

ELMHURST HISTORY HIGHLIGHT: ELMHURST IN 1900

In the year 1900, Elmhurst had 1,728 residents. Incorporated as a village in 1882, issues addressed by the Village Board included installation of cement sidewalks, streetlights, sewers, stone crosswalks, and the development of new subdivisions. An ordinance passed in 1900 also provided a street numbering plan. The village limits were from North Ave. to St. Charles Road and from Poplar Ave. to Myrtle/Hagans with an extension west to Villa Ave. and a small triangular area at Lake Street, North Avenue and Emroy.

The village was a mix of large estates, modest brick and frame homes, and farms. There was a strong German influence in the community since many of the residents were of German descent. The business district centered around York Street and the Chicago and North Western Railroad. The majority of the businesses were housed in frame buildings with residences interspersed among the stores. The Glos Block was an imposing three-story brick structure on the southeast corner of York Street and Park Avenue that housed the post office, the bank, a grocery store, and a public hall. Electricity, telephone service, and water were available to Elmhurst residents, but were relatively new to the community, so not everyone had access to them.



Members of the Elmhurst Volunteer Fire Department on Schiller Street, 1908. M2013.1.55



Elmhurst Public School, circa 1900. P73.1.4

The Village Hall, with a jail in the back, was on the south side of Schiller Street. The Elmhurst Volunteer Fire Department provided fire protection. There was a Marshall/Constable as well as a Policeman/Street Commissioner to maintain order.

There was one public school, Elmhurst Public School, a two-story brick building on Cottage Hill Avenue at Arthur Street for

students through 8th grade, with an attached building for Elmhurst High School students. There were also three parochial schools: St. Peters, Immanuel Lutheran, and St. Mary's (later renamed Immaculate Conception).

The Proseminary, predecessor to Elmhurst College, had about 100 male students in 1900 and the curriculum was in German. There were five churches, all in frame buildings: Immanuel Lutheran, Christ Church, Evangelical St. Peters, Bird's Nest Chapel, predecessor to Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, and St. Mary's Catholic Church.

The Chicago and North Western Railroad provided commuter service to Chicago and by 1902, Elmhurst was also being served by the Aurora Elgin and Chicago Railway. Automobiles were still rare in Elmhurst, but the village did pass an ordinance in 1903 setting the speed limit at 8 mph.

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