

A CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE
TOWN OF SUNMAN, INDIANA, FROM
AN INDUSTRIAL AND ETHNICAL
VIEWPOINT 1851 - 1956

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty
Of Saint Meinrad College of Liberal Arts
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

Sylvan Lee Luhring
May 14, 1971
Saint Meinrad College
Saint Meinrad, Indiana



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. Beginning of Sunman 1815-1851.....	I
II. A Major Step In Development.....	5
III. Sunman 1860-1900.....	11
IV. Sunman 1900-1956.....	18
APPENDIX.....	28
FOOTNOTES.....	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	37

CHAPTER I

BEGINNING OF SUNMAN 1815-1851

Before one can delve into the actual account of the history of Sunman, Indiana, a certain amount of background must be supplied to show the circumstances revolving around the establishment of the Sunman Community in 1851. In trying to supply such information, in order to show the development of the surrounding area along with that of Sunman itself, I have found it necessary to begin the account in the year 1815 with the arrival of the first settlers to the community and to continue to the year 1851.

The earliest known record of someone living in the community of Sunman, Indiana, is attributed to Richard Wortman and his wife, Dorcas, who settled in the wilderness about five miles west of the present site of the town of Sunman. Mr. and Mrs. Wortman migrated from Kentucky in 1815. However, it is not until several years later that there were any official records confirming the fact that the Wortmans were the first settlers living in the area. This official record was a United States Patent of Land deeds which on March 24, 1836, granted Mr. Wortman 120 acres of wilderness in the aforementioned area.^I

As far as the historical records are concerned, the earliest official land deeds of the area were given to John Sunman and his son, Thomas Sunman, on March 20, 1835, when they gave up the comforts and securities of home life in England and immigrated to the North American continent. They settled in the forests of this area in 1819 on a 200 acre tract of timberland one mile west of the present site of Penntown.²

In the following months the Anthony McKee family also took up residence in the area a few miles east of the Wortman homestead on a place now known as Kammeyers Corner in September, 1835.³ A short time afterwards, new settlements began to spring up everywhere, especially in the vicinity of present day Penntown, with the arrival of the families of John Carrius, John Clark (June 17, 1836),⁴ and Thomas Summersville (March 22, 1836).⁵ Eventually, by the middle of the 1830's several new families had found their way into this region, some of them being the Bennett family, the Johnson family, that of William Bowers and the Bensons. Also among these pioneering families were the Perrines, the Vances, The Moons, and the Hollensbes.

During this time most of the people settling in the area were either of English or Pennsylvania Dutch origin but it also saw the advent of a group of German Roman Catholic families settling in the area of Nicholasville, about three miles west of Sunman. The families were those of Nicholas Behr, Louis Retzner, John Gauck, Joseph Schmaltz (March 21, 1835),⁶ Michael Forthofer (March 24, 1835),⁷ and Nicholas Federle. These families came mainly from the area around the Province of Baden-Wurtenburg, in Germany.⁸

As time progressed even closer to 1851, more people began moving into the community and establishing residency. Dirt roads were carved out of the forests connecting one family to another and sometimes even communities.

Two of the most predominant and most traveled roads were the one running east and west connecting Lawrenceburg with Nicholasville, and the one stretching north and south connecting Brookville and Versailles. It was at the intersection of these two roads that the town of Sunman originated and began its trek down through the pages of history to the present. It is also the geographical center of the town today. In bisecting each other they also quartered a section of land 160 acres in area into tracts of land forty acres each. The southeast quarter of this section was purchased by Fred Leffler on November 19, 1855.⁹ The northeast part was purchased by Barzilla Stuwart and the southwest forty by John Werde. These three men erected cabins and lived on their own land. The northwest section, however, was owned by Peter Bleistein, who took up residency elsewhere. There were no dwellings on his land which like the other three sections were comprised of forests and swamps.¹⁰

In 1851, John Tangman, then only nineteen, purchased a parcel of land from John Werde for ten dollars at the intersection of the two roads.¹¹ Here he erected a cabin which he used for a home and also for a trading post business.¹² This was the first business at the crossroads, then known as Smith's Switch. (The origin of this name is unknown.)

CHAPTER II

A MAJOR STEP IN DEVELOPMENT

Along with the establishment of John Tangman's new business establishment came a very important turning point in the tide of the small community's fate. A railroad had been planned to connect Lawrenceburg and Indianapolis and was to pass directly through the crossroads settlement of Smith's Switch. This railroad, as will be seen from later events, literally put Smith's Switch on the map. Not only did it make the town more accessible, by providing the latest and most modern facilities in transportation, but it was also a railroader by the name of James Vanness who visualized the locality as a likely spot for a platted town. It was a railroad stockholder and also one of the earliest settlers in the community for whom the town was eventually named.

The right-of-way for the railroad having been granted, and the land surveyed and staked out, the workers began to lay the tracks from the Lawrenceburg terminal. By 1852 the operation had covered about nineteen miles and began to enter the southeast section of town on the property belonging to Fred Leffler.

At this point Smith's Switch took another step in the advancement of business. Albert Stewart, a neighbor to John Tangman, was engulfed in the spirit of enterprise and built an addition on to his cabin in order to

accomodate anyone needing room and board, especially the railroad workers.¹³ Thus the first hotel came into existence in the village.

As time went on and the railroad got deeper into this community, many more people began to realize the great opportunities which the railroad had opened for them. The people on the railroad were also becoming conscious of the future that lay in waiting for the community. James Vanness was one of these people. He was the second section foreman (successor to Thomas Gavey the first boss) and engaged in steps for the platting of the town.

The construction of the railroad continued for quite some time since all the work was done without the help of modern machinery and explosives but rather with pick and shovel. Finally, on October 3, 1853, it was completed and that day was filled with all the festivities of a fourth of July. People came from miles around gathering on both sides on the track to welcome the first train as it entered the village where it stopped to refuel. The train consisted of a little wood burning engine and two wooden coaches conducted by George Tyre and engineered by George Matthews. With the arrival of this new form of faster transportation the people began to increase their croppage, sending the harvest to the city for sale. Smith's Switch became and was known for many years as one of the largest shipping centers for farm products between Cincinnati and Indianapolis.¹⁴

During this time, James Vanness had been growing in prominence in the village and upon purchase of his first tract of land in the southeast forty section, the community became variously known as Vanness' Switch or Leffler's Station. However this alternation was discontinued in April 1856, when Mr. Vanness purchased a large parcel of land and had it surveyed and

and platted. At this time he designated the village to be named Sunmansville after his friend and financial backer Thomas Sunman, who was one of the stockholders of the railroad and, as mentioned before, one of the first settlers in the community.¹⁵ Vanness bought more land on April 17, 1857, thus making two additions to his plat.¹⁶ One addition was purchased from John Werde. This plat extended from what is presently Meridian street to the west line of the Galbraith property and south from the railroad to Vine Street and containing in all 116 lots.^{17*} The second addition was purchased in the north west forty from Peter Bleistein. The name Sunmansville was kept until the establishment of the first Post Office in the early sixties when the 'ville was dropped and the name shortened to Sunman.¹⁸

The name of the railroad was also changed around this time as its terminals were extended. It was first called the Lawrenceburg and Indianapolis Railway - those being the two terminals at each end of the line. Eventually the line became known as the Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Lafayette Railway and later in the summer of 1870 it became known as the Big Four or the Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Saint Louis Railway.¹⁹ Today it is part of the New York Central System although local passenger service has been discontinued.

Now that the railroad had insured Sunmansville of good transportation and lots were available for purchase, people began to move into the area and establish new businesses. Some of the pioneers coming to the area around this time were Mrs. Sallie Jenner, Henry Hendrickson, Joseph Federle, Mrs. John Engle, and daughter Caroline, Nate Hazen,²⁰ Elmer Alden, and Louise Torrence. Caroline later married John Diver. Isaac Doles also

* See PLATE I in appendix

moved into the area. Seeing the need for houses and building materials, he opened a sawmill. It was one of the leading industries then and ranks second in today's industries. The demand for building materials also brought Joseph Stegner to the industrial profession. He opened a brickmaking factory. Nathaniel Wright opened a stove mill which provided work for many of the people in the area. Peter Bleistein opened up another general store followed by John Hashagan a few months later. Andrew Downs established the village's first saloon and was fatally wounded in an attempted holdup at his saloon.²¹ John Whitmore opened the second hotel in the town but sold out to Samuel Clark who turned it into the fourth general store.

The first railroad depot was erected on the north side of the tracks and east of the Versailles-Brookville road. The first agent of the depot was followed by Charles Marsh, Mr. Sefton, and Miles and George Ashton.²² The later became agent in 1868 and served for forty years until 1908. Mr. Wash Tucker was also involved with the area of transportation.

He built a two story frame building to be used as a hotel and a barn to house horses. This was the first livery stable in town. The hotel served as place for religious meetings, social affairs, and general public use for more than forty years.

The first school was also held in this building under the direction of Miss Hiran Close, who was succeeded by Louise Ferris, Frank Bordenhofer, Fannin Sunman, Gertrude Sunman, and Frank Horming.

Until this time the German Catholics of the area had been attending the Holy Sacrifice at New Alsace, some eight miles away. On July 26, 1836, they organized a congregation and held the first Holy Mass with Father

Joseph Ferneding in the home of Nicholas Behr.²⁵ Father Ferneding came from Oldenburg every Sunday thereafter to offer the Holy Sacrifice in the houses of the parishoners. Then in 1837 these people erected a log cabin church on the ground donated by Nicholas Behr, Louis Retzner, Joseph Schmaltz, and a protestant, Mr. Pappett. The parish was named Saint Nicholas in honor of Nicholas Feferle who cut the first log for the church.

Father Ferneding was succeeded some years later by Rev. Joseph Rudolph, also from Oldenburg, who was followed by Revs. Schneiderjans, Opermann, Munchina. Rev. Peter Kreush was the first resident pastor arriving in 1853 and it was during his pastorate that the present brick structure was erected in 1856. Successor to Father Kreush was Rev. Ignatius Klein who improved the church property by erecting a log schoolhouse in 1859. Joseph Klein, his brother served as the first teacher. Other pastors were Revs. Frudinger, Pepersack, under whose pastorate the sisters of Saint Francis, then living in Oldenburg, began teaching in 1866; Revs. Stolz, Schuck, and Sepee; Rev. Gilig under whom the present brick schoolhouse and rectory were erected; Revs. Schwartz, Hilbert, Koester, Whiteman, Zogleman, Sonderman, Schnieder, Raap, Schenk, Riehle, Terstage, Jansen, Conan, John R. Betz, Widolf, Hillman, Weidman and McLoughlin.²⁶

In the town of Sunmansville itself there was no established church or denomination as such. A Union Sunday School was held in the public building and the first Christmas Tree celebration was held here when Michael Stegner was superintendent and Miles Ashton was Secretary. Balsar Trautman was in command of the celebration and a minister-fiddler, the Rev. B. J. Ferris came to provide the only music.²⁷

CHAPTER III

SUNMAN 1860-1900

The decade of the sixties saw the beginning of a steadier development in the small community's businesses which have persisted throughout the years with amazing results. On March 6, 1860, Herman Nieman bought a tract of land from John Tangman along with the later's business. Mr. Nieman erected a brick building on the site and transferred the business to this building.²⁸

The year 1861 brought hardships for most of the people of the area, especially the farmers. Many head of livestock and poultry perished in the early days of January as a result of cold weather. On New Years Day, 1861, the temperature crashed to a freezing thirty degrees below zero and remained in the minus bracket for about a week.

Later on in the summer, however, the town acquired its first physician, Dr. Preston. The arrival of Dr. Preston was the relief of a tremendous burden for the townspeople since before that time the sick were tended to with several different types of home remedies. A flour and grist mill was also opened this year by William Bennett and Jack Holsmier. In 1867 both Bennett and Holsmier sold to Herman Nieman. The mill in turn was operated by J. H. Nieman who conducted the mill for fifty-two years followed by

Estal Nieman. This mill aided the people of the community greatly in the grinding of wheat and other grains used in the making of bread, pastries, and food for the livestock.²⁹

The progress of the town was stifled for a while when the Civil War broke out, as men from the area went to partake in the action. In 1862 progress was pretty well brought to a stand still when eighty men from Sunmansville and the surrounding community enlisted and left with Company G of the 83rd Indiana Volunteer Regiment. Out of these eighty men fifty-eight returned at the conclusion of the war.

The Civil War also brought about much tension in 1863 when Morgan's Raiders advanced into the area on July 12, 1863. Morgan had worked his way up through Columbus, Indiana, to Versailles. Here he divided the troops upon departure from

Versailles, the main body being under Basil W. Duke. This division marching on into the night, halted at Sunman, but as there was a federal force of some 2,500 men under General Wallace, the body encamped for the night at a safe distance. At 5 o'clock on Monday morning, they resumed their march, crossed the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Railroad between Sunman's Station and Van Weddon's tore up the track near Sunman's and reached Harrison, Ohio on the state line a little after noon, July 13, 1863.³⁰

Basil W. Duke also makes an account of Morgan's Raiders entering the area of Sunmansville in his autobiography of Morgan's Calvary when he describes Morgan's entrance into Indiana.

Marching all day and the greater part of the next night we reached a point on the Ohio and Mississippi road, twenty-five miles from Harrison, called Sunmansville. Here twenty-five hundred militia lay loaded in boxcars. We halted to rest, and unconscious of our presence, although we were close to them, they moved off toward Cincinnati.³¹

Between the years 1863 and 1868 there were no businesses established. The ones already established were settling in their foundations and

development became stagnant. Most of the blame for this stagnation was pinned on the war since it had claimed the majority of the population.

Things began to brighten up towards the end of 1868. This year saw the establishment of the first baseball team in the town. The players called themselves the Sunman Grey Stockings.

In 1870 William Smith, Elmore Saltmarsh and James Stevenson established a brick and tile company. Smith later bought out Saltmarsh and Stevenson in 1874. The company was handed down to Morris Smith and after his death the company folded. Lewis Sieg also erected a building just about south of Sunman and moved into the town in 1914. Today it is the largest supplier of building materials in the town. It is presently owned and operated by McKittrick and Sons.

1873 saw the coming of Doctor E. B. Vincent to the town as the second physician and first to have graduated with a degree.³² He was the first one in the community to own an automobile and also a telephone. Shortly after the arrival of Doctor Vincent, came Doctor Freeland. He owned and operated a farm just south of Sunman. His wife was the editor of a book entitled EARLY DAYS; his daughter was one of the first teachers of Sunman; and his son is Harold Freeland³³ the author referred to at intervals throughout this paper.

The Tucker hotel was purchased in 1874 by Henry Schuck who operated it until he was appointed postmaster during President Harrison's term of office. During this year a farmers Grange Society was organized and John Bennett became president. The latter was the first chicken farmer and Thomas Sunman, the secretary, was the first sheep farmer.³⁴ Up until the turn of the century, farming was the most important part of the town's economy.

In 1881 the town saw the need to increase the facilities of education in the area. As a result the little frame building was replaced with a new two-story brick building in the west part of town. The first teachers in the new building were Dirce Freeland, Grace Henfrickson, Fran Alexander and Dora Beer.³⁵

Sunman acquired another hotel in 1882. It was owned and operated by Fredrick Walter. William Koeing opened a barber shop the same year. During the summer of this year the railroad erected a water tower and pumping station in the town. The first station attendant was George Tangman who was followed by William Stephens who served the town for eighteen years.

Doctor Christian Neuforth was the fourth doctor to settle in the community. He practiced there until his death, in 1927, having served the community for forty-four years. William and Enid Goldsmith opened another general store and huckster route to serve the surrounding areas. A cigar shop was opened by William Huneke who made such cigars as the "Dew Drop", and the "Lean Hoosier".

The next year, 1884, saw the establishment of the first jewelry and watch repair shop by Otto Beer and the first drug store by V. W. Bigney who sold out to Arthur Schene in 1919. Mr. Schene operated as the town's only druggist until 1964. That year was also the year when the Big Four Hall was built. It is now owned by the Kenneth L. Diver Post 337 American Legion of Sunman.

The small community took a huge step toward its preservation and protection in 1886 when the men of the community joined forces and organized a Volunteer Fire Department. This was the result of damages

suffered by several buildings of the town by fire a few weeks before. The first piece of equipment for the department was a hand-pumper which proved to be worth its expense many times over throughout the following years.³⁷ Today the department is the largest owner of fire-fighting equipment in a thirty mile radius. It also has twenty-two members.

This year also saw the coming of Alexander Connelly, a Baptist minister, to the town. He organized and founded the first Baptist congregation in the community during the first months of 1887. It never quite acquired a staple start collapsed a few months later.

Since farm produce was the number one source of the small community's economy, there was an opening for George and William McMullen, in 1887, to establish a meat market on the south side of town. The Sunman Building and Loan Association was founded the following year, 1888, and served the area for many years until the Bank Holidays in the early 1930's.

During this period, since metal and steel were not perfected yet, wood played a very important role in every community and Sunman was no exception. In 1890 a group of men established a woodworking plant in the town. In 1898 it was sold to the Saint Marys Spoke Works of Saint Marys, Ohio. This plant not only made spokes for wagons (although that was about seventy-five percent of its business) but it also made furniture materials to be used by the people of the area. Today it is still in existence at a New location and under the supervision of the Bacon Lumber Company of Chicago.³⁸

The last decade of the nineteenth century saw the need for a new religion in the community due to the arrival of Rev. David L. Vandament. He organized the Christian Union Society which is still the largest

religious denomination in the area. In 1891 Doctor E. B. Vincent erected a telephone line from his home to that of Walter Fitch near Penntown. This line proved to be of good use in many occasions when, due to the profession of a doctor, time was of the utmost importance. Doctor Vincent also became Chancellor Commander of the Knights of Pythias that year. The next four years were to see the organization of the F&AM Lodge No. 590 with Samuel Webster as Worshipful Master. The Enid Chapter of Eastern Star with Mrs. Mayme Smith as Worthy Matron, and the Pythian Sisters with Mrs. Minnie Bigney as leader.³⁹

Two men Mr. Bielby and Wetzler arrived in the town in 1891 and in March, 1893, bought a large amount of land just east of that owned by James Vanness. On May 14, 1894, they had the land platted for purchase by newcomers to the area.^{40*} These two men had been partners in a hardware business during this time.

1895 was a busy year for the community with the erection of four new businesses. Albert Behlmer erected a building and opened a general store. John Hashagen opened a barber shop. Robert Russell opened a print shop (the first in the town) and published a newspaper weekly called the SUNMAN PRESS. Mr. Behlmer and Mr. Bruns opened up the undertaking business.

The last two years of the century saw the passing of a major milestone in the history of Sunman. It was on March 5, 1898 that the Board of County Commissioners assembled and signed a charter of Incorporation for the town of Sunman. The Charter read thus:

That the town of Sunman be and the same is hereby declared to be the incorporated town of Sunman at the fifty day of our March session, 1898.⁴¹

* See Plate II in the appendix

CHAPTER IV

SUNMAN 1900-1956

The twentieth century began in this small but rapidly growing community with the arrival of the town's fifth doctor, Doctor Birchfield. Doctor Birchfield not only fulfilled his role as a physician but also took an active interest in the community by organizing the first Brass Band in Sunman which he led until the outbreak of World War I when it was disbanded due to insufficient participation.

The year 1900 also saw Henry Price open a confectionary and ice cream parlor in which he has made ice cream from his own recipes for over sixty years. Talbert and Galbraith purchased the saw mill and later Talvert sold out to Galbraith and sons. Today it is owned by the Bacon Lumber Company of Chicago. It was also during this year that the town's first bank came into existence, the Sunman State Bank with Christ Nieman as president. Like the Building and Loan Association it closed at the beginning of the 1930's with the Bank Holiday. Motorists were pleased this year when the first stone road was built through Sunman. This road was part of the Versailles-Brookville road that is Highway 101 today.⁴² Also during this year was the opening of Joe Wipple's tavern.

The delivery of the mail was expanded in 1901 to include most of the people in the surrounding area of Sunman. This was done with the establishment of two new mail routes.⁴³ Richard Behlmer came in Sunman this year and began work as the town's only blacksmith. His brother, Edward Behlmer, purchased the Nieman interests and continued the grocery and dry goods business. Another organization was started this year, that of the Ojibwi Tribe of Red Men with Frank Dudley as Sachem.

John Kuebel opened a livestock and feed business in the town during 1902. The following year the Sunman Fire Department erected a new one story frame building to shelter their equipment. This building was also used as the housing for the town jail, a little metal cage seven feet tall, four feet wide and six feet long. It is still the town's only place of confinement today.⁴⁴

1904 brought about the renovation of the railroad by the company. The second track was laid with an interlocking switch system, and a new station was built to pump water for the trains. This was located a mile east of Sunman. There was plenty of work this year for anyone who wanted it. McMullen's meat market also saw a great change. A long distance telephone line was hooked into the store consisting of a switchboard and an operator. In 1908 it was franchised to Southern Indiana Telephone Company and the switchboard was removed from the market. In 1912 the company was turned over to the Farmer's Telephone Company and in 1917 was purchased by Edward Behlmer. The later sold the company to the Sunman Telephone Company after operating it for three years.⁴⁵ Today it is operated by the Sunman Telephone Company under the management of Robert Miles.

March 23, 1905 will long be a memorable date in the history of Sunman,

Indiana. It was on this date that a fire, originating in the back of Butler's livery barn, spread, out of control, to several other buildings containing businesses and residences. When the fire was brought under control, by the use of the hand pump and a fire-bucket brigade, eight houses and business establishments were either destroyed or badly damaged.

The damage extended from Washington Street eastward to Meridian Street, westward to Filmore Street and to the south on Vine Street. (See PLATE V in appendix) Property destroyed included the Butler livery barn; a one-story frame building of four front businesses adjoining the livery barn to the south on Meridian Street; the two-story frame residence and hotel building of Frank Brinkman's housing John Hashagan's barber shop and grocery; Joseph Wipple's two-story brick residence and saloon building; Emory Heavy's story and a half frame residence; and Edward Cook's two-story frame residence and saloon building. All of the later were facing Washington Street. William Huneke's frame barn and tobacco storehouse; Edward Behlmer's two-story brick and frame residence and store building facing the whole length of Meridian Street from Washington to the Railroad. The water tank, at the northeast corner of the Behlmer property and used by the railroad, was destroyed despite the fact that it was full of water. Spreading across Meridian Street, the fire badly damaged the two-story Schuck residence and hotel building.⁴⁶

Although hit with a staggering blow of defeat, the town was not down yet. People of the community responded quickly and began to rebuild most of the damaged property. Also in this year the Co-Operative Canning Company was established for the purpose of canning the farm products of the area such as corn, beans, tomatoes etc.⁴⁷ This company was located at the site of the Saint Marys Spoke Works. Gus Brenner also opened a barber shop this year. Several of the dairymen of the area joined together and organized the Clover Leaf Elgin Creamery Company in this year.

Several major developments were made in the town during 1906. The first sewer line was laid and a system of sidewalks were laid throughout the town. William Polar opened a garage. It was also during this year that Doctor Vincent bought the first automobile in the town.

1907 witnessed the formation of the second bank in the town, the Farmer's National Bank with Doctor Neuforth acting as president. However, it went the way of all banks in 1930. Also in this year the Co-Operative Canning Company sold out to the Sheriff Preserve Company. The later sold to the Naas Food Corporation later.⁴⁸

Doctor Fletcher became the sixth physician of the town and having graduated from the Louisville College of Medicine, served the community for forty-eight years until 1956. In 1910, Sam Kirshner established a clothing store in the town.

Sunman radiated with electricity in 1911 for the first time when Joseph Kuebel organized the Electric Light and Power company.⁴⁹ The main street (the old Versailles-Brookville road) was the first to be equipped with this facility and then only partially. Also during this year Doctor Wilbur Robinson came and settled in the community as the seventh doctor.

The fourth platted addition to Sunman was made in the year 1912 when Walter Fitch bought a large tract of land just north of that belonging to Christ and Emma Nieman, and east of that belonging to Bielby and Wetzler.⁵⁰ (See appendix PLATE IV)

1914 was a fruitful year for the people of the area with the arrival of Maurice Neufarth who founded the second blacksmith shop in the town and operated it until the late 1950's. Authur Baeverlin opened a garage in the area this year also.

Toothaches were taken care of for the first time professionally in 1917 when Doctor Campbell settled in the town as the only dentist in the history of the town. The Red Wing Council No. 356 was organized this year also. Again, as in 1863, the developement of the town was stifled and eventually

became stagnant when, on April 12, 1917, President Wilson delivered his Call To Arms address at the outbreak of the United States' entry into World War I.⁵¹

Richard and Leonard Beer purchased the Bielby and Wetzler business in 1920 and ran a hardware-grocery store as the Beer Brothers. This year also saw the McMullen interests purchased by Herbert Cooper who sold out to Walter Osburn and Henry Trautman a few years later. This year faced the people of the community with the need for another expansion of the educational facilities in the area. So, in order to cope with the needs, a new building was erected in the northern part of the town and another addition was added in 1928.⁵² The American Legion Post 337 was formed this year by the early veterans of the war.⁵³ John Schwing also built a garage this year.

The druggist of the town, the Bigney and Company Drugs, sold out to Arthur Schene in 1921. He continued in the business until 1964. The following year, Rev. Alfred Thomas settled in the area and organized the first Sunman Community Church. Ben Boggess established residency in Sunman and became the town's first professional truck driver.

1924 saw the establishment of a new feed mill operated by Roy Nedderman and his father John. Harold Zimmerman established another garage. The following year, 1925, saw another addition to the Volunteer Fire Department, a new 1925 HOWE pumper which is still owned and operable today.⁵⁴ Standard Oil Company moved in and established a warehouse in Sunman in 1926 with Edward Schuck as operator. Raymond Brownfield purchased the business from Adam Huber, the follower of Mr. Schuck, in 1940.

One of the oldest residents of Sunman, Charles McClosky, began a watch repairing business in 1930, one year after Ollie Wuellner went into business as a contractor.

The People's Bank and Trust Company was formed in 1933 after the Bank Holidays ended and has served the community with forty-one years of successful business. It was the result of the combination of the Sunman State Bank and the Farmer's National Bank.⁵⁵ 1933 was also the year in which the Business Mens Club was organized.

Doctor McConnell took up residency here as the eighth doctor in 1934 and is operating today as a physician-surgeon and the town's only doctor. Russell Schuck took over the operation of the hotel from his father. He later sold the business and is now dealing in the refrigeration business. Ruben Roberts began his poultry trucking business at this time. John Hashagan and Howard Cook organized an undertaking service also in 1934.

The first beauty shop, owned by Mrs. Frank Weber, was opened for business in 1937 along with the first of a line of Boy Scout Troops in Sunman. It was formed by Earl Shirling who acted as the scoutmaster. The beginning of this year was full of activity for most of the people in the area when a record-breaking flood surged through the surrounding community. The Sunman railroad terminal was declared an emergency station and headquarters for the National Guard and American Red Cross. The terminal was also used as a collection center for the victims of the flood.⁵⁶

In 1938, Harvey Mosmeier opened up another barber shop with Paul Forthofer in his employ. The two later became partners in 1947. In 1955 Mr. Forthofer purchased the Mosmeier interests and is operating as sole owner yet today. The following year witnessed the establishment of the

Brunzman Farm Implement Shop which was owned by Al Brunzman. In 1951 Mr. Brunzman became partners with Joseph Hartman and operated the Brunzman-Hartman Implement Company.⁵⁷ Gilbert Webster and his wife, Edwina, started a hardware store in the north part of town this same year.

Howard Cook and his wife, Sarah, bought the Hashagan interests in the undertaking business in 1941 and the service became known as the Cook Funeral Home. Mr. Cook also operated the life squad units for the town.⁵⁸ For a short while in 1941 Edna Osburn was president of a group of ladies in an organization called the World War Mother's Club but it was disbanded at the close of the war. Two years later, 1943, the Sunman Lions Club was organized. There were forty-three Charter members and Forest Walters was the first president.⁵⁹

1945 was a year of sorrow for those who had lost loved-ones in the war but for the more fortunate it was a time of rejoicing and rapid development in the town. This time saw a rise of new additions to the businesses of the town and more people settled in the area. The Business Directory records four new establishments and a couple of transfers. Virginia Trautman became head postmistress this year following John Beer who served since 1943. Prior to this time the postmasters were (in reverse order) Henry Price, Edith Wetzler, and B. W. Bigney.⁶⁰ Annette Thornburg opened a beauty salon, Roy Hoff purchased the Schuck interests and re-established the hotel business, Charles Miller moved his fertilizer store to town, Nick Martin opened another saloon while Alma and Lisa Schazer went into the clothing business by buying the Sam Kishner interests. This year also witnessed the purchase of the Galbraith saw mill by the Bacon Lumber Company of Chicago.

1948 was another year of development. Selke Brothers Implement Store was established under management of Clifford and Kenneth Selke, Dallas Lattire bought interests in a Dry Cleaning business, Ernest Howery purchased the rights for a Mobil Oil filling station, and Adam Huber purchased a furniture store from John Hoff who started it in 1923.⁶¹ The Naas Corporation saw a change in management this year with Howard Osburn becoming the new manager and remaining in that position for seventeen years.⁶²

The next year, 1949, observed Miss Elsa Dreyer organizing the first nursing home in the town located on the south side.⁶³ The Webster Newhouse Electric Company was organized this year along with the Knueven Brothers White Villa Store which was operated by John and Joseph Knueven and later on by Willard, another brother.

In 1951 the residents of Sunman acquired the new facility of running water. A reservoir of water had been discovered in an underground lake situated beneath a large portion of the east section of the town. There were festivities in the town in 1951 with the dedication of the new water tower.

Up until this time Meridian Street was the only street in the town that had electric lighting. During this year the rest of Meridian Street was lighted along with the rest of the town. Eugene McPherson came into the community moving his mail order printing business, Standard Statements, here from Indianapolis occupying the quarters formerly owned by Marvin Luhning and his Acorn Press. Kenneth Schmidt moved his electrical and plumbing business to town from his farm location.

Louis Gillman purchased the Dot Food Store from Edna and Merideth Gunter in 1952; Alfred Schafer opened a barber shop, Wilma Vail and Ira

Brinkman started separate news agencies; and Wilbur Lewis became manager of the Ripley County Farm Bureau in Sunman.

The last two years of the century of Sunman's history passed on with Edna Gunter taking over the Merchants Creamery Company which was formerly run by Hazel Norman. Mr. Stoner came to the town as a railroad agent succeeding E. G. Ammerman. The Cub Scouts of America were organized this year. In the last year, 1956, Tom Manlif opened the Tom and Joe's Grill and Bennett Franklin purchased the Mobil Oil Station from Ernest Howery.⁶⁴

APPENDIX

[illegible]

-24-

SE 1/4 of SE 1/4
SEC 8 T9N R13E

SE 1/4 of SW 1/4
SEC 9 T9N R13E

NE 1/4 of NE 1/4
SEC 7 T9N R13E

NW 1/4 of NW 1/4
SEC 4 T9N R13E

MAP OF
SUNMAN INDIANA

SEPT 26 1941

PLANNED BY JOHN C. COBBETT

ENTERED BY HENRIE B. B. B.

-25-

PLATE III
 LAND PLATTED BY CHRIST NIEMAN
 OCTOBER 3, 1904



MAP — TOWN OF SUNMAN

[illegible]

-27-

A detailed plat map of Sunman, Indiana, showing street layouts, lot numbers, and section designations. The map includes a north arrow and a title block in the bottom right corner.

MAP OF
SUNMAN, INDIANA
 CALLED BY ACT OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
 OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SUNMAN, INDIANA
 IN THE YEAR 1894

-28-

FOOTNOTES

¹U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Ripley County Land Tract Book, Volume II, p. 65.

²U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Ripley County Land Tract Book, Volume I, p. 78.

³U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Ripley County Land Tract Book, Volume III, p. 87.

⁴Ibid., p. 17.

⁵Ibid., p. 88.

⁶Ibid., II. p. 67.

⁷Ibid., p. 87.

⁸Saint Nicholas Catholic School Centennial Program, Saint Nicholas Indiana. May 3, 1956, p. I.

⁹Land Tracts, Volume III, p. 101.

¹⁰Harold Freeland, History of Adams Township, (Batesville: Batesville Herald Tribune Publishing Company, 1950) p. 2-3.

¹¹U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Ripley County Deeds, Book W, p. 395.

¹²Sunman Lions Club, "Story of a Town", program compiled for the dedication of the water tower, 1951, p. I.

- ¹³Freeland, History of Adams Township, p. 8.
- ¹⁴Sunman Lions Club, Story of A Town, p. I.
- ¹⁵Ibid, p. I.
- ¹⁶U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Ripley County Plat Book, Volume II, p. 28.
- ¹⁷Sunman Lions Club, Story of A Town, p. I.
- ¹⁸U. S. Postal Records, Sunman Post Office, 1861.
- ¹⁹Freeland, History of Adams Township, p. 8.
- ²⁰U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Tract Book III, p. 78.
- ²¹Freeland, History of Adams Township, p. 8-9.
- ²²Editorial, Batesville Herald Tribune, Batesville, Indiana July 19, 1956, p. 8-9.
- ²³U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Tract Book I, p. 53.
- ²⁴Sunman Lions Club, Story of A Town, p. 2.
- ²⁵Saint Nicholas Centennial Program, p. 2.
- ²⁶Saint Nicholas Parish Records, Saint Nicholas Parish RR #2, Sunman, Indiana.
- ²⁷Freeland, History of Adams Township, p. 9.
- ²⁸U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Deeds of Ripley County, Book 31, p. 205.
- ²⁹Herman Nieman's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Emma Nieman, is living in the

Sunman Community at the age of 105. She has recalled for me most of the important transactions of the family to the present. Herman Nieman is her father-in-law, Christ Nieman is her husband, and Estal Nieman is her son.

³⁰ Margarette Boyer, Morgan's Raids Into Indiana, Volume VIII of the Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History, (49 vols.; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, December 12, 1912) p. 158.

³¹ Basil W. Duke, A History of Morgan's Calvary, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960) p. 439.

³² Batesville Herald Tribune, p. 9-10.

³³ Freeland, History of Adams Township, p. 18.

³⁴ Batesville Herald Tribune, p. 10.

³⁵ Records of Sunman High School, Sunman, Indiana, 1881.

³⁶ U. S. Postal Records, 1884.

³⁷ Files of the Sunman Rural Volunteer Fire Department, Sunman, Indiana, 1887.

³⁸ Bacon Lumber Company Records, Sunman, Indiana.

³⁹ Batesville Herald Tribune, p. 10.

⁴⁰ U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Plat Book II, p. 28.

⁴¹ Board of County Commissioners, Minutes of Meeting, March 5, 1898.

⁴² Batesville Herald Tribune, p. 10.

⁴³ Postal Records, 1901.

⁴⁴ Fire Department, 1903.

- 45 Sunman Telephone Company Files, Sunman, Indiana, 1908.
- 46 Editorial, Batesville Herald Tribune, Batesville, Indiana, March 30, 1905, p. 12.
- 47 Naas Food Corporation Files, Sunman, Indiana, 1905.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Public Service Company Records, Batesville, Indiana, 1911.
- 50 U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Plat Book II, p. 28.
- 51 Freeland, History of A Town, p. 28.
- 52 Records, Sunman High School, 1928.
- 53 American Legion Kenneth L. Diver Post #337, Minutes of the meetings, 1920.
- 54 Sunman Rural Volunteer Fire Department, 1925.
- 55 Peoples Bank and Trust Company, Records, 1933.
- 56 Sunman Business Directory, Sunman, Indiana 1937.
- 57 Ibid., 1938.
- 58 Ibid., 1941.
- 59 Sunman Lions Club, Minutes of first meeting, 1943, Sunman, Indiana.
- 60 Postal Records, 1945.
- 61 Sunman Business Directory, 1948.

⁶² Howard Osburn, private interview held March 22, 1971.

⁶³ Sunman Business Directory, 1949.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1950-1956.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- American Legion Kenneth L. Diver Post #337, Files, Sunman, Indiana.
- Bacon Lumber Company Files, Sunman, Indiana.
- Batesville Herald Tribune, Editorial, Volume XXVII, July 19, 1956.
- Batesville Herald Tribune, Editorial, Volume, _____, March 30, 1905.
- Board of County Commissioners, Minutes of Meeting, March 5, 1898.
- Boyer, Margarette. "Morgan's Raid into Indiana", Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History. Volume VIII, December, 1912.
- Business Directory of Sunman, Sunman, Indiana.
- Deed Records of Ripley County, Versailles Courthouse, Versailles, Indiana.
- Duke, Basil W. History of Morgan's Calvary. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960.
- Freeland, Harold. History of Adams Township. Batesville: Batesville Herald Tribune Publishing Company, 1950.
- Naas Food Corporation, Records, Sunman, Indiana.
- Nieman, Emma. Interview December 21, 1970.
- Osburn, Howard. Interview March 22, 1971.
- Peoples Bank and Trust Company, Records, Sunman, Indiana.
- Public Service Company, Records, Batesville, Indiana.
- Ripley County Land Plat Book, Volume II, Versailles, Indiana.
- Saint Nicholas Catholic School Centennial, Program, May 3, 1956.
- Saint Nicholas Parish Records, Sunman, Indiana.
- Sunman High School. Files. Sunman, Indiana.

Sunman Lions Club. Story of A Town. Program compiles for the dedication of the water tower. 1951.

Sunman Rural Volunteer Fire Department. Files. Sunman, Indiana.

Sunman Telephone Company, Records. Sunman, Indiana.

U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Deeds of Ripley County. Book W Versailles Courthouse, Versailles, Indiana.

U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Deeds of Ripley County. Book 3I Versailles Courthouse, Versailles, Indiana.

U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Ripley County Land Tracts. 3 Vols. Versailles Counthouse, Versailles, Indiana.

U. S. Patent on Land Deeds, Ripley County Plat Book, 2 Vols. Versailles Courthouse, Versailles, Indiana.

U. S. Postal Records, Post Office of Sunman, Indiana.

No. 100

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

FOR THE

LIBRARY

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ARCHABEE LIBRARY



3 0764 1003 0239 2