

THE "WINONA" HOTEL

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One hundred years ago, in 1888, historic events were taking place here, there and everywhere, marking it as a year to remember. In London, the populace was in a state of fear over the grisly White Chapel, "Jack the Ripper" murders. Our nation hung its head as it was announced that only a "handful" of American Bison (Buffalo) remained of the 50 million that once roamed our great prairies. . . all had been wantonly slaughtered for "progress".

In St. Augustine, Florida, Henry M. Flagler opened the first great luxury hotel of that state, the "Ponce De Leon". In Indianapolis our handsome new capitol building was erected, as well as the now-restored Union Station. In Warsaw, the first sanitary sewers were laid on Center and Market streets, and in Winona Lake the Beyer Bros. opened the "Spring Fountain Park, luxury" hotel, now the Winona Hotel.

The Beyer brothers, Fred, Christian and Ed, had bought the bulk of what is now Winona, from the estate of Dr. Jacob Boss in 1881. Their main objective was the many cold-flowing springs that dotted the grounds. They used the springs to cool a warehouse for their flourishing creamery business. The creamery was built just east of the old arcade-depot on the railroad. They changed the name of the area from "Boss' Spring & Grounds" to "Spring Fountain Park." The park's popularity grew unbelievably, and it was becoming well known in the midwest. Ed Beyer was instrumental in starting a chautauqua program on the grounds, due to a growing thirst for religious revival.

As success breeds more success, the Beyers decided to build a luxury hotel.

In April of 1887 construction was started, just as the first electric lights were turned on in Warsaw along Buffalo street. The block-long hotel structure was built of the best cypress, hard pine and oak available. Mr. Washington Vanator was the architect and builder. The ground-basement floor was partly of stone to give a sound foundation, and the entire front toward the lake

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had a spacious covered porch. Three other floors were given to guest rooms, a spacious lobby and dining facilities.

In June of 1888 the "Spring Fountain Park" Hotel opened and had continuous full occupancy during the season. That summer the Beyer Bros. announced a \$2,000 fireworks display for the Fourth of July.

In 1896 more room was needed, and a \$9,900 enlargement was added to the south end. When the Beyers sold Spring Fountain Park to the Presbyterians in 1894, and Eagle Lake became "Winona," the hotel was renamed the "Winona Hotel."

In the early 1900's an off-season school for girls was operated in the hotel, called the "Winona Park School" for Young Women. It was advertised as a non-sectarian, but Christian, school and home. The course of study secondary, "fitting for life" and for entrance to accredited colleges. Three hours a week were ^{given} to the study of the English Bible. Courses were offered in Music, drawing and expression. It had a faculty of "college-trained women" who were experienced teachers and who knew the value of "laying proper emphasis on cultured Christian womanhood."

Board, room and tuition for the full nine-month school year was \$250. The first semester opened September 12, 1905, Rev. Sol Dickey, president, and Miss Lottie E. Granger principal.

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