

# VALPARAISO

# CENTENNIAL

# 1866

# 1966



# AN EARLY HISTORY OF VALPARAISO



The celebration of Valparaiso's centennial year would not be complete without a documentation of its history. But where does its history begin? Certainly it goes beyond December 2, 1865, the date Valparaiso was incorporated as a city. And where does history end; for yesterday is already shelved into that category.

The stories, significant events, the little known and long forgotten happenings could fill a book. Its pages would be exciting. They would be humorous, and sad as well. From the pages of what someday may be a book, let this be a brief look at Valparaiso's early years—especially the ones leading up to, and just after that anniver-

sary date in December 100 years ago.

A history book might start back when Valparaiso was an Indian village of bark houses. Named after a Pottawatamie chief, Valparaiso was then known as Chiqua's town.

Near what is today, Valparaiso's Public Library, passed the Old Sac Trail. The Trail was traveled by Indian tribes, explorers and, according to records, by the Spanish Army under Don Pierre, in 1781.

It was not until 1822 that history recorded the honor of Porter County's first white resident to Joseph Bailly. For eleven years the area's first settler also had the distinction of being the total non-Indian population in the county.

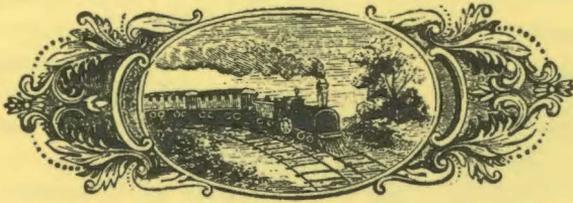
The purchase of land by the United States, in October, 1832, paved the way for more settlers who came the following year.

During 1834, J. P. Ballard became the first man to erect a house on the site of Valparaiso. This first home was built in the valley by the stream—which flowed across what is now Morgan Street.

By an act of the General Assembly in 1836, Porter County was officially formed; the name honoring Commander Porter who had fought in the War of 1812.

In those early years, Valparaiso was known as Portersville. The original town was laid out on July 7, 1836; and in that same year, on October 31, the plat was officially recorded.

Also in 1836, the Portersville Land Company gave to the county our present public square, ninety-six lots and a donation of \$1,200



for the erection of public buildings.

In 1837, a fund of \$1,250 was raised by subscription for a court house and jail. The frame court house was finished that year, just west of the square. The next year, a log jail was completed southeast of the public square.

The year 1837 was also the year Portersville became Valparaiso. As the story goes, the name was suggested by a party of sailors from the South Pacific who stopped one night at Hall's Tavern, and related their experiences in Chile.

An early criminal case, recorded in 1837, concerned charges and a conviction against one Moses Wilson for assault and battery. His fine—one cent. As if this might have been a sign, the first sermon was preached in Valparaiso the very next year. Valparaiso's first newspaper hit the streets in 1843, under the editorship of James Castle.

Valparaiso was incorporated as a town by a special act of legislature in 1850, and within a few years started showing real signs of progress. A new brick court house was erected on the public square in 1853, at a cost of \$13,000. Five years later, in 1858, the Iron Horse came through Valparaiso, in the form of the Pittsburg, Ft. Wayne and Chicago Railway.

History continued to record its many events. The first murder

was committed in 1863, the guilty party drawing two years. Two years later, a new jail was finished, at a cost of \$26,500.

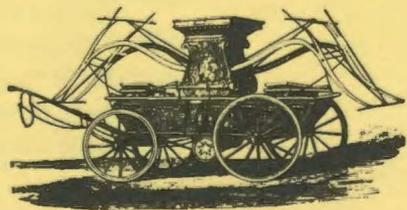
Then on December 2, 1865, the official papers were signed incorporating the City of Valparaiso. In that same year, Thomas J. Merrifield, a Democrat, became Valparaiso's first mayor.

The organization of the first fire department began in 1866. In 1867, the city secured control of the old cemetery, and began to establish a new one by purchasing the Maplewood Cemetery.

In 1868, \$50,000 worth of bonds were voted by the City Council for the Peninsular Railroad—later to be known as the Chicago and Lake Huron. The first high school commencement was held in 1874.

Although industry in Valparaiso started in 1866 and 1867 with the establishment of woolen mills and a paper factory, the first claim to fame came in 1873. In that year the only pin factory west of New York, and one of four in the entire country, was established here.

Of more noteworthy importance was the founding of Northern Indiana Normal in 1873. Founded by H. B. Brown, who was later joined in 1880 by Professor O. P. Kinsey, the school later became known as



Valparaiso University. Gaining the reputation as "the poor man's Harvard," the excellence of its students brought the school national fame; and enrollment grew to a peak of 5,500.

The Dodge School of Telegraphy was founded in 1874. For over a half of a century, this institution was the prime source of operators for railroad and telegraph companies. It now serves the new electronic age as the Valparaiso Technical Institute.

Although space has limited us to covering only a few short years, the succeeding years continued to contribute to Valparaiso's growth. Thousands of events, far too nu-

merous to detail here, have spanned Valparaiso's years. As we close a century marked mainly by steady progress and growth—greatly accelerated in the last decade—we must now look forward.

To some citizens of Valparaiso, the entire transition from horse-drawn carts to rockets to the moon have passed before their eyes. To others, they are just opening their eyes to this, our centennial year. We face the second century with expectations of developments that may well be even more spectacular than the past 100 years. But let us hope that in the year 2066 Valparaiso will still be the Vale of Paradise.

## VALPARAISO CITY OFFICERS

	1865	1966
<b>Mayor</b>	Thomas J. Merrifield	Donald E. Will
<b>Clerk</b>	J. B. Marshall	Hallie B. Edge
<b>Treasurer</b>	J. B. Hawkins	Hallie B. Edge
<b>City Attorney</b>	H. A. Gillette	Roger K. Claudon
<b>Marshall</b>	A. H. Goodwin	—
<b>City Engineer</b>	J. M. Felton	William E. Morthland
<b>City Judge</b>	—	John W. Ruge
<b>Assessor</b>	I. W. Boman	—
<b>Councilmen</b>	T. A. Hogan	Charles E. Beach
	George Porter	King Telle
	J. C. Peirce	James E. Smith
	O. Dunham	Bryce E. Billings
	A. H. Somers	Arnold E. Smith
	A. W. Kellogg	Robert L. Miller
		Everett E. Lembke



## VALPARAISO MAYORS

<b>Thomas J. Merrifield</b>	(D)	1865-1868
<b>Thomas G. Lytle</b>	(R)	1868-1872
<b>John N. Skinner</b>	(D)	1872-1882
<b>Thomas G. Lytle</b>	(R)	1882-1886
<b>Alvin D. Bartholomew</b>	(D)	1886-1888
<b>Thomas G. Lytle</b>	(R)	1888-1892
<b>Frank P. Jones</b>	(D)	1892-1894
<b>Col. I. C. B. Suman</b>	(R)	1894-1898
<b>Addison E. Woodhull</b>	(D)	1898-1902
<b>William F. Spooner</b>	(D)	1902-1906
<b>William H. Williams</b>	(R)	1906-1910
<b>William F. Spooner</b>	(D)	1910-1914
<b>Perry L. Sisson</b>	*	1914-1922
<b>Edgerton W. Agar</b>	(R)	1922-1926
<b>William F. Spooner</b>	(D)	1926-1928
<b>Louis F. Leetz</b>	(R)	1928-1930
<b>Harold J. Schenck</b>	(R)	1930-1935
<b>Charles L. Bartholomew</b>	(R)	1935-1944
<b>Garrett Conover</b>	(R)	1944-1948
<b>Elden Kuehl</b>	(D)	1948-1952
<b>John E. Wiggins</b>	(R)	1952-1960
<b>Donald E. Will</b>	(R)	1960-

\*Citizen's Ticket

**Right**

Valparaiso became Porter County's governmental center; and the first Court House was built in 1837. It was replaced by a brick structure in 1853; and then in 1883, the new Court House was built on the square. On December 27, 1934 it was gutted by a fire. The present structure was rebuilt and dedicated in 1937.



**Below**

The first school was built in 1837, at the present site of the Presbyterian Church. The present grade school system was organized in 1871. This structure was Valparaiso's high school from 1871 to 1904, the present site of Benjamin Franklin.





Structure above served as Valparaiso's High School from 1904 to 1927, when the new and present high school was completed on Campbell Street in 1927. From 1927, until its destruction by fire in 1937 the building pictured here served as the central grade and junior high. It is the present site of Benjamin Franklin Junior High.



Washington Street looking south. The famous Academy of Music, which was built in 1864, made Valparaiso a bright spot on the theatrical map.



Lincolnway looking east, in the early 1920's; before the Academy of Music building was destroyed by fire in 1926.



Early scene, west of Court House (Franklin Street).



Washington Street, looking north, around 1900.



North side of Main Street (Lincolnway), between Washington and LaFayette, around 1900.



Temperance movement became a reality in Valparaiso, as shown by this "sit-in" in front of Tom Ward's saloon on Main Street, in 1871.

Typical of modern merchandising in the early days, was this view inside Lilienthals Department Store, formerly located at No. 1 Main Street.





The railroad came to Valparaiso in 1858, replacing the stage coach and plank road—and Valparaiso became more prominent as an industrial and commercial center.



**Left**

More than 500 pieces of baggage, mostly trunks, were loaded out at the end of 1906 college year.

**Below**

The interurban was King in Indiana, and on July 4, 1910, Valparaiso became a part of the kingdom.



**Right**

South College, and  
the horseless carriage.



**Below**

Northwest Normal  
School—now Valparaiso  
University—founded  
1873, and our city  
became an educational  
center.





Many mills were built in the Valparaiso area. The two most well known and remembered are Sagers (above) and Crosbys (below). In 1873, the only pin factory west of New York was built on a tract south of the present Penn. R. R. and north of Crosbys.



*View of Sagers, Valparaiso in the distance.*



Looking at Valparaiso from the old ice house at Sagers Lake.

Dolson stables, on the corner of Main Street & Michigan was a social center as well as the place where Silas Dolson put "many in the driver's seat."



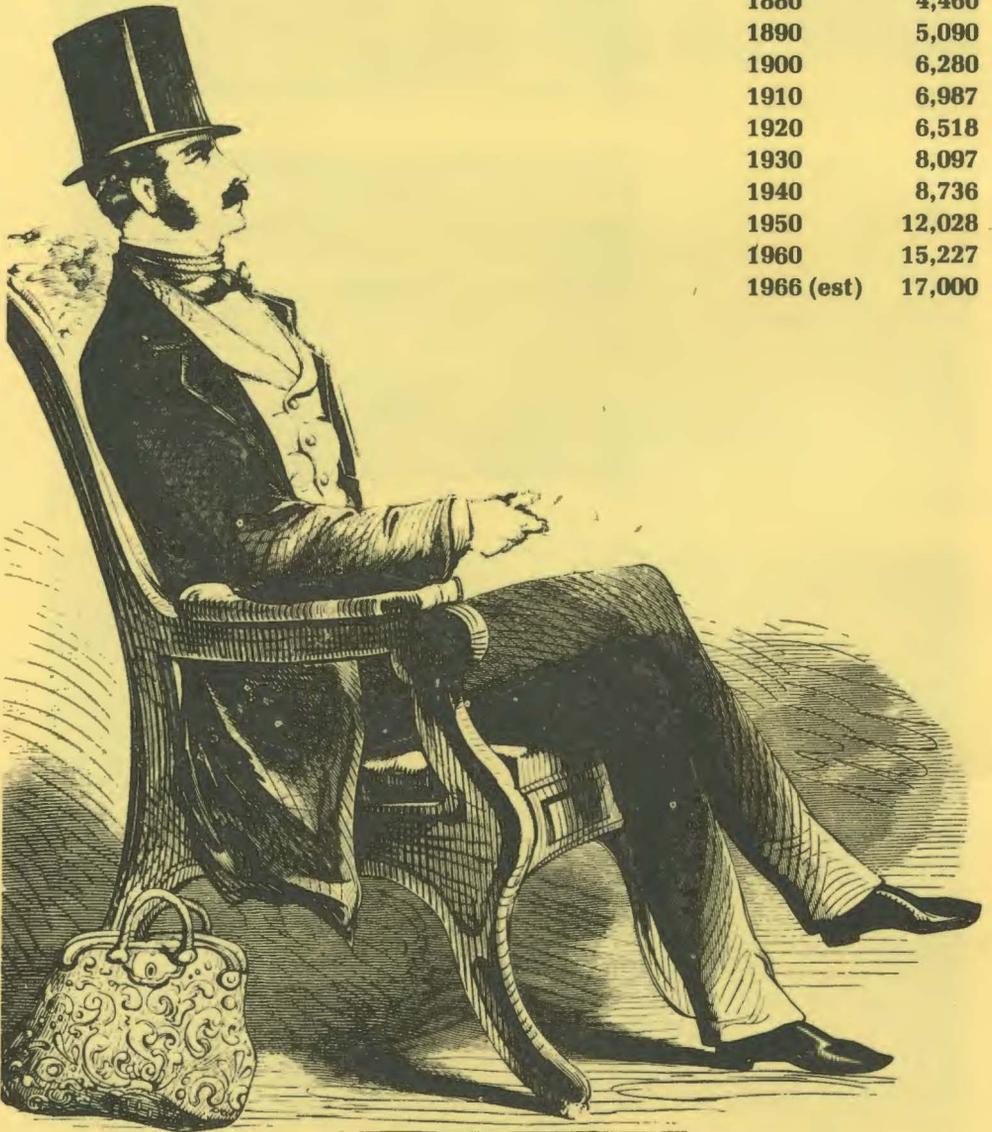
The interurban helped to make area lakes a public playground for many years.



Everybody loves a parade; and Valparaiso has had hundreds—this one was Labor Day, 1914.

# POPULATION CHANGES

1850	520
1860	1,690
1870	2,760
1880	4,460
1890	5,090
1900	6,280
1910	6,987
1920	6,518
1930	8,097
1940	8,736
1950	12,028
1960	15,227
1966 (est)	17,000



# CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

**CHAIRMAN**, James C. M. Gill  
**CO-ORDINATOR**, Richard H. Hohler

## **PARADE**

William V. Domke  
Earle W. Johnson  
Mrs. Robert G. Pierce

## **MERCHANTS DAY**

Mrs. Ann Plotkin  
Jay Alvin  
Robert L. Bibler  
Leonard Ellis  
Alan F. Lippman  
Harold W. Procell  
Charles L. Worden

## **PUBLICITY**

David L. Glass  
Herbert E. Steinbach  
Jack Welsh

## **BROCHURE**

George E. Neeley  
Lee Ragsdale  
Jack Welsh

## **EDUCATION DAY**

Ronald B. McGuire  
Kenneth Rucker

## **BANQUET**

Charles E. Beach  
Harold A. Gram  
Herman C. Hesse  
Robert B. Johnson  
Richard P. Koenig  
Willard F. Wellman

## **CENTENNIAL SUNDAY**

Rev. Thomas E. Alston

## **SPECIAL GUESTS**

King Telle  
Donald E. Will

# CENTENNIAL SCHEDULE

## **Wednesday, October 12**

Century Note Hunt — 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Old Fashion Prices — 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Street Dances — 7:30 p.m., on the Square. Round, square and teenage style.

## **Thursday, October 13**

Centennial Banquet — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Valparaiso University

## **Friday, October 14**

High School Football Game—Valparaiso vs. Tolleston. Halftime program.

## **Saturday, October 15**

Joint Centennial and Valparaiso University Homecoming Parade — 9:00 a.m.

# A PROUD HERITAGE A PROMINENT FUTURE

**COVER:** The board side walks, dirt streets and horse and buggy days are obvious in this early scene of Valparaiso's Main Street (Lincolnway); around 1890. East Main Street businesses of this era were (street numbers):

1. Wm. C. Letherman, druggist.
3. Jas. A. Wilker & Geo. Beach jewelers; Mary Hammond, milliner (upstairs).
5. Louis D. Bond, dry goods.
7. Wm. H. Vail, jeweler; Charles S. Pierce, boots and shoes.
9. Frank Faley, gents' furnishings; H. N. Renner, dentist (upstairs).
11. Specht-Finney, dry goods and clothing.
13. Wm. B. McCallum, dry goods; M. M. Mudge, photographer (upstairs).
15. Geo. Haste & Minor, hardware; H. J. Upthegrove, clothing manufacturer.
17. Dolson & Talbott, grocers.
19. Cornell & Smith, grocers.
21. Aylesworth & Dye, shoes; W. H. McClure, jeweler.