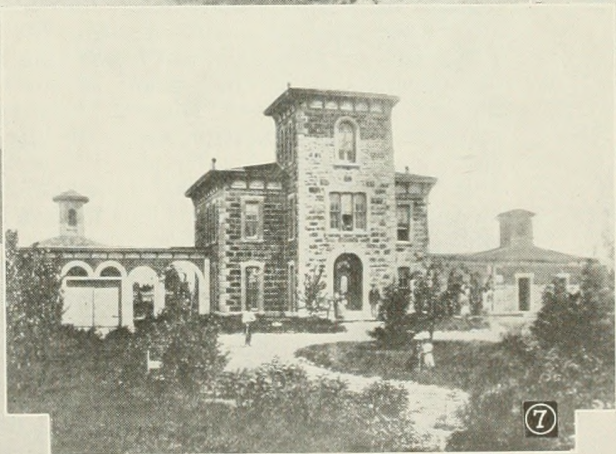
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1. FIRST BRIDGE AT THE FILL  
2. EARLY WATER STREET

3. BARTON'S POLYGON MILL  
4. LAND OFFICE & WINSLOW WAREHOUSE  
7. BARTON'S CASTLE

5. WATER STREET AFTER 1870  
6. RIVER TRAFFIC



mainder for current expenses, interest on bonds, and outstanding scrip. The city was not in bad financial condition, however, since there was enough money, either in the hands of the city treasurer or outstanding in taxes, to pay the debt.

#### OLD SETTLERS' SOCIETY AND CONCORDIA

The Old Settlers' Society was organized in 1859. Membership required actual residence of twenty years in the county. After preliminary organization proceedings, the Society held their first banquet on February twenty-second. They lingered at the table until far into the "wee sma' hours," drinking toasts and making speeches. The Hon. Stephen A. Douglas was invited to attend but sent a letter of regret, which was read. In practically every year following, meetings were held in various parts of the county. They were well attended. The last record of such a meeting is in 1884.

One of the early, widely known landmarks of Peru was Concordia Hall and Garden, established on the corner of Sixth and Peoria Streets in the late fifties, by Mr. Paul Boehme. His wish to develop harmony and goodfellowship in Peru is shown in the name, "Concordia."

Concordia provided Peru with music and a place to dance, but it did more than that. During the winter seasons panoramas, troupes of magicians, vocalists and plays appeared on its stage. After a few seasons Mr. Boehme secured a regular stock company with a repertoire of German comedies and more serious offerings.

On nights when there was no stage production there often were dances, and the early Peruvians danced the quadrille and polka, and waltzed to the music of Johann Strauss the elder, which was sweeping the country. During the summers band concerts were held in a garden adjoining the hall. Civil War melodies and inspiring marches prevailed during the early years.

One of the most popular early features of Concordia was a large scale erected by Mr. Boehme for the convenience of the farmers.

In 1897, under the direction of the Boehme Brothers, the first vaudeville exhibitions in this vicinity replaced the original entertainment at Concordia, but a few years later the place passed into the hands of a succession of promoters, and before long the name "Concordia," which had meant so much to Mr. Boehme, was changed to "Ninewa." Ninewa suffered a gradual loss of popularity, and finally, eleven years ago, was destroyed by fire. The place that was the scene of so much entertainment, that drew patronage from far and near, is now occupied by a modern building, and a gasoline service station.

During the "gay nineties" the socially inclined young men of Peru organized themselves into a group which was called the "Forty Club." The sole aim of this club was to supply "nice" dancing parties, which they gave about twice a year. These were dress affairs, and at them were displayed all the grace of Professor Willis' pupils in the Bon Ton, Waltz Oxford and other stately dances, together with the Redowa, Two Step, and *always* the Lancers.

Page Eighteen

Later the gayer spirits formed what was called the "Anti-Stag" group, and gave dances every month during the winter season. The name of the group was an index to its demands—no man was admitted without a woman as his companion. These dances, most informal affairs, were called "shirt waist dances" because the women were invited to wear what was the fashion in those days, a shirt waist suit such as was shown by Charles Dana Gibson in his drawings of the famous "Gibson Girl."

Another source of pleasure in the early days—much earlier than the Forty Club—was Capt. John Graham's excursion steamer, the Katie G., named for his daughter. This was often chartered by picnic parties for runs to Starved Rock or Hennepin.

#### PONTOON BRIDGES AND FERRIES

One of Peru's biggest needs was a bridge across the river and a good road over the bottoms. Some time between 1855 and 1860, as nearly as it can be placed, Captain McCormick undertook to do something about this. He built a pontoon bridge on two flatboats, spanning the river about two blocks below the present bridge. The piers to which it was fastened are still there, though they are beginning to break up. This bridge, on which, of course, toll was collected, was very accommodating. When river traffic needed to pass, the south end of the bridge would be cast loose, the current would swing the southern flatboat around to the north bank, and allow the boat to pass, after which a cable wound on a windlass would pull the bridge back into position.

This still left the question of crossing the bottoms. For several months in the year the water was likely to be so high that the bottoms would be, as they are this spring, virtual lakes, and quite impassable. In the months of low water the bridge served a long-felt want, and was regarded as a great asset by the citizens.

From the time of our first settler, crossing the river had been a problem. After the Hays Ferry, three others appear to have existed at different times. One was operated by a man named Blackman, opposite the present Maze Lumber Yard. Another was run by William Barlow, just east of the City Scales. The merchants and grain dealers operated a free ferry in much the same location, probably about opposite Weberling's Bakery.

Some time after Mr. McCormick constructed his bridge, Mr. Samuel Maze built a second bridge, on eight or ten pontoons, with railings along the sides, near the foot of Plain Street.

In the early sixties Peru had a glass factory. This was on the hillside, north of the Peru Coal Mining Company's shaft. Probably the reason for its location was that good coal was easily available. The silica used was brought from the sandbanks at Utica. This plant was known as a "bottle works," the product being limited to bottles of various kinds and sizes.

There was one large building, containing a large furnace, around which the blowers, twenty-five or so, were grouped. With their blowpipes they would reach into the furnace and gather at the end

a quantity of the molten material, blow it, swing it in the air, and at the proper time insert it into a mold, where pressure would bring about the desired shape. The men employed came from the glass-blowing centers, and were highly paid, the occupation being considered unhealthful. For some reason, the enterprise lasted only a few years.

Among Peru's early industries was a cornsheller factory, run by Mr. George Leavett, on Plain and Jackson Streets. Jackson Street is now Fifth. Mr. Eli Leavett ran a "fanning mill factory" at the same location. A fanning mill was a device for separating chaff from grain.

Mr. Samuel Maze operated a limekiln in the southwest quarter of the city, near the place where for many years Robert Unzicker had a tile factory.

#### THE CIVIL WAR

Of course from 1861 to 1865 the war overshadowed all else. The news that Fort Sumter had been fired on, on April 12, aroused the patriotism of the people. Companies were formed throughout the county, the one at Peru under Capt. Palmer. When President Lincoln called for 600,000 men in August of 1862, Governor Yates promised Illinois would furnish its quota without a draft. La Salle County was called on to furnish a thousand men, and raised twelve companies, one of them being Capt. Palmer's which consisted of 89 men. They were sent off with much ceremony, and just before they left Miss Minnie Paul, who afterwards became the wife of Wm. B. Powell, and the mother of Maud Powell, presented Capt. Palmer with a flag, the presentation being made from the balcony of the Chambers House. Afterwards Peru organized a home guard and drilled to be in readiness should the government ask for more men.

In order to avoid a draft, bounties were offered to men who would enlist. T. D. Brewster gave a city lot to each of the first ten men who enlisted in Peru. Some of the townships also offered bounties, among them Peru. No draft became necessary until October, 1864. The only way to escape was to hire a substitute or go to Canada. Another draft was to be made in the spring of 1865, but before it began, news of Lee's surrender came.

Now, seventy years after the war, we are accustomed to think of Peru as a northern city, and it is a little hard to realize that not all of Peru's citizens were unswerving in their loyalty to the Union. The fact is that amongst Peru's inhabitants there were a few Southern sympathizers.

Although there was much rejoicing over the ending of the war, enthusiasm was by no means so unrestrained as at the end of the World War. There was a very good reason for this. Many wounded soldiers had returned, and there were many homes in which there was a badly wounded man to care for. The war had been much nearer and much more real than the World War ever could have been to people in this country.

When the soldiers returned home, the town gave them a banquet at the Chambers House for which the townspeople furnished the food.

When word came of President Lincoln's assassination on April 14, 1865, many Peru residents draped their homes in mourning. A clipping from *The Peru Herald*, dated April 20, 1865, says:

"The day appointed for the funeral services of our lamented President to take place at Washington, was observed in Peru in an appropriate and becoming manner. All the business houses were closed. Labor was entirely suspended. The residences were almost universally marked with the mournful evidences that within the inmates were sorrowing for the martyred dead. At 12 o'clock the people assembled at the Congregational Church for divine services. That large and commodious building was filled to its utmost capacity. The audience was addressed by the Rev. Dr. Ingersoll upon the sorrowful event which had so lately befallen the nation. The speaker adduced many evidences to prove the hand of God in this great affliction, and argued that He would bring good out of the event, and that we should bow down in humble submission to His dispensations, although seemingly grievous. In the evening services were again held in the Church, and remarks made by a number of speakers."

#### SHARPSHOOTERS CLUB

On September 12, 1865, the Peru Sharpshooters Club was organized. The original officers were August Heinze, Frederick Hundt, and Nepomuch Andesner. The records do not show what offices they held.

The club, when organized, was known as "The Peru Rifle Company." The name was changed in May, 1867. The first complete list of officers in the club's records is for 1868, and is: Joseph Nadler, President; Gerhardt Seepe, Vice-President; P. Boehme, Secretary; August Heinze, Treasurer.

When it organized, the club bought ten acres north of the city to be used as a range and site for the club buildings. Later half of this was disposed of. The club was affiliated with the Central Shooting Society, which in turn was a member, or division, of the National Sharpshooter Association.

One of the outstanding events in which local members were registered was the Columbian International Shooting Festival, held in Chicago in connection with the Columbian Exposition. Otto Lauer, shooting against marksmen from all parts of the world, held top score until next to the last day, when he was topped, though he held second place. Robert Unzicker won a gold medal for being one of the runners-up.

The highlight of the shooting season was the "king" shoot, when the best shot of the club was determined by competition on the range. The "king" was crowned with much hilarious celebration.

Besides being a leading sporting organization, the Sharpshooters Club was of considerable importance socially. Its annual dances were the events of the season, looked forward to with eager anticipation, and remembered with much pleasure. It also gave annual game dinners, for which the guns of the members provided the game.

In the early days travel eastward from Peru

was along Water Street. This road presented difficulties because during several months of the year there was the possibility of its being flooded. On the upper road there were deep ravines to be crossed. one of these, since filled, cut through Fourth Street, then known as North, between Rock and Plain Streets, and for many years was crossed by a bridge.

The place we know as "The Fill" was a ravine crossed by a tollbridge operated by a man named Merritt. This place was known as the "First Bridge," a name which clung for many years. Foot passengers crossed Mr. Merritt's bridge free, but vehicles paid a toll. In about 1865 he was bitten by a Great Dane and died of hydrophobia, and after his death the toll was abolished.

In June of 1880 the bridge was declared unsafe and ordered closed, and contract let for a new bridge, which was opened in October. In 1889 the council passed an ordinance providing for the erection of a stone bridge, and apparently this work was done, but not much about it can be learned.

In May, 1895, a contract was let for a stone arch bridge to replace the "First Bridge." This was completed in November, the masonry work having been done by Henry Schweickert. In 1920 the fill was widened, and a sidewalk constructed on the south side.

Perhaps this would be a good place to mention that not only was travel along Water Street, but virtually all of the town's business was on or very near that street. This was logical, since the rivers were the natural highways through the country and Peru, being at the head of navigation on the Illinois, was an important shipping point.

In 1840, and probably for ten years thereafter, it was not unusual for three boats to reach Peru from St. Louis in a single day. These boats brought sugar, molasses, cotton, various kinds of manufactured goods, a large part of the cargoes being stoves, tinware and drygoods, judging from the numbers of stores along Water Street dealing in these wares. They carried away grain and flour. Peru had at least three flour mills during this time, one of which belonged to Mr. James Barton, who also ran a large stone warehouse on the river front.

Mr. Barton, whose home in the extreme north-east portion of the community was known as "The Castle," because of its appearance and structure, invented and built a windmill for grinding flour, which was known as the Polygon Mill. The picture will show why. None of Mr. Barton's neighbors who saw the plans for this mill believed that it would work, but it did. It cost so much money to build that he never insured it because he was afraid that if it burned people would accuse him of firing it to get the insurance. Consequently when it did burn, the loss was heavy.

With the gradual spread of the city, Water Street became less desirable as a business location. As early as the late fifties a few business men had opened businesses along Fourth Street. Four of these, grouped around the intersection of Fourth and Peoria Streets, gave the "Four Corners" its name. They were:

August Bulfer's grocery store on the corner now occupied by his son's drug store; John Aaron's grocery store directly south in the Anton Meyer building; Dr. Raith's drug store, in which his wife also sold fancy goods, west of this; and on the fourth corner, Conrad Eckenfelder's saloon.

The merchants who had establishments on Water Street were slow in falling in line with this idea. For instance, the firm of Seepe & Hoscheit, established in 1872, with a store on Water Street, dissolved partnership in 1880, and Mr. Hoscheit, joining with Mr. Kobbemann to start the firm of Hoscheit & Kobbemann, moved "up on the hill," but Mr. Seepe continued on Water Street until 1896, in which year Mr. Charles Brunner built the Masonic Temple, and Mr. Seepe moved his dry goods store into the ground floor of this building.

The Post Office was on Water Street as late as 1903, but by that time the exodus to Fourth Street was well under way.

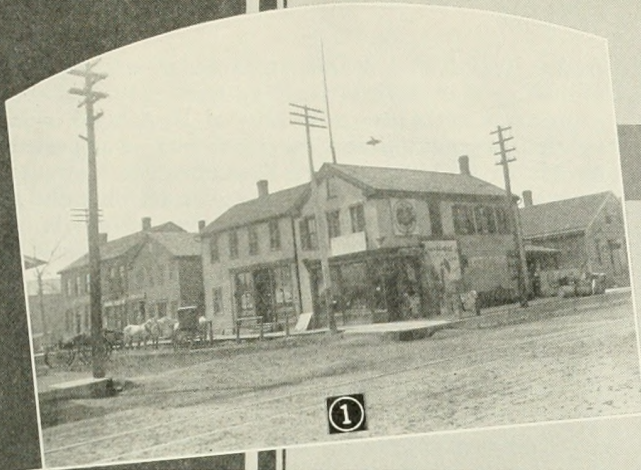
#### THE BRIDGE IS BUILT

By 1869 the need for a permanent bridge across the river, and a good road across the bottoms, had become so evident that the Illinois River Bridge Company was formed, and its charter approved on February 25, 1869. The purpose of this company was to bridge the bayou, (now known as the slough,) bridge the river, and connect the two bridges by a good road.

An iron bridge across the slough, consisting of three fixed spans, each seventy-five feet in length, was begun on July eighteenth, work having been delayed by high water, and completed in November. There was a northern approach 265 feet long, built of timber. The road connecting it with the river bridge was built on an embankment 300 rods long, eight feet high, with a roadbed twenty-five feet wide. It was thought that this embankment would raise the road above high water level, but it was flooded many times.

Work on the river bridge was begun on October eighth. "This bridge consists of a single span, or draw, constructed of iron and timber, 310 feet long," (at that time the longest single span bridge in the State,) "resting upon a round pier constructed of stone and solid masonry in the center of the river. The extremities of the draw rest on stone abutments opposite the center, on the northern and southern banks of the river. The approaches to the bridge from the banks are of timber, about 200 feet in length. This bridge was completed on March 5, 1870. The entire cost of both bridges and embankment was \$66,115.66. The architects were Messrs. Boyington, Rust and Bruce." This quotation is from the Peru Herald, dated March 17, 1870.

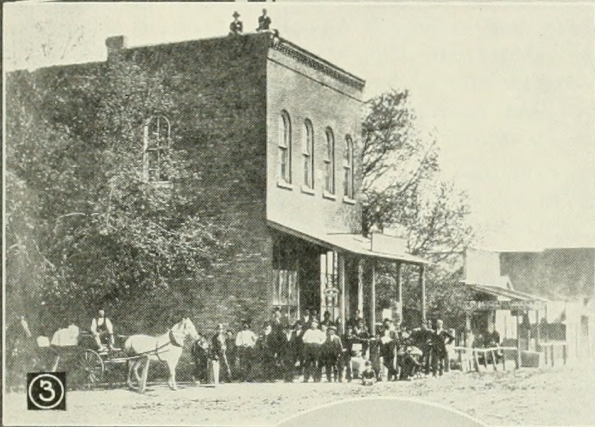
The same paper says that the bridge was formally opened on Friday, March 11, with 1500 to 2000 people present. In spite of bad weather, a procession formed at two o'clock, headed by the Young America Cornet Band, followed by the members, in uniform, of Odd Fellows, Masons, and Turnverein, and by citizens and school children with appropriate banners. They marched over the bridge



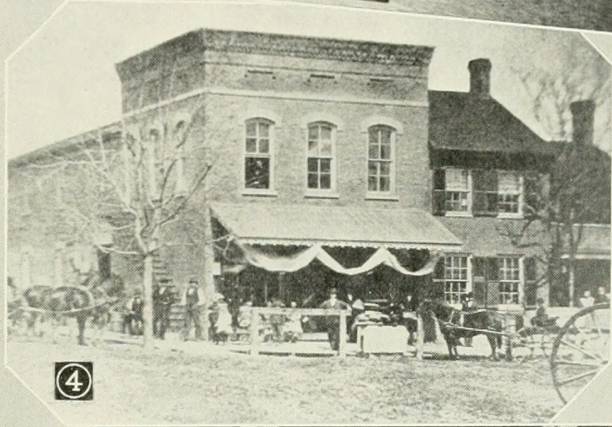
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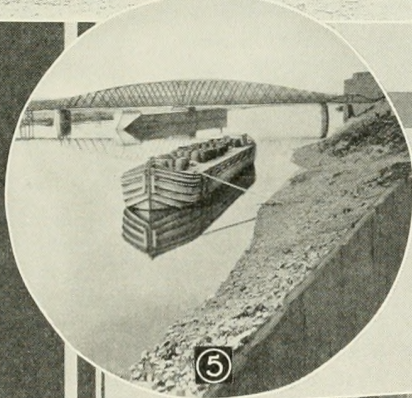
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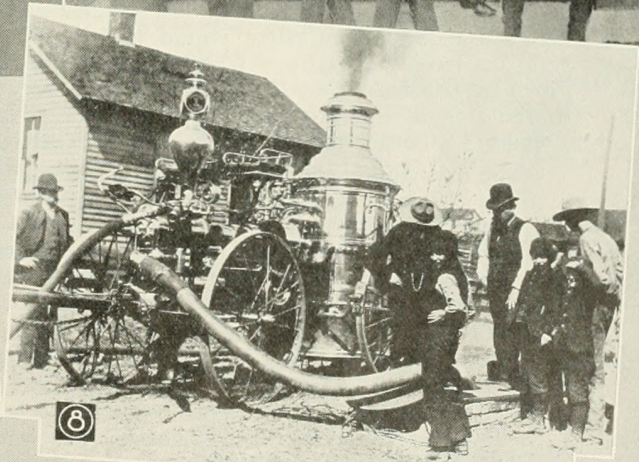
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1. DR. RAIH'S DRUG STORE
2. WILLIAM SPERBER'S SALOON AND GROCERY STORE, FOURTH AND CALHOUN STS.
3. JOHN AARON'S GROCERY STORE
4. AUGUST BULFER'S GROCERY STORE
5. THE RIVER BRIDGE
6. LIBERTY FIRE COMPANY NO. 1
7. THE FIRE TEAM
8. THE SHELBY ENGINE

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

to the south side, halted, gave three cheers for the bridge, and marched back again to where a stand had been erected on the river bank opposite the store of R. & A. D. Murray.

Mr. Geo. D. Ladd acted as chairman and introduced the Hon. Churchill Coffing, who delivered the congratulatory address commending those who were responsible for this great achievement. After Mr. Coffing's speech, the chairman introduced Messrs. Boyington and Rust, two of the firm of architects, who addressed the people.

The chairman then read, by request, a poem written for the occasion by one who had been active in bringing about the construction of the bridge, and whose name, cast in iron, was placed upon each end of the structure. The names appearing on these plates are:

S. N. MAZE, *President*  
JOEL HOPKINS, *Vice President*  
JOHN WHITE, *Secretary*  
B. V. SUTHERLAND, *Treasurer*  
PETER BOWERS, *Director*  
WM. GRASMICK, *Director*  
JAMES BARTON, *Director*  
W. L. HUSE, *Director*  
JOSEPH RHINEHART, *Director*

The ceremonies concluded with a grand ball at the Chambers House.

#### LIBERTY FIRE COMPANY No. 1

In 1870 Illinois had a Constitutional Convention which drew up the present Constitution of Illinois. Judge George S. Eldridge, then a resident of Peru, was a member of this convention.

On June 25, 1873, Liberty Fire Co. No. 1 was organized. The fire company when formed had little equipment for fire-fighting, and the methods in use seem to us almost as crude as the early bucket-brigades, but Liberty Fire Co. from its beginning was composed of "fire eaters" to whom a fire was a challenge to be met with every ounce of their energy. This is the spirit which makes a handful of poorly equipped volunteers the superiors of a fully outfitted paid organization without the love of fire-fighting. If this spirit had not been almost traditional in Peru's fire department, Peru would probably have gone on having disastrous fires. As it is, Liberty Fire Co. has been consistently a source of service to the community, not only the city of Peru, but a number of other municipalities in the vicinity.

The first equipment purchased was a hand-pumper of the "back breaker" type. This was kept in the Old City Hall, and was hand drawn. When a fire was discovered, someone would run to the City Hall and ring the bell. At the first clang the members of the department would rush to the station and pull the pumper to the scene of the fire as fast as they could.

In 1885 a "steam pumper," known as a "Silsby engine," replaced the hand machine. A number of large cisterns located at strategic points about the town supplied the water for fire-fighting. The water to fill these was pumped from the river.

In September, 1890, a contract for a new fire

station was let to Sperber & Koehler, and in the following year the new building was ready, and the engine was moved from the City Hall. A bond issue for the construction of a "water works" was passed on March 7, 1891, and by December fire hydrants were installed and ready for use. The city bought a hose wagon in January, 1892, and by the middle of the following May a fire alarm system was installed.

For many years the city owned one team of horses, which pulled the fire engine. When the fire bell rang there would be a mad race amongst the teamsters who were anywhere near, each driver trying to get to the station first, in order to hitch his team to the hose cart.

Two conventions of the Illinois State Firemen's Association have been held in Peru, in January of 1896, and in January of 1911. Mr. J. W. Henshaw, of Liberty Fire Co., was the first president of the Association.

The charter members of the Liberty Fire Co. No. 1 were:

BART DENNY, MARSHALL	C. W. WOODHEAD
E. METZGER	NEWTON THOMPSON
JAS. DWYER	R. MAZE
S. ROSENHAUPT	THOS. MOLLOY
PATRICK O'DOWD	JOHN G. BEYER
C. IRELAND	WM. B. DAY, JR.
G. B. DENNY	HENRY BELLINGHAUSEN
JOHN BALZER	A. KOEHLER
C. P. GRASMICK	THOS. R. PRENDERGAST
GOTTLIEB GMELICH	GEO. MURRAY
CHAS. BRUNNER	CORNELIUS CAHILL
P. PRENDERGAST	M. G. ROSGEN
HERMAN BRUNNER	R. C. HATTENHAUER
JAS. D. KING	HENRY MOSBACH
WM. BIRKENBEUEL	CHARLES HOBBS

#### HORSE CARS, ELEVATOR AND STREET LIGHTING

The La Salle and Peru Horse and Dummy Railroad was authorized by ordinance in August, 1874. E. C. Hegeler, W. L. Huse, T. D. Brewster, and Frank lin Corwin formed the corporation which operated it. From La Salle it ran as far west on Fourth Street as Rock Street, down Rock to Bluff, along Bluff to West, turned on West to Second, and over Second to Peoria.

In the same month Horace Holmes asked the city council for permission to build an elevator from Water Street to First Street, on West Street. The petition was granted in April, 1876. The elevator was an inclined railway designed to furnish a means of transportation up and down the steep hill between the business section and the residential district of the town.

The upper platform was directly south of the City Hall, while the lower one was west of the old National Bank Building on Water Street. There were two high, narrow, wooden cars which were painted yellow. They could accommodate about a dozen passengers apiece. Each car ran on a separate track, and was connected to the motive power, (a steam engine at the top of the incline,) by means of a steel cable. As one car was drawn up,

the other was let down; thus the weight of the car going down helped pull the other to the top.

Financially, the venture was not a success. It cost five cents to ride, and most of the thrifty Peru people saw no reason for paying to be carried so short a distance, even up hill. After a few years the owners gave up hope, and sold the elevator for junk. For a long time the cars and other parts of the equipment stood in the yard of the Brunner Foundry.

In 1874 a franchise was granted to Benjamin W. Robinson to start a gas plant in Peru, but he did not exercise his right, and the franchise lapsed.

An ordinance was passed in January, 1874, for the erection of thirty or more lamp posts for street lights throughout the city. Nothing seems to have been done about this until the middle of the following year, by which time the Peru & La-Salle Gas Light Co. had been formed. Our first street lights were gas lamps which had to be lighted each night and turned off each morning. The first lamplighter was Thos. Conlin, who received \$15.00 a month.

Apparently by 1885 more lamps had been added, for on July sixth an estimate of expense for street lamps for the year gives:

Salary Lamplighter.....	\$300
Gas.....	400
New Lamps & Repairs.....	100

On October 4, 1887, W. E. Moore, W. K. Hoagland, and Theodore Weberling were granted permission to operate the Peru Electric Light Co. In November the council voted to install electric street lights; thirty thirty-two candle power lamps at a cost of \$36 each per year, and thirty sixteen candle-power lamps at \$18 each per year, were to be installed. This made a lamplighter unnecessary, and that office was abolished.

In June of 1891 the council agreed to buy the electric light plant at a price of \$16,000, to be paid by using revenue received from private consumers. The first payment was to be made when there was \$500 in the fund, and in amounts of \$500 thereafter. Interest was to be paid at the rate of 5%. On April 15, 1896, the balance due was \$4,225.10.

The original force of the Light Plant consisted of Theodore Weberling, Superintendent; Charles Kendall, Engineer; and Nick Sausen, Fireman. The first equipment was installed by the Edison Company of Chicago, and consisted of one Buckeye slide valve engine belted to two 110 volt Edison generators. One of these generators, after it was retired from service in the Light Plant, was sold to the Illinois Zinc Company, who used it until a few years ago, when it was sent to the Field Museum in Chicago. It is said that so far as is known only one other generator of this make and model is still in existence and it is in the Ford museum at Dearborn, Michigan.

In November of 1897 the council voted to substitute arc lights in its street lighting system, and these lights were put in at Fourth and Putnam Streets, at Fourth and Peoria Streets, and at Fourth and Fulton Streets, but the plan was not continued.

When the plant started, power was used only for street lights and business houses, and the plant operated only from four o'clock in the afternoon until midnight. Early in 1898 a new engine and dynamos were installed, and in June it was suggested that the plant be operated all day, which would seem to show that already electricity was becoming more popular. In 1912 the plant was again enlarged, the council voting to buy a new alternating current unit, generator and condenser. Up to that time they had generated nothing but direct current.

In January of 1916 a severe flood of the Illinois River extinguished the fires in the Water and Light Plant, and for several days the city was without light or water. The stores which had oil lamps or lanterns in stock did a rushing business, and even candles were in demand. This was perhaps the highest water Peru had known since the flood described by Mr. Beebe. Water Street was overflowed to a depth that permitted rowing a boat into the Water and Light plant. It was in this year that the bridge across the slough was carried away.

In 1926 a new boiler house was built at the Water and Light Plant, and the boilers set well above high water mark. New generating units were added at the same time.

Many changes have been made in our street lighting system, but to show how far we have come from thirty-two and sixteen candlepower lamps, it is interesting to note that on February 26, 1926, the council voted to change the street lighting system, using lamps of about 200 candle power on intersections.

#### WASHINGTON PARK

In 1885 the City Council was urged, by a petition signed by 106 citizens, to buy the twenty acre tract known as the "Race Track" or "Driving Park." This had originally been owned by the Peru Driving Park Association, one of whose principal members was William L. Huse, senior member of the Huse & Loomis Ice Company, and for many years prominent in Peru's business.

After the Driving Park Association became inactive, the property came into the hands of Frederick Schulte, whose widow, Mrs. Ellen Schulte, offered it to the city at a price of \$3,000, if she might retain the coal rights.

In the summer of 1885 a special election was held at which 359 votes were cast in favor of buying the tract, 312 against it. An early ordinance gave Washington Park its name, but it was not formally dedicated until 1932.

For the next twenty-five or thirty years the park was used as a ball park, a picnic ground, and for various public gatherings, such as singing competitions. In short, it began at once to be a recreation center, though it was many years before it was improved.

In 1911 the Peru Hospital Association asked for part of the Park as a site for the Hospital. The public did not like the idea of having its park used for a hospital, and argued that a better place could be found for that institution. Notable among the pro-

tests were resolutions against the sale presented by many of the Labor Unions.

In 1915 it was decided to spend \$1,200 on the park. Playground equipment was installed, and tennis courts were laid out. The Peru Schools held Field Days in the Park, the one in 1917 being a World War benefit, the proceeds going to such institutions as the Red Cross and Community Chest.

In 1922 a restroom was built, and in the following year the city's Tourist Camp was moved to the north end of the Park, fireplaces were built, and other necessary conveniences installed.

In April, 1927, the voters approved a bond issue to provide a swimming pool at the Park, and contracts were let for the construction of the pool, for a filtration system and bathhouse, and a sidewalk around the pool.

On June 24, 1928, in connection with a district American Legion Convention being held here, the pool was formally dedicated to Peru's war veterans.

Since that time it has been necessary to enlarge the bathhouse. In recent winters part of the park has been flooded for skating, providing a safe and easily accessible spot for this sport, and making Washington Park a popular recreation ground, winter as well as summer.

On July 10, 1932, as Peru's contribution to the nationwide bi-centennial celebration of George Washington's birth, the park was formally dedicated to his memory, the American Legion taking charge of the ceremonies. A huge boulder on which was mounted a bronze tablet dedicating the Park was set in place.

On October 11, 1929, in celebration of the Sesquicentennial of General Pulaski, the former "Haymarket Square" was dedicated to the memory of General Pulaski, and the name changed to Pulaski Square.

On June 25, 1902, the Soldiers Monument in the Public Square was unveiled. The idea of erecting a monument was started by the Sons of Veterans and the Woman's Relief Corps, and was carried through by the Monument Association. The money for the statue and for benches, drinking fountains and installation of cannon in the park, was raised by a citizens' committee, which gave home talent plays and dances for the purpose.

Capt. A. Means Camp, No. 166, Sons of Veterans, U. S. A., sent out formal invitations to the unveiling. Reduced rates on all railroads had been secured for the occasion.

The program began with the reception in the morning of visiting G. A. R. Camps, and included a parade in the afternoon, band music and singing, a presentation of the monument by a Past Commander-in-chief of the Sons of Veterans, U. S. A., and an acceptance by the Department Commander of the G. A. R., also addresses by Louis Schadensack, Mayor and Rev. Paul Brauns.

Stone sidewalks were laid along Water Street at an early date. There had been wooden sidewalks through many of the residence districts, but these

were expensive to keep up, and dangerous when they began to wear out, and most of them were replaced by cinders.

During Mayor George D. Ladd's administration in 1886, the first block of stone sidewalk in a residence district was laid, on the north side of Bluff Street, between West and Plum Streets. The property owners bore the cost of this.

Joliet flagstone was used, and people must have liked the result, for during the two years Mr. Ladd was mayor, several other streets were provided with similar walks.

Little effort seems to have been made to improve the streets until about 1897. In that year several streets were macadamized, notably Fourth Street from Church Street to the eastern city limits. The result was not satisfactory, and in 1908 bricks were laid over the macadam. Brick was laid on Water Street in 1898, and since that time most of Peru's streets have been paved, in recent years concrete having been used.

The Illinois Valley and Northern Railroad Co., incorporated on May 25, 1887, under the laws of Illinois, constructed the line of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Co., running from Streator to Walnut, through Peru. Mr. Ernst Roth came to Peru as a civil engineer in charge of building this road, and was later recalled by Mr. Matthiessen to take charge of the Western Clock Co. in its early days.

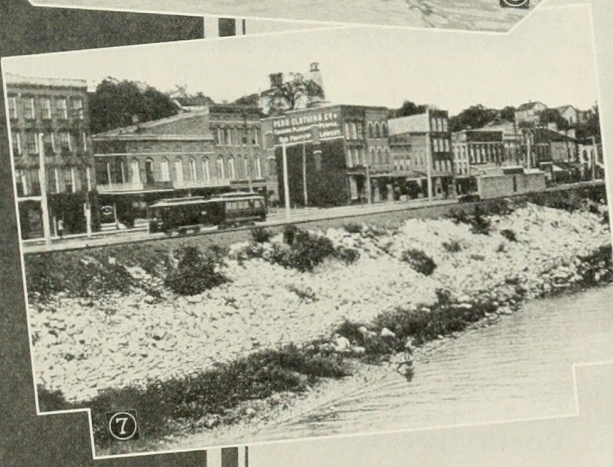
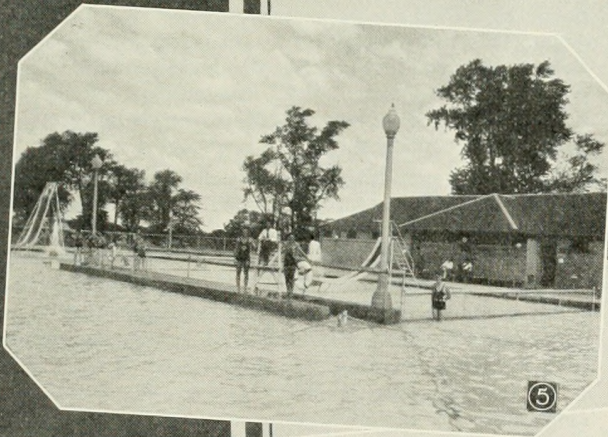
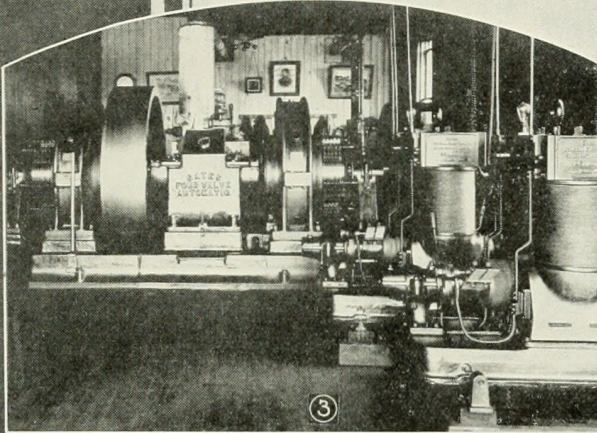
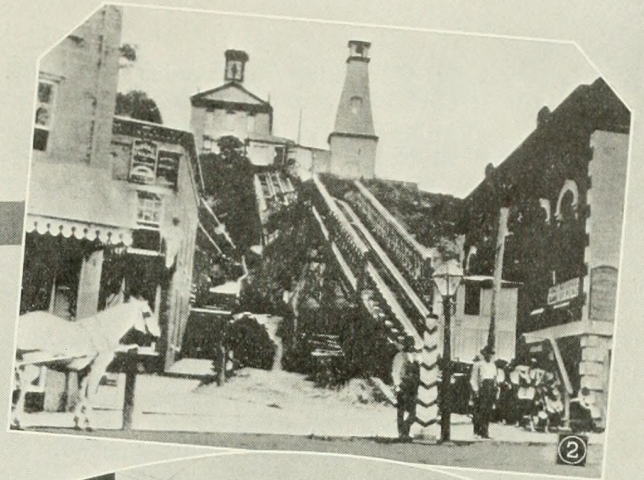
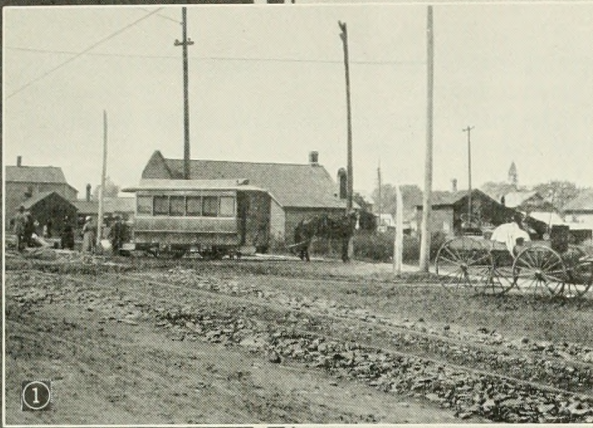
The first main line, 59.9 miles of track, was completed on June 1, 1888, the first train running through on or about that time. The Illinois Valley and Northern Railroad Co. did not operate the road, but leased it at once to the C. B. & Q. R. R. Co., and sold it to them on June 1, 1899.

The first mail box "on the hill" was obtained about 1888, through the efforts of August Bulfer, who of his own accord took the matter up with the Postal authorities at Washington. The town's Post Office was then on Water Street. This mail box was placed on the trunk of a tree at the northeast corner of Fourth and Peoria Streets, just outside the Bulfer store, where it remained for many years.

There was no free delivery of mail in those days, and in order that citizens and merchants "on the hill" might be spared a daily trip "down town" to the Post Office, Rudolph Meyer made two deliveries a day to each business house or residence that paid ten cents a week for the service.

In 1889 an ordinance was passed giving to Wm. G. Reeve, W. E. Moore, Henry Bellinghausen, and George D. Ladd the right to operate an electric railway under the name of "Peru Electric Street Railway Co."

Dennis O'Brien of Oglesby was construction foreman. The first superintendent of the company was E. Enyart. Charles Bensel of Peru and Robert Ellis, now of Utica, worked on the first car. These men report that the Water Street line began to operate in 1889. It ran from about the Illinois Central Station in La Salle to the site of the present Burlington Depot. About two years later the Fourth Street line



1. HORSE CAR ON HORSE & DUMMY RAILROAD      4. HIGH WATER, 1916, SHOWING ENTRANCE  
 2. HOLMES ELEVATOR      TO LIGHT PLANT  
 3. FIRST ELECTRIC LIGHT PLANT EQUIPMENT,      5. SWIMMING POOL, WASHINGTON PARK  
 SHOWING EDISON UNIT NOW IN FIELD MUSEUM      6. VIEW OF FOURTH STREET, UNPAVED, LOOKING EAST  
 7. ELECTRIC STREET CAR, ON WATER STREET      8. ELECTRIC STREET CAR, ON FOURTH STREET



was opened, running from a point three hundred feet west of Church Street into La Salle.

The line was originally called the La Salle and Peru Railway. The first car barn was on Water Street, about where the Peru Wheel Company warehouse is now located. It was moved to about where the Western Clock Co. engine room now stands. This barn was burned, and for nine weeks the town had no street cars. In that time a new car barn was built at the present site.

In June, 1890, the Secretary of State granted George D. Ladd, W. K. Hoagland, Theodore Weberling, John Cahill and Charles Brunner the right to take stock subscriptions to the Peru Artesian Water Supply Company. This company drilled a well east of Grant Street above the Rock Island tracks, which the city leased a year later for \$25,000.

In the years that followed various wells were sunk, the contract for the latest one having been let on January 9, 1931, to the Sewell Well Company of St. Louis.

A new elevated tank east of the fire station was built in 1922, and in August, 1923, two new pumps and engines were added to the equipment of the Water and Light Plant. In 1931 two new elevated tanks were built, one at the north edge of town, and one at the east.

Progress on the new well was slow, and many difficulties were encountered in the drilling. Eventually it was decided to go a few hundred feet deeper than had originally been planned, in order to secure a more abundant supply of water. A super-abundance of iron came with the water, or perhaps some element in the water from the new well took the iron from the mains. Late in 1932 a contract was let for a water-treatment plant. Peru now has the deepest well in the state, and the purest water, by analysis.

In 1851 Peru was incorporated as a city by a Special Act of the Legislature, but the Act of 1872 entitled, "An Act providing for the incorporation of cities and villages," approved April 10, 1872, in force July 1, 1872, broadened the powers of municipalities and on March 13, 1890, at a special election, the incorporation of the City under the Act of 1872 was approved by a vote of 334 to 53.

#### THE HOSPITAL

On July 5, 1907, Rev. Paul Brauns called the first citizens' meeting for the purpose of organizing a hospital association as the first step toward a new and up-to-date hospital for Peru. The first officers of the Association were Charles Nadler, President; G. Lassig, Vice-President; F. E. Hoberg, Secretary; and Henry Ream, Treasurer.

Many entertainments were given to raise funds for the proposed hospital, the most important being the concerts given by Peru's celebrated violinist, Maud Powell.

Madame Powell gave two concerts for the hospital fund, one on November 4, 1910, and one on February 14, 1913. In the first case her services were freely given, and the citizens of Peru showed their

appreciation of her friendly interest by attending in great numbers.

The hospital charter was granted on August 3, 1911, and work began on the building in August of 1913. By the time it was formally opened in May, 1914, People's Hospital represented a community investment of \$90,000.

The Woman's Auxiliary of the hospital was organized in October, 1913, under the leadership of Mrs. Charles Nadler, the first president. In all the years since, it has done much to aid in financing the institution, and has given much time to repairing linens, and rendering other needed services.

The hospital is one of the most modern in the state, having practically all of the latest equipment. There has also been added a comfortable nurses' home.

In connection there is an Isolation Hospital for contagious diseases, the gift of Mr. F. W. Matthiessen of La Salle.

#### THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Agitation for a Public Library in Peru began in 1908. A committee of citizens appointed the following as a board of directors of the Peru Public Library: A. H. Neureuther, President; Gustav Lassig, Vice-President; James R. Hart, Secretary; Charles Nadler, Treasurer; and Ernst Roth, Thomas F. Noon, Walter H. Maze, Rudolph Struever and Charles Link.

Andrew Carnegie agreed to give \$15,000 for the building if the city would provide a site and appropriate \$1500 a year for the support and maintenance of the library. In April, 1910, the council voted the appropriation. Interested citizens made donations of money and books. Mr. James R. Hart, the secretary, secured many books through solicitation of various publishers.

The lot on which the library stands was purchased in 1910, and plans drawn for the building, which was completed in the fall of 1911, and formally opened on December first, at which time there were over two thousand books ready for distribution.

At a meeting held in the fall of 1911, the Board of Directors of the Peru Public Library was unanimously elected Board of Trustees of Peru Public Library, and Miss Fanny Snyder was appointed Librarian.

As time went on the stock of reference books was increased by the addition of dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, biographies, histories, books of travel, poetry, music, and art. People who have never patronized libraries in other towns the size of Peru do not realize how superior our library is in this respect.

The library also subscribes for many magazines, adult and juvenile, and has a fine collection of books for children, as well as fiction for the grown-ups.

#### POST OFFICE

Peru's first postoffice was established on February 19, 1836. During the ninety-nine years, Peru has had seventeen postmasters, the first of whom, Ulysses Spaulding, served until February, 1837.

During the next twenty-three years there were eight postmasters.

Dr. Samuel G. Smith became postmaster in March, 1861. In his unpublished article, "Water Street in 1862," Mr. Henry Bellinghausen says: "The Doctor kept a stock of drugs on one side of the store and the post office on the other. He ran the office much as he pleased, and rules and regulations had no terror for him. He was so popular that no one ever complained. As long as he lived, no one would have thought of superseding him.

"He had a succession of clerks who helped both in the drug store and the post office. One of the ablest of these was young Thomas Noon, but the place did not offer sufficient scope for his abilities, and he left. Eventually he became president of the Illinois Zinc Company, and in his later years did a great deal for his town."

Dr. Smith held the office for twenty-two years, until July, 1883, when Mr. Hibben S. Corwin was appointed. Mr. Corwin was postmaster for twenty-seven years, until his death in December, 1910, when his son Charles was appointed, and held the office for another five years.

At the present time Mr. C. F. Schmoeger is acting postmaster.

In the early days people had to call at the post-office for their mail, and pay the postage. Later the postage was prepaid, but patrons still called for the mail. On February 1, 1904, the Post Office Department inaugurated city free delivery. The first carriers were William Struever, who is now superintendent of parcel post in Jacksonville, Florida; George W. Halm, who afterwards became postmaster; and Francis B. Rybarczyk, who is now a clerk at the Peru Post Office.

The postoffice was on Water Street until July 1, 1903, when it was moved into the building at the northwest corner of Fourth and Grant Streets. Five years later the location was changed to the south side of Fourth Street, between Peoria and Fulton Streets, where it remained for twenty-five years.

After the postoffice achieved a first class rating in 1926, intensive effort was made to secure a Federal Building. In 1930 Congress passed the necessary legislation, and the southwest corner of Fourth and West Streets was selected as a site. The corner stone was laid on July 10, 1932, and the building was ready for occupancy in July, 1933.

#### HOTEL AND THEATRE

In order to supply the need for a good hotel, the Citizens Hotel Company of Peru was organized and granted a charter in 1909. The southwest corner of Fourth and Grant Streets was selected as a site, and a three-story brick building erected. Hotel Peru was open for business on August 9, 1910.

The first officers of the Company were Charles Seepe, Sr., President; Fred A. Koehler, Vice President; Andrew Hebel, Secretary; and George Soedler, Treasurer.

In 1911 the hotel manager asked for an additional story and this was added, increasing the number of

rooms to seventy-five. Hotel Peru has been leased to various managers, but at present is operated by the Citizens Hotel Company.

Peru Theatre, operated by E. E. Alger, had its formal opening on January 15, 1931. This is a new building, built with the cooperation of Peru's business men and citizens, and has a seating capacity of 800. The modern ventilating system keeps the theatre cool and comfortable in the hottest summer weather. The very best of screen entertainment is shown here.

The First National Bank in Peru was chartered on December 26, 1933, and opened for business with the purpose of providing banking facilities for our city. The officers of the bank are: E. L. Meade, President; Fred P. Erlenborn, Vice-President; J. L. Mankowski, Cashier; and Edith Nothnagel, Assistant Cashier. The Directors are E. L. Meade, Fred P. Erlenborn, H. A. Link, Oscar W. Hoberg, and P. J. Brauns, Jr.

In 1934 a new bridge at the eastern limit of the city was opened. Previous to this there had been two bridges across this ravine at different times, the first of wood, and the second a steel bridge, which was removed to make way for the present concrete span.

In 1903 the council voted to change its meeting place from the old City Hall to the room above the Fire Station. The council met there for a few years, until it became necessary to have more room for city offices, when it decided to use the rooms on the second floor of the Eckenfelder building on Fourth Street, between Peoria and Fulton Streets. These rooms were used as a city office until December, 1933, when the city secured a five year lease on the National Bank Building.

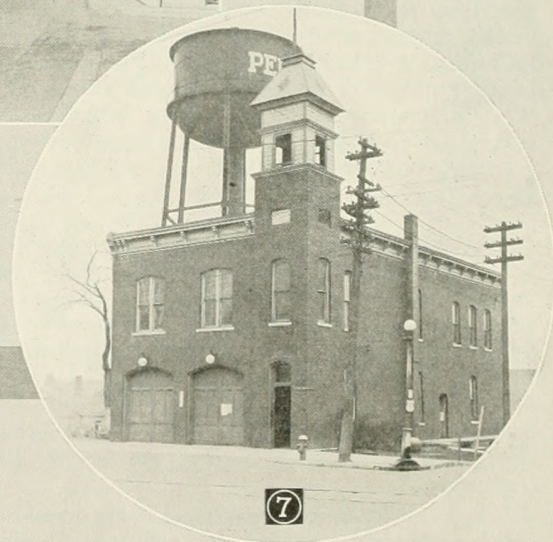
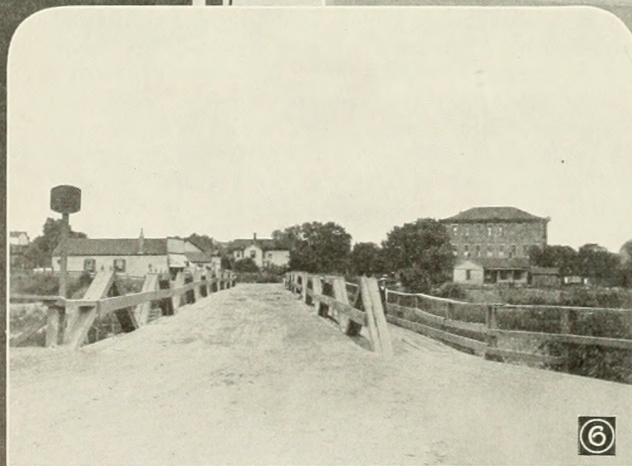
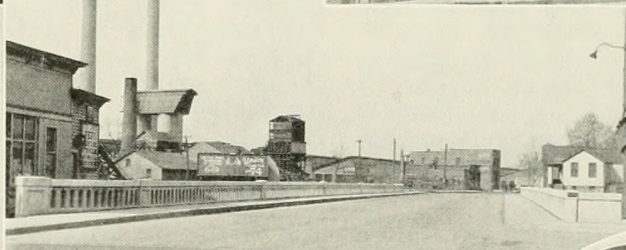
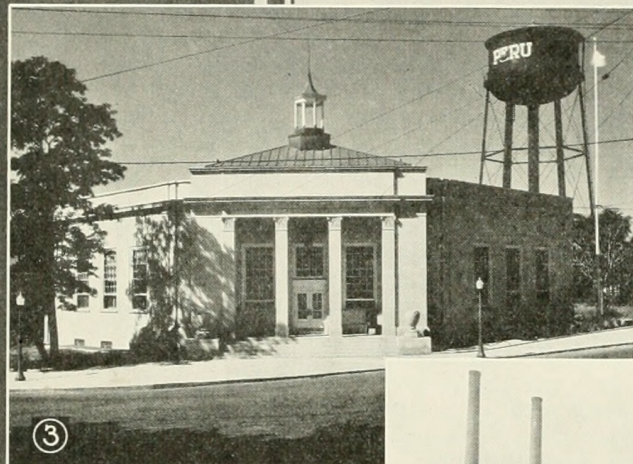
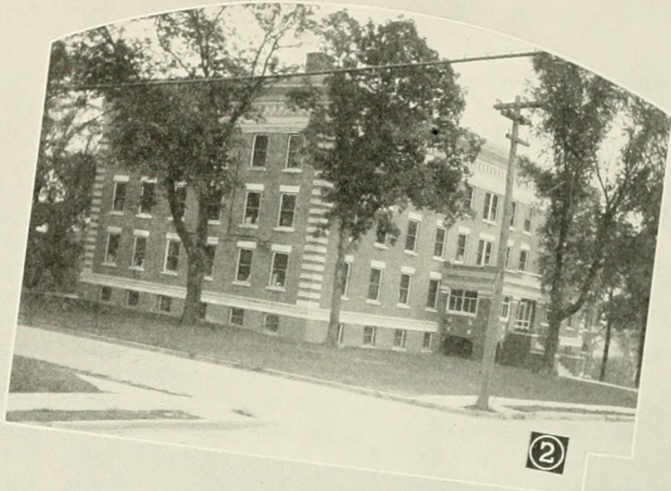
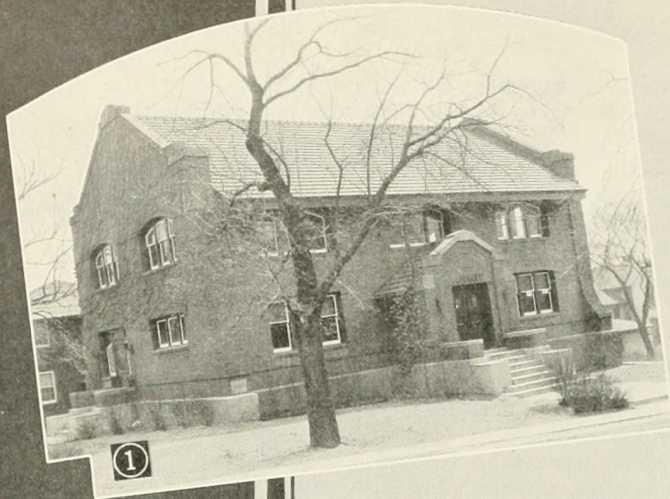
During the years of America's participation in the World War—April 6, 1916 to November 11, 1918—the town whole-heartedly lent its energies to helping its country. All of the Liberty Loans were over-subscribed, the Red Cross and all similar organizations were generously supported, Peruvians learned to eat bread made with corn meal and rye flour instead of wheat flour, to drink their coffee without sugar, and to limit their use of coal.

Peru sent many young men to the front, some of whom never returned. Young women also volunteered, and served their country in various capacities.

In 1935 Peru is gradually lifting itself out of the depression which started with the stock market crash of October, 1929. The Bank Moratorium of 1935 tied up not only the savings and working capital of Peru citizens and business houses, but the city funds as well. Now that the greater part of this money has been released, and the bank is on a sound basis, business is going forward.

The present population is 9,100. There are concrete roads leading into the city from the north, east and west. The Chamber of Commerce and similar organizations are endeavoring to secure a new bridge across the river, and a hard road to Cedar Point. This will doubtless come before long.

In April of this year, surveys are being made for a forty-foot concrete road from the new bridge



1. PERU PUBLIC LIBRARY  
2. PEOPLE'S HOSPITAL  
3. POST OFFICE BUILDING

4. HOTEL PERU  
5. NEW BRIDGE BETWEEN PERU AND LA SALLE, LOOKING WEST

6. EARLY BRIDGE BETWEEN PERU AND LA SALLE, LOOKING EAST  
7. FIRE STATION

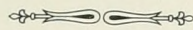
at the east limit of the city through Fourth Street to the west limit. When this is laid, the street car tracks will be removed. The cars themselves were abandoned about a year ago, having been replaced by busses operated by the same company.

The city has one attractive theatre in which talking pictures are shown. It has one bank, a hospital, a Federal post office building, three public schools for pupils from the first to the fourth grade, and one Central School for those from the fifth to the eighth grade; three parochial schools; a High School and

Junior College, a library, one hotel and seven churches.

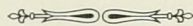
The city's financial condition is excellent, as it has been from the first. Peru's public funds have always been carefully administered, and the city has long had an enviable reputation in this matter.

The Deep Waterway, finished a year or two ago, is steadily increasing river traffic. Perhaps in the next hundred years Peru will reverse the process, and move down along Water Street again, in order to take advantage of her facilities for handling river traffic.



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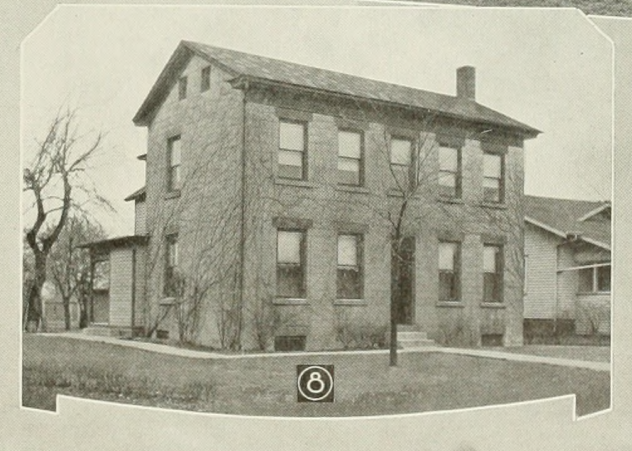
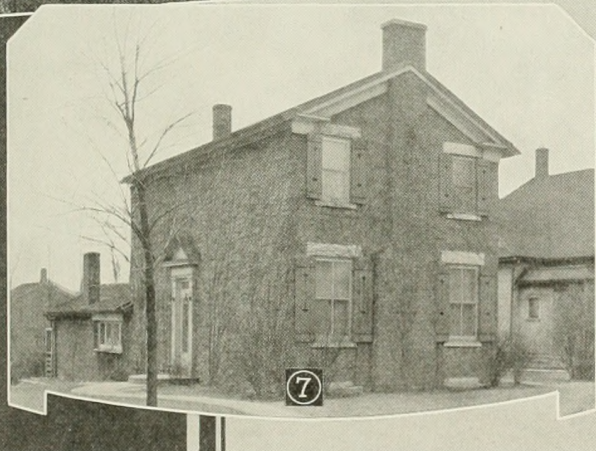
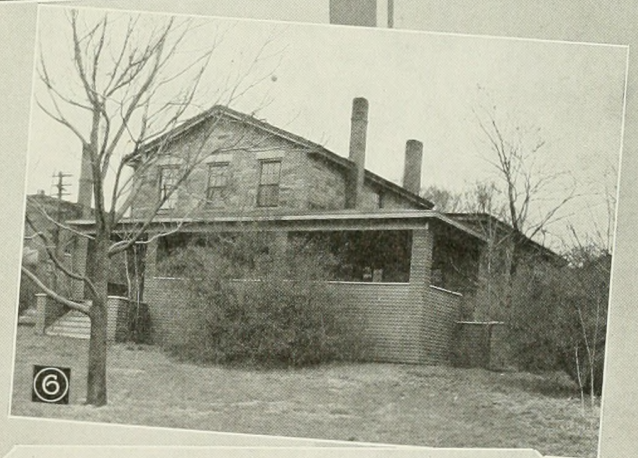
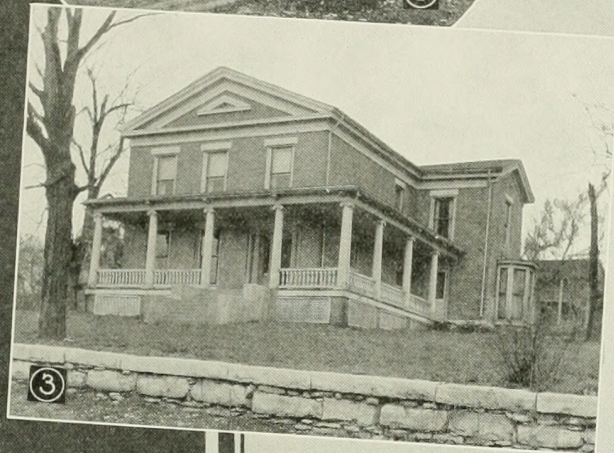
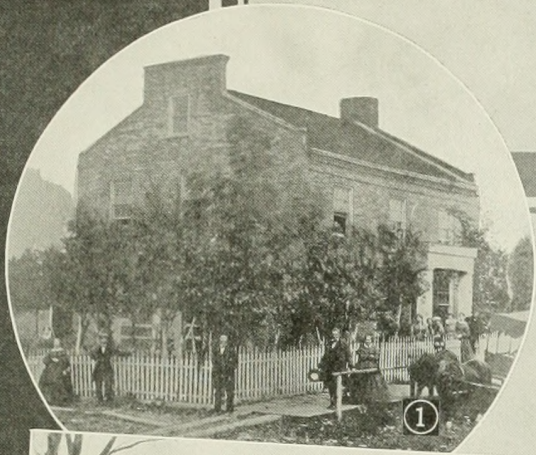
## PRESIDENTS OF VILLAGE BOARD

1838	ZIMRI LEWIS	1846	CHURCHILL COFFING
1839	SIMON KINNEY	1847	WILLIAM CHUMASERO
1840	ISAAC ABRAHAM	1848	ERASMUS WINSLOW
1841-43	CHURCHILL COFFING	1849	P. M. KILDUFF
1844-45	HERMAN WHITEHEAD	1850	WM. PAUL

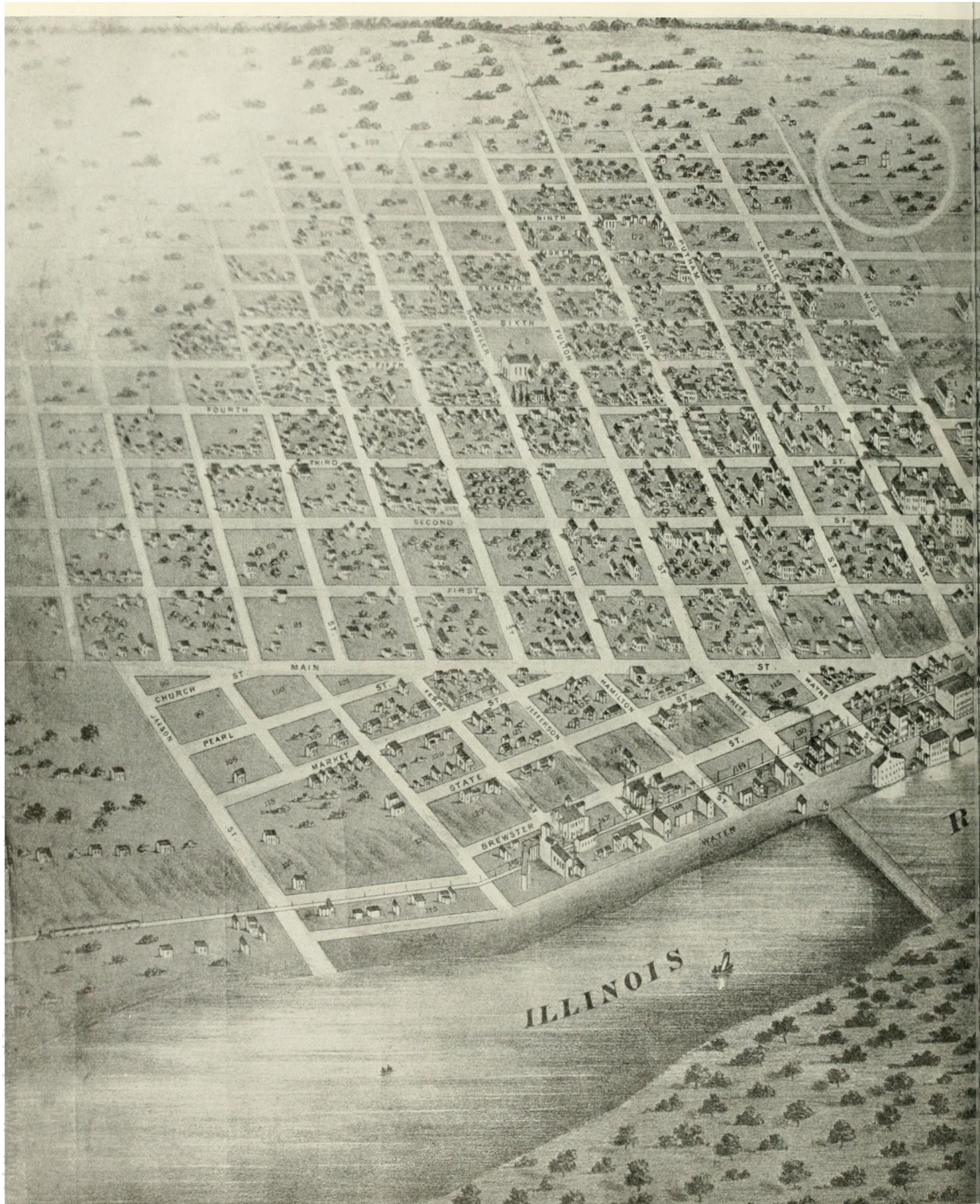
## MAYORS

1851-52	T. D. BREWSTER	1888-89	HENRY HOERNER
1853	H. S. BEEBE, elected in April, resigned in May. P. M. Kilduff elected for remainder of term.	1890-92	G. GMELICH
1854	T. D. BREWSTER	1893-94	H. E. RAUSCH, resigned August, 1894. A. HEBEL, remainder of term.
1855	GEORGE W. GILSON	1895-97	A. HEBEL
1856-62	J. L. McCORMICK	1898-1900	HENRY HOERNER
1863	BENJAMIN REAM	1901-03	LOUIS SHADENSACK, resigned Nov. 1902. M. J. DENNY to April 30, 1903.
1864	PHILIP K. BEHREND	1903-07	HENRY HOERNER
1865-67	E. S. WINSLOW	1907-09	LOUIS SHADENSACK
1868	C. C. CHARLES	1909-11	HENRY HOERNER
1869-70	WM. L. HUSE	1911-13	LOUIS SHADENSACK
1871	J. L. McCORMICK	1913-21	JOHN J. MASSIEON
1872-75	H. M. GALLAGHER	1921-27	LOUIS L. DEISBECK
1876-82	R. C. HATTENHAUER	1927-33	ALBERT HASSE
1883-85	H. BELLINGHAUSEN	1933-35	CHAS. TOELLEN
1886-87	GEO. D. LADD	1935-	ALBERT HASSE





- 1. LININGER HOUSE, WHICH STOOD AT CORNER OF FIRST AND GRANT STREETS
- 2. ABRAMS HOUSE, 1616 FIRST STREET, LATER OCCUPIED BY HENRY LINNIG
- 3. HOUSE AT 1323 CENTER ST., BUILT BY CHURCHILL COFFING, LATER OCCUPIED BY ARCHIBALD MEANS
- 4. HOUSE AT 1509 THIRD STREET, BUILT BY A MR. PARKS, LATER OCCUPIED BY W. L. HUSE
- 5. HOUSE AT 1109 BLUFF STREET. BUILT BY DR. JOHN MILLING
- 6. HOUSE AT 1427 CENTER ST., BUILT BY WILLIAM PAUL
- 7. HOUSE AT 1516 SECOND STREET, BUILT BY ERNEST GUNTHER
- 8. HOUSE AT 1924 MAIN ST., BUILT BY JOSEPH NADLER



MAP OF PERU PROBABLY DRAWN ABOUT 1868, SHOWING WAREHOUSES ALONG THE RIVER FRONT, THE MCCORMICK PONTOON BRIDGE, THE BAYOU, RAVINES THROUGH THE CITY, STREET NAMES, THE DRIVING PARK, AND EARLY BUILDINGS.

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# SCHOOLS

IN 1787 Congress passed an Ordinance for the government of the territory of the United States northwest of the Ohio River. The third article refers to education in this manner: "Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."

In the early days of Peru, all schools were private enterprises. A dozen or more children would be gathered together, usually in the home of the instructor, and taught "Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic."

The earliest record of a Peru school which has so far been discovered, is in the form of an advertisement which appeared in the *Ninawah Gazette* under date of May 23, 1840.

Dr. J. H. Elmore, Wm. Richardson, and C. H. Charles, signing themselves as Trustees of the Peru Select School, advertised that this school would open, and gave a list of the subjects to be taught, and the tuition fees. Latin and Greek; Surveying, with Geometry, Trigonometry, and Navigation; Algebra; Chemistry; Natural, Moral and Mental Philosophy, would all be available at a price of \$5.00 per subject per term.

Bookkeeping, Double and Single Entry, cost \$4.00, Arithmetic, English Grammar and Geography cost only \$3.00, while Reading, Writing, Spelling, Composition and Punctuation could be studied at a cost of \$2.00 a term. A term was to consist of twelve weeks, of five and a half days each. The pupils would be required to board the teacher.

In the *Peru Democrat* of April 6, 1852, Mr. D. T. Wright signified his intention of opening a "select" school in the house recently occupied by the Rev. Mr. Dickinson.

Some of Peru's older citizens recall a school which stood on the northeast corner of Second and Peoria Streets, probably in the late fifties. This was called the "McCormick Little House," because it was built on McCormick property.

Miss Sarah Alcott, a cousin of Louisa May Alcott, who wrote "Little Women," conducted a school on the north side of Main Street, between Peoria and Fulton Streets.

Mr. Splitzstoesser was in charge of a school upstairs in the old Bulfer Building, on the corner of Fourth and Peoria Streets.

Miss Irene Willis conducted a school on the north side of Second Street, just two doors east of Putnam Street.

Miss Emily Hutchins taught a class of boys and girls in a home on the northwest corner of Fourth and Plain Streets.

In the 1850's there was a "Harrington School" at the southeast corner of Bluff and West Streets. Mr. Harrington later taught in the "Little Brick."

For a number of years Professor Joseph Anton Reinhart conducted a German school in his home on Fifth Street, between Putnam and Grant. He also gave instruction in music.

On July 26, 1860, the Association of the German & English Citizens' School of Peru, a voluntary association consisting of Paul Boehme, William Uthoff, Conrad Eckenfelder, Benjamin Ream, Edward Loekle, and Joseph Nadler, purchased a lot on the north side of Seventh Street, between Peoria and Fulton Streets, and erected a building in which a school was conducted for many years. This is now the Waldorf home. Among the earliest teachers were Dr. Ewald Poppe and Miss Mary Minthorne. The latter married Mr. Charles Struever, and became the mother of Rudolph Struever. This school was later acquired by the Board of Education.

One of the most prominent of the early schools was "The Academy," a frame structure north of the present Congregational Church. It was afterwards moved to the southeast corner of West and Center Streets, and occupied by F. Burkart and E. Loekle, as a meat market.

During the late 1850's a nun conducted a school, attended by approximately twenty pupils, near the present intersection of First and Cross Streets. Later she conducted a boarding school in the large stone house on the south side of First Street, between Schuyler and Pike Streets. About ten girls were boarding pupils. Both boys and girls attended as day pupils.

One other undertaking deserves mention in this connection, though it was not a school. It was the Boys' Working Club, for which Mrs. Holmes and Mrs. T. D. Brewster, Sr., were largely responsible. The boys of this club met in the old City Hall and were given instruction in what would be called Manual Training today. Some of Peru's old residents still have small articles of furniture made to order by these boys.

Unfortunately, a fire in the office of the Secretary of the Board of Education, Dr. H. Ziesing, on the night of August 11, 1858, destroyed all previous records of the Public School System in Peru. These records would have covered such matters as the

erection of the first school at or near the site of the Jefferson School.

The first record available, under date of September 1, 1858, shows that the following teachers were elected to serve for one school year: A. Springstead, S. F. Harrington, F. Flota, Miss Margaret E. Wood, Miss Electa Brown, and Mrs. Mary Minthorne Struever.

In September, 1859, the Principal, Mr. A. Springstead, retired and W. C. Knapp, late of The North Western University, was selected to fill the post. During this time the school year was six months. Payment of teachers was made quarterly. It was not until 1865 that the school year was extended to ten months.

In December, 1859, Mr. Knapp was allowed \$1.00 per month for the purpose of visiting and examining several schools, with a view of introducing a system of graduation.

In 1862 Mr. W. B. Powell came to Peru from Hennepin to take charge of the Principal School. Miss S. C. Bassford was his assistant. Mr. S. F. Harrington, Miss S. J. Bidderonce were teachers of the Intermediate School; Mrs. Struever, Miss Alcott, and Miss Wood, of the Primary School.

In 1863 the need of more school room was pressing. The Methodist Church building at Third and Putnam Streets, with the parsonage, could be bought for \$3250, and at a special election in May the voters approved its purchase. Since there was no money in the treasury for remodeling, the money was borrowed, and the work done by the day, instead of by contract. In October the Trustees authorized the sale of the Academy, and the use of the money for further repairing the new building. The Academy was sold for \$685 and the Methodist Church Parsonage for \$125.

In September, 1866, the School Board contracted with August Heinze for the erection of an additional room and hall in the Fourth Ward School—to be completely finished and the key delivered for \$1000. Because of the loss of earlier records, this is the first information available about this school.

In August, 1867, the old Third Ward School, a two-room frame structure on the site of the present Lincoln School, was contracted for.

On January 1, 1870, Mr. Powell handed in his resignation as Superintendent of Schools and left Peru to accept a similar position in Aurora. From there Mr. Powell went to Washington, D. C., where he was head of the school system for a number of years.

Older citizens will remember Powell's "How to Talk" and "How to Write," a series of language books used as text books in the Peru Schools for a number of years. Mr. John S. Gibson was elected to fill his place, and served for one school term.

The former church building was converted into the Peru High School, and the first graduation exercises were held in 1870. For several years these exercises were held in the City Hall, but the records show that after 1879 they took place in the Peru Turn Hall.

Teachers' Institutes were held in Peru once a year. Such men as Professor Thomas Metcalf of the Illinois State Normal University, President Hewitt, of the same school, and State Superintendent Raab conducted these institutes on one Friday and Saturday during the school year, usually in April.

Mr. G. B. Stockdale, of Philadelphia, was appointed superintendent of schools September 1, 1871, remaining for seven years. In 1878 Mr. Stockdale was elected County Superintendent of Schools, and was twice re-elected, serving twelve years in this capacity.

In November of 1871 a vote was taken to build a new school house in the Fourth Ward. It was in this building, known as the Jefferson School, that Miss Dora Kilduff taught for so many years.

In May, 1878, Mr. Stockdale was succeeded by Mr. Joseph Carter, of Normal.

Washington School, a four-room building, was erected in 1881 upon the site occupied for many years by the "Little Brick," so called to distinguish it from the "Big Brick" across the street west. Upon the completion of the Washington School, the school on Seventh Street was closed.

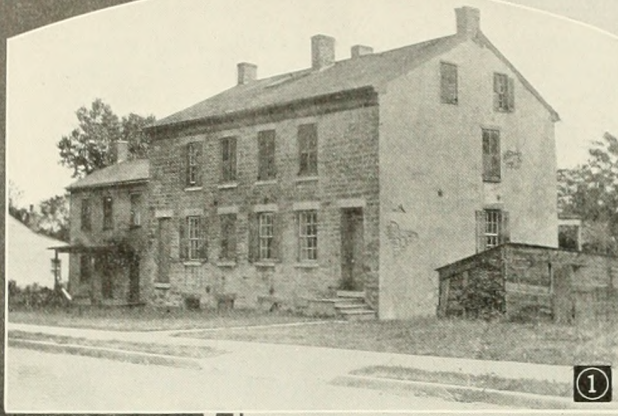
In the basement of the new "Little Brick" Mr. Carter organized the first Manual Training Class in any public school in the State of Illinois. He purchased tools and fitted up a shop, and though classes were optional, instruction was eagerly received. When Mr. Carter resigned in June, 1885, the Board of Education bought the tools from him and continued the classes.

When the La Salle-Peru Township High School opened in 1898, the old Peru High School was converted into a Grammar School, with a ninth grade added. However, this extra grade lasted for only a few years.

Mr. R. L. Barton followed Mr. Carter as principal, Mr. F. W. Smedley was the next to hold the office, and Mr. W. W. Wirt followed Mr. Smedley. Mr. Ira M. Ong was principal in 1903, when an open meeting was called to decide what to do about providing more school room. The citizens left the decision to the School Board, whose members at that time were: Thomas F. Noon, President; Adolph Hoss, Secretary; Charles Castendyke, Henry Phillips, George Soedler, George Burke, John Schaulin, and Emil Schaid. Later, at a special election, Peru voted to erect a new school building on the site of the old High School.

The present Central School was completed in February, 1904. Much of the credit for its arrangement is due Mr. Ong. It is known as a Departmental School—the first of its kind in the State. Each floor accommodates two grades, and is arranged with an assembly room with four classrooms adjoining. Manual Training is taught in basement classrooms, and the third floor contains cooking and sewing equipment, as well as an Auditorium with stage and dressing rooms.

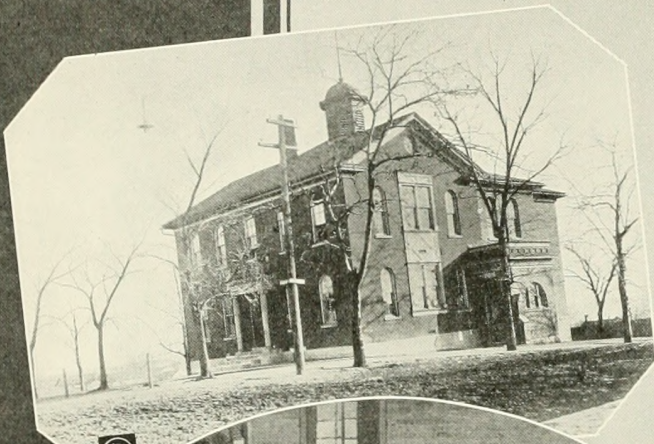
In the first years of its existence the Central School was visited by many superintendents and teachers, since it was unique in being the first De-



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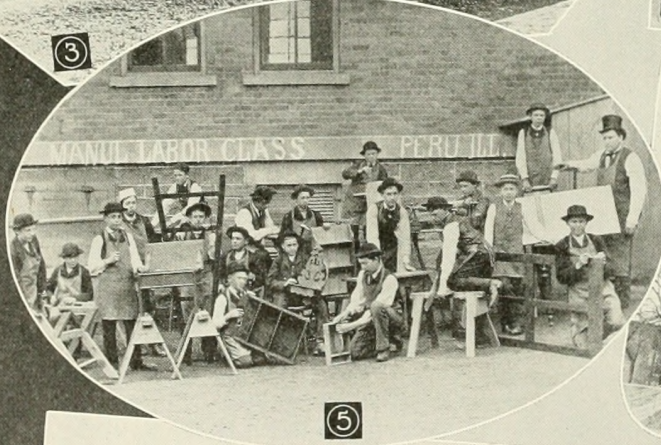
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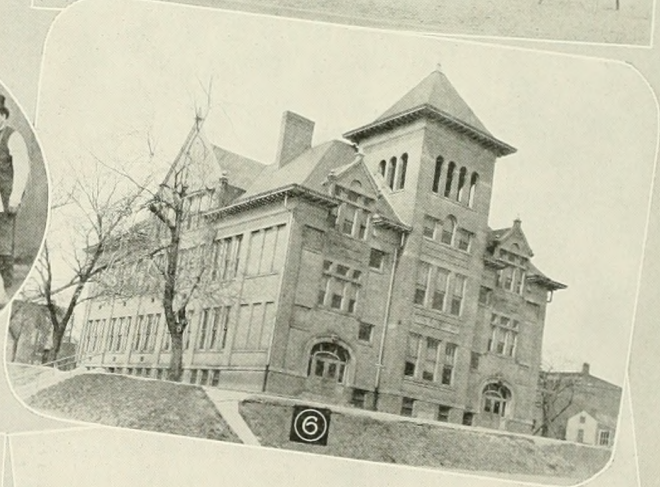
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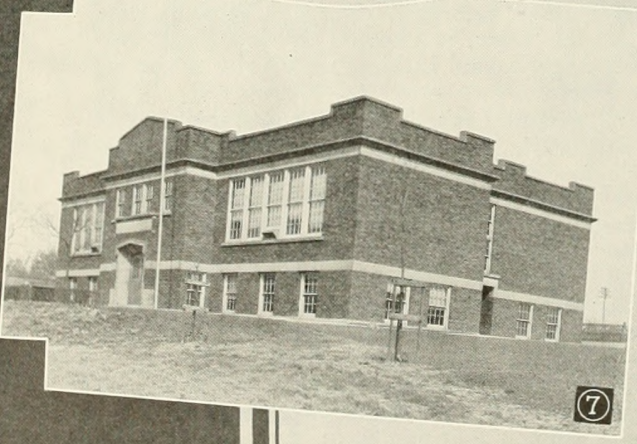
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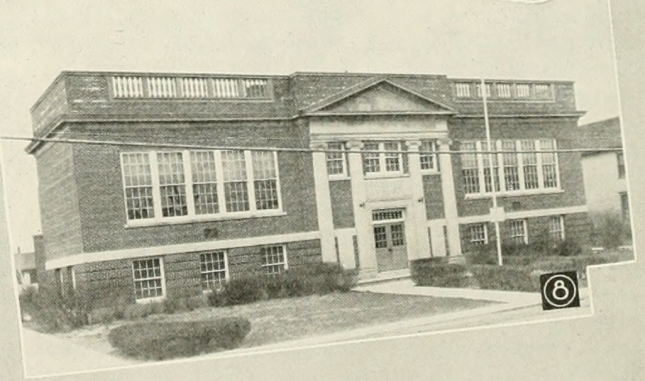
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- 1. NUN'S BOARDING SCHOOL, ON FIRST STREET
- 2. LINCOLN SCHOOL
- 3. JEFFERSON SCHOOL
- 4. WASHINGTON SCHOOL
- 5. MANUAL TRAINING CLASS, CONDUCTED IN THE EIGHTIES, BASEMENT OF THE WASHINGTON SCHOOL
- 6. CENTRAL SCHOOL
- 7. MCKINLEY SCHOOL
- 8. ROOSEVELT SCHOOL

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partmental Grade School in the State. This system has many advantages—each teacher is a specialist in her subject, having her own class room for her teaching, so that the Assembly is left a silent study room.

In 1907 Mr. Ong was succeeded as principal by Mr. Jas. R. Hart, who held the office until his death in 1915, when Mr. A. H. Karn was appointed. He is still at the head of the Peru Schools.

The McKinley School, a modern, four-room building in the eastern section of town, was erected in the fall of 1922. The Lincoln School is now closed. The Roosevelt School, modern in every respect, was erected in the western part of the city in the fall of 1922. The Jefferson School was abandoned in September, 1927.

Parochial schools are supported by the people of St. Mary's, St. Joseph's and St. Valentine's Churches. The enrollment almost equals that of the Public Schools, and the scholarship standard is quite as high.

Peru may well be proud of her schools, Public and Parochial. Her students have made enviable scholarship records at the Township High School and Junior College, and in higher schools throughout the country. The growth of the schools has been as important as any other single factor in the development of the community.

#### TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL AND JUNIOR COLLEGE

Construction was started on the first building of the La Salle-Peru Township High School in 1897, and the first session was held in September, 1898. There have been four superintendents: Mr. Stratton D. Brooks, later President of the University of Missouri; Mr. C. A. Farnum; Dr. Thomas J. McCormack; and Dr. Fred G. Stevenson. Mr. Thomas C. Kohin has been assistant principal since the foundation of the school.

For the first few years, as is the case with all new high schools, the attendance remained small, but between 1917 and 1923 enrollment increased 72 per cent. In the last six years the increase has been rapid, the enrollment in October, 1934, being 1425.

Dr. Thomas J. McCormack held the position of principal for twenty-nine years, from 1903 until his death in 1932. He was an educational lecturer and author of numerous scientific and pedagogical articles in educational reviews, and the editor of a series of Philosophical Classics. Before entering the profession of teaching, he was one of the editors of the "Open Court" and the "Monist" of Chicago.

Dr. McCormack was a scholar and educational leader with no superior in this part of the country.

Dr. Fred G. Stevenson, who is the present Superintendent of the Township High School

and President of the La Salle-Peru-Oglesby Junior College, came here in the fall of 1932.

In addition to the original building, the La Salle-Peru Township High School property now consists of the recreation building, erected in 1913-1914, and added to in 1918 and 1923; the building which houses the Hygienic Institute; and the new High School and Junior College building, erected in 1927-1928.

The school owes much to Mr. F. W. Matthiessen and his family, who generously gave time and money to make it one of the finest and best-equipped schools in the state.

The La Salle-Peru-Oglesby Junior College was started in response to public demand, in 1924. It is designed to give local young people the advantages of the first two years of college training. There are training classes for teachers and preparatory classes for nearly all the vocations and professions taught in the universities. The entering class numbered thirty-two; the present enrollment is over two hundred. The Junior College is housed in the top floor of the new building.

#### ST. BEDE COLLEGE

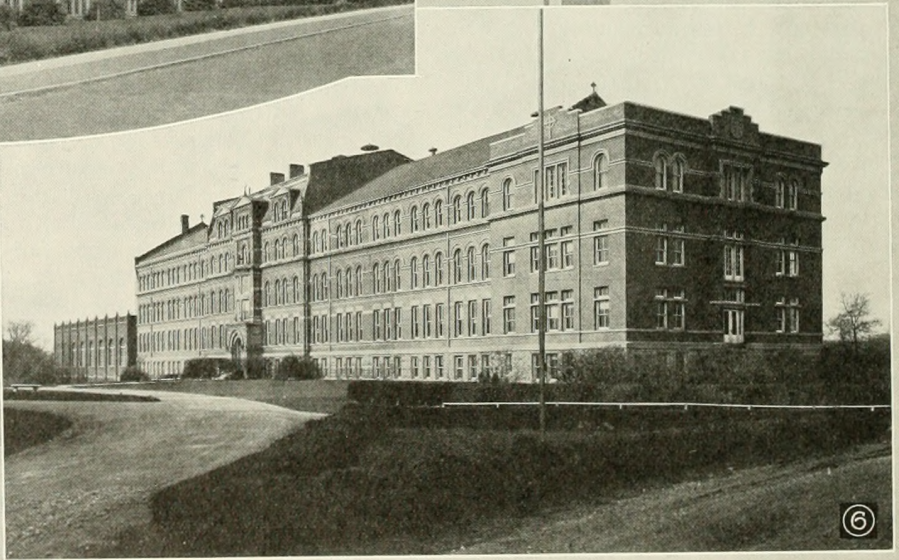
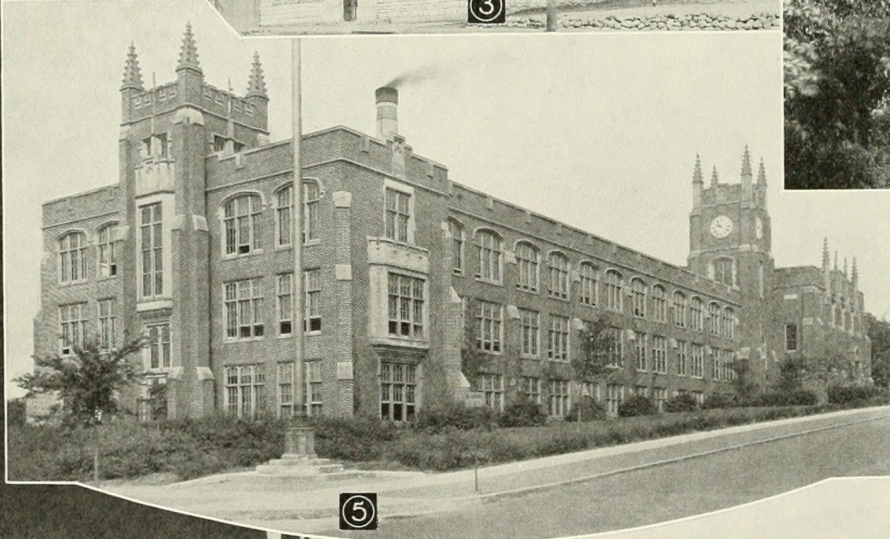
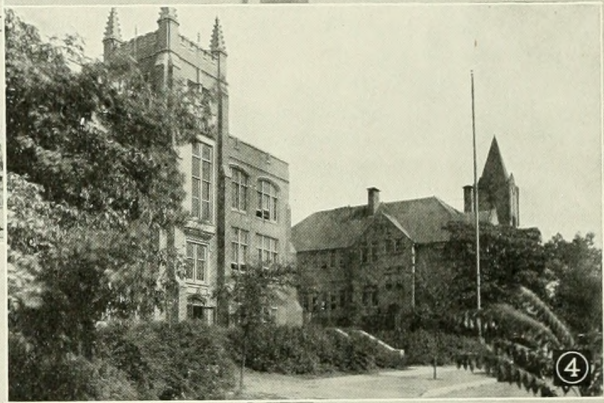
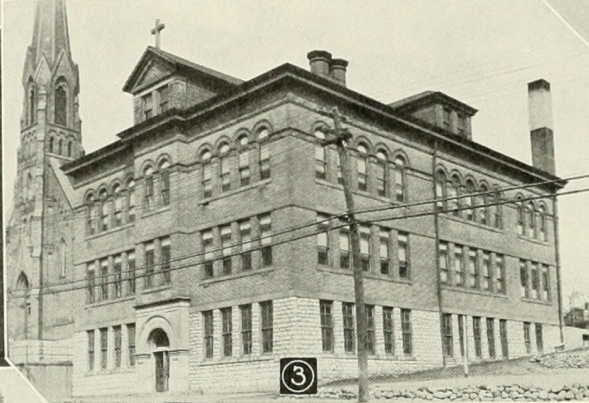
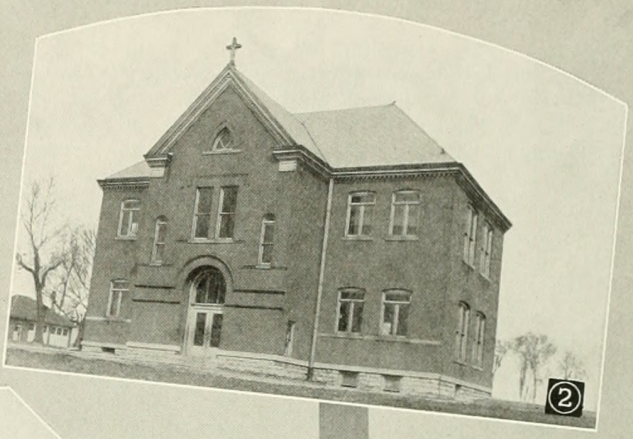
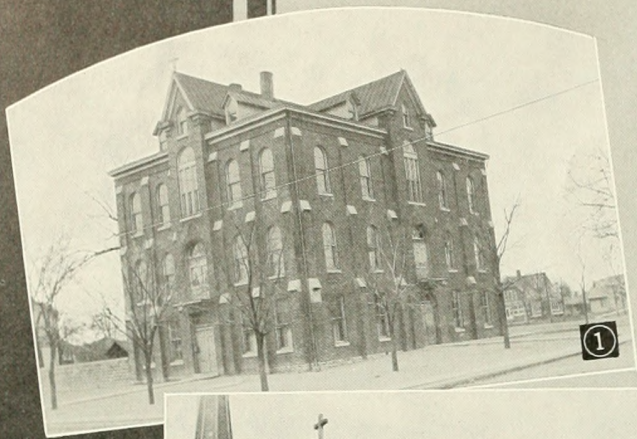
One of the outstanding Catholic Schools for boys in the Mid-Western States, St. Bede College, is situated one mile west of Peru. It comprises academy, college, and seminary. It was founded by the Benedictine Fathers of St. Vincent Abbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, in the year 1889, when a portion of the famous Daniel Webster farm was purchased and the erection of a boarding school was started. Nineteen years later St. Bede was elevated to an Abbey by His Holiness Pope Pius X, and Father Vincent Huber, O. S. B., of St. Vincent Archabbey was elected the first abbot of St. Bede.

On February 12, 1890, the institution was incorporated, and by an act of the Legislature of Illinois was empowered to confer all academic degrees. The first scholastic year began on Monday, September 7, 1891. The St. Bede Academy is affiliated with the University of Illinois, and accredited by the State Department of Education.

Additions were made to the main building in 1906 and 1914, and in 1925 one of the largest gymnasiums in the state was built. St. Bede's athletic program is a recognized asset of the school.

The school itself is built on a slope overlooking the Illinois River, nearly a mile away. Its spacious campus is beautifully landscaped and surrounded by woods and glens.

The activities of the college, such as lectures; and dramatic, musical and literary entertainments, are open to the public, thus increasing its service to the citizens of Peru.



1. ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL
2. ST. MARY'S SCHOOL
3. ST. VALENTINE'S SCHOOL
4. THE OLD LA SALLE-PERU TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
5. THE NEW LA SALLE-PERU TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL AND JUNIOR COLLEGE
6. ST. BEDE COLLEGE

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# CHURCHES

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN 1841, largely through the generosity of Mr. Theron D. Brewster, a church was built for the use of the Congregational Society, organized some time before. This was "the little stone church" on the north side of Second Street, between Peoria and Putnam Streets. Mr. John C. Coffing of Salisbury, Connecticut, the father of Churchill Coffing, one of Peru's first settlers, donated a bell which was installed in the tower of this church. The Rev. Nahum Gould was pastor at this time.

Previous to this and on November 27, 1837, a Presbyterian Church had been organized in this community and held services at Rockwell until 1839, when the members moved to Peru and within a short time joined with the Congregationalists.

The Rev. Owen Lovejoy, of Princeton, supplied the pulpit from 1841 to 1842, when the Rev. Charles Dickinson was appointed. He was succeeded in 1847 by the Rev. Samuel Dickinson, who remained until 1851.

During the pastorate of the Rev. William Baldwin (1852-1853) the present church building was begun. The yard-thick foundation—which contains a boatload of sea shells brought from New Orleans by Mr. S. N. Maze to add strength to the mortar—was completed in 1853 and the basement finished, and here the Rev. Albert Smith conducted services while he was pastor (1854-1855). The building was completed in 1856 and dedication services were held October fifth under the Rev. A. L. Harrington (1855-1859). At this time the bell donated by Mr. John C. Coffing and used in the little stone church on Second Street was removed to the new belfry, where it is still in use. It has twice rung to celebrate the coming of peace—at the end of the Civil war and at the end of the World War.

From 1859 to 1911 the church had twelve pastors, including the Rev. Julius Marks, the Rev. John Childress, and the Rev. Charles Ebersol.

In 1911 the Rev. Walter Spence assumed the pastorate. Under his leadership the Brotherhood of the Golden Rule, a non-sectarian society, was organized. The first Boy Scout troop was formed in 1912, with the Rev. Spence as Scout Master. Mrs. Spence was the first Guardian of a group of Camp Fire Girls in 1913, an organization which disbanded after a number of years of activity.

In 1917 an Estey pipe organ was installed, the interior of the church remodeled, and an extension added on the north.

The Rev. Spence went to France as a Y. M. C. A.

Chaplain in 1918. During his absence the Rev. William Moore filled his place. Mr. Moore died in June, 1919. In the fall of 1919 Mr. Spence resumed his duties, remaining until 1924, when the Rev. Wilford H. Evans was called.

The brick parsonage north of the church was completed in 1925. In 1929 Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Hackman presented to the church, for use as a parish house, the Henry Ream home directly west of the church. The various church societies, and on Sundays the primary department of the Sunday School, meet here.

Mr. Evans remained as pastor until 1930 and was succeeded by the Rev. Edward Koster. The pastorate is now filled by the Rev. Edward R. Howard, who came here in May, 1934.

## ZION EVANGELICAL CHURCH

On September 5, 1852 the Zion Evangelical Church was founded under the name of Zion German Evangelical Church. The first pastor was the Rev. William Uhl who was succeeded during a period of ten years by the Rev. Rosenberger, the Rev. Mueller, the Rev. Tovote and the Rev. J. Zimmerman.

In 1862, under the pastorate of the Rev. H. Siekmann (1862-1866), the property at the northeast corner of Sixth and Grant Streets on which the present church stands, as well as the property at the southeast corner of the same street intersection, which became the parsonage, was purchased. In 1866, under the leadership of the Rev. L. Austermann (1866-1874), the church was built; a tower was added in 1871, and the next year a chime of two bells, imported from Germany, was installed. Rev. Austermann was succeeded by the Rev. William Luer (1874-1877). A pipe organ, installed in 1877 while the Rev. D. Niethammer was pastor (1877-1882), was in use until 1922. The Rev. Ankele served the church from 1882 until 1886.

In 1889, under the Rev. S. Hoffmeister (1886-1900), the old parsonage was sold and the present residence, located just east of the church, was built. In 1891 a new tower was built to replace the old one, which had been damaged by lightning.

The Rev. Paul Brauns took charge on April 29, 1900 and remains as a much loved leader.

In 1902 when the congregation celebrated its Golden Jubilee, a third bell was added to the chime and extensive repairs were made. The corner stone of an addition was laid in 1905 and in January, 1906, the church was properly dedicated.

A new pipe organ was purchased in 1922 and in 1927, to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary, the church received splendid gifts from its societies, including a magnificent Communion Service of Silver.

A venerable institution of this church is the "Frauenverein" (Ladies Aid Society), organized in 1866. Today it has a membership of 112.

The first officers of this society were:

MRS. MARIE BREUNING.....*President*  
MRS. ELIZABETH DINGLER.....*Vice President*  
MRS. MARIE MEYER.....*Secretary*  
MRS. JULIA SPERBER.....*Treasurer*

The present officers are:

MRS. ALMA UTZ.....*President*  
MRS. LENA BRADTKE.....*Vice President*  
MRS. MINNIE WELLNER.....*Secretary*  
MRS. ELSIE BRAUNS.....*Treasurer*  
MRS. HERMINA SCHUESSLER.....*Treasurer of  
Death Benefit Fund*

#### ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

The history of St. Joseph's Church, the oldest Roman Catholic church of Peru, forms a most interesting chapter in the development of the city.

Early records of the church reveal that in 1854 St. Joseph's Church was organized as a mission of St. Patrick's Church, La Salle, a move designed to give Catholics of Peru a more conveniently located place of worship as the long walk to the La Salle church proved a hardship, especially in inclement weather.

In 1854 plans were made to erect a church and in 1856 the first church was completed, a small building of rough stone on the site of the present church. The building measured only 80 by 40 feet but proved adequate for the needs of that day. It was badly damaged in 1859 when a severe windstorm tore off the roof. Repairs were completed in several weeks, however, and services resumed.

After ten years as a mission, during which time a priest of St. Patrick's Church, La Salle, was in charge of services, St. Joseph's was made a regular parish and on May 15, 1864 the Rev. Peter Fassbender was named as the first resident pastor. It was under his direction that the first parochial school was built in 1866.

The Rev. H. Boers was the next pastor and he in turn was succeeded by the Rev. Leander Schaffer, who directed the erection of the first parochial residence, a frame structure. Four other priests served the parish during the next few years.

In 1877 the Rev. James Cossman, was appointed to the pastorate of St. Joseph's Church. Shortly after his arrival he began plans for the construction of the present beautiful stone church and during his incumbency he saw the edifice completed. The 165-foot tower is equipped with an electrically operated clock and three large bells.

The Rev. P. J. Gerhardy became pastor in 1881 and during his pastorate the present spacious parochial school and Sisters' Home was erected. At the present time the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred

Heart are in charge of the parochial school, giving instruction in the eight grades and also in commercial work.

In 1894 the Benedictine Order of Priests took charge of St. Joseph's Parish and the Rev. Norbert Gerstl, O. S. B. became pastor. He was succeeded in 1900 by the Rev. P. Adolph Rupprecht, O. S. B. During the ten-year pastorate of Father Adolph the beautiful brick parochial residence was erected just south of the church. This was completed in 1905.

On September 9, 1910 the Rev. P. Justus Wirth, O. S. B., now Abbot of St. Bede Abbey, became pastor of St. Joseph's Church. He directed the erection of the parish hall which was completed in 1914. This building contains a spacious auditorium, bowling alleys, club rooms, a kitchen and dining room.

In 1915 the Rev. Florian Heiss, O. S. B., the present pastor, was appointed to St. Joseph's Church. During the twenty years of his pastorate he has directed extensive improvements to the church property, including a new organ in the church, a new roof on the church and parish hall, and new heating equipment in all the buildings. Father Florian is a charter member of St. Bede Abbey.

#### ST. MARY'S CHURCH

In response to a petition of the non-German-speaking members of St. Joseph's Parish for a division of that parish and for an English-speaking priest, Bishop Duggan of Chicago sent the Rev. A. J. Pettit to Peru in August, 1867, to become the founder and first pastor of St. Mary's Parish. He promptly purchased the lots on which the present church, rectory, and convent stand, and at once began the erection of a frame church which was ready for services on Christmas Day of the same year. That St. Mary's Parish was a successful undertaking from the very beginning is indicated by the fact that the parish records of the period report an average of over sixty baptisms per year for a long period of years. Father Pettit remained as pastor from 1867 to 1874, although during 1870, owing to the illness of the pastor, the Rev. J. M. Ryan was in charge for a time.

In 1874 the Rev. E. Gray was appointed to succeed Father Pettit, and at the beginning of his administration the parish acquired the residence and lots east of their previous holdings by purchase from the elder Judge Eldredge, and shortly after the Sisters of St. Joseph opened an academy in the building.

The Rev. John F. Power succeeded Father Gray in January, 1882, and soon afterward made possible the opening of a regular parochial school by renting the hall of the Father Matthew Temperance Society and using some space in the convent for classrooms as well. He also purchased the central part of the present parish grounds, upon which there had been an armory and drill grounds in Civil War days. In 1888 Father Power removed to Spring Valley where he had opened a mission four years earlier, and was succeeded in Peru by the Rev. Michael Heafy who, during a pastorate of ten years, cleared the parish of debt, built a tower on the church, and erected the present St. Mary's School.

For a year after Father Heafy's retirement the parish was attended by Benedictine Fathers from St. Bede College until the Rev. Edward Hearn assumed charge in February, 1899. Father Hearn's incumbency was brief, for in June, 1900, he was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. Patrick Dillon, who looked after the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish until his death in February, 1909.

The youthful and energetic Rev. Patrick O'C. Culleton succeeded Dr. Dillon and, with the whole-hearted support of the parish, first erected the present rectory and then the beautiful Romanesque Church, dedicated in 1917, which is a monument to the architectural taste of the pastor and the generosity of the members of the parish.

After his successful pastorate of fourteen years, Father Culleton was transferred to St. Patrick's Parish, Peoria, Illinois, in January, 1923, and the present pastor, the Rev. Michael S. Gildea, came to St. Mary's. Father Gildea has continued the good work of his predecessors in improving the parish buildings and property. In 1931 he procured the fine new convent, and at present is engaged in remodeling the old convent into a recreation hall and social center for the parish.

The parish school, which has been in charge of the Franciscan Sisters for the past twenty-five years, has an enrollment of 175 pupils.

#### ST. VALENTINE'S CHURCH

St. Valentine's Parish owes its beginning to St. Valentine's Society. This society was organized June 17, 1889 and was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois on June 22, 1889. In its beginning the society numbered but twenty-four members.

On July 29, 1890, St. Valentine's Society purchased four lots and a small home, between Syracuse and St. James Streets, on Pulaski, for parochial purposes.

With the permission of the Most Rev. J. L. Spalding, Bishop of Peoria, St. Valentine's Society undertook the gigantic task of building a school which was completed in 1891. This building was also used as a church until September 3, 1899. On January 20, 1892 Bishop Spalding appointed the Rev. A. M. Sikorski as the first resident pastor of the young and growing parish of St. Valentine. He immediately undertook the work of building a rectory.

In January, 1896, the Rev. Sikorski was appointed pastor of St. Hyacinth's Church at La Salle and for the next six months a Polish priest from Spring Valley took charge of St. Valentine's. In July, 1896, the Rev. Casimir Truszynski of Chicago was appointed pastor of St. Valentine's. He at once set about paying all financial indebtedness.

On July 3, 1890, a meeting of the parishioners was called at which a special assessment was agreed upon, making it possible to build a church in the near future. For nine years they worked, raising a fund for this purpose, and on September 3, 1899, the new church was completed and dedicated in

honor of St. Valentine by His Excellency, the Most Rev. J. L. Spalding, D. D., Bishop of Peoria.

St. Valentine's Church completed, and almost entirely paid for, Father Truszynski and his parishioners decided to build a new school and directed their efforts to this cause. On May 14, 1905, the corner stone was laid and shortly after the school was completed and placed in charge of the Felician Sisters of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Rev. Truszynski worked hard in harmony with the parishioners until the present beautiful church, school and rectory were without debt. They stand as monuments to the untiring efforts, labors and sacrifices of the congregation. Father Truszynski was a zealous and intrepid worker but in 1911, because of failing health, he was obliged to resign.

In 1912 the Rev. S. Przybysz was appointed pastor and served thirteen years, and in December, 1925, the present pastor, the Rev. A. A. Jagodzinski, assumed the pastorate, by appointment from His Excellency, the Most Rev. E. M. Dunne, D. D., Bishop of Peoria.

St. Valentine's Parish today numbers 2220. There are 330 children in school under the able tutelage of the Felician Sisters.

#### ST. JOHN'S ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

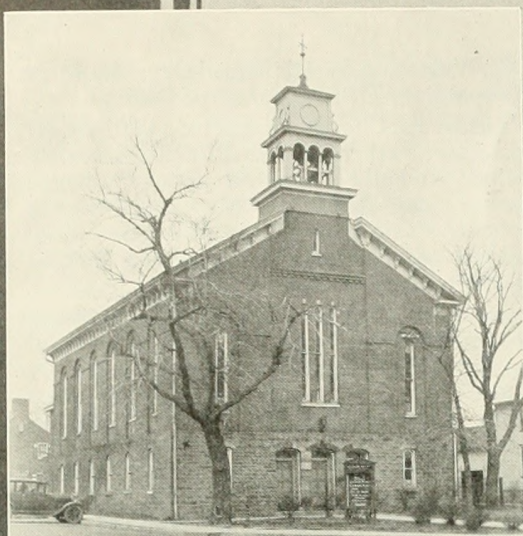
St. John's English Lutheran Church was organized on August 3, 1919 in the Peru Public Library, with a membership of eighteen.

As early as 1880 the Rev. Mr. Johnson, Pastor of the County Line Lutheran Church, had preached occasionally to a few Lutherans in Peru. In 1884 the Rev. Mr. Bauman organized this group under the name, "St. John's German Lutheran Church." A church was built nine years later on North Calhoun Street and was dedicated on December 8, 1895. The pastor of the County Line Church served this congregation also until 1908, when the Mission Board attempted to establish an independent mission in Peru. The first pastor, the Rev. Mr. Hertel, remained only nine months, and from 1909 to 1919 the church was served by the pastors at Hollowayville and Princeton.

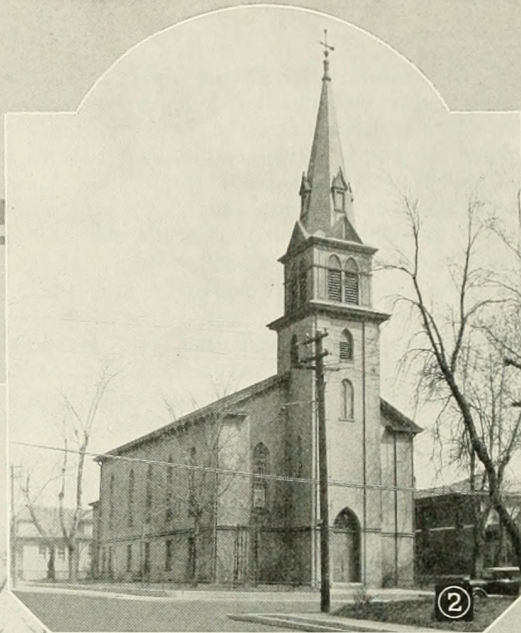
Early in 1919 the Mission Board sent the Rev. Mr. Groth to build an English congregation. Meetings were held in the Peru Public Library. Mr. Groth remained two months. The Rev. M. L. Bischoff came as a resident pastor on June 29, 1919, and when the congregation was organized on August third of that year it was found that part of the old German Lutheran congregation formed part of the new group and that the old church would be at the disposal of the new congregation.

In 1920 plans were made to move the old church to a better location, and the property at the south-east corner of Seventh and Fulton Streets was purchased. The house on this lot was moved to the south end and made into a parsonage, and in April the old frame church was moved from Calhoun Street to the new location. Remodeling began at once and on August 1, 1920 the corner stone was laid. Dedication services were held on November 4, 1920.

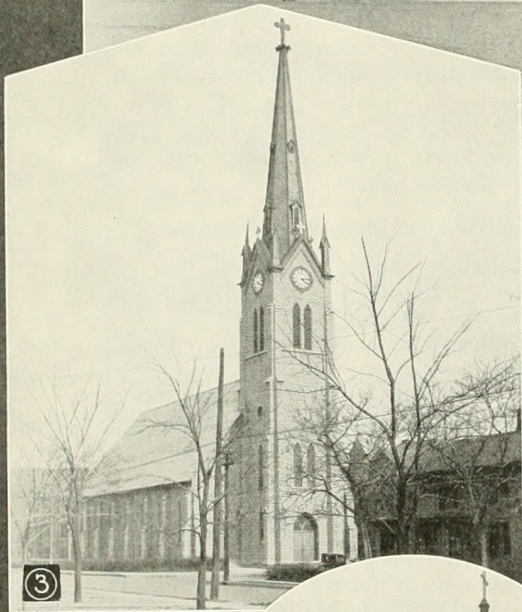




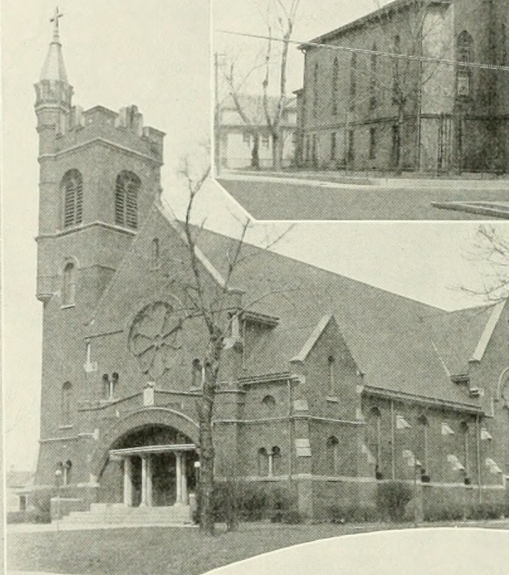
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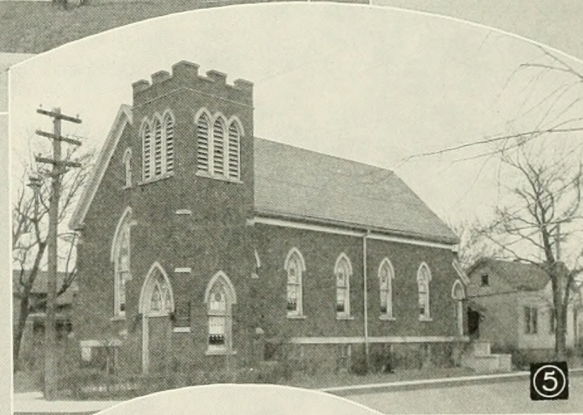
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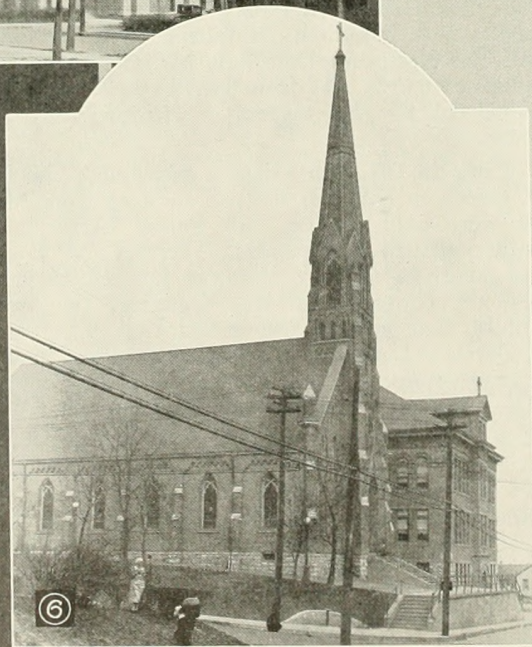
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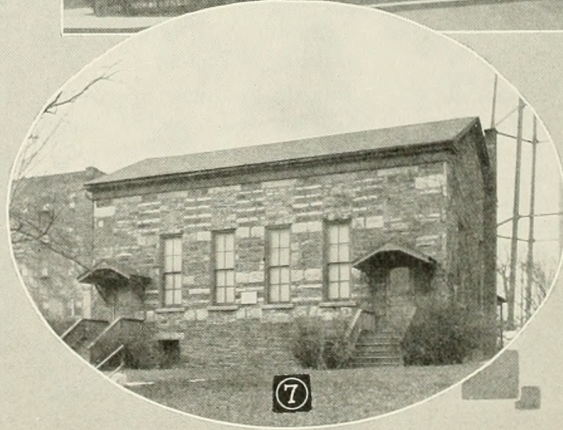
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1. FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
2. ZION EVANGELICAL CHURCH

3. ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH  
4. ST. MARY'S CHURCH

5. ST. JOHN'S ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
6. ST. VALENTINE'S CHURCH

7. FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST, OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS

The Rev. Mr. Bischoff remained almost four years and then accepted a call to Wartburg College at Clinton, Iowa. He was succeeded by the Rev. A. C. Huth who held the pastorage until January, 1926.

On April 4, 1926, Easter Sunday, the present pastor, Rev. Henry C. Hafermann, conducted his first service in the church.

In 1927 and 1928 extensive improvements were made to the church property, including the installation of a metal ceiling in the church auditorium, an addition of two rooms to the parsonage, and decorations of both the church and parsonage. In 1929 the grounds were landscaped.

Miss Emma Herlein, in memory of her deceased brother, Frederick Herlein, presented the congregation with a pipe organ, which was dedicated on May 11, 1930.

In 1932 the first vacation Bible School was conducted, and on July 1, 1933 the congregation became self-supporting.

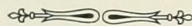
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST,  
OF PERU, ILLINOIS

First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Peru, Illinois had its beginning in the summer of 1909 when

a small group of earnest students of Christian Science arranged for Sunday services to be held at a private residence. The attendance at these services increased steadily, and on June 23, 1913, Christian Science Society of Peru, Illinois, a branch of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Boston, Massachusetts, was organized. A room in the Masonic Temple was secured and furnished; regular services were held, a Sunday School was instituted, and a Reading Room maintained. In July 1915 the church quarters were enlarged by the addition of an adjoining room.

In June, 1924, the old stone residence at the north east corner of Third and Grant Streets was purchased and remodeled for a church edifice. At this time also the Society was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois under the name of Christian Science Society of Peru, Illinois. On March 8, 1925, the first services were held in the new church home.

A Christian Science church building cannot be dedicated until it is free from debt. In April 1931, all indebtedness having been paid, the necessary steps were taken to change the name of the Society to First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Peru, Illinois, and on Sunday, June 14, 1931, dedication services were held.



## CLUBS AND LODGES

### CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Peru Chamber of Commerce, one of the City's most active organizations, had its inception with the organization October 20, 1887, of the Peru Board of Trade. The object of that group, as outlined on its membership certificates, was "the advancement of the material interests of the City in every way possible."

W. G. Reeve was president of the Board of Trade and William E. Moore, Secretary.

This organization was followed in later years by other business men's clubs, and in 1900 the Peru Business Men's and Social Association was formed, with W. K. Hoagland as President, Henry Ream as Treasurer, and Chris. Gunther as Secretary. In 1908 this Association was reorganized and a short time later the name was changed to the Peru Business Men's Association.

The Chamber of Commerce was formed in 1919, with W. H. Bacon instrumental in its organization. It has always been active in civic affairs and several projects which proved of benefit to the city were fostered by the membership.

A. C. Schmoeger was elected President of the Chamber of Commerce for 1935 and H. J. Haas, Secretary.

The Retail Merchants' division of the Chamber

of Commerce is a recent outgrowth of the parent organization and includes a large and active membership. Meetings are held once a month at which subjects of interest to retailers are discussed. The members also are active in civic affairs. Charles Gisler is President of the group and H. J. Haas serves as Secretary.

### YOUNG MEN'S ATHLETIC CLUB

The Young Men's Athletic Club was organized in Peru on September 15, 1901, with nine members, and on June 13, 1917, was incorporated. In 1922 the membership had grown to about two hundred. At this time the Brewster property at Second and Peoria Streets was purchased and the residence remodeled into a clubhouse.

### FIRST OFFICERS

WILLIAM BULFER, *President*  
WILLIAM STRUEVER, *Financial Secretary*  
FRED SHADENSACK, *Recording Secretary*  
WILLIAM STRUEVER, *Treasurer*

### PRESENT OFFICERS

WILLIAM C. WALTER, *President*  
FRED E. HUNDT, *Vice-President*  
BEN HEBEL, *Financial Secretary*  
HERBERT FRIZOL, *Recording Secretary*  
CHRIST HAGEMAN, *Treasurer*

## BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

The Boy Scout movement was started in Peru by the Rev. Walter Spence, former Pastor of the Peru Congregational Church, who took an active part in all Boy Scout activities during his pastorate here. The first troop to be registered was Troop No. 1 on June 12th, 1912, with an enrolment of 25 boys. This troop is one of the oldest in northern Illinois. In October, 1924, another troop was started and sponsored by the Congregational Church. At the present time there are 135 scouts and 19 sea scouts in Peru. Following is a list of the scout troops in Peru and their sponsoring institutions:

Troop No. 1 Peru Congregational Church  
Troop No. 4 Peru Congregational Church  
Troop No. 6 The American Legion  
Troop No. 8 St. Valentine's Church  
Troop No. 9 St. Valentine's Church  
Troop No. 12 St. Joseph's Church  
Troop No. 14 St. John's Lutheran Church  
Troop No. 24 St. Mary's Church  
Troop No. 20 Sea Scout Ship Premier,  
The American Legion

These troops all belong to Starved Rock Council Area, which includes all of La Salle, part of Bureau and part of Putnam Counties. The present Scout Executive is Mr. Lloyd Schaefer, who came to Peru in April of this year.

## CAMP FIRE GIRLS

The first organization of Camp Fire Girls in Peru was under the guardianship of Mrs. Walter Spence. The girls of this group grew up, and the press of other activities superseded the Camp Fire. In 1920 another group began to hold meetings and work along the lines prescribed in the Camp Fire Manual, but it was not until 1922 that they secured a guardian and become affiliated with the National Association of Camp Fire Girls. At first they met in the homes of the members, but later the Congregational Church granted them the use of the church parlors.

When the first guardian of the new organization, Miss Caroline Turnis, took charge, there were twenty-two girls in the Camp Fire. Miss Turnis resigned her guardianship in 1925, and Mrs. Katherine Heintz took her place. Soon after the membership reached forty-eight, too many for one Camp Fire. Miss Ethel Hundt, who had qualified for the rank of Torchbearer, took charge of eighteen of the younger girls, forming the Wantan Camp Fire. The older group was called Kokohanna Camp Fire.

The Camp Fire Girls at present are under the guardianship of Miss Luella Kuehn.

## THE MAIDS AND MATRONS CLUB

In 1917 the Business Girls Club was organized under the direction of the Rev. Walter Spence, Pastor of the Congregational Church. This group met at stated times in the basement of the Congregational Church and practiced calisthenics and gymnastic dancing, and also enjoyed a social hour. Later the physical exercises were abandoned and the club be-

came a social organization, devoting much attention to philanthropic work. After a number of years the name of the club was changed to The Maids and Matrons Club and married women were admitted to membership. The meeting place was changed to the Chamber of Commerce rooms.

In 1929 the Maids and Matrons were instrumental in organizing the Women's Club of Peru which has been a strong influence toward education and culture in the community.

The Maids and Matrons now meet at the homes of members and enjoy their social contacts, and continue to carry on their various philanthropies.

The present officers are: Mrs. W. H. Noon, President; Miss Florence Loekle, Secretary; Miss Priscilla Burke, Treasurer.

## THE AMERICAN LEGION

Peru Post No. 375, The American Legion, was organized September 26, 1919. Its first officers were:

HAROLD R. CORWIN, *Post Commander*  
K. A. KILDUFF, *Senior Vice Commander*  
DONALD BROWN, *Junior Vice Commander*  
EDW. C. KEEGAN, *Post Adjutant*  
VINCENT J. REAM, *Post Finance Officer*

Peru Post soon became active throughout The American Legion and likewise participated in community affairs. In 1921 it assumed the arrangement of the Memorial Day program, which formerly had been handled by the local Post of the G. A. R. and the Sons of Veterans.

The municipal swimming pool project received the full support of Peru Post, all of the members being active in bringing about the approval of the bond issue which made possible the construction of the fine pool at Washington Park. Before the pool was completed the city officials decided to make it a War Veterans' Memorial and it was so dedicated on June 24, 1928.

In 1929 Peru Post assumed the sponsorship of a Boy Scout Troop and during 1931 that of a Sea Scout Ship, the latter being the first unit of its kind organized in this section.

The Post again has proved its interest in the youth of our community by sponsoring the Junior Baseball program and by furnishing speakers in the schools on such national holidays as Memorial Day and Armistice Day.

The present officers of Peru Post No. 375 are:  
PAUL ZIMMERMAN, *Post Commander*  
FRED P. GRESS, *Senior Vice Commander*  
STEPHEN ROMANOWSKI, *Junior Vice Commander*  
HERMAN H. FREDERICK, *Post Adjutant*  
FRED E. HUNDT, *Finance Officer*

American Legion Auxiliary, Peru Unit No. 375, was organized in May, 1921. The first officers were:

MARGARET KILDUFF, *President*  
MARY ARNOLD, *Vice President*  
MYRTLE BERGFHEFER, *Treasurer*  
JANET MASSIEON, *Secretary*

The Auxiliary has always worked in close harmony with Peru Post of The American Legion and

has supported all of its activities. The sale of poppies on "Poppy Day" is conducted each year by this organization.

The present officers are:

MARGARET WELCH, *President*  
FLORENCE DINGLER, *First Vice President*  
KATE ZILINSKI, *Second Vice President*  
DOROTHY SCHMITT, *Secretary*  
HERMINA ZIMMERMAN, *Treasurer*

#### ROTARY CLUB

The Rotary Club of Peru received its charter on September 29, 1921, with a membership of seventeen.

The first officers were:

JOHN J. MASSIEON, *President*  
E. C. ROTH, *Vice President*  
S. J. MARSHALL, *Secretary-Treasurer*

The Club meets weekly at a luncheon and while it has objects as planned by the International organization, it also is active in Peru's civic affairs. The present membership numbers twenty-four and the officers are:

J. D. WALSH, *President*  
EDWARD PETERS, *Vice President*  
HENRY J. AMSLER, *Treasurer*  
OTTO HOFFMAN, *Secretary*

#### WOMEN'S CLUB OF PERU

In the spring of 1929, the women of Peru felt the need of an organization which would be broader in scope than the Maids and Matrons Club.

Accordingly, the Maids and Matrons took upon themselves the task of calling public meetings of all women who might have an interest in an organization which offered educational and cultural opportunities, as well as an opportunity to do philanthropic work in a regulated and orderly manner. On April 17, 1929 the Women's Club was organized with over a hundred enthusiastic members. Later the younger girls were brought into the Club through the Junior Department, and there are now three thriving auxiliary clubs, namely: the Junior Women's Club, the Intermediate Women's Club, and the Sigma Kappa, all of which, together with the parent club, are members of the County, District and State Federations.

The Women's Club has more than realized the expectations of its organizers. The membership is constantly increasing, department meetings are eagerly attended, and much philanthropic work has been done, which otherwise might have been neglected because of lack of leadership.

#### FIRST OFFICERS

MRS. W. H. NOON, *President*  
MRS. OSCAR HOBERG, *First Vice-President*  
MISS SIDONIA BRUNNER, *Second Vice-President*  
MISS NELLIE E. CHURCHILL, *Recording Secretary*  
MISS MARGARET POPPE, *Corresponding Secretary*  
MRS. ERNEST LUEDTKE, *Treasurer*

#### PRESENT OFFICERS

MRS. HENRY WILLMEROOTH, *President*  
MRS. REUBEN WALTHER, *First Vice-President*

MRS. CHESTER FRULAND, *Second Vice-President*  
MRS. GEORGE D. WALTMAN, *Recording Secretary*  
MRS. R. F. STRUEVER, *Corresponding Secretary*  
MRS. EUGENE MILLER, *Treasurer*

#### MASONIC FRATERNITIES

On June 20, 1841, the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Illinois, upon petition of several Master Masons, issued a Dispensation for a Lodge to be constituted at Vermillionville, Illinois. In 1842 the Grand Lodge authorized the location to be changed from Vermillionville to Peru, and a charter was issued on June 9, 1843, to St. John's Lodge No. 13, A. F. & A. M.

The first officers were:

WARREN BROWN, *Worshipful Master*  
SAMUEL NORTON, *Senior Warden*  
ASA HOLDRIDGE, *Junior Warden*  
HERMAN WHITEHEAD, *Treasurer*  
AMBROSE O'CONNOR, *Secretary*

The present officers are:

HARRY B. ROTHWELL, *Worshipful Master*  
ARTHUR W. JANZ, *Senior Warden*  
BERT M. BROWN, *Junior Warden*  
ROBERT C. HATTENHAUER, P. M., *Treasurer*  
ROY L. HUGHES, P. M., *Secretary*

Other Masonic organizations in Peru are:

Peru Chapter No. 60, Royal Arch Masons.  
Peru Council No. 12, R. and S. M.  
St. John Commandery, Knights Templar

#### INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS

Mokena Lodge No. 34, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, was instituted in Peru on January 20, 1848.

#### FIRST OFFICERS

FREDERICK DAY, *Noble Grand*  
ISAAC D. HARMON, *Vice Grand*  
CHURCHILL COFFING, *Secretary*  
ALEXANDER HAWTHORNE, *treasurer*

#### PRESENT OFFICERS

JOHN WIDMAN, *Noble Grand*  
ADOLPH C. WASCHER, *Vice Grand*  
WM. HUNDT, JR., *Recording Secretary*  
EUGENE MORROW, *Financial Secretary*  
CHARLES SPERBER, *Treasurer*

#### ST. JOSEPH BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

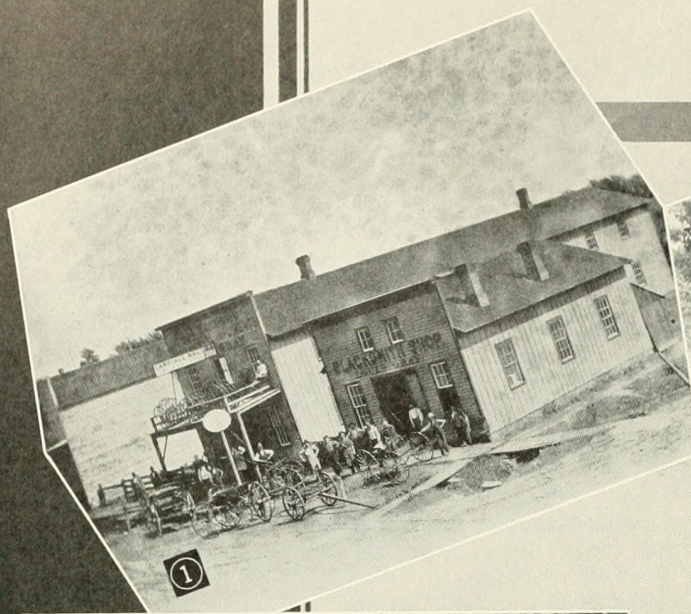
A charter was granted to St. Joseph Benevolent Society on October 16, 1875.

The present officers are:

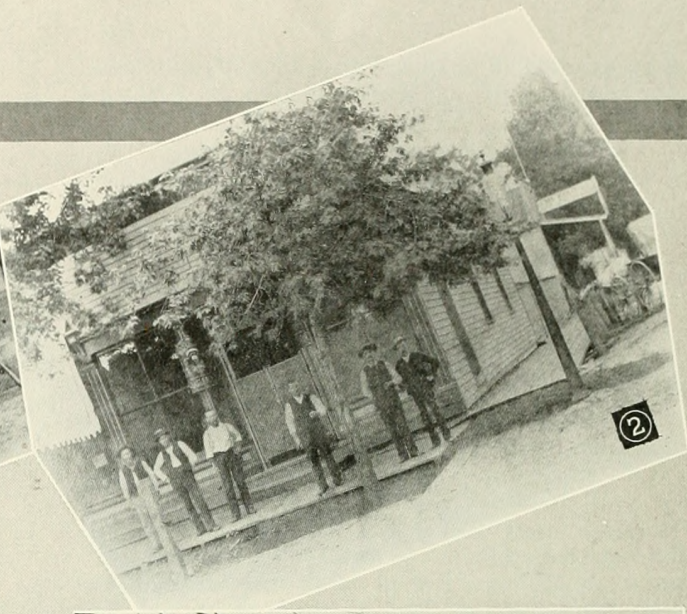
REV. FLORIAN HEISS, O. S. B., *Spiritual Director*  
EMIL FRIZOL, *President*  
JOSEPH WOLF, *Vice President*  
JOHN MUELLER, *Corresponding Secretary*  
JOHN EBERHART, *Financial Secretary*  
GUSTAV HOSS, *Treasurer*

#### LILY REBEKAH LODGE NO. 89

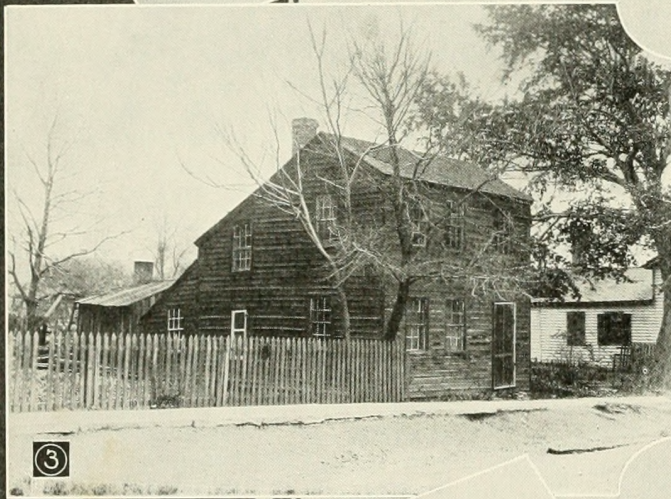
Lily Rebekah Lodge No. 89 was instituted in Peru on November 12, 1875.



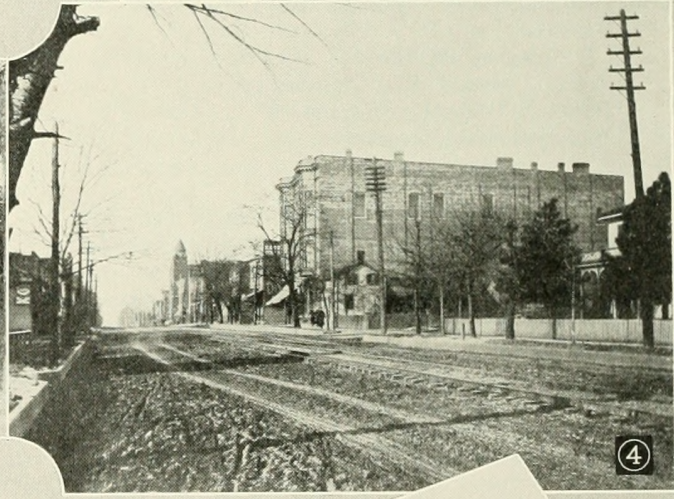
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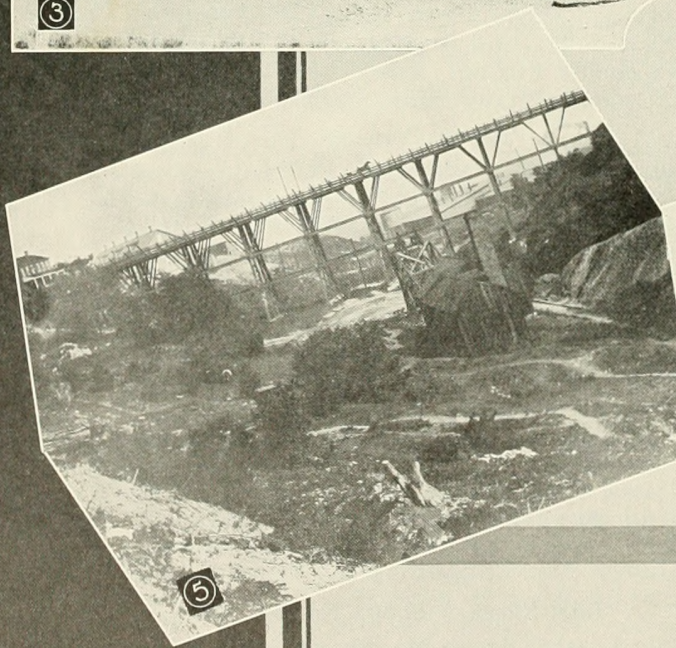
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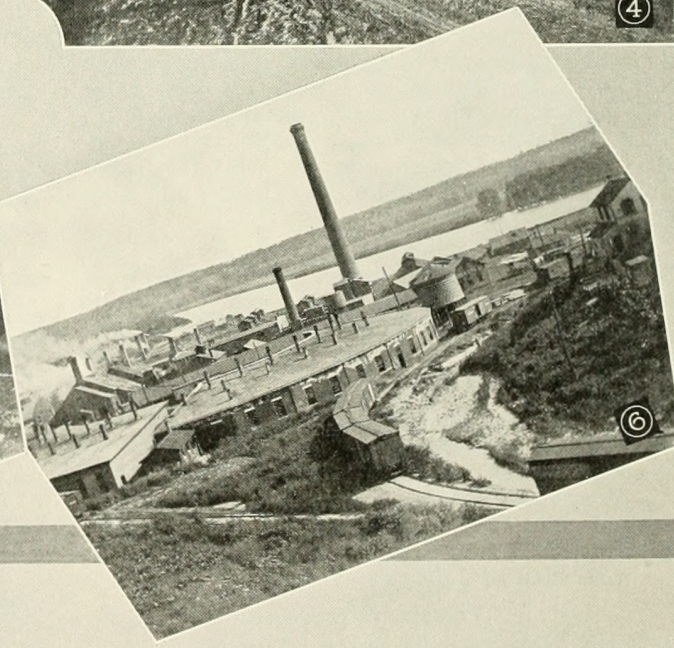
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1. LOUIS GRAF'S BLACKSMITH SHOP, AT FOURTH STREET AND FULTON
2. CONRAD ECKENFELDER'S SALOON, AT FOURTH AND PEORIA STREETS
3. THE KOHR HOME, ON THE SITE OF THE MASONIC TEMPLE
4. EARLY VIEW OF FOURTH STREET LOOKING WEST
5. TOLL BRIDGE AT THE FILL
6. ROCK ISLAND RAILROAD BUILDING

The first officers were:

FRED SEEPE, SR., *Noble Grand*  
MARY THOMPSON, *Vice Grand*  
MARY HAHN, *Secretary*  
WILHELMINA LAUBER, *Treasurer*

The present officers are:

CHARLENE SPLITTSTOESSER, *Noble Grand*  
OLGA ZABUKAVIC, *Vice Grand*  
LOTTIE GEIGER, *Recording Secretary*  
EMMA DERWIN, *Financial Secretary*  
JOHN SCHWEIGER, *Treasurer*

#### ANCIENT ORDER OF UNITED WORKMEN

Peru Lodge No. 188, Ancient Order of United Workmen, was instituted June 14, 1881 with nineteen charter members. This is a fraternal insurance organization.

##### FIRST OFFICERS

HENRY SCHULTZ, *Master Workman*  
HERMAN BRUNNER, *Foreman*  
FRED GROSS, *Overseer*  
Y. S. TROYER, *Recorder*  
JACOB HARTER, *Financier*  
GUST HERRMANN, *Receiver*

##### PRESENT OFFICERS

HENRY HELMIG, *Master Workman*  
HARRY KEHLENBACH, *Foreman*  
CHARLES W. HELMIG, *Secretary-Treasurer*

#### CATHOLIC KNIGHTS OF AMERICA

St. Henry's Branch No. 279, Catholic Knights of America, was organized on January 22, 1883.

The present officers are:

CHARLES SCHWEICKERT, JR., *President*  
MRS. AUGUST JUST, *Vice President*  
ANDREW A. HEBEL, *Recording Secretary*  
JOHN A. MCCRINDLE, *Financial Secretary*  
ANDREW HEBEL, *Treasurer*

#### MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA

Peru Camp No. 95, Modern Woodmen of America, was organized on May 4, 1885, with twenty-two charter members. This is a fraternal insurance society.

##### FIRST OFFICERS

CHARLES BRUNNER, *Consul*  
CHARLES SEEPE, *Advisor*  
GUSTAV LASSIG, *Clerk*  
DR. A. T. OLMSTED, *Banker*

##### PRESENT OFFICERS

WILLIAM HERRMANN, JR., *Consul*  
WILLIAM GROSSKREUTZ, *Advisor*  
FRANK R. DAFT, *Clerk*  
OTTO J. LOEKLE, *Banker*

#### ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR

Amaranth Chapter No. 290, Order of the Eastern Star, was instituted in Peru on March 1st, 1895 with fifty charter members.

##### FIRST OFFICERS

IDA M. SMEDLEY, *Worthy Matron*  
EMIL WAGENKNECHT, *Worthy Patron*

HELEN M. KOONS, *Associate Matron*  
AUGUSTA HOBERG SHERRARD, *Secretary*  
ELIZABETH BRUNNER, *Treasurer*  
EMMA STRUEVER, *Conductress*  
KATE M. GALLAGHER, *Associate Conductress*

##### PRESENT OFFICERS

JANET MASSIEON, *Worthy Matron*  
FRED HENKEL, *Worthy Patron*  
TILLIE TOELLEN, *Associate Matron*  
HENRY C. TOELLEN, *Associate Patron*  
MABLE B. MENG, *Secretary*  
STEPHANIE HASSE, *Treasurer*  
GLADYS HENKEL, *Conductress*  
GAYLE MYERS, *Associate Conductress*

#### KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS

Golden Spur Lodge No. 546, Knights of Pythias, was organized on May 27, 1896 with twenty-eight charter members.

##### FIRST OFFICERS

F. C. NEUREUTHER, *Chancellor Commander*  
A. W. SEEPE, *Vice Chancellor*  
WM. LOCEY, *Prelate*  
FRED TESCHE, *Master of Work*  
WM. DOBSON, *Keeper of Records and Seal*  
CHARLES NADLER, *Master of Finance*  
R. F. STRUEVER, *Master of Exchequer*

##### PRESENT OFFICERS

AL. MEUSER, *Chancellor Commander*  
GEORGE ARBUCKLE, *Vice Chancellor*  
GEORGE GLEIXNER, *Prelate*  
CHARLES BENSEL, *Master of Work*  
RAY YOXALL, *Keeper of Records and Seal*  
HENRY STRUNK, *Master of Finance*  
OTTO WITTE, *Master of Exchequer*

Affiliated with the Knights of Pythias is Mek-Kah Temple, D. O. K. K. which is recognized as one of the strongest in the state.

#### ROYAL NEIGHBORS OF AMERICA

A charter was issued to Starved Rock Camp, Royal Neighbors of America, on October 10, 1896. There were twenty charter members.

##### FIRST OFFICERS

MINNIE HURON, *Oracle*  
ANNA K. WAGNER, *V. Oracle*  
EVA UNZICKER, *Chancellor*  
EMMA SCHAULIN, *Receiver*  
ANNA BREUNING, *Recorder*

##### PRESENT OFFICERS

MARY ARNOLD, *Oracle*  
LOLA STARKEY, *V. Oracle*  
MABEL OUSEC, *Chancellor*  
MARIE KEMPER, *Receiver*  
ANNA MORAWICZ, *Recorder*

#### MYSTIC WORKERS OF THE WORLD

Peru Lodge No. 70, Mystic Workers of the World, was chartered in Peru on January 19, 1897, with twenty-two members. In September, 1930, the name was changed to Fidelity Life Association.

The first officers were:

DR. C. S. MORSMAN, *Master*  
GILBERT ZACHER, *Vice Master*  
JULIUS MOSBACH, *Secretary*  
CHARLES A. BRAUN, *Treasurer*

The present officers are:

PAULINE LUDWIG, *Prefect*  
CLARE SCHWARTZ, *Monitor*  
WALTER HUNDT, *Secretary*  
OTTO J. LOEKLE, *Treasurer*

#### CATHOLIC ORDER OF FORESTERS

St. Benedict Court No. 782, Catholic Order of Foresters, was instituted in Peru on January 6, 1898.

#### FIRST OFFICERS

REV. P. NORBERT, *Spiritual Director*  
ANDREW HEBEL, *Chief Ranger*  
PETER TROST, *Vice Chief Ranger*  
WILLIAM WAGNER, *Recording Secretary*  
EDWARD G. EICKHOFF, *Financial Secretary*  
PETER KETTWIG, *Treasurer*

#### PRESENT OFFICERS

REV. FLORIAN HEISS O. S. B., *Spiritual Director*  
EMIL FRIZOL, *Chief Ranger*  
JOHN HOHLMAN, SR., *Vice Chief Ranger*  
JOSEPH A. WOLF, *Recording Secretary*  
ANTHONY F. HEBEL, *Financial Secretary*  
ANDREW A. HEBEL, *Treasurer*

#### LADIES OF THE MACCABEES

Peru Hive No. 888, Ladies of the Maccabees, was instituted on January 6, 1904 with eighteen charter members.

#### FIRST OFFICERS

STEPHANIE NEUREUTHER (HASSE), *Commander*  
BERTHA CROISANT, *Lieutenant Commander*  
SUSIE AULER, *Chaplain*  
MARY METZINGER, *Record Keeper*

#### PRESENT OFFICERS

ELLA ZEASKE, *Commander*  
DOROTHY CLARK, *Lieutenant Commander*  
MAYME HOELLE, *Chaplain*  
CARRIE BEUTLER, *Record Keeper*

#### WOMEN'S CATHOLIC ORDER OF FORESTERS

St. Magdalena Court No. 641, Women's Catholic Order of Foresters, was organized May 17, 1905 with thirty-one members.

#### FIRST OFFICERS

MARGARET MERTEL, *Chief Ranger*  
CATHERINE HEBEL, *Vice Chief Ranger*  
MARGARET SCHULTZ, *Recording Secretary*  
ELIZABETH SCHAEFER, *Treasurer*

#### PRESENT OFFICERS

CATHERINE HEBEL, *Chief Ranger*  
FRANCES PFAB, *Vice Chief Ranger*  
MARGARET SCHULTZ, *Recording Secretary*  
JOSEPHINE EWING, *Financial Secretary*  
EVA HEBEL, *Treasurer*

#### PYTHIAN SISTERS

On June 20, 1905, a temple of "The Rathbone Sisters" was organized in Peru and called Peru Temple No. 159. Thirty-one members were taken in.

Page Forty-eight

In 1910 the name was changed to "Pythian Sisters."

#### FIRST OFFICERS

BERTHA HOERNER, *Most Excellent Chief*  
MARTHA SAUSEN, *Excellent Senior*  
LILLIAN HELMIG, *Excellent Junior*  
EDITH SEEPE, *Manager*  
EMMA CHURCHILL, *M. of R. & C.*  
CARRIE BIRKENBEUEL, *M. of F.*

#### PRESENT OFFICERS

ELIZABETH DUFFY, *Most Excellent Chief*  
ANNA GREENING, *Excellent Senior*  
AGNES GUNTHER, *Excellent Junior*  
CATHERINE WIDMAN, *Manager*  
VILA WITTE, *M. of R. & C.*  
CATHERINE FIESER, *M. of F.*

#### LOYAL ORDER OF MOOSE

Peru Lodge No. 1102, Loyal Order of Moose, was instituted October 25, 1916 with fifty charter members.

The present officers are:

F. S. KLUG, *Dictator*  
ED. LEITTL, *Vice Dictator*  
HARRY QUIMBY, *Prelate*  
OTTO C. MEUSER, *Secretary*  
A. O. BERGFEFER, *Treasurer*

The Ladies of the Mooseheart Legion were organized in Peru in June, 1923.

#### FIRST OFFICERS

CATHERINE CONSTANTINE, *Senior Regent*  
MAY WEBERLING, *Junior Regent*  
LOUISE ZIMMERMAN, *Chaplain*  
ELSIE SWEITZER, *Recorder*  
LENA LEISSE, *Treasurer*

#### PRESENT OFFICERS

JOHANNA TREGONNING, *Senior Regent*  
PAULINE LUDWIG, *Junior Regent*  
HENRIETTA V. MEISENBACH, *Chaplain*  
FRANCES MASON, *Recorder*  
EMMA SCHMIDT, *Treasurer*

#### WHITE SHRINE OF JERUSALEM

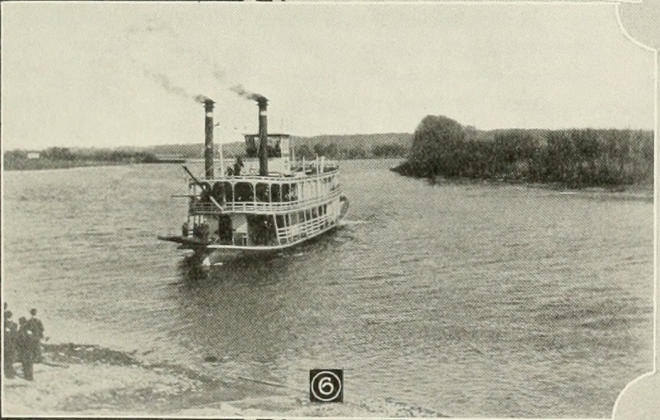
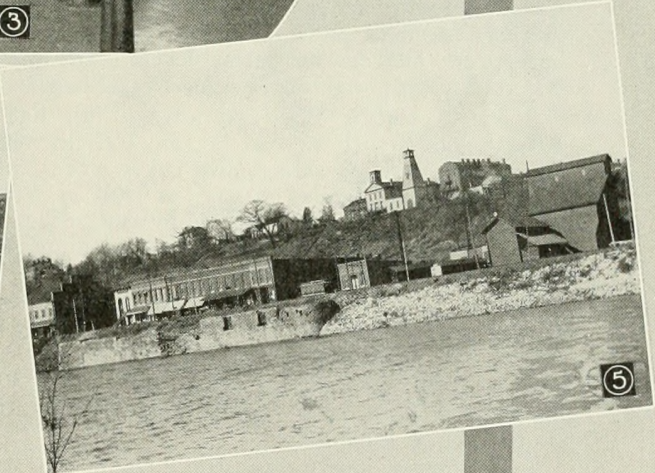
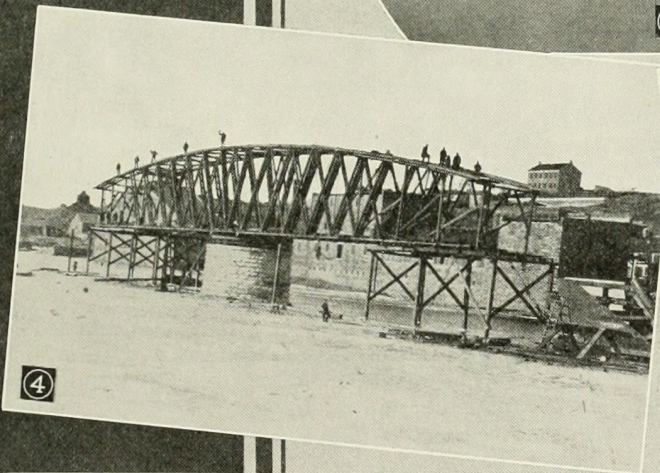
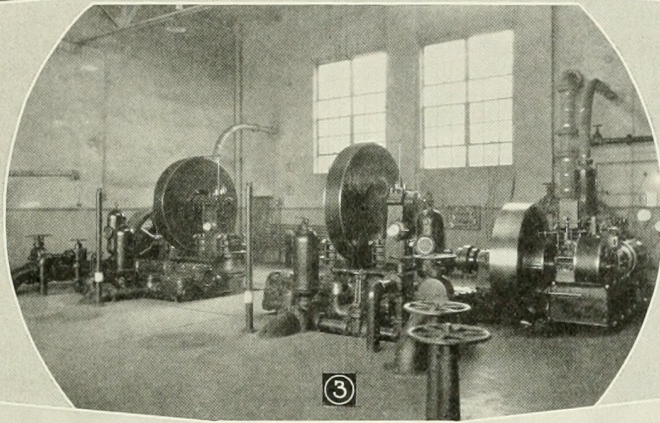
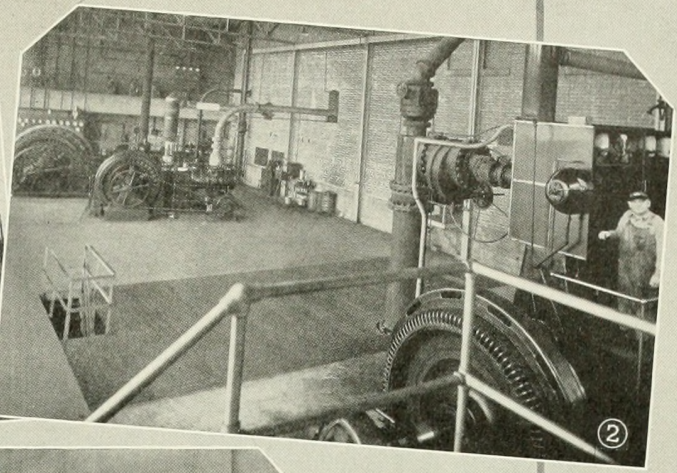
Illini Shrine No. 37, White Shrine of Jerusalem, was instituted in Peru on April 21, 1919 with one hundred and eight charter members.

#### FIRST OFFICERS

MYRA B. MASSIEON, *Worthy High Priestess*  
HENRY F. LINNIG, *Watchman of Shepherds*  
EMMA M. ZIMMERMAN, *Noble Prophetess*  
CHARLOTTE NELSON, *Worthy Scribe*  
MAE B. WACHTER, *Worthy Treasurer*  
AMANDA ZUBROD, *Worthy Chaplain*  
AGNES KEENAN, *Worthy Shepherdess*  
LOUISE LINNIG, *Worthy Guide*

#### PRESENT OFFICERS

EDITH LUNDBERG, *Worthy High Priestess*  
FRED KOLM, *Watchman of Shepherds*  
MILLIE THOMPSON, *Noble Prophetess*  
CHARLOTTE NELSON, *Worthy Scribe*  
ELIZABETH HUNDT, *Worthy Treasurer*  
LENA KOLM, *Worthy Chaplain*  
JANET MASSIEON, *Worthy Shepherdess*  
CARRIE MITCHELL, *Worthy Guide*



1 THE WATER AND LIGHT PLANT

2. & 3. INTERIOR VIEWS OF THE WATER AND LIGHT PLANT

4. ILLINOIS RIVER BRIDGE IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION

5. VIEW OF WATER STREET FROM THE RIVER, SHOWING THE CITY HALL, HOSE TOWER AND CHAMBERS HOUSE IN THE BACKGROUND

6. AN EARLY RIVER BOAT

7. HIGH WATER IN 1916, SHOWING THE SOUTH ROAD FLOODED

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



# INDUSTRIES

## WEBERLING BROTHERS

The Weberling Brothers' plant which produces Bakery Goods, Ice Cream and Home made Candies, was started on a partnership basis February 22, 1909, by August E. Weberling, Edward F. Weberling and Max J. Weberling, and at that time the equipment consisted of one oven. The employees numbered five, and two routes were operated. At present there are four ovens, employees numbers 42 and there are ten routes. The Bakery Plant is located at 1605 Water Street.

The firm was incorporated March 1, 1916.

When the firm started, all delivery equipment was horse drawn. Now the deliveries, except on one route, are made by motor truck.

All operations were at first carried on by hand, but the plant is now equipped with the latest machinery, including dough mixers, dividers, rounders, proofers, molders, proof boxes, and ovens. The cake department includes the latest development in mixers, cookie droppers and doughnut machines.

The Weberling Plant produces a full line of bakery goods, such as pan breads, Italian breads, sesame bread, sweet rolls, coffee cakes, cakes, pies, doughnuts, and Danish pastry, as well as Velvet ice cream, which is manufactured by sanitary machinery without ice, and is kept in cold hardening rooms at zero temperature.

Weberling Brothers also conduct a retail store known as the Weberling Confectionery, 1829 Fourth Street. The store was opened in 1906 by Mr. and Mrs. August E. Weberling, and was operated by them until 1928, when it was bought by the firm of Weberling Brothers.

The confectionery was the first in the Twin Cities to have a mechanically operated and cooled soda fountain.

Officers of the firm at present are August E. Weberling, President; Edward F. Weberling, Vice President, and Max J. Weberling, Secretary-Treasurer.

## PERU WHEEL COMPANY

The Peru Wheel Company traces its origin back to 1851 when Tuller, Dodge and Pitts formed the Peru City Plow Company, the factory being located at that time on Second Street.

In 1882 the company was incorporated under the same name, by Brewster, Dodge & Huse and in 1886 the name of the company was changed to Peru Plow and Wheel Company.

The present factory was erected and located on East Brunner Street in 1895.

In 1930 the name was again changed to the Peru Wheel Company, the manufacture of plows having been discontinued.

The company at present, in normal times, employs about 350 men and manufactures wood and steel farm wagons and trucks, wood and steel wheels, and tractor attachments.

The present officers of the company are D. W. Voorhees, President and General Manager; W. F. Eisfeld, Vice President; Ferd Luthy, Secretary-Treasurer. Other members of the board of directors are George Luthy and Margaret A. Voorhees.

## W. H. MAZE COMPANY

### CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS—COAL AND COKE

The W. H. Maze Company was founded in 1854 by Samuel Nesbit Maze who settled in Peru in 1838. Upon the death of Samuel Maze in 1885, the active management of the company was assumed by his youngest son, W. H. Maze, whose name the company now bears and who was in charge until his death in 1912.

The W. H. Maze Company has now occupied its present location at the corner of Plain and Water Streets for 81 years and during the entire period has devoted itself to the retailing and manufacturing of lumber, building materials and coal.

## ED. WEILAND, INC.

The firm of Ed. Weiland, Inc., was founded in the year 1877 by the late Ed. Weiland, at 1803 Fourth Street, as manufacturers of cigars, succeeding Fred Seepe, and later moved to Water Street, returning to Fourth Street in 1904 and locating at 1807 Fourth Street, the present location.

In succeeding years the manufacture of tobacco products, and tobacco jobbing were entered into, later developing into the general jobbing business.

Mr. Weiland remained sole owner of the firm until his death in the year 1925.

The business is now operated by the Ed. Weiland Company, Incorporated, of which Mrs. M. Weiland is President; Dora Kutter, Vice President, and Edward J. Kutter, Secretary-Treasurer.

## AMERICAN NICKELOID CO.

The American Nickeloid Company was established in Peru in 1898—more than 37 years ago.

This company was the first to manufacture nickel zinc sheets in the United States. During all the years the American Nickeloid Company has held faithfully to the manufacture of pre-finished

metals. Among their customers are included some of the largest and most prominent concerns in many different industries. Hundreds of different articles and parts are being made from their metals, ranging all the way from buttons to kitchen table tops. Developing steadily year after year, today this company is considered the outstanding manufacturer in this field. Their line of bonded metals is sold to manufacturers and jobbers in all parts of the United States, Canada, Cuba and Mexico.

The company maintains factories in Peru, a well-equipped research laboratory and also a factory in Walnutport, Pennsylvania, and its own sales offices in the larger cities. Employees number approximately 250.

The officers of the company are R. F. Struever, Chairman of the Board of Directors; F. M. Maze, President; Carl C. Struever, Vice-President and General Manager; Hamilton M. Maze, Treasurer, and James S. Maze, Secretary.

#### PERU PRODUCTS CO.

William Rausch, in 1847, started a brewery at the location now known as Putnam Street and the C. R. I. and P. Railroad tracks, one block north of the Illinois River bridge. In 1851 Mr. Rausch moved to the site now occupied by the Peru Products Company, and took in as a partner P. K. Behrend. In 1857 Behrend and Kitzinger bought out Rausch's interest, and a few years later sole ownership passed into the hands of Behrend.

In 1868 Behrend failed, and a short time thereafter some of the residents of Peru organized a stock company, calling it the Peru Beer Company, and took over the brewery. This company remained in control until 1872, when Andreas Hebel and Herman Brunner, who had acted as foreman and bookkeeper, respectively, purchased the business.

The new firm of Hebel and Brunner was remarkably successful. In 1886 Mr. Hebel died and his son, Andrew, succeeded him. The latter took an active part in the management of the business, and with Mr. Brunner ran it until 1888. In that year Charles Herbold, who had acted as foreman since Andreas Hebel's death, purchased an interest. In 1889 the partnership incorporated, and the stock company was again named the Peru Beer Company.

In 1920 the name was changed to Peru Products Company. The present officers are Andrew Hebel, President and General Manager, and Andrew A. Hebel, Secretary and Treasurer.

#### ILLINOIS VALLEY MANUFACTURING CO.

The Illinois Valley Manufacturing Company, producers of art furniture and architectural wood work, is located at 1315 Water Street. The business was started in the late sixties by a contractor named August Heinze, who, with a few machines, manufactured flooring, siding, and mouldings, made mostly from rough white pine lumber brought to Peru from Michigan and Wisconsin by way of Chicago and the Illinois and Michigan Canal. This lumber was machined for the local lumber yards and other dealers.

The property was purchased about 1893 by Walter Maze. The plant consisted at that time of a two story brick building, measuring 80 feet by 60 feet. To the building was attached a small boiler and engine room. Mr. Maze installed a few machines, intending to manufacture building material for his own lumber yard and for contractors.

Ground and buildings were added from time to time, and during the late 1920's a large new modern building was added. This was equipped with modern electrically driven machinery.

The company now enjoys the distinction of having one of the largest and best equipped wood working plants manufacturing custom made architectural wood work and occasional furniture, much of which is used in this section and some shipped to nearby states.

#### TROMPETER CONSTRUCTION CO.

Beginning a general teaming business about half a century ago, the late Peter J. Trompeter laid the foundation for the present Trompeter Construction Company, General Contractors and Road Builders, with offices located at 2428 Fourth St., Peru, Illinois, which company is now managed by the three sons, Frank J., Nicholas, and Peter J. Trompeter.

Today the Construction Company, engaged in highway paving, heavy grading, and concrete bridge construction, is considered one of the leading paving companies in Illinois. City pavements and highway projects have been carried on by this firm in approximately 75 different communities in Illinois. At present the company has under contract with the Department of Public Works and Buildings, State of Illinois, numerous projects scattered over a wide area. In addition to the work in Illinois, the firm has done some work in Iowa and Wisconsin.

Forty-five years ago this July, in 1890, Peter J. Trompeter began a general teaming business at 2210 Fourth Street, Peru, Illinois. A few years later he added two street sprinklers to his equipment, which were used on both Fourth Street and Water Street. Several years later, with the awarding of contracts for street improvements in the city of Peru and vicinity, Mr. Trompeter added street paving work to his general teaming business.

From 1890 until 1911 Mr. Trompeter conducted his growing business alone, but with the admission of his three sons Frank J., Nicholas, and Peter J. as partners, in 1911, he retired from active management of the firm. The company was then known as Trompeter and Sons, Paving Contractors.

In 1915, with the letting of a number of small contracts and the prospects of an extensive highway program to be undertaken by the State of Illinois, this company was among the first construction firms to submit proposals for this type of work, and accordingly spread their operations over the entire state.

After the death of the founder of the company, in August, 1922, Trompeter and Sons continued for nine years as a co-partnership among the three sons,

who built and established the present offices of the firm at 2428 Fourth Street. In August, 1931, Trompeter and Sons was incorporated under the state laws of Illinois, and the name changed to Trompeter Construction Company, General Contractors.

The present officers of the Construction Company are Frank J. Trompeter, President; Nicholas Trompeter, Vice-President; and Peter J. Trompeter, Secretary-treasurer.

#### CHAMBERLIN METAL WEATHER STRIP CO.

The Chamberlin Metal Weather Strip Company was organized and incorporated in 1897 for the purpose of engaging in the manufacture and installation of metal weather strip.

Beginning in a small way in a shop on Detroit's East Side, the business grew until nine years later a modern factory was purchased and the business conducted from there until 1912 when a fire which totally destroyed the plant caused the Directors of the Company to consider rebuilding in Peru, where production could be more economically and expeditiously carried on through the immediate proximity of the Peru zinc mills, sheet zinc being the principal raw material used.

The first unit of the company's plant in Peru was erected in the latter part of 1912 under the supervision of Mr. F. J. Rauscher, who has remained in charge of the plant since then. He also had charge of the erection of the addition to the original structure, built in 1926.

The company also operates a plant in Detroit where it manufactures a complete line of metal insect screens, both roll and flat, as well as winter windows, window ventilators, guards, and fire-place screens.

All products are sold through the company's factory-controlled branches located in all the principal cities of the country. General offices are located at 1254 LaBrosse St., Detroit, Michigan.

#### STAR UNION PRODUCTS COMPANY

Star Union Products Company, Peru, was originated in the year 1845 by a man named Fred Kaiser, at the same location as now occupied by the present Star Union Products Company.

In 1860, Mr. Kaiser sold the property to Benjamin Ream. Anton Halm controlled the plant with Messrs. Grasmick, Eck, and Winheim for a number of years during the Civil War.

The plant was then purchased by Phil Link, Chas. Bereiter, Wm. Meyer, Fred Schulte and Fred Seepe and was incorporated under the name of Union Beer Company.

In the year 1880 Henry Hoerner purchased the stock of Messrs. Meyer, Schulte and Seepe and the corporate name was changed to the Union Brewing Co. Under this title the business was conducted until July, 1893, when the capital stock was made \$150,000 with Mr. Hoerner owner of two-thirds of the stock and Phil Link owner of one third.

In 1920 the company installed an artificial ice plant and a new department to manufacture a line

of sodas and gingerale. In 1927 the name of the company was changed to the Star Union Products Company.

In 1931 Mr. Hoerner retired from the brewing business in favor of his son and daughter.

Martin H. Hoerner is President and General Manager; Kathryn Hoerner Ellis is Vice-President and Treasurer and Lester M. Link is Secretary. For the past two years vast improvements have been made in the plant by installing new machinery, 300 H. P. boilers, a new 100 ton ice machine and complete new bottling equipment. A fleet of sixteen trucks is required to handle the growing business of the company.

The brewery today is one of the largest breweries of the State and has a record of ninety years of continuous operation.

#### WESTERN CLOCK COMPANY

Like a mighty oak starting from a tiny acorn the Western Clock Company grew from humble beginnings. The tree, planted 50 years ago, today has vastly broadened and branched, with its roots reaching into the far corners of the earth, and its products known in every land.

On this, Peru's One Hundredth Birthday, the Western Clock Company is celebrating its Fiftieth Anniversary. It was on December 23, 1885 that a group of local citizens incorporated the United Clock Company, the company that was later to take the name of the Western Clock Company. During that year a tiny plant was built.

On May 14, 1887 the Western Clock Company was incorporated, taking over the United Clock Company.

Cooperative readers could save us the task of retailing much of Westclox development during the following years if they would take the trouble, some day, to stroll observantly in the vicinity of the plant. There, written in buildings and machinery, is History, and he who walks may read. The original plant, built in 1885, still stands, with a modern factory covering many acres spreading out from it in all directions.

Half a century ago the little Westclox plant made several hundred clocks a day with a force of 81 workers. For several years its growth was slow and at times erratic; but always it struggled ahead.

By 1900 the number on the payroll had increased to 245, and in 1910, the year Big Ben, probably the world's most famous alarm clock, was introduced, the plant was employing 896 workers.

Meanwhile the Company was gaining recognition in other fields. In the field of employee benefits it became a leader, pioneering in many outstanding innovations. It was a pioneer in the Safety First movement, and today the plant holds the safety championship of the United States. It has gained a wide reputation for favorable working conditions.

Today it is known as the world's largest alarm clock factory where 2300 workers are employed manufacturing a complete line of Westclox time-pieces: alarm clocks; time clocks, spring and electric;

pocket watches; automobile clocks, and many other timekeeping instruments.

On this anniversary of Peru's settlement it is a source of pride to know that just as Pittsburgh means steel to many people and Akron means rubber, so Peru stands synonymous with clocks.

#### UNION COAL COMPANY

Peru boasts one of the largest mines in the northern Illinois coal field.

It is the colliery operated by the Union Coal company, whose offices and plant are located at the extreme east end of Fifth Street.

Here, during the last year approximately 136,148 tons of coal were mined by a force of 270 men who had almost steady employment the year round.

The Union mine is one of the most modernly equipped in the state and is operated by a corporation of which James D. Walsh is President; Adam Currie, Vice-President and Superintendent of Operations; and William J. Wimbuscus, the latter of Spring Valley, Secretary; these officers, along with Wayne Hummer and George Herbolsheimer, making up the Board of Directors.

The company was the first in the northern field to put "dustless" coal on the market by processing its production with an application of calcium chloride solution. Storage facilities are available for approximately 1,200 tons of coal.

The Union Coal Company came into existence on February 15, 1930 when the corporation purchased the Peru, La Salle and Jonesville mines of the La Salle County Carbon Coal Company. The La Salle and Jonesville mines were later abandoned because economic conditions allowed no market for their output, but the Peru colliery, formerly known as the "Kilgovern Shaft," was maintained in operation and has met with most unusual success.

#### MUNDIE MANUFACTURING COMPANY

One of Peru's long-established industries is that operated by the Mundie Manufacturing Company, formerly owned by the Brunner Foundry and Machine Company, located at 501-631 Water Street.

This plant was purchased from the Brunner interests in March of 1923 by the late George W. Mundie and was continued in operation as a foundry and machine shop. The manufacture of "Cowboy" brand tank heaters and other farm specialties was added.

Employment is here afforded thirty-one workers during normal times. The management, since the death of the late George W. Mundie, has been in the hands of G. W. Mundie, Jr.

#### ILLINOIS ZINC COMPANY

One of the most important Peru industries is the Illinois Zinc company, which was incorporated February 3, 1870 and which today employs a force of several hundred men.

The original stockholders were Calvin Wells, Aaron French, William Mullins, James D. Layng and Archibald Means—all of them Pittsburgh men with the exception of Mr. Means, who was a native of Steubenville, O.

The first president was Mr. Wells, while Mr. Means was first manager. Following his death he was succeeded by Thomas F. Noon, who later became president of the corporation.

Starting from a comparatively modest beginning, the manufacturing facilities of the Illinois Zinc Company were increased from year to year on account of the rapidly developing demand for the high grade spelter and rolled zinc produced here.

The company also has its own coal mine where employment is afforded about 200 men and while a good portion of the mine output is used as fuel for ore furnaces, much of it is also disposed of in retail channels. The mine was formerly operated by the Cahill Coal Company and was sunk in 1879 by James Cahill, whose associates were Lawrence Christopher and James O'Malley.

Charles R. MacBrayne is plant manager, and also superintendent of operations at the local coal mine. Head of the corporation is L. E. Wemple, of Chicago.

#### NATIONAL SHEET METAL COMPANY

The National Sheet Metal Company, whose plant is located at the northeast corner of Water and Putnam streets, came into existence in 1904 as successor to the Peru Sheet Metal Plating and Novelty Company; organized in 1901.

Charles F. Neureuther was President of the original company, the other officers having been George Soedler, Vice-President; Henry Ream, Treasurer, and Rev. Paul Brauns, Secretary.

The original plant consisted of three brick buildings, 70 by 80 feet in dimensions and of two-story design, to which were later added five buildings which gave the plant approximately 35,000 square feet of floor area.

The company is engaged in the plating of sheet zinc and tinplate in nickle, brass, copper and chrome under the trade names of Nicolene, Nickeltin, Brassene, Brasstin, Copperene, Coppertin, Chromene and Chrometin and also plates coil zinc in nickel, brass and copper under the trade names of Ribbon Nicolene, Ribbon Brassene, and Ribbon Copperene. Also, the plant finishes cold rolled steel in sheets and coils in the nickel, brass, copper and chrome; also finishes sheet and coil brass and copper in nickel silver in the plated or polished finishes. In addition to facilities for doing the aforementioned plating, the plant is also equipped to fabricate the sheets and coils in various articles through operation of their press departments.

Other products of the National Sheet Metal Company include household articles, such as serving trays, comb cases, crumb-tray sets, metal novelties, etc., also glazier points, as well as any special line of stamped work that is required by the trade.

Present officers of the corporation are Andrew H. Neureuther, President, Charles Neureuther, Vice-President and Treasurer; George L. Herbolsheimer, Secretary and General Manager. They serve on the Board of Directors, with Otto J. Loekle and Oscar W. Hoberg.

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FRED KUHN

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