

# Medical- Dental

## DOCTORS

Dr. C. A. Lampanius began his practice in Wheaton in May, 1885. He was the first health officer when the village was organized as well as the first medical doctor. The following year he purchased and moved into Wheaton a store building from another town which he "fitted up" for his office. In 1887 he had a telephone installed connecting Mork's Drug Store and his residence.

In 1889 Dr. D. B. Neumann moved here from Abercrombie to set up practice. He succeeded Dr. J. A. Regner, also a physician and surgeon.

In 1889 Drs. Koppelberger and Fleming were practicing physicians and surgeons in Wheaton. Dr. M. E. Jackson also assumed practice here, and Dr. L. O. Kron was here in 1900. Dr. E. B. Johnston was practicing here in the 1930's.

Dr. C. F. Ewing of Anoka, a close personal friend of the Drs. Mayo of Rochester, decided to locate his practice in Wheaton in 1904. He installed an X-ray machine in his office the same year. Dr. Bates became a part of his practice in 1912 and remained until 1924, with time out for overseas duty during World War I, when he moved to Browns Valley to serve that community. In 1920 Ewing and Bates had moved from their office on the second floor of the present Grosland Jewelry building to the ground floor of the same building, occupying the area now used by Dr. H. N. Weickert. Later in 1924 Dr. A. L. Lindberg joined Dr. Ewing in a partnership. Dr. Ewing died in 1944 after practicing medicine in Wheaton for forty years. Dr. Lind-

berg served Wheaton for thirty-seven years.

June, 1920, was a sad time for Wheaton when Dr. E. W. Gaag, age 38, died suddenly from ptomaine poisoning after being here for only two years. He was cited for his heroic work in the flu epidemic and in his



Dr. C. F. Ewing came to Wheaton in 1904 and continued his medical practice here until his death forty years later.

short time in Wheaton established his own hospital (see "Hospitals").

Dr. A. E. Magnuson came to Wheaton in June, 1941, establishing his practice above the Gopher Theatre. In 1950 he moved to a new clinic building which he built at 15 Tenth Street South and remained in Wheaton until 1969 when he left to take a position in Fargo. During the years 1961-1967 Dr. Paul Vangerud was associated with him. Dr. Magnuson, a native of Traverse County, now lives in retirement in Fergus Falls.

Dr. Herbert Winge arrived in Wheaton in 1955 and in January of the next year had opened his office in the Broadway Office Building. He was joined by Dr. Russell H. Larsen in 1960, who stayed but a short time. In December, 1970, Dr. Winge gave notice to move after fifteen years of practice.

The departure of Winge left Wheaton with no resident doctor. Dr. Joseph Kass had been practicing in Rosholt since 1960 and was the only physician to serve the needs of patients in the area. Recruitment began to bring a physician to the town. During this time several foreign doctors practiced here briefly. Dr. Benigno Buentipo, Jr., a Filipino, came for a few months in 1968, then left for a practice in Webster, South Dakota. Dr. Joseph Pettko moved here from Sweden in 1972 but left for Texas in 1974. In 1971 Dr. Hans van Trampe, a Swede, arrived but stayed only a short time.

Dr. James Poole arrived in Wheaton in 1971 and remains in practice in the Wheaton Community Health Center. He was joined in the clinic in July, 1975, by Dr. Steven P. Radjenovich and by Wheaton native Dr. Stanley C. Gallagher in 1977. They have independent practices.

Other doctors with staff privileges who routinely use the Wheaton Community Hospital are Dr. Joseph Kass, his son Dr. Tom Kass, who began his Rosholt practice in 1984, and consulting surgeon Dr. Perry Engstrom of Breckenridge.



**The first city-owned hospital in Wheaton was this structure, located at 902 Third Avenue North, acquired after the village council approved establishment of a municipal hospital in 1943. Today the building is the residence of the Al Hennens.**

## HOSPITALS

The history of hospital care in Wheaton dates back to 1898, when Drs. Koppelberger and Fleming secured a deed to a tract in Annie Leaser's First Addition just east of the present Presbyterian Church for a hospital site. The new Inter State Hospital opened August 15, 1898. Only graduate nurses were employed. The building was used for apartments in recent years just prior to demolition, but it was Wheaton's first actual hospital building, the same structure which Dr. E. W. Gaag purchased in 1919 and remodeled, turning it into a modern sanitarium. His "Wheaton Sanitarium", which accommodated patients with acute and chronic ailments and maternity cases, could serve twenty patients.

A hospital was also started in 1904 by Dr. C. F. Ewing above Lindig's Store. This three-bed unit was used by Drs. Ewing and Bates. In 1914 Dr. and Mrs. Ewing purchased the Lars Hauglie residence (now the McCullar residence at 302 Eighth Street South), making it into a privately-run hospital operated first by Ewing and Bates and later by Ewing and Lindberg. The nurse in charge for twenty-two years was Lenora Selness, who was known to run a "tight ship". This hospital continued in operation until October, 1943, when it closed because of the war and the shortage of nurses.

On December 8, 1943, the Village of Wheaton passed Ordinance 115 to sponsor a

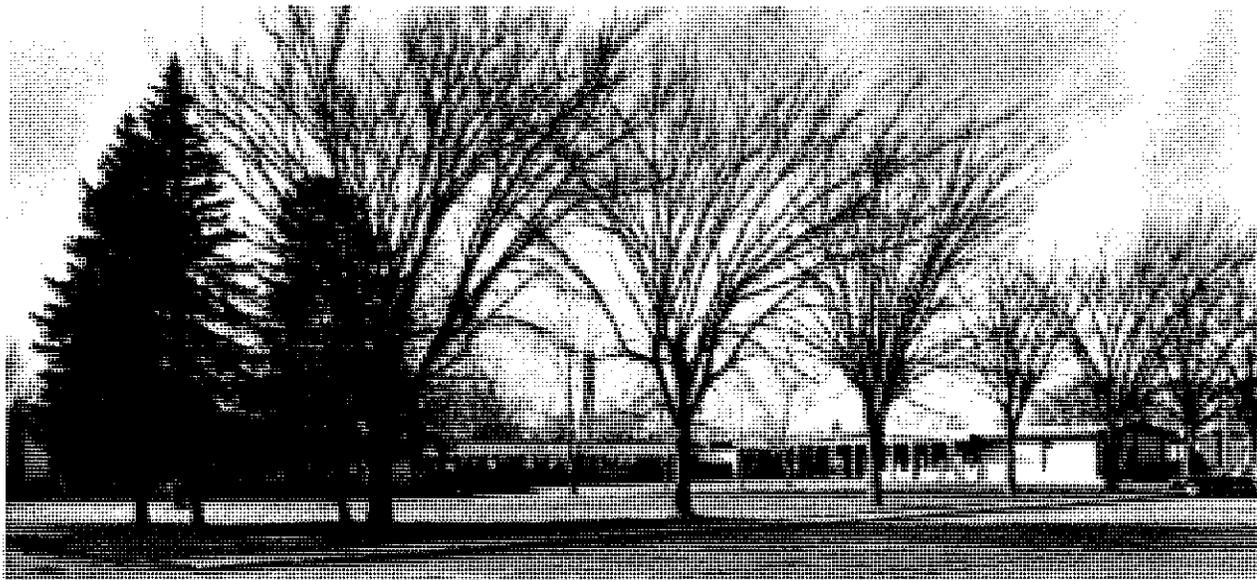
hospital and to appoint a board of governors. The Ordinance reads: **An ordinance providing for the establishment of a municipal hospital: creating a hospital board to advise in its management, providing for the organization and tenure of the members thereof, regulating their conduct and defining their powers and duties and providing for a hospital fund.**

A hospital was started again in the Olga Johnson residence at 902 Third Avenue North with Drs. Ewing, Lindberg and Magnuson as staff members. The building was leased by the village and provided medical and obstetrical services. Surgical patients were handled in other towns. At this time the hospital assumed its present name, the Wheaton Community Hospital. The ten-bed hospital opened in February, 1944. The first patient was a Mrs. Trochinski and the first baby born was to the William Cunninghams. This hospital operated until January, 1951. Total cost of this hospital including equipment and supplies totaled \$3500 with \$1900 of that raised in donations.

The present hospital stands on a whole block of land donated by Ansgar Lundquist. The 21-bed hospital opened with transfer of patients by Anderson-Ranney Ambulance during the last days of December, 1950. This new building cost a total of \$225,000

with one-third of the cost born by the federal government (Hill-Burton Act, 1946) and the remaining two-thirds paid for by the village (bond issuance) and voluntary donations. Over 80 percent of the hospitals built under Hill-Burton were in the rural communities and 50 percent of the hospitals were under 50 beds. The first babies born in the new hospital were a son to the Francis Mayou's of Rosholt and a daughter to the Kenneth Cole's (Kathy Ranney). The surgery unit was started in 1955. In 1958 the emergency room was completed.

In May, 1962, the completion of a \$238,000 remodeling project added a new wing to the hospital. The circular unit was unique in that the sixteen rooms added were visible from the nurse's station, bringing the total rooms to forty. Remodeling was done to the older part of the hospital. The clinic addition was started and completed in one year's time. The Wheaton Community Health Center, occupied in May, 1971, had room for three doctors and two dentists. In early 1977 a wing was added to the clinic to accommodate Dr. Gallagher. In 1979 a bond issuance of \$750,000 was approved to remodel the older part of the hospital and add an expansive wing for the kitchen, employee lounge and storage space.



**Wheaton Community Hospital today. The hospital, constructed by the city as a municipal facility, opened in December, 1950. Since that time three major additions have been made to the structure.**

Current trends include the 1983 decision by the Wheaton Hospital Board to accept a modified form of primary nursing to cut costs. Layoffs included many aides. In 1984 mobile imaging was added with a computerized tomography (CT) scanner, based in Fergus Falls. Dr. John Hustad, psychologist, was added to the service of the hospital. The hospital has a computer for billing and has constantly updated lab, X-ray, and other equipment over the years.

Wheaton Community Hospital has withstood good times and shortages, long hours and many changes. Babies have been born; people have died. Wounds have healed and bodies made well. The service of providing for quality of life and the ability to meet that demand has been present in the dedicated persons who have worked at Wheaton Community Hospital even if names are not remembered and characters are diminished in the history of a growing community hospital.

## **DENTISTRY**

The first dentist in the Wheaton area was Dr. J. W. Harris who came from Ortonville for two days of practice a week commencing in 1885. He was succeeded by Dr. J. Brown.

The first resident dentists were Drs. M. R. Britten and M. Williams. Dr. C. B. Norgaard was also practicing in 1916, and Dr. Frank Haas opened a modern dentist office over the Home Bakery in 1920. In 1923 Dr. Williams sold his dental practice to Dr. Harold Weickert after practicing dentistry in Wheaton for twenty-six years. Dr. Weickert came here from Warren, Minnesota, where he had practiced for a year. He remains in practice at this time, having served the community well for over sixty years with time out during World War II in the service of his country. A Dr. May practiced in the Corner Drug Building in about the 1930's.

Several dentists have come and gone over the years in a dental office which was located over the present Senior Center on Broadway. Dr. O. D. Nelson practiced there and sold his practice in 1947 to Dr. Robert Herder after twenty-five years in this community. Dr. Herder sold the practice to

Dr. David Gorde in 1958, who was followed by Dr. Kenneth Strader. Forced to retire due to illness, Strader was followed in 1960 by Dr. James Alevizos, who moved to Minneapolis with his family but he retained office hours two days a week until the late 1960's.

Dr. Raymond C. Kieffer began his dental practice in 1972, the first dentist to occupy the new dental wing of the Wheaton Community Health Center. Dr. Duane Krivarchka took over the dental practice of Dr. Kieffer, who moved to Brainerd.

Dr. Michael Marchetti opened his dental practice in 1981, locating in the east half of the old Wells building on Broadway. He was joined by Dr. Kevin Nakagaki. Their practice was burned out in 1983 when the Wells building was destroyed by fire. Dr. Krivarchka moved his practice to North Dakota about the same time. With the clinic dental suite available, Drs. Marchetti and Nakagaki moved into the Wheaton Community Health Center where they continue to practice.

## **CHIROPRACTORS**

The earliest known chiropractor in Wheaton was a J. W. Anderson in 1916. Bly and Bly, a brother-sister team, practiced in Wheaton for many years starting about 1920.

Dr. M. V. Mitteness announced the opening of his chiropractic practice in Wheaton on October 16, 1959. Twenty years later he constructed a new clinic on Highway 75 South. His son Paul joined as a partner in early 1981. Both continue in practice at this time.

## **EYE DOCTORS**

In the early years itinerant eye doctors would come to Wheaton, spending a day a month servicing the community. One such was Dr. B. W. Brokow who in 1905 was advertising that he fitted glass eyes, examined eyes and fitted for glasses.

Dr. Lyle Goodnough took over the practice of Dr. H. R. Morgan in January, 1952, and has continued to practice here for over thirty years.

## AMBULANCE SERVICE

The first ambulance, a combination funeral coach and ambulance, was operated for a year by Chester Anderson and Elmer Nord in 1948-1949, following the death of mortician A. H. Peterson who had ordered it just prior to his death. It was taken over by Anderson and David Ranney in 1949 in conjunction with their Anderson-Ranney Funeral Home. Anderson operated the ambulance service from 1953 until 1959, after which it became Ranney's enterprise.

The history of the present Wheaton Ambulance Service dates back to 1969 when Ranney learned that the state government had changed regulations so that it was no longer feasible to maintain private ambulance service. A group sought aid from the county, asking for a county-wide service, but the county turned it down. A new campaign was launched to start an ambulance district consisting of Wheaton, Dumont and the surrounding eight townships. A training program was established with twenty-two volunteers trained in professional emergency care. A one and one-half mill levy was requested from the area to be served with a call for bids for an ambulance. A used station wagon was purchased and equipped to provide suitable service until the new ambulance arrived. A two-stall garage was constructed on the west side of the hospital to house the equipment.

The new ambulance, a 1970 Chevrolet, was equipped with oxygen and suction, splints, a first aid kit, dressings and bandages. It was air-conditioned and heated in both front and rear. It had space for four stretchers and attending personnel. Total cost was \$9400. A charge of \$25.00 was made for each call plus 50 cents per mile one way.

A paging system was implemented with the device carried by drivers on call so they could be summoned by the hospital. Another feature added was the two-way radio equipment allowing conversation between the hospital and ambulance, and a 75-foot radio tower was erected at the rear of the hospital.

A new van-type ambulance was procured in 1974 at a cost of \$11,000 after recommendations by the state to replace the



**The first new ambulance for the Wheaton Volunteer Ambulance Service arrived in 1970. The service had been formed the preceding year. Hospital Board Chairman Elmer Bud Worner, on the right, is pictured turning over the keys of the ambulance to Hospital Administrator Bill Buchholz.**

smaller unit. Financing for the vehicle was provided by subsidies from the two villages and eight townships and from operating capital from four years of service. Another ambulance was purchased in 1980 at a cost of \$23,000.

In September, 1984, the city of Wheaton approved bids for the ambulance service to acquire the most up-to-date modular ambulance costing \$36,000. The ambulance garage had to be renovated to accommodate the new larger unit.

## TRAVERSE COUNTY NURSING HOME

The Traverse County Nursing Home opened its 60-bed unit January 10, 1958. A special bond election was held to secure the \$365,000 necessary to build the home. Marceline Lano, RN, was the first administrator. Governor Freeman dedicated the Traverse County Nursing Home May 31, 1959. This was the first county-operated nursing home in the state. Emma Winters was the first resident with six more admitted that same week.

In May, 1967, bids were let by Traverse County for construction of an addition to the nursing home. The new wing provided recreation and therapy rooms, meeting and consultation rooms, an area for church services and other meetings, and another outside entrance.

In March, 1978, a van was purchased after a fund drive and county revenue sharing provided the money for the specially equipped vehicle for transporting residents.

The nursing home added a feature in March, 1982, with the opening of a store supplying cards, candies, and other small items for the benefit of the residents.

The one-story home is owned and operated by Traverse County as a non-profit facility. The board of directors is comprised of the elected board of County Commissioners and two lay members. Current administrator is Gael Coleman. Audrey Mitteness is the director of nursing.



**Traverse County Nursing Home, a 60-bed facility, opened in January, 1958. A major addition was constructed in 1967. The home is owned and operated by Traverse County.**

### **PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING**

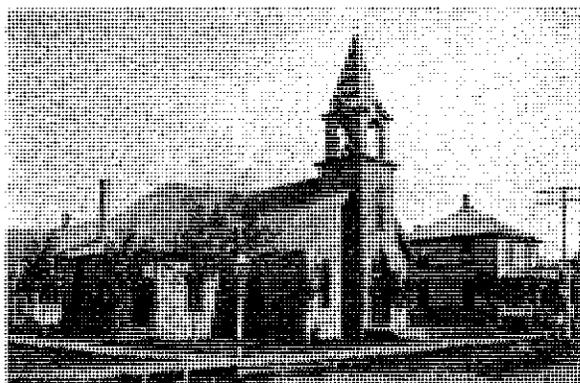
In 1919 a county nurse was employed jointly financed by the county and the local Red Cross chapter. Bess Burns was hired to serve in this capacity. The county nurse visited schools to assist with the health needs of the children and did other public nursing as needed.

The present program began in Wheaton in 1977 with Stevens-Traverse County Public Health Nursing Service being responsible for making the lives of the elderly and disabled more enjoyable. Barb Tauber, RN, is the director for Traverse County with Adrienne Horning and three home health care aides discharging care.

Public Health Nursing visits the diseased and disabled in their homes guiding them in their self-care. Expectant parents classes, WIC nutrition education clinics, pre-school screenings, Head Start screenings, blood pressure, diabetes, and hearing screenings are also a part of their care, as well as new-baby home visits. Home health aide and homemaker services are provided to help with personal care and light household care and errands. Public Health Nursing provides a health care alternative for recovery and maintenance in a cost-effective manner in the patients' homes. The Traverse branch of the service is headquartered in the Wheaton Community Hospital.



# Churches



The First Baptist Church of Wheaton, the first established church in the community.

## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

The church organization previously known as the First Baptist Church of Maudada was changed to the First Baptist Church of Wheaton in the fall of 1885, the first established church in Wheaton. Under the guidance of Rev. Kephart of Herman, immediate arrangements were made for three lots on which to build. The following year the first church in Wheaton was built cater-cornered on the lots now occupied by the NFO building and Lillian's Beauty Shop on Tenth Street North. With room left for the parsonage on the south side, it was built in 1899. The sanctuary was 24 by 40 feet and was erected by Al Setterlund at a cost of \$1,000. A steeple was added to the church in 1892.

The parsonage was later moved to First Avenue North and is now the Leonard Rusch home. The church was razed to

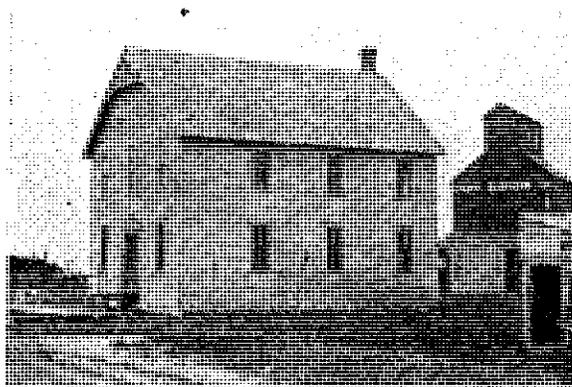
make room for the present buildings.

The first resident pastor was W. T. Williams, who was also the county superintendent of schools. Church services were held every other Sunday in the beginning. Other pastors serving the congregation were Rev. Cressy, Rev. T. G. Attebury, Rev. W. H. Mount, Rev. C. T. Hollowell, Rev. L. B. Pruitt, W. T. McGann, Rev. B. R. Croft, and Rev. E. Lansing Holland in 1918.

## SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY

One of the old school buildings was sold to the local Spiritualist Society for \$800.00 and moved from the high school site to 202 Tenth Street South in 1899. It became the church home for that congregation. A Rev. Wm. Bonney was serving as pastor in 1902.

The Society remained active in Wheaton until at least 1917.



The Spiritualist Society Church as it appeared in 1899.

## GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS LUTHERAN CHURCH

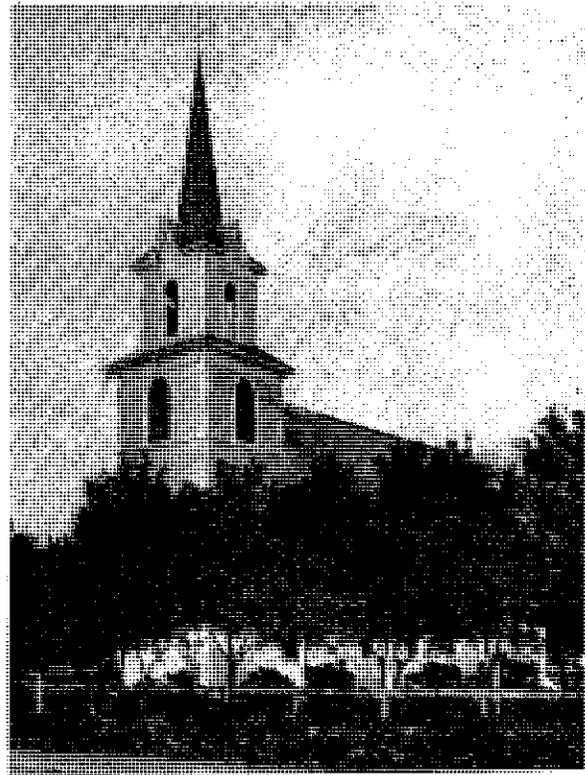
On the twelfth day of December, 1883, a little group of twenty-three Swedish immigrants under the leadership of Pastor J. O. Lundberg of Herman organized the Gustavus Adolphus Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lake Valley, Traverse County, in a little schoolhouse one mile south of Wheaton, prior to the beginning of the town. The constitution for the Augustana Synod was accepted, and Rev. Lundberg was called as pastor of the congregation at this meeting. He was paid \$50.00 per year to hold worship services every third Sunday. Even prior to then a committee consisting of A. G. Swenson, N. T. Erickson, and E. E. Erickson had formed to draw up a statement on the needs of a congregation and on January 6, 1878, a meeting was held to discuss the progress that had been made.

The little congregation made slow but steady progress. At the annual meeting on December 15, 1884, Ola Johnson donated two acres of land for a cemetery (Section 20, Township 127, Range 46), and the church lot was purchased. In 1891 the congregation was incorporated, and by December 10, 1892, a new church had been built. In 1899 a bell was placed in the steeple, the same bell which was mounted as an historic memento at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in 1985.

Pastor Lundberg stayed with the congregation until 1888. He was followed by Erik Schold (1890-1904), Edward A. Lindgren (1906-1910), Lars J. Lundquist, supply pastor (1912-1925), J. G. Swedberg, student pastor (1912-14), Jonas V. Lundgren (1913-14), E. A. Martell (1921-29), Elof G. Carlson (1929-31), Carl G. Zaar (1932-48), Elder W.



An interior view of the Swedish Lutheran Church taken from a card postmarked February 17, 1912.

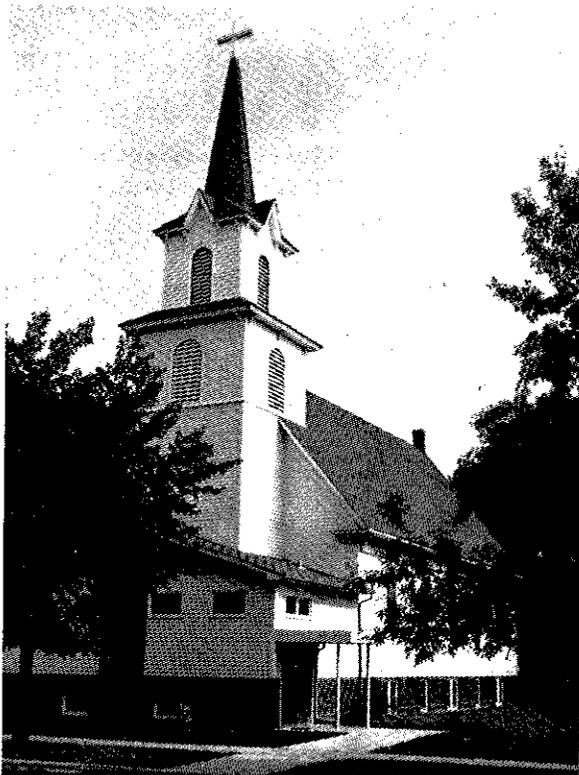


Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church, known during its early years as the Swedish Lutheran Church. This building was constructed in 1892.

Jackson (1948-49), George C. Benson (1949-59), Raymond E. Borg (1961-65), and Mattys Van Steen (1966).

English became the official language of the congregation in the year 1928. Prior to the 1933 celebration of the congregation's golden anniversary, a full basement had been built, new furnace installed, new sidewalk and curbing put in, and other improvements added. On October 29, 1945, a new Reuter Electro Magnetic pipe organ was installed and a concert given to a packed audience by Joyce Hilary, an accomplished musician from Gustavus Adolphus College. This organ was later moved to the new Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. The year 1953 saw the complete remodeling of the interior of the church. The 80th year, 1963, was marked by the completion of a new entrance.

After the merger with Hope Lutheran Church in 1966 and the building of a new sanctuary, the old landmark building was demolished to make way for the present Ranney Mortuary at Tenth Street and Second Avenue North.



Following the merger of Gustavus Adolphus and Hope Lutheran congregations, the remodeled G.A. church became the "north unit" of the newly formed Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

## HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Hope Lutheran Church was first organized as Lake Valley Norske Evangeliske Menighed I, Wheaton, Minnesota. The organizational meeting was held in T. O. Thorson's general store November 29, 1892, for the purpose of organizing a church among the Norwegian Lutherans in Wheaton and surrounding territory. Serving as first officers of the congregation were T. K. Mork, president; C. O. Nelson, secretary; T. E. Norgaard, H. O. Monson, and Ole O. Thorson, trustees.

At the first meeting the Rev. T. T. Wiperud was called as first pastor of the congregation, and he served until 1897, part of the time from Milnor, North Dakota, and part of the time as resident pastor. Pastor Engel Olson of the Alberta area served the congregation temporarily following Wiperud's departure.

The church edifice was erected in 1896.

In June, 1924, the congregation accepted plans submitted by architect Joseph E. Nason of Minneapolis for brick veneering and extensive remodeling of the original church structure. Dedication services were held August 30, 1925, at which time the Rustad family presented an altar painting "Women at the Tomb," by Axel Endor and reproduced by Eva Rustad. The painting may still be seen at the Wheaton Community Library, along with beautiful leaded, stained glass windows which had been installed by the families of F. G. Steidl, Andrew Peterson, Alfred Rustad, T. O. Torgerson, and T. O. Thorson. A pipe organ was installed in 1927 through the generosity of Andrew Peterson and efforts of the ladies aid. The Schulmerich Tower Carillon and Chimatron organ chimes dedicated to the memory of Oliver S. Torgerson in 1966 were later moved to the merged Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Other pastors who served the congregation were Rev. C. B. Ingebrigtsen (1899-1907), T. A. Hoff (1909-14), J. O. Holum (1914-19), Melvin O. Andrews (1919-23), H. K. Narum (1923-39), L. C. Jenson (1940-44), T. M. Boe (1945-47), Walter Wang (1948-62), Jesse W. Thompson (1963-65), and Arthur Lunow (1966-67).

It was during Pastor Holum's pastorate that the constitution was rewritten in the



Hope Lutheran Church was originally organized in 1892 as the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

English language and the name changed to Hope Lutheran Church. For several years prior to this, English services had alternated with the Norwegian.

At the church's fiftieth anniversary in 1942, three of the charter members were still active, L. J. Bakke, T. O. Thorson, and Alfred Rustad.

Discussion of the merger with Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church began in December, 1962, and continued until 1966. On August 14 of that year both congregations voted with an overwhelming majority to merge. When no longer needed to meet the needs of the combined congregation, Hope Lutheran Church was sold to the village of Wheaton in 1971 for \$1.00 to be used as a community library.



**Hope Lutheran Church as it appeared just prior to the merger with G.A. Lutheran. The building was originally constructed in 1896, and in 1924 it was veneered with brick. Compare the building with the old Norwegian Lutheran structure. It's the same building.**

## UNION CHURCH

A Pastor J. N. Solheim was serving the Union Church in Wheaton 1903-05. Nothing further is known of this church.

## ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

The history of St. John's congregation dates back to the 1880's when first services were conducted by traveling pastors in the vicinity of Tintah. The earliest records go back to the year 1887 when three members from the Wheaton area, Wm. Zempel, John Zempel and Herman Frase, attended the services conducted by Pastor E. B. Meichsner at Immanuel, Monson Township. Shortly afterward they were joined by the Groth and Schmidt families. By the year 1892 the group numbered six families and several individuals. Pastor Meichsner consented to conduct services in Wheaton which were held regularly in the Groth and Schmidt homes. In 1896 it was decided to build a church, and that necessitated the organization of a congregation. The official organizational meeting of the German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession was held on March 21, 1896.

The lot on which the new church would be built was purchased for \$125.00. On April 16, 1896, the lowest bid to construct the 36 by 24 by 12 foot church, together with a chancel and a tower up to fifty feet in height, was granted to John Otto and Ferdinand Krenz. In 1901 boxelder trees were planted with the special regulation that no teams be tied to them.

In 1900 Dumont, Wheaton and Parnell sent a joint call to Rev. Otto Wedermann to be their first pastor at a salary of \$500.00 a year. He returned to Germany to serve fellow Christians there in 1904.

In 1903 the congregation became a member of the Missouri Synod. A parsonage was built in 1905 by all three congregations at a cost of \$3,181.43. It is being used as a home today at 506 First Avenue North. In 1914 it was voted to build a new church because of the steady growth of the congregation. The description of the new church is taken from the **Wheaton Gazette-Reporter** dated November 10, 1916, as follows:

"This magnificent new structure is 64 by 36 feet in size, with an extension of 14 by 16 feet on the north end for altar purposes and a vestry room 10 by 10 feet. The excellent cut published herewith gives an excellent idea of the architecture and

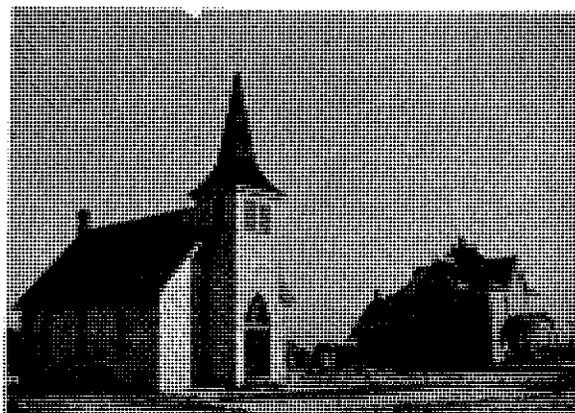
general exterior beauty of the edifice. Underneath is a full basement fitted up for Sunday School work and general church entertainment purposes. It is equipped with water, toilets and all modern conveniences.

"The church floor is built with a gradual descent from the door to the altar platform. The main floor is 48 by 36 feet with a gallery 24 by 36 feet, artistically designed, and extending across the rear. The main floor and gallery comfortably seats about six hundred people, but eight hundred can be crowded in with extra seats in case of necessity . . . There are two spires in front, one extending 88 feet and in this is suspended the new bell that, in pure sweet tones each Sunday peals forth its invitation to all to assemble in God's house for worship.

"The cost of the church complete is approximately \$12,000.00, and in beauty and design and general finish is the finest church within the county . . ."

The old church was moved to 210 Broadway where it was converted into a home.

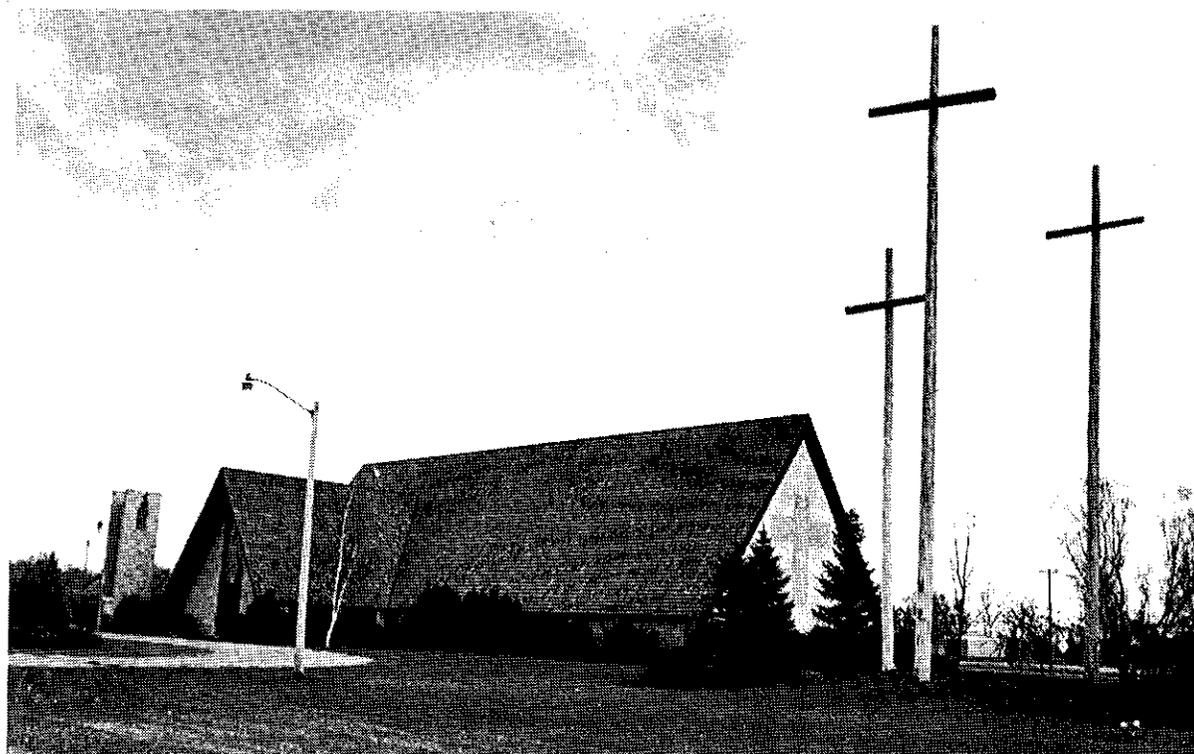
The Dumont and Parnell congregations voted to separate from Wheaton in 1921. In



**The German Lutheran Church constructed in 1896. To the right is the parsonage, which was built in 1905.**

1928 it was noted that "the children and young people are now becoming 'English'. For several years the confirmation instruction has already been given in English almost entirely. Services are now held regularly in English as well as in German." In 1941 a new pipe organ was installed at a cost of \$2,760.00 and was dedicated on June 29.

In 1955 the congregation purchased a triangular shaped lot on Highway 27 West for a future parsonage and church site. The



**St. John Lutheran Church in Wheaton today. This building was constructed in 1967.**

parsonage was completed in the spring of 1958 and the new church in 1967. The old parsonage was converted into Sunday School classrooms and church office and was used until the new church was completed. Members of the building committee for the third house of worship were Carl Leininger, George Schmidtke, Donald Grohn, Roland Hausmann, Wallace Krumwiede, Arthur Rinke, Carl Shuller and Rev. Kenneth Putt.

During Pastor Langemo's pastorate (1968-73), the parking lot was fully black-topped, a new tower was built in which the bell from the second house of worship was placed, and landscaping was carried out around the church. When the old church was razed in 1971, the cross from the top of the main spire was preserved and refinished and can be found in the present narthex.

Two sons of the congregation, George Sagissor and Dennis Grohn, have been ordained, as well as Allen Ashbacker, friend of St. John.

The congregation continues its very active role in the community. A recent change in the constitution was adopted to read that "anyone over the age of 18 years has the right to vote." In the fall of 1981 a mortgage burning celebration was held — the congregation was debt-free.

#### **PASTORS, VICARS, SUMMER FIELD WORKERS SERVING ST. JOHN**

- 1901-1904 - Rev. Otto Weidermann
- 1904-1921 - Rev. Herman Faedtke
- 1921-1939 - Rev. Theo. Heine
- 1939 - Rev. Albert Gierke - St. John's, Dumont - Vacancy Pastor
- Rev. John Zimmerman - Immanuel, Monson - Vac. Pastor
- 1939-1951 - Rev. Ernest C. Hallstein
- 1951 - Rev. Holzhauer - Trinity, Ortonville, Vacancy Pastor
- Rev. Ervin Binger - Immanuel, Monson - Vacancy Pastor
- 1951-1955 - Rev. Otto N. Truog
- 1952 - Dale Young - Summer Field Worker
- 1953 - James Schwandt - Summer Field Worker
- 1954 - Karl Koslowsky - Summer Field Worker

- 1955 - Theo Allwardt - Summer Field Worker
- 1955 - Rev. Fry - Wahpeton - Vacancy Pastor
- Rev. Ervin Binger - Immanuel, Monson, Vacancy Pastor
- 1955-1960 - Rev. Arthur A. Dierks
- 1956 - William Dierks - Summer Field Worker
- 1957-1958 - Kenneth J. Putt - Vicar
- 1959 - William Dierks - Vicar
- 1959 - Rev. Albert Gierke - St. John's - Dumont, Assistant Pastor
- 1960 - Douglas Lamb - Summer Field Worker
- 1960 - Rev. Albert Gierke - St. John's, Dumont, Vacancy Pastor
- 1960-1964 - Rev. Palmer Ruschke
- 1961-1962 - Nadine Tresemer - Deaconess
- 1962-1963 - Donald Pohlers - Vicar
- 1964 - Rev. Clarence Bremer - St. John's Dumont - Vac. Pastor
- 1964 - Myron Maltz - Vicar (just summer months)
- 1964-1968 - Rev. Kenneth J. Putt
- 1966 - John Simboris, C.R.M. - Summer Field Worker
- 1968 - Rev. Julius Myhr - Christ, Elbow Lake - Vacancy Pastor
- 1968-1973 - Rev. Martin S. Langemo
- 1973 - Rev. Herbert J. Malotky - Detroit Lakes, Vacancy Pastor
- 1974-1980 - Rev. W. O. Sprengeler
- 1980 - Rev. Paul Friedrich - Immanuel, Monson - Vacancy Pastor
- Rev. Floyd Kruger - Fergus Falls - conducted Sunday Ser.
- 1981 - Rev. Royce C. Leckband

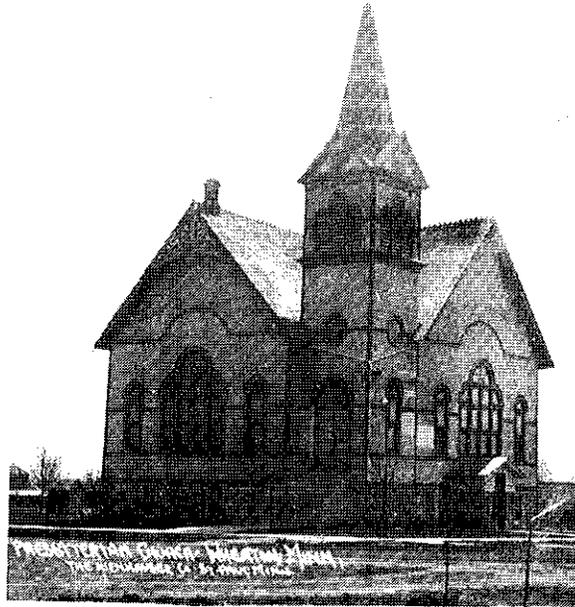
#### **JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES**

In September and October, 1975, Witnesses from Massachusetts, Ohio, Colorado, and Minneapolis and St. Paul moved to Wheaton to join the existing group who had lived in Wheaton for many years. The following year the Wheaton Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses were incorporated, legalized and recognized by the State of Minnesota. In October, 1976, the Kingdom Hall was built during one weekend with a work force of volunteers from neighboring towns and as far away as the Twin Cities, Red Wing, Huron, South Dakota, and Fargo, North Dakota.

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In the 1890's a few early pioneers of this locality, feeling the need of Christian fellowship, would meet in homes on Sunday evenings for prayer and devotions. Rev. W. F. Finch conducted services in the school building in 1893. These early settlers felt the need of a church, and in June, 1895, the first planning meeting was held in the hope of forming a second protestant church in the town. The Rev. Mr. Wright from Minneapolis attended and plans were laid in meetings held in the courthouse hall. In September, 1895, the Norwegian Church (the present library) was rented and the lot upon which the present Presbyterian Church stands was purchased. The contract for their first church was awarded to Alfred Setterlund, who had bid \$2380.00. On Thanksgiving Day 1899 the Rev. Charles Scanlon preached the first sermon, dedicating the sanctuary to the service of God. The debt was retired by subscription of members attending the dedication.

In the late 1940's the old church no longer met the needs of the congregation and plans were made for a new church building. On August 3, 1952, the Rev. George Fay preached the last sermon in the old church. Work began immediately to tear down the old building, taking with it



**On Thanksgiving Day, 1899, the first sermon was preached in this new First Presbyterian Church.**

many cherished memories of people and events.

In November, 1952, the cornerstone of the new church was laid with the oldest living member, Charles Winchell, an attendant since before the building of the old church, laying the stone and the Rev. George Fay and Elder Alvin Johanson



**The First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton as it appears today.**

speaking. On December 3, 1953, the new church was dedicated.

Miss Alma Dodds, who joined as a member of the church in 1905, became a medical missionary (see "Historic Personalities").

At present this congregation has a membership of 215 and is being served by the Rev. David Wallace, who came to Wheaton in 1980. Other pastors have been:

Rev. Charles Scanlon (1895-99)  
Rev. J. Sharp Phillips (1900-01, 1904-05)  
Rev. Clair Latimer (1901-02, 1909-12)  
Rev. Francis Biedler (1902-04)  
Rev. Harold Gaunt (1909-12)  
Rev. W. H. Clatsworthy (1912-14)  
Rev. C. E. Fulton (1914-16)  
Rev. Allan Brown (1917-18)  
Rev. F. D. McMartin (1919-25)  
Rev. John Cooke (1925-27)  
Rev. George Root (1927-32)  
Rev. J. F. Mulholland (1933-35)  
Rev. Robert Zarse (1937-41)  
Rev. Paul Vornholt (1942-44)  
Rev. Robert Rae (1944-49)  
Rev. Ralph Walters (1949-52)  
Rev. George Fay (1952-55)  
Rev. John Menoch (1956-60)  
Rev. Knox Seaton (1960-65)  
Rev. Harvey R. Senecal (1965-69)  
Rev. Burton F. Blair (1970-79)

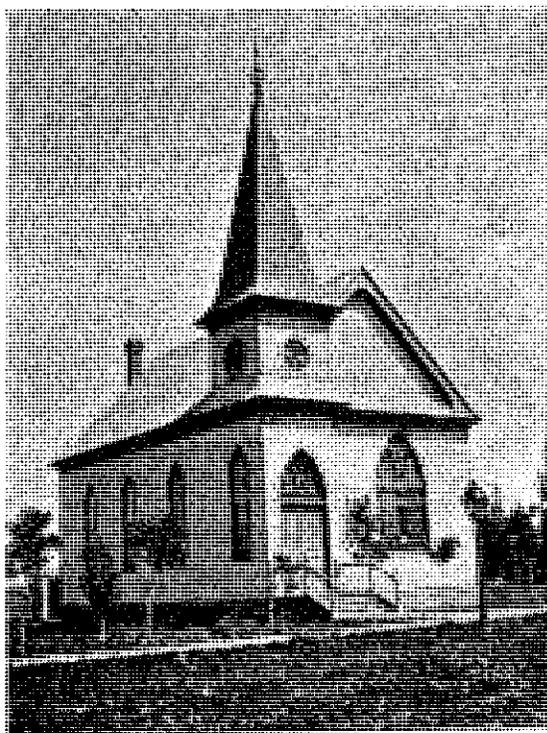
## BETHLEHEM COVENANT CHURCH

August 20, 1898, marks the beginning of the Swedish Christian Bethlehem congregation. John Compton, Elick Anderson, A. L. Benson, Peter Lundell, Andrew Lindquist, Alfred H. Johnson, John Lindgren, and Oscar Peterson were the organizers with Anderson elected chairman. The incorporation date was August 24, 1898.

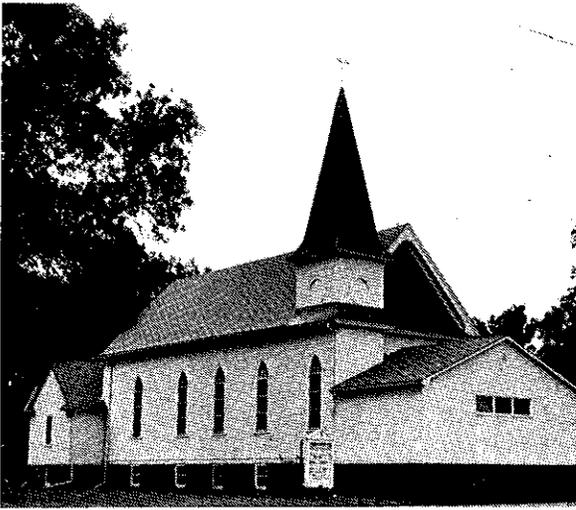
The original edifice was built in 1898 and the Norwegian Trinity Church was co-owner with the Bethlehem Church. On July 7, 1905, the Norwegian congregation sold to Bethlehem Church all their interest and equity in the building. (There is no other historical data available on the "Norwegian Trinity Church" referred to — the Hope Lutheran Church was built in 1896 and already viable at this time.)

In 1914 a chancel was added to the church and a furnace installed. Another building program was inaugurated in 1925 when the church proper was extended sixteen feet to the east and a full basement built to accommodate Sunday School and social functions of the congregation. Following a fire in the spring of 1946 which caused major damages, the job of reconstruction included an enlargement of the east end of the church with four additional rooms added, two in the basement and two on the sanctuary level. A new chancel was built at that time with new pulpit and windows, two new stairways, and new pews. In 1965 the entry was enclosed and a roomy narthex added.

For several years prior to the organization of this congregation the Mission friends of the community met in private homes for prayer and mutual edification, now and then being visited by circuit preachers. Earlier pastors ministered exclusively to the Swedish people, using their language. From 1929 to 1947 both the English and Swedish languages were used, and since then services have been conducted exclusively in English.



The original Swedish Mission Church as it appeared in 1898.



**Bethlehem Covenant Church as it appears today.**

Rev. John Lindgren was the first pastor of the Bethlehem Church, serving from 1898-1900. The following pastors have since served the church:

- Rev. C. W. Boquist (1902-08)
- Rev. P. B. Fallquist (1908-12)
- Rev. N. G. Malmstedt (1913-22)
- Rev. John E. Melin (1922-23)
- Rev. Leonard W. Lindholm, interim pastor (1923-24)
- Rev. A. M. Palmquist (1924-27)
- Rev. N. G. Malmstedt (1928-45)
- Rev. H. R. Jacobson (1945-65)
- Rev. Maynard Anderson (1965-85)
- Rev. Rodney Rosengren, interim pastor (1985-86)

The present pastor is Rev. Merrill Kindall who assumed the pastorate in January, 1986.

### **AVE MARIA CHURCH**

Although Wheaton had been an organized village since 1887, the first Catholic church was not built until 1899. In the early 1890's priests from Dumont and Collis visited Wheaton from time to time, said Mass and took care of the spiritual needs of the Catholics in private homes. Frank Thill and James Cunningham were the first trustees when the parish was organized.

Articles of incorporation were signed on the 7th day of August, 1899, by James

Trobeck, Bishop, and Edward J. Nagle, Vicar General of the Diocese of St. Cloud; by William Maria Gumper, Pastor; and by John Mulvanny and Joseph Mergens, lay members of the church.

Church membership in 1900 was about thirty families with services on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. By 1925 there were about eighty families.

Rev. Henry A. Steichen, who came to Wheaton in 1927, was the first resident priest. For five years he rented a house, and in 1932 a rectory was purchased. Prior to 1927, priests from Dumont and Collis held Sunday services here. They included Father Schritz, Father Haupt, Father Gumper, Father Peter Besselaar, Father Henry Hirsch, and Father Stephan Bujaski. Resident pastors since 1927 are as follows:

- Henry A. Steichen (1927-1946)
- Henry Retzek (1946-1947)
- Nicholas A. Kraemer (1947-1959)
- John Symons (1959-1960)



**The first Catholic Church in Wheaton, constructed in 1899.**



**Ave Maria Catholic Church and parsonage in Wheaton today.**

Harold Pavellis (1960-1961)  
 Richard Wey (1961-1970)  
 Andrew J. Nolon (1970-1971)  
 John W. Eccleston (1971-1982)  
 Lawrence Botz (1982- )

In 1950 Anton Krajeck, a church trustee for over thirty years, passed away. Peter N. Muellenbach was appointed trustee in his place to serve with Sam Deal. Both are still serving as trustees.

In 1953 a new church was built at a cost of about \$207,500.00 which included church furnishings. In 1962 a new parish house was built and attached to the church at a cost of \$64,335.30 plus furnishings of \$7,164.92 for a total cost of \$71,500.22. This building also added office space and classrooms.

Present membership is approximately 600 (150 families).

#### **BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH**

In 1951 a new Bible Baptist congregation organized, holding services in homes of members. They purchased and moved into Wheaton the former Immanuel Lutheran Church, siting it on Third Avenue South in the southwest part of Wheaton. The Rev. Manley Surbrook was the pastor.

#### **WHEATON BIBLE CHURCH**

The Revs. Edwin Johnson and Leon Armstrong founded the nondenominational Wheaton Bible Church in 1956, using the church building which had been moved into town by the Bible Baptist group. The Rev. Mr. Johnson had previously been with the Bible Baptists.

#### **CHURCH OF GOD**

The third congregation to use the Immanuel building is the Church of God. Started in 1965 by the Rev. Thomas Haley of Herman, the first resident pastor was the Rev. S. M. McDonald, who came here in 1966. Subsequent pastoral leaders have been the Rev. W. S. McDonald, the Rev. Harold Fowler, the Rev. Leonard Lane, the Rev. Dennis F. Robinson, the Rev. Arthur Harrington, and the Rev. William Keehr.

There is no resident pastor for the Church of God's three members at this time. However, a retired Assembly of God pastor, the Rev. Clayton Scharnberg of Wheaton, conducts a mid-week Bible class for this small congregation.

## **GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH**

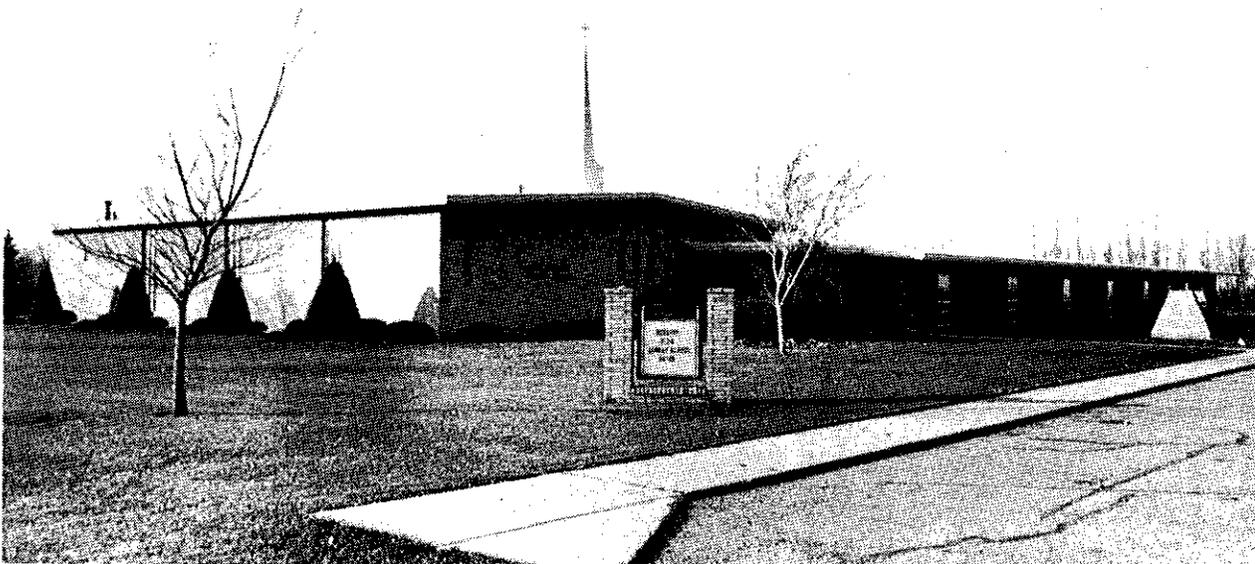
On August 14, 1966, the announcement was made that a new church was born — Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Wheaton. The birth of this new church was the result of a merger of the Hope Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church (LCA).

Discussions of a merger between the two churches began on December 4, 1962, and on August 14, 1966, both congregations voted with an overwhelming majority to merge. The first union service of the new congregation was held in the auditorium of the Pearson Elementary School on Sunday, August 21, 1966. Then followed the formal meetings for organizational structure and incorporation of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church under the laws of the State of Minnesota and affiliation with the Lutheran Church in America and the Red River Valley Synod.

On March 8, 1967, Good Shepherd congregation issued a call for its first pastor, the Rev. Mattys C. Van Steen. The Red River Valley Synod met in convention at Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, on March 28, 1967, and accepted Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Wheaton as one of its first acts of business. This was the largest congregation (650 baptized members) to join the synod since the constituting convention.

Sunday, February 28, 1971, saw the dedication of a new building for the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Wheaton at 605 Tenth Street North. A 50 by 50 foot addition was built to the north in 1983 for educational purposes.

The second pastor called by the congregation was the Rev. Mel Soderberg (1972-81), and the congregation is presently served by the Rev. Robert Porisch, who accepted a call in 1982.



**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, a modern facility constructed on the north side of Wheaton in 1970. The church building was constructed following the merger of Gustavus Adolphus and Hope Lutheran congregations to form the new Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.**

The Most Wonderful Moving Pictures in the World. A  
Truly Wonderful Production of the Sublime

# “Passion Play”

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

WILL BE EXHIBITED AT THE

## Wheaton Opera House

Tuesday and Wednesday, March 15-16

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In no other way, short of a personal visit to the village of Oberammergau, in Bavaria, at the time of this stupendous enactment, can so lasting a realization of the Crucifixion of Christ be made. It fixes the mind upon its great subject—the Christ. Clearly and distinctly does it unfold the scenes and incidents of His early life; portraying it so plainly, so beautifully, that the smallest child shall know and understand this beautiful, simple story.

Every parent and Sunday-school teacher should take advantage of this opportunity to vividly impress upon the children these scenes in Christ's life—impressions that can never be effaced while the lamp of this life holds out to burn.

Every man, woman and child will not only enjoy it, but will be held spellbound at the sight of the fascinating and sublime life-size moving pictures.

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**This is absolutely the last chance you will ever have to see this wonderful production,  
so don't miss it.**

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**NOTE: On account of my showing in Wheaton permanently, the prices will be reduced  
to Children, 15c; Adults, 25c.**

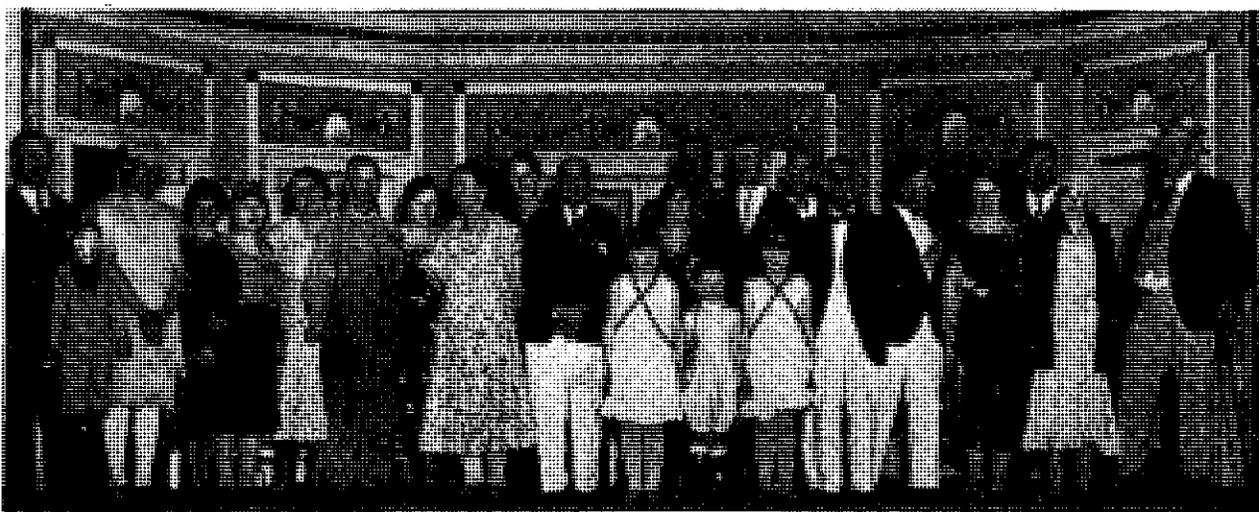
**Motion pictures were introduced in the community shortly after the turn of the century. In 1910 this advertisement appeared in the Wheaton Gazette, promoters called the “Passion Play” a must for young and old. It was to be shown at the Opera House.**



## Parks - Recreation - Entertainment

In the late 1800's and at the turn of the century, spur-of-the-moment foot races for cash purses and ball games between neighboring towns were among the most common forms of entertainment. Also popular were basket socials, dances, musical entertainment, local talent shows, July Fourth celebrations, card playing, vaudeville shows, and plays. Chautauquas and traveling show troops performing in tents were well attended performances.

The earliest large public hall used for dances and other entertainment was the courthouse. When the courthouse was built in 1892, the Village of Wheaton made a generous contribution with the understanding that the courtroom, which comprised practically all of the second floor, could be used by the public. A stage, wings, and curtains (removed when occasion demanded) were installed for the use of show troops, annual balls, and other dances and entertainment. Square dancing was pop-



The involvement of community in plays early in the century was commonplace. This was the cast of a 1930 play at the old "Opera House". Members of the cast, pictured from left to right: O. M. Torgerson, Cliff Atherton, Lella Torgerson, Laura Atherton, Lena Krenz, Abel Nelson, Mrs. Cady, Irene Asplund, Lucita Johanson, O. C. Johnson, Euphemia Abraham, Alelt Lupkes, Mr. Cady, Clarence Johanson, Dan Terpena, Earl Johnson, Miss Witsik, Anton Krajeck, Gladys Johnson, Albert Lupkes. No identification of the three children.

ular. To prevent overcrowding the dance floor, tickets were numbered so that the call could be made for even numbers or odd numbers and the floor would not be swamped by all in attendance wanting to dance at the same time. One of the old-time callers for the square dancing was Phil Deal. At other times Professor Holcomb, school superintendent, played the violin and called the more formal and sedate minuets. A Firemen's Ball was held in the courthouse hall in 1894 and at various places thereafter for many, many years.

After permitting the use of the courthouse for some time, commissioners in 1898 resolved to allow no more dances or entertainment in the courtroom, using it thereafter only for court purposes, conventions, and public meetings, despite the fact that this practice had substantially enhanced the county treasury.

The courthouse was replaced by the Masonic Hall (Opera House) as a center for social events. In 1899 one of the old school buildings was sold to the Masonic Lodge for \$1,000.00. In April of the following year the work of moving the old school building to the lots on the corner of Broadway and Educative Streets was completed. The lower floor was at once put in shape for a public hall with a stage 20 by 40 feet and the main hall 40 by 50 feet. A hardwood floor was laid for dances, and seats were arranged in sections for use during theatricals and meetings of various kinds. In 1908 the stage area was heightened seven feet to



The original "Golden Quartette" of Wheaton, made up of pioneer businessmen Ed Joubert, Paul Lamprecht, S. W. Frasier, and E. E. Sorenson.

allow more space for placing scenery. The second floor was used by the Masons for their meeting place.

Social events held at the "Opera House" included masquerade balls, three-act dramas, and touring company performances. In 1903 the price of seats to see the New York production of "A Busy Day" were 25 cents, 35 cents, and 50 cents. In 1905 it was used by S. W. Frasier for roller skating every afternoon and evening except when in other use — in fact, it was used off and on for roller skating throughout the life of the building. The first movies were shown here, including one about the San Francisco Earthquake. Shakespeare's "Othello" was performed here, an example of the quality of the arts in the early years. In 1906 the Wheaton Topsechoren Dancing Club was organized and danced at the Opera House. The building continued to be used for meetings, dances, and other purposes until it was demolished in 1958.

One of the most popular types of entertainment was the Chautauqua, a one-week summer program with music, plays, vaudeville acts, impersonators, light opera, and speakers. Season tickets cost \$2.00 and the performances took place in tents on vacant lots in various parts of town. In 1925 this was sponsored by the Commercial Club. All performances were free and special sales were held by local businessmen. It was the first experiment of the kind in the United States and drew immense crowds daily.

The Christy Obrecht vaudeville tent shows are fondly remembered. They came to Wheaton for three-day stints for many years and were playing here as recently as the late 1940's. Small circuses also came to town in the summers, much to the joy of the children.

After the building of the new school auditorium in 1916, that became the principal location for important functions and entertainment. That year Mary Pickford, a famous screen actress, appeared in the leading roll of "Madame Butterfly". In 1952 Jerry Colonna, a top-flight entertainer and long-time associate of Bob Hope, performed there with his troupe.

Square dancing again became popular in the 1960's and remains so today.



**This was the huge cast of local players who participated in what has gone down as one of the most memorable of local performances. Many longtime residents still talk about the "Womanless Wedding."**

For many years summer recreational activities arranged by several clubs and the village council included supervised play, kittenball, tumbling, baseball, track, swimming, Junior Legion ball, and roller skating. In 1949 Ordinance 119 was passed establishing a Joint Recreation Board of seven members, four appointed by the council and three by the school board. Swimming at Shady Dell, midget baseball, volleyball, archery, baseball, women's softball, golf, croquet, and independent baseball were offered in the 1950's. In 1957 there were 167 swimmers in the program at Shady Dell.

Winter recreation in the early years consisted mainly of skating on the river and lakes, ice-boating on Lake Traverse, and

skiing trips to Beck's Hill. In 1921 a skating rink was opened west of the railroad tracks with 100 or more skaters using it. Later the village council and the American Legion made arrangements for an ice rink north of the fairgrounds, where it remained until the site was needed for the nursing home, at which time the rink was again built west of the tracks. The hockey rink fund received a gift of \$1,000.00 from Lawrence Jacobson in 1973 to develop the hockey area. Ice fishing and snowmobiling also have been popular winter sports. A snowmobile club, Moonlight Riders, was active in the 1970's. In 1974 Bill Summers sponsored an entry to the annual Winnepeg to St. Paul Snowmobile Race. When the Moonlight Riders disbanded, their funds were turned over to the hockey fund.

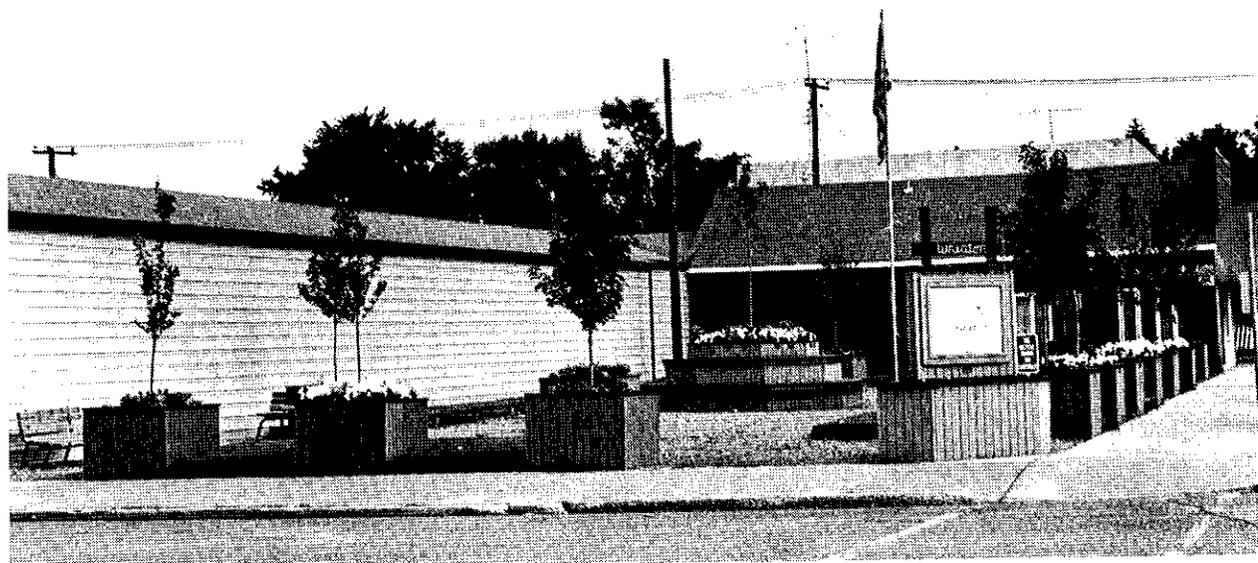


**One of three popular city parks in Wheaton today is this one located on the southeast side of town, near the Traverse County Fairgrounds.**

#### **PARKS**

The first village park, adjacent to the fairgrounds, was the gift of Annie Leaser, who gave a block of land for this purpose in

1898. One hundred fifty trees were planted there in 1901 at a cost of \$150.00. A bandstand was erected in the center of the park in 1913, then moved to the watertower area of downtown, and later moved back to



**Following the loss of the Wells building to fire, a downtown mini-park was designed by architect Brian Buchholz. The park was constructed and planted with funds contributed by local business and professional people.**

the park. It deteriorated and was demolished in the 1950's. The local Civic League purchased several playground devices, and in 1923 a concrete wading pool was installed there and later removed. More recent installations have been a concrete basketball court, horseshoe pits, and a picnic shelter.

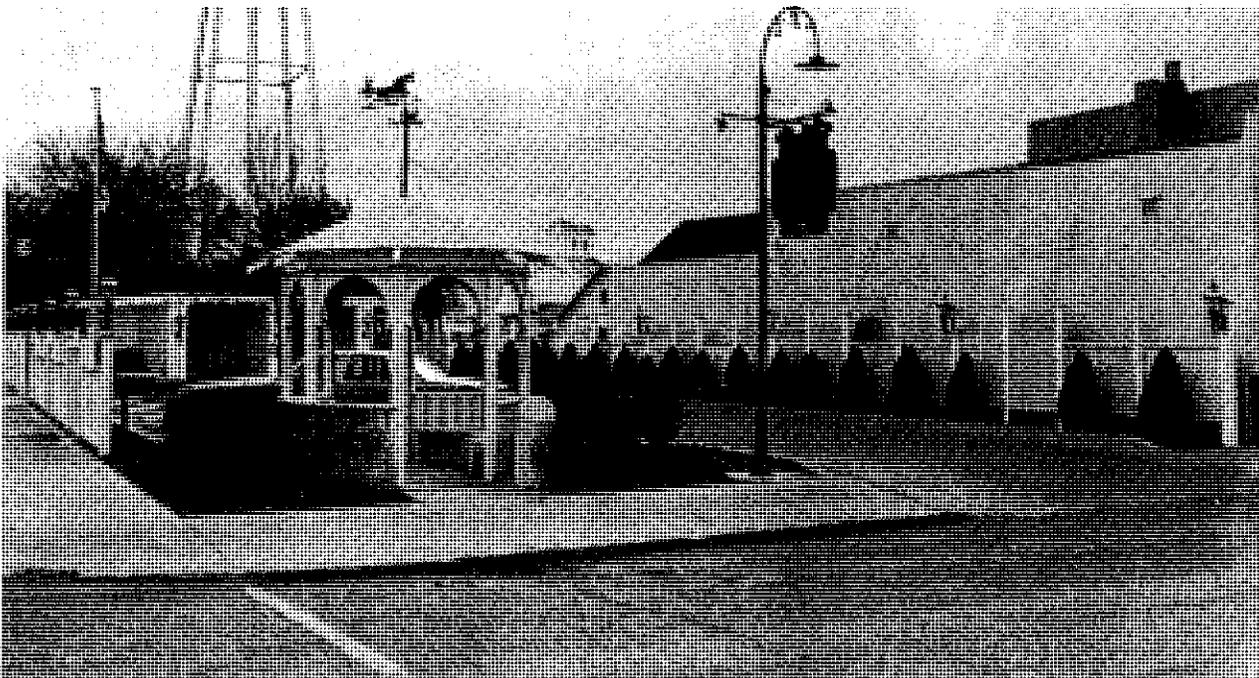
An unofficial "Sidney Park" was used by north-side children for several years. Originally purchased by Dr. H. Winge for a possible clinic site, then acquired by the village for the same purpose, it was used by neighborhood children as a playground for some time. However, when the new clinic was eventually built on the hospital grounds, this "park" was sold and is now the home site of Dr. S. C. Gallagher.

In 1973 Albert Falk's will offered his land in the northeast part of Wheaton, a tract of about five acres, to the village for a public park. Included in the will was the offer of \$3,600.00 to defray expenses for operating such a park. Later an additional parcel was purchased to complete a square-block tract. Donations of \$200.00 from the Mrs. Jaycees and \$4,000.00 from the Tra-verse Veterans Club were received for

equipment, and in 1977 a new picnic shelter was erected. It is now a well-maintained park complete with playground equipment, picnic tables, grills, bike rack, restrooms, softball field, and recently planted shade trees.

The village council voted to purchase a plat of ground on the west side of Wheaton from Harold Peterson in 1946. The contract called for construction of baseball and football fields and the start of construction on a multiple play area. The new athletic field and playground was developed in 1949 with the most expensive item being the fence. Lights for the football field were installed in 1949. Joe Norsen, a rural sports enthusiast, gave \$8,000.00 to provide lights for the baseball diamond. The first game held under lights was July 12, 1964. A six-lane regulation cinder track was completed a year later. Plans for development of a new six or eight-lane track adjacent to the high school were started in late 1985, with the football field, baseball and softball diamonds to remain where they are. A tennis court is also located there.

The city acquired an additional park along with the swimming pool in 1979.



**Downtown Wheaton took on a sparkling and rather spectacular look when this beautiful park was constructed by the State Bank of Wheaton. The park serves a twofold purpose. In addition to providing a spot of downtown beauty, it also serves as the bank's drive-in facility, located at the rear of the lot, with transactions carried on through television cameras and an underground transport mechanism.**

## BANDS

Wheaton has had the benefit of many excellent bands over the years for the entertainment of the community. Already in 1885 the Wheaton Cornet Brass Band was organized with H. J. Frase, one of Wheaton's founders, as leader. The Brass Band made its first public appearance in February, 1886, and received many compliments for its proficiency attained in so short a time. In those first years there was also a string band which played for dances.

Bach's Military Band began in 1892 with

F. Bach its instructor and leader. It was recognized as one of the finest bands in the state outside of the large cities, and its services were frequently secured for celebrations in this area. There were open-air concerts each Friday evening arranged by the village council. In 1898 the band gave performances at the courthouse and saw volunteers off for the Spanish-American War. A military band was still playing in the 1920's.

In 1906 a Symphony Orchestra was formed with Lawrence Nelson the conduct-



**The original Six Kernels band was comprised of this group, photographed in 1946. From left to right: Dale Strong, Leonard Anderson, Hubert Grosland, Ernst Lindig, Horace Amidon, George Zentgraf.**



**By 1951 the Six Kernels had taken on a new look and some changes in personnel. Left to right: Keith Davison, Leonard Anderson, Horace Amidon, David Ranney, Hubert Grosland and Ernst Lindig.**

or. He was succeeded by Ernst Lindig. Free band concerts, led by Willard Tripp, were a highlight of Saturday evenings in the 1920's and 1930's, when downtown stores were open until 10:00 p.m.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's Wheaton also had an all-girl Drum and Bugle Corps featuring forty to fifty members, complete with a drum majorette. Under the direction of Rudy Lundquist, this group performed at parades in Wheaton and all the surrounding communities and also at the Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis.

A popular band of the 1950's and later was the "Six Kernels", a Little German Band. Band members were David Ranney, Sr., Ernst Lindig, Horace Amidon, Leonard Anderson, Hubert Grosland, and George Zentgraf, with Keith Davison replacing the latter when Zentgraf moved from Wheaton. They performed at various area and community affairs and participated in parades, using a model T Ford for their parade vehicle. They were offered \$2,000.00 for their model T when they appeared in the

American Legion Convention parade in Chicago in 1958.

Several of the musicians mentioned above were also a part of the dance band called the Tempo Kings, a popular dance band in this area for many years.

The Tri-State Band was organized in 1946 and directed by Ernst Lindig until 1962, when Lindig retired and was succeeded by Walter Rennerfeldt of Rosholt. Members are from Wheaton and the surrounding tri-state area, hence the name. There are four original members still playing in the band: Keith Davison, Lionel Erickson, Hubert Grosland, and Walter Rennerfeldt. The band meets for nine weeks each summer starting in July and plays open-air concerts in the members' home towns. The band winds up its season by playing at the Traverse County Fair grandstand each September. Musicians vary in number from 50 to 60 each season.

A teen-age German Band named the Polka Dots was playing in the early 1960's.

Last but not least, we are always proud to listen to performances by the Wheaton High School Band which has musically inspired the community for many, many years. Playing in high school band concerts, in parades, at Memorial Day services, and at sporting events, our many young musicians have had excellent training and experience, and they have provided the Wheaton community with many hours of good listening pleasure.

## **THEATRES**

While the very first movies shown in Wheaton had been at the "Opera House", in September, 1908, the Ideal Theatre, a movie theatre as we know it, opened for business in the present Corner Drug block. Schnock Brothers were the proprietors, and the movies were silent motion pictures projected on an Edison moving picture machine. The theatre was open each evening with a complete change of pictures three times a week. Admission was 10 cents for young and old. In 1911 the theatre was taken over by Lawrence Nelson, renamed the Grand Theatre, and a new motion picture machine installed.

A collection of the old silent movies is owned by Vernon Haugland and may still be seen at his "Ike's Chicken Shack" on Lake Traverse during his open season.

The second theatre, the Grand Theatre, opened in 1920 in a new building near the Palmer House. It had a seating capacity of over 300, and Mr. Hasbrauch was manager. Ownership was transferred to Mike DeFea in 1922, who moved to South Dakota in 1932 and left his brother Pete operating the Grand. It was during the DeFea era, in the late 1920's, that movies came in with sound, a major transformation in the movie-making industry. The Grand burned down in 1934 along with the adjacent furniture store, and in October Tom Hetherington began the construction of a new \$15,000.00 theatre on the same site. He leased the new theatre to Kenneth Jahnigs in 1935, and it was renamed the Gem Theatre. Jahnig left the Gem in 1940 to build his own theatre, and it was operated first by Sandow Holman and then by Hetherington himself, who renamed it the Wheaton Theatre. It closed permanently January 27, 1946.

A popular feature of the 1930's was "bank night". People registered for a cash drawing, with the "pot" increasing each week if the person whose name was drawn was not there to claim the prize. "Bank night" always drew a full house.

The new Gopher Theatre operated by the Jahnigs is the same theatre in operation today. Dorothy (Swedberg) Jackson was the winner of a contest to name the new theatre. After Jahnig's death in 1944, Tom Hetherington ran both theatres in town until the Wheaton closed. The business was sold to James and Veronica Goggin in 1953, and Veronica (Goggin) Olson has run it since the death of her husband in 1961.

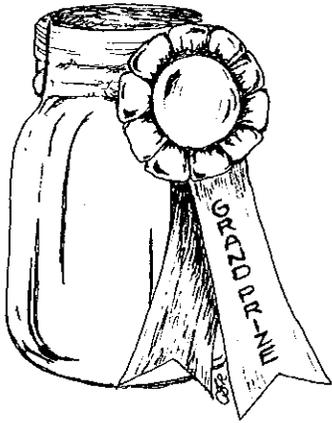
## **WHEATON SWIMMING POOL AND PARK**

After several efforts over the years to have a swimming pool in Wheaton, the deed was accomplished in 1964-65. The non-profit Minn-Kota Recreation Association was formed, and \$25.00 shares of stock were sold to buy the land and raise local funds. When the required \$20,000.00 local money was available, the Association became eligible for a Farmers Home Administration loan to finance the cost of the pool complex. Construction commenced in August, 1964. The pool opened June 6, 1965, with about 100 youngsters braving the cool breeze and unheated water to try out their new pool. A pool heater was added in 1968 following another fund drive for that purpose.

The first pool manager was Jim Henkes. Youngsters from Rosholt, South Dakota, were the first to receive Red Cross swimming instructions.

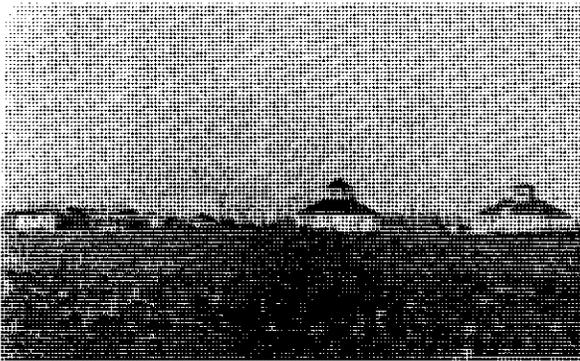
In 1979 the City Council authorized purchase of the swimming pool from the Minn-Kota group for \$1.00 plus assumption of the outstanding FmHA loan in anticipation of receiving a grant to cover most of the cost. Late that summer the federal government came through with a grant of \$30,200.00 for the purchase of the pool.

The city-operated pool has continued to provide the community with safe and educational swimming, and the park where it is located in the southwest part of Wheaton has been a well-maintained area for picnicking, camping, and enjoying the Dairy Dipper facility, a convenient fast-food stop for hungry swimmers and their families.



# Traverse County Fair

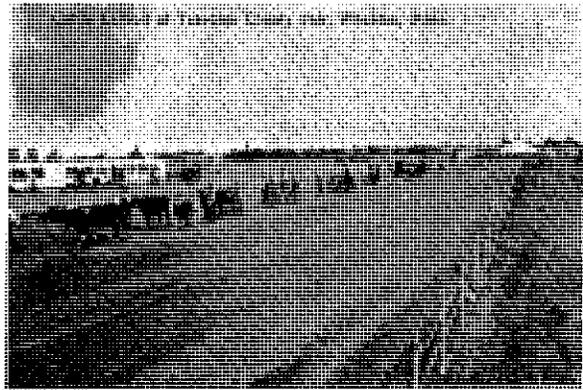
The Traverse County Agricultural Association was organized in Wheaton under a Certificate of Incorporation dated April 16, 1907. The general purpose of the association was to aid, develop and promote the agricultural resources of this section of the country. Thirty-six acres were purchased



One of the first photos of the county fair, taken after the first buildings were constructed.



Buildings were gradually added at the fairgrounds, but the "round building" always remained as the very core of the site.



Cattle were paraded past the grandstand in 1910.

on the south side of Wheaton for the fair site.

The first annual fair was held September 19, 20 and 21, 1907. Thursday was promoted as Children's Day, Friday was White Rock Day and Saturday was Old Settlers' Day. Over 5,000 people attended the first fair. Lillie Heidelberger was elected Queen of the Fair, and a diamond ring was awarded her. A race track was built the first year, and races have been held each year as a main attraction to the fair.

In 1978 the fair board began booking major recording stars for grandstand entertainment. Such stars as the Statler Brothers, Barbara Mandrell, Charley Pride, Johnny Cash, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Alabama, and the Oak Ridge Boys have appeared. Because of the great costs involved in booking these acts, it was decided to construct a permanent roof over the stage and track areas as protection from inclement

# Follow The Crowd and Attend The 1913 Traverse County Fair

At Wheaton, Minn., September 17, 18 and 19

First Day--Children's Day. Second Day--Neighboring Towns' Day. Third Day--Home-Coming Day

**D**ON'T fail to bring in your entries to the various departments, in a friendly contest for the large prizes offered by the Association. The large up-to-date Stock Barn recently erected gives ample opportunity to display the splendid stock in this community, and the other departments as well will be carefully looked after by the Superintendent in charge. By all means come and see the numerous attractions provided for, including two Air-Ship flights daily, a Ladies' Relay race, and spirited Horse races between well matched thoroughbreds. With the bounteous harvest now assured one can easily secure suitable material to enter the various contests and afford to take a three-days' rest from the strenuous harvest season.

Music by the Wheaton Junior Band



Yes, You are Invited

To visit this splendid exposition which represents the progress and prosperity of our great and growing region. Besides there's mirth and merriment and you will begin to imagine the great fun to be had by you—so come along with your friends to the wheat and sign language extravaganza.

To Tickle Your Funny Bone

A splendid array of attractions and jay walking stunts that will simply drive "that cork" and the "gibson bug" to the tail of the fence. Topnotchers only are found at this gathering. Every minute an hour of pleasure! Every hour a leap of joy!

A Whole Lot of Money

has been spent for your information, entertainment and recreation at this great exposition of progress products. Many times more than your money's worth in real healthy recreation, fun and frolic—as you'll agree if you come and see. It's easily the biggest and best fair in all this region and you simply can't afford to stay away this year. COME.

Some of Our County Fair Buildings



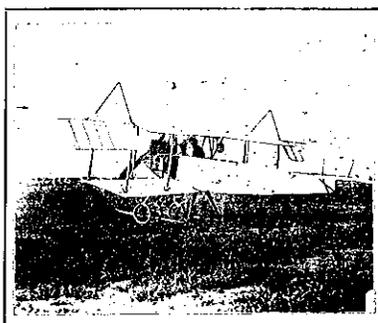
Won't You Come Too?

If you don't you'll surely miss the best all round fair ever held anywhere. Interesting and instructive exhibits in great variety—marvels in machinery and mechanism—besides there's a whole lot of fun and cheerful entertainment in store for you and your friends.

BE SURE AND COME

## RACING PROGRAM

First Day--Sept. 17th	
Farmers' Trot or Pace	Purse 50.00
Wagon Race	Purse 25.00
Tug of War, between the Germans and Swedes, teams to consist of 10 on each side	Purse 5.00
Second Day--Sept. 18th	
2:30 Trot or 2:35 Pace	Purse \$200.00
Free-For-All Running Race	Purse 150.00
Tug of War, between the Norwegians and Irish, teams to consist of 10 on each side	Purse 5.00
Third Day--Sept. 19th	
2:20 Trot or 2:25 Pace	Purse \$250.00
Ladies' 5-mile Relay Race	Purse 150.00
Tug of War, between the two champion nationalities pulling the first 2 days	Purse 5.00
Other races being arranged for. See entry blanks.	



\$3,500 in Premiums  
For Exhibits

And the largest display for competition in all departments is assured. Something doing all the time for old and young.

EXCELLENT  
Carnival Shows

Merry Go-Round, Automobile Rides, Big Amusement Brass Bands, Prominent Speakers.

Lay Aside Your Work  
and Worry

For all three days and feast on the good things that are planned and are in store for you. Watch the local papers and fair posters for particulars.

O. C. NEUMAN, President

A. T. RUSTAD, Secretary

The 1913 Traverse County Fair was promoted with this advertisement in the Wheaton Gazette.

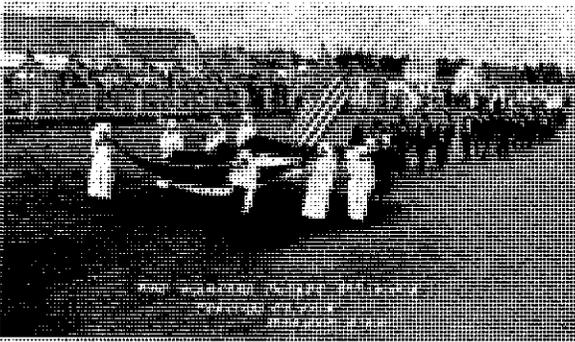


**The midway at the Traverse County Fair has seen many changes over the years. This is the way things looked in 1928. Note that there is another obvious change today. In the photo virtually all men are dressed for the occasion — in white shirt and tie.**

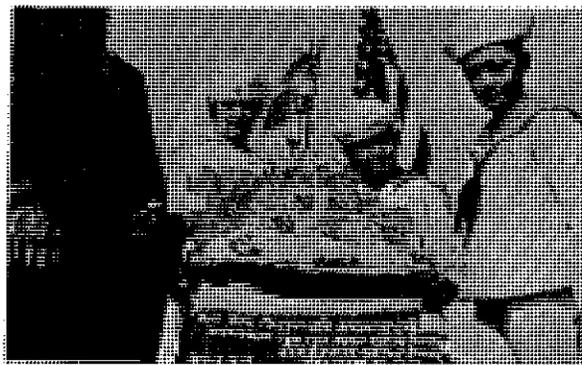
weather. A number of times since the roof was built it has paid for itself by providing shelter for the performers as well as the audience. As many as 7,000 people have been entertained at one show. It is planned to continued with "big name" entertainment as long as the interest and support of the community warrants it.

The Traverse County Fairgrounds has maintained an amazing degree of integrity, making it a particularly good example of a county fairgrounds site. For this reason it was included in the 1983-84 historic site survey conducted in Traverse County by the Minnesota Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office and was one of the nominees for the National Register of Historic Sites.

The round exhibit building was built in 1908. This building was unique in that it is one of only a very few truly round buildings. The county school building was built in 1910, the women's building in 1911, and the stock barn in 1913. The first grandstand was erected in 1912 but had to be replaced in 1924. A 500-seat addition was built in 1938



**This was the War Workers Parade at the 1918 county fair. Patriotism flourished as Red Cross workers in white garb, pictured above, and horsemen and a band, below, paraded in front of the fairgrounds grandstand.**



**Youngsters, dressed in uniforms of Red Cross workers and servicemen, had a hand in displaying patriotism at the 1918 fair. This cake, called "Our General Pershing's Birthday Cake," was to be auctioned off, with proceeds going to the Red Cross.**



**Judging stallions at the 1914 Traverse County Fair.**



**An early view of the fairgrounds looking from the main entrance down toward the track and grandstand.**



**A postal card with a postmark of 1912 showed this scene, with the caption, "Taking in the Fair, Wheaton, Minn."**

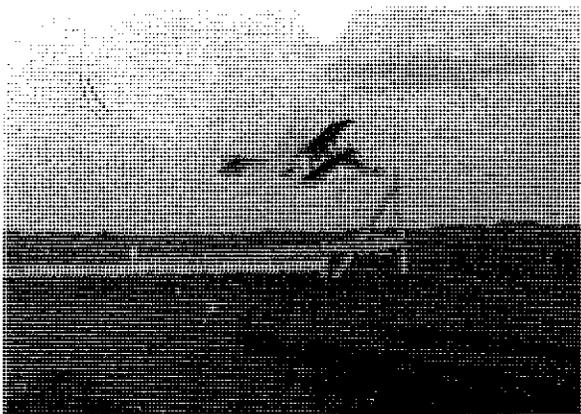
as part of a WPA project, as well as a baseball and football field on the infield area of the race track. These facilities were used by the Wheaton school for many years. A horse exhibit barn which was constructed in 1915 is now used for commercial exhibitors during the fair. The dance hall was built in 1919 and first used as a dining hall. Over the years other buildings have been added



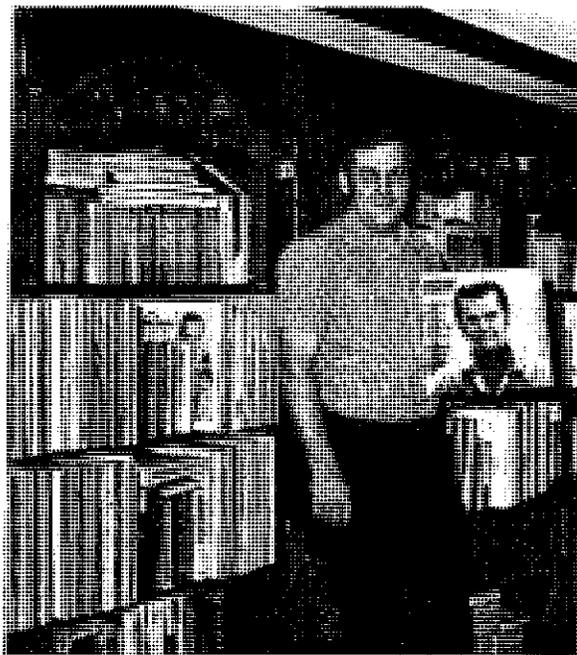
**A partial inside view of school exhibits in "Williams Hall" during the fair of 1912. At that time there was a great deal of participation in the fair by schools in the county. This building was named after County Superintendent of Schools C. T. Williams.**

with the help of service organizations in town. In 1966 federal funds were received for renovation, providing employment for fourteen people for the summer months.

The fair has been held annually in September except for the year 1946, when it was cancelled because of fear of polio during the polio epidemic.



Fairgoers in 1913 were given the thrill of a lifetime. They actually saw an airplane fly. This plane was brought into Wheaton by railroad car, taken out to the fairgrounds and took off in the middle of the race track.



Fair board secretary John Muellenbach shows a Conway Twitty album, promoting a fair that featured the popular singer on stage. Muellenbach was the driving force to bring "big name" entertainment to the fair starting in 1978. The switch in entertainment has made the fair one of the biggest and most popular in the state.



For many years the Tri-State Band has been a special attraction at the Traverse County Fair. This was the look of the band in 1951.



**Attendance at the Traverse Fair has continued to grow over the years. This was the look of things from a ferris wheel at the 1965 fair.**

Unique features of the fair have included a daily balloon ascension in 1908, midget car racing in 1953, tractor pulling contest starting in 1964, and mud wrestling in the 1980's. Seventy horses were entered in the harness races in 1940. A specially designed vehicle-mounted starting gate was used for racing starting in 1952.

Because of good maintenance and management on the part of the Fair Board, the Traverse County Fair has consistently been deemed one of the most successful county fair operations in the State of Minnesota.



**Early auto racing at the fairgrounds track.**



**One of the earliest commercial exhibitors at the Traverse Fair was the Tow Brady Tow Company, upholsterers.**