

# History Of Winona

By RUTH KAIN  
Times-Union Society Editor

The history of the Winona Chautauqua was the subject of an interesting talk by James Heaton when he addressed Zerelda Reading Club members, husbands and guests at his home recently.

Mrs. George Bowser was in charge of the program and the committee for the evening was composed of the officers: Mrs. J. N. Rodeheaver, president; Mrs. Byron Kennedy, first vice president; Mrs. Richard Glover, second vice president; and Mrs. Donald Scearce, secretary.

Mr. Heaton was for 30 years the platform manager at Winona Lake and was executive manager for 10 years. In these capacities he planned all the programs and hired the talent. He also had a fine tenor voice and was cast in the lead role in many of the plays. He is "Mr. Chautauqua" himself.

The rise and decline of the Chautauqua movement was described by Mrs. Bowser. It originated as a summer program for Sunday School teachers at Chautauqua Lake, N.Y. in 1874, and spread rapidly, reaching a peak in 1924.

A rapid decline set in the following year, attributed to the popularity of radios and automobiles. But for 50 years the Chautauquas provided the only satisfaction for cultural hunger in small communities.

## ORIGIN OF WINONA LAKE

In his talk Mr. Heaton pointed out that most of the land which now comprises the town of Winona Lake was originally sold to William Bashford on June 30, 1837 and consisted of 127.42 acres. After the death of Mr. Bashford the property fell into the hands of the Bashford heirs who sold it Dec. 13, 1852 to Dr. Jacob Boss. On March 13, 1872 Dr. Boss deeded the property to his son, Julius Boss, after having deeded to the Pennsylvania Railroad what is known as the Gravel Pit, the gravel of which was used in the construction of the railroad.

On May 6, 1881 the Beyer Brothers, J.F., C.C., and J.E., bought the property lying south of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks consisting of 94 acres. This represented the front portion of the Winona Assembly property and was bounded by a line running east and west where the Hillside cottage stands, immediately south of what is now the Billy Sunday Tabernacle, and along 7th Street, running east and west, north of the Winona Presbyterian Church, thence east and one mile along the south line of the Pennsyl-

named, expanded into an amusement park. A roller coaster, two cycloramas — one depicting the life of Christ, the other two Civil War battles, and even a race track appeared on the island. The race track lasted only two years, however, because of an agreement forbidding gambling.

In 1895 the Winona Bible Conference and Summer School purchased the land and inaugurated what became known as the Winona Movement, a chautauqua that was a combination of religion and entertainment. Others, up to this time, had been totally one or the other.

## FENCE ERECTED

A fence was erected around the town with a turnstile entrance near the north end. Streets leading from Kings Highway were fenced off, with gates at 4th, 7th, and 13th streets. Everyone, even those who lived there, paid to enter the grounds. The cost was not high, \$6 entitled one to all the programs for the season, which was more than six weeks long. Students, ministers and cottage owners were admitted for \$3. The gates remained in use until 1930.

Five schools were offered: Normal School, held in the building which is now the Free Methodist Headquarters; Agriculture School, in the Westminster Hotel; Girl's School, in the Winona Hotel; Boy's School in the Daguerre (Photography) School building; and the Music School, located in a building that later burned at 7th Street and Kings Highway. Some of the famous directors of the Winona Bible Conference and Summer School included H. J. Heinz, the canned food magnate; John M. Studebaker, maker of wagons and later automobiles; and Alexander MacDonald, president of Standard Oil of Ohio.

## TRANSPORTATION

Tourists arrived by many methods. The Pennsylvania Railroad stopped by the Eagle Arcade where passengers could disembark and visit the restaurants and shops. The Big Four Railroad was met by a launch that brought passengers to Winona through a canal west of the present high school. Local residents came by street car, horse and buggy, and eventually by car. The Interurban Electric Line, which was 64 miles long, ran near Winona. This railroad was called the "connecting link" as it joined the New York Central at Goshen to the Wabash Railroad at Peru.

The powerhouse for this railroad was located near the present Litchfield Creamery. It also served the local street



**LAKE CRUISES** — The steamboat Warsaw, capacity 150 passengers, regular sightseeing cruises around Win

missions. At the site of the present skating rink was a boathouse with 200 boats for rent, the only ones available.

A bathhouse could be used for 10c and a bathing suit rented for an additional fee.

A steamer, "City of Warsaw," could accommodate 150 passengers on a leisurely cruise around Eagle, as Winona Lake was then called, and Little Eagle Lakes.

The Society also owned a golf course, east of the present Arnolt Corporation, a

vanilla railroad.  
Later, the Wilcox property, where the Auditorium is located, and the Furlong and Kelly properties were acquired. The Furlong property included the Bethany Camp, now the Winona School of Theology. The Kelly property lay south of that and contained what is now the Chicago Boy's Club property. The Kellys were grandparents of Mrs. George Heaton.

The Beyer brothers were produce men, large dealers in butter and eggs. Natural springs in the area created a means of refrigeration for their product. As buyers from large cities began doing business in Winona, the Beyers created entertainment facilities. A summer resort gradually evolved and in the early 1890's, Spring Fountain Park, as the area was

cars and provided electricity for warsaw and Winona. The heat was piped under Chestnut street.

Room and board ranged from \$6 to \$10 a week. Besides the larger hotels, Westminster Hotel, Winona Hotel and the Inn Hotel, one could stay at the Swiss Terrace, the Franconia, the Otterbein, or the Heights, to name a few.

The grounds were beautifully kept. Fish ponds, flower gardens and statuary abounded. Mr. Heinz gave "The Student", a statue carved in Paris, the "Stone Lion", made in China; and a large bell from the Boxer Rebellion. The latter stood east of the old Auditorium, which seated 2,600 persons.

In order to balance the budget, the Winona Society inaugurated a few other money raising ventures beside ad-

souvenir store, restaurant and a drug store. Rooming houses had to pay a 5 per cent commission on rents collected.

There was always something to do in Winona. One could attend the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, which met every morning, a cooking school or a health lecture. Plays, modern as well as Shakespeare, magicians, movies, religious operas, children's operettas, band concerts and special events were scheduled.

#### VENETIAN NIGHT

One such special event was the annual Venetian Night. Seats were erected along the canal, boats donated by the Society were gaily decorated along given themes, and prizes awarded. The last such pageant was held in 1917 when a near tragedy occurred. A float denoting the



**WINONA HOTEL** — In 1890 when Winona Lake was known as Spring Fountain Park, the main part of what is now the Winona Hotel was the Eagle Lake

Hotel and was considered the finest hostelry in any Indiana watering place.

## Thanksgiving Service Set At Silver Lake

The Silver Lake Ministerial Assn. will hold a community-wide Thanksgiving eve service, Nov. 24 at the Eel River Church of the Brethren, located five miles east of Silver Lake on State Rd. 14. The service begins at 7:30 p.m.

Rev. Dewey Findley will direct the program. Others taking part include, Rev. William Parrett, pastor of the Silver Lake Wesleyan Church, bringing the message; and Miss Karen Sells, singing a solo. A combined choir, composed of members from the participating

churches, will furnish several selections with the Thanksgiving theme. Mrs. Jean Kerlin will direct the choir.

Refreshments will be served following the service. The public is invited.

## Named Member Of Family Test Group

Mrs. Max M. Anglin, Rt. 2, Warsaw, has been named a member of the Countryside Family Test Group of Farm Journal, Inc. according to Mary Sheldon, director.

The 500 member-families who make up the group are selected for their special skills and interests in countryside living, homemaking and community work. They are located all across the country.

## Nurserymen Elect Max Beer New President

Members of the Indiana North Central Nurseryman's Assn. elected Max Beer, of Milford, president at a recent quarterly meeting held at Piercetown. Marion Dueall of Marion was named vice president.

Mrs. Max Beer will serve as secretary-treasurer. The meeting was attended by 22 area nurserymen, landscapers, and their wives.

The group exchanged ideas and views on nursery growing and talked about new techniques of landscape design and maintenance.

# Chautauqua Re-Lived



City of  
le reg-  
a Lake

in those Halcyon days of long ago. A highlight of a stay at Winona Lake was a moonlight cruise on a balmy summer evening. The pic-

ture was made from a collection of glass plate negatives, owned by Oren Burnworth, of Warsaw.

nes of a drunkard and a temperance  
n capsized when the drunkard fell  
rboard and the other passengers all  
hed to his aid.  
Col. Herbert Petrie's White Hussars  
nd was a crowd favorite. An artist or  
raction was usually invited to appear  
ce every two or three years. The White  
ssars performed in Winona eight out of  
a years, something of a record on the  
hatauqua Circuit.

her own right and sang with Homer for the  
Chautauqua programs.  
Rev. Billy Sunday, a former baseball  
player who converted more than a  
million persons to Christianity in his  
lifetime, never charged for his ap-  
pearances in Winona, and all donations  
given on Monday nights, wherever he  
was speaking, were donated to the Wi-  
nona Assembly. The Billy Sunday  
Tabernacle was dedicated in 1920.

Adm. Richard E. Byrd and Ronald  
Amundsen, Arctic explorers; Thomas R.  
Marshall, Vice President of the United  
States under Woodrow Wilson, and a  
native of North Manchester and Colum-  
bia City; Russell Conwell, author of  
"Acres of Diamonds"; Glenn Curtiss,  
aircraft builder and inventor; and Will  
Rogers, not an artist but an "institution",  
according to Mr. Heaton.  
Poets appearing at Winona included

**HOMER AND BILLY**  
 Two men whose names have become synonymous with Winona Lake were Homer Rodeheaver and Billy Sunday. Homer Rodeheaver was described by Mr. Heaton as a versatile entertainer who could sense the mood of an audience and adapt his performance to it. He was not only a liberal donor to the Winona Society, but through his School of Music sponsored the appearance of such famous artists as Marian Tally, Gladys Swarthout and The Travelers. His younger sister, Ruth Thomas, studied voice in Europe and returned to teach at the School of Music. She was an artist in

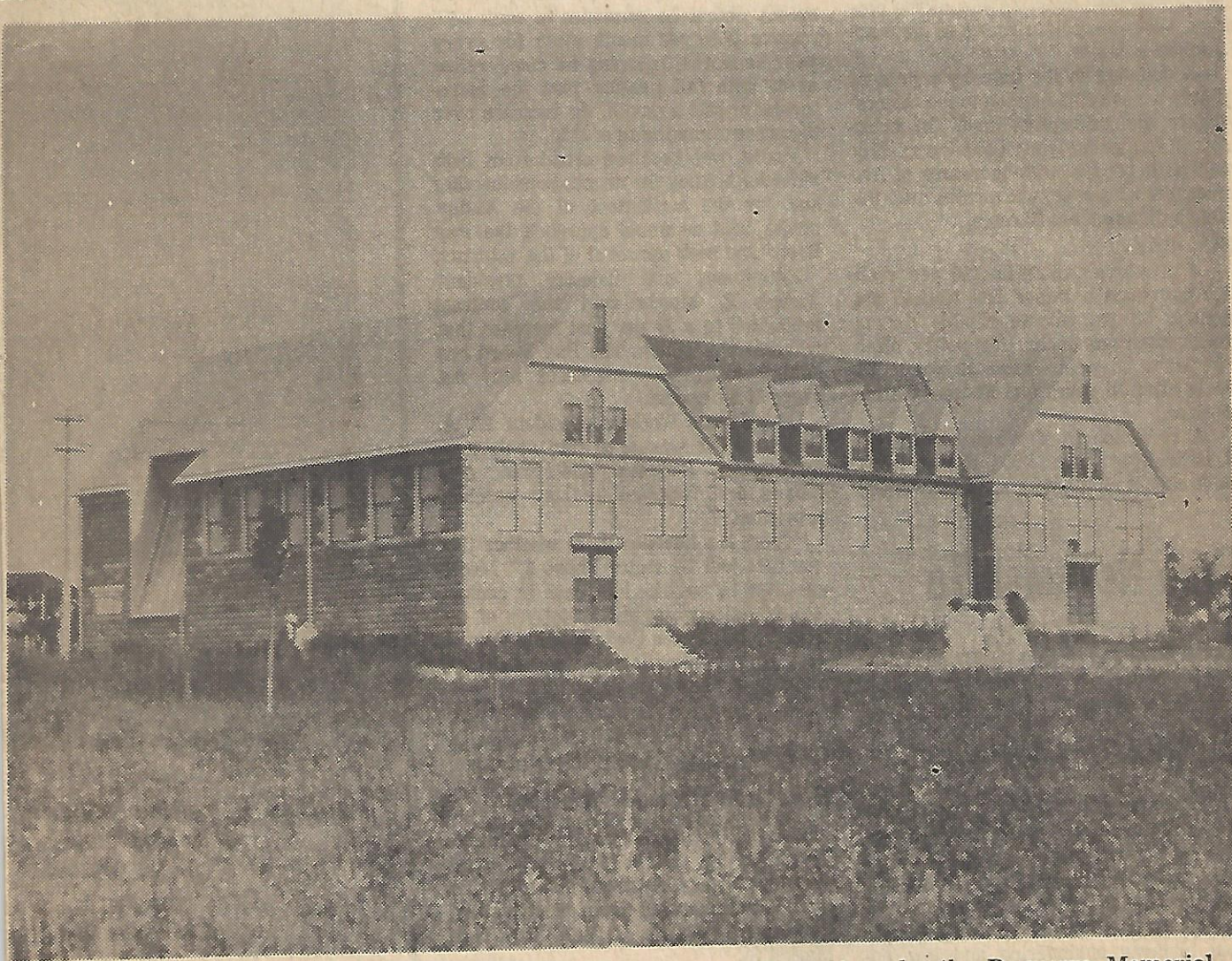
Club had close connections with the Chautauqua movement. Mrs. Louis Jonas' grandfather, George V. Roscoe, was director of a band and orchestra that played in Winona for several complete summers. Mrs. J. N. Rodeheaver was for three years the official accompanist at the famous Lakeside Chautauqua in Ohio. Mrs. Petrie sang with her husband's band, the White Hussars.

**FAMOUS LECTURERS**

Lecturers who appeared here included William Jennings Bryan, the "silver tongued orator," who was president of the Winona Assembly for two years;

Guest. The list of operatic stars and instrumental virtuosos included all the great names of the period, e.g., Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heinck, Amelita Galli-Curci, Mischa Elman, Charlotte Lund, Evan Williams, Efrem Zimbalist and Albert Spaulding.

Mr. Heaton, now 92 years old, presented all these famous people, and many more, to the Winona Chautauqua stage as master of ceremonies. In many instances he also conducted them around the grounds. In his possession are actual recordings and autographed pictures of many of these stars of yesteryear.



**DAGUERRE BUILDING** — The building which houses the Photography School sponsored by the Photographers' Association of America each summer, was once used as a gymnasium. It was built

early in the century by the Daguerre Memorial Commission, named in honor of Louis Daguerre (1789-1851), the French inventor of the daguerrotype, a forerunner of modern photo processes.

**18 Club Members Respond To Roll Call At Meeting**

The Magazine Club met Wednesday evening at the home of Mrs. John Gillette with Mrs. Charles Beanblossom presiding.

Eighteen members responded to roll call with favorite quotations.

Following the club collect and reports by Mrs. Robert Chamness and Mrs. Gillette, collections were taken for the Cheer Fund and also to assist the Navaho Indians.

Mrs. Paul Landis presented an interesting program concerning Iran, and spoke of Douglas McArthur III who serves as U.S. Ambassador there. She

also described the four large jet airports and the displays of wealth and pagentry on many occasions, and also the extreme poverty, which exists in this land of more than 26 million people.

A miscellaneous auction was conducted by Mrs. John Whiteneck and delicious refreshments were served by the hostess, assisted by Mrs. Milton Keebler.

The next meeting will be held Dec. 8 at the home of Mrs. Robert Chamness.