

THE HISTORY OF NASHUA, IOWA

**A BRIEF HISTORIC OVERVIEW
OF NASHUA
FROM 1855 - 2005**

- THE HISTORY OF NASHUA, IOWA -

THE LOCATION

“The Big Woods,” extending from Janesville to Charles City, about 40 miles long and 8 miles wide, was the best timber in Iowa. Bradford Township was in this area. Early settlers had the materials for building log cabins, sheds for livestock, rail fences, and fuel near at hand. They also had a reliable water supply from the Red Cedar River. Many saw mills were set up and moved up the river as the supply of timber was cut off. Later, some lumber mills were converted into mills for grinding grain.

Bradford Township got its name from Bradford, the chief of the Chickasaw Indian tribe. Chief Bradford was widely known in this section of Iowa prior to 1860. Traders and trappers drifted in along the Cedar River as early as 1840, but the first settlers came in 1848. Some of the first settlers were men who got their land from the government on land warrants issued to them as soldiers of the Mexican War. They had first choice and chose locations along the river, the best land in the state of Iowa. One of the settlers was Truman Merritt and his daughter, Elvira Merritt, the first white child born in Bradford Township and Chickasaw County. Merritt first settled in the Indian Trading Post and later moved to his farm south of Greenwood. Elmer Case was the first white male born in the county near Greenwood in 1851.

BRADFORD

The village of Bradford grew fast, crowded with travelers, land seekers, and immigrants. In 1851, John Bird, a pioneer from New Hampshire, started building the “House of Seven Gables.” This building

would serve as the first court house for Chickasaw County. John Bird was the first sheriff appointed under the title of "Organizing Sheriff." He played a key role in organizing Chickasaw County. Bird was a man of some means and started construction of his fine home almost immediately. This was in an era when many settlers were living in sod houses or crudely-cut log cabins.

In 1855, Bradford was a typical pioneer town of approximately 500 inhabitants. Bradford citizens were genuine frontiersmen; bold, hardy people who were willing to undergo all kinds of dangers and hardships to make a home for themselves. Most settlers were highly-educated men and women, who had left pleasant, cultured eastern homes to become the "advance guard of civilization."

The principal businesses in Bradford included general stores, hotels, wagon makers, a harness shop, tannery, a broom and organ factory, civil engineers, lawyers, a doctor's office, brewery, post office and shoemaker. The mail came to Bradford by stage coach from McGregor and later from Sturgis Falls (Cedar Falls) by horseback. Joseph Bird, Jr. carried mail between Bradford and Cedar Falls. Bird also roomed with the late Dr. W. S. Pitts, author of "The Church in the Wildwood."

Greenwood, located southwest of Bradford on the Little Cedar River, was a small community. Greenwood contained a saw mill, a furniture factory, and later a grist mill and school.

The Little Brown Church was dedicated in 1864. Reverend Nutting was the first minister. Previously, church was held in homes and empty buildings, beginning with the organization of the Congregational Church at Bradford in 1856. The first church services, for both the Congregational and Methodist denominations in the county, were held at the "House of Seven Gables" in Bradford.

EARLY EDUCATION

The first public grammar school was established in Bradford in 1852. This was also the first grammar school in the county. The Academy was started in 1861, held in the upstairs of a store building before the actual building of the school. It was the first institution of higher learning. This brought 80 to 120 students to Bradford. Rev. Nutting and his nephew, Mr. Bennett, were the first instructors. Many of the students of the Academy became successful teachers and ministers. The Academy lasted for sixteen years, closing in 1877. The Academy building became the county's first high school. Bradford's High School was discontinued years later as the public school in Nashua grew in academic strength. In 1887 Bradford lost its high school. The bell from the Academy is displayed on the Little Brown Church grounds.

NASHUA PIONEERS

Nashua was becoming a dangerous rival to Bradford in the area of population and business. The strong water power gave Nashua a considerable advantage over Bradford and Greenwood.

The first man to settle in what is now Nashua was John Hall, who came in the summer of 1854, when there was only one log house. Hall erected a frame building and he and his family were compelled to pass the winter in it without the necessary protection against the wintry blasts. Many houses and other businesses in town sprang up. Other families who came in 1855 were: H. Hall, J. D. Hall, Jacob Hall, Edward Hall, James Helms, John Hugh, George O'Donnell, Owen Teeney, James Welch, and Enoch "Deacon" Woodbridge.

The original Nashua plat was surveyed in 1855, when there was little in the way of businesses or settlers. "Deacon" Enoch Woodbridge and

Andrew Sample recommended the town be surveyed and recorded. The land belonged to Andrew Sample, but selling or trading a half interest to Enoch Woodbridge, they platted a town and first called it Bridgeport, but shortly changed it to Woodbridge. Charles A. and E. P. Greeley had in some way acquired the title to the town plat and changed the name to Nashua in honor of their hometown of Nashua, New Hampshire.

The first two stores in Nashua were Smiley Sample's Grocery and Liquor store, and E. P. Greeley's General Store, built in 1856. John Hall and Mr. Stephenson were the first carpenters, John Butler, the first blacksmith, John Colt, the first wagon maker, and W. Reed, the first shoemaker. The Nashua post office was established May 10, 1858, with Andrew Sample the first postmaster.

John Coler, who came to Nashua in 1854, purchased all of the land south of what is now Lexington Avenue. He did considerable toward improving the town when it was new; donating land for the railroad and giving an extra lot to everyone who purchased a lot of his, and who would erect a house. This encouraged the building of new residences.

SCHOOLS

Nashua's first school was in a log house. The teacher was Miss Maggie Nichols, an adopted daughter of Enoch Woodbridge. This log school was located on the corner where the United Methodist Church now stands. Later a frame structure was built close to where the present high school is located. This wooden building was sold to the Methodist Church for \$210 and moved toward town, later to be moved again, then torn down.

In 1869, the Nashua Independent School District Board of Directors made a contract with S. W. Byers to construct a brick school house in

the amount of \$10,750.00. At the time it housed the entire school in the four rooms. An addition, which was built on the west side, was later torn down when the newer building was constructed.

In 1903, a newer structure was built beside the 1869 school building, giving much needed space for the increasing enrollment in the public school system. Later additions were built in 1936 as well as 1962. The 1869 building stood until July of 1962 when the present Nashua Elementary School was being completed. This building had been used for the primary grades once the high school building was built in 1903. Many remember the catwalk that connected the "Assembly Room" with a third floor classroom in the old 1869 building.

The Ward school was used in the Brooklyn section of Nashua until 1919 when students were transported across the river to the main school facilities. This building still stands and is used as the Big Four Fair secretary's office.

The 1903 high school building was demolished in 1982 and a new addition and remodeling of the high school facility was completed and dedicated on February 6, 1983. The Nashua Community School District began a whole-grade sharing agreement with the Plainfield Community School in 1991. Several years later, in 1997, voters from both districts agreed to consolidate forming the Nashua-Plainfield Community School District.

DAMS

There were several dams built across the river and a small saw mill erected at the south end of the dam. When timber for sawing became scarce, the machinery was removed from the saw mill and converted into a grist mill. John Harrison took charge of the mill as miller and remained in that capacity until he retired.

In 1857, the old mill was demolished by E. P. Greeley. Andrew Sample built a grist mill on the south bank of the Red Cedar. E. P. Greeley replaced it in 1862 with a larger merchant mill, with granite foundation and a five-story frame structure, complete with an entire new system of modern rollers. This mill burned down in 1899. The foundation of the old Greeley mill is now the stone wall used as an observation and fishing area south and east of the current dam and powerhouse.

With the erection of the dam over the Cedar River and the installation of the Cedar Valley Electric Power Plant in 1916, Nashua became a town on a controlled Cedar Lake. The best view of the lake is from the Cannon Park. This land was sold or given to the city of Nashua in 1913 for use as a public park. Named the Cedar View Park, it was specified that the grounds could be used as a chautauqua grounds under control of the town council.

When the park was given a cannon and a boulder with a bronze tablet in 1929, it was renamed Cannon Park. On Armistice Day, November 11, 1929, the stone was unveiled and dedicated by the members of the Nashua's Women's Relief Corps. The monument honors those who gave their lives in the Civil War and all future wars. The boulder, which required a twelve-horse team to bring to the park, originated at the Bertha Parish Mitchell farm two miles west of Nashua. The original cannon is no longer there. It was removed during the First World War and melted down for the war effort. The current cannon is a captured 75 mm. Japanese Howitzer 3 inch gun on wheels from W. W. II.

In May of 1963, after a damaging flood, operation of the hydroelectric power plant was discontinued by the Iowa Public Service Company. Years of time and neglect took its toll on the dam. The last

control gate broke in 1982 and the dam was no longer able to function. The lake, which had long been an important part of Nashua's identity, soon dried up.

The people and businesses of Nashua, former citizens, relatives and a host of friends from surrounding communities contributed money for restoration of the dam in conjunction with the state legislature and Iowa Public Service. The lake was dredged and construction began in 1989.

On March 8, 1990, after many years of waiting, the lake was filled for the first time in close to a decade. After the powerhouse gates were closed, it took just 8 hours for water to run over the control gate. Later that June, Nashuans hosted the first annual "Water Over the Dam Days" celebration.

NEWSPAPERS

The first newspaper, the **Cedar Valley News** was established in Bradford in 1857 and was short lived. The first Nashua paper, **The Post**, was founded in 1867 by Andy Felt. Felt later became Lieutenant Governor of the State of Kansas. The first edition appeared May 22, 1867. In 1918, **The Post** was purchased by E.G. Ellison, the publisher of **The Reporter**. It then became **The Nashua Reporter and Weekly Post**.

There was another paper in Nashua in the 1880s and 1890s-- **The Nashua Times**, founded in 1885 by J. D. Knapp. It was this paper's equipment that was purchased and used by **The Reporter** in 1893. **The Times** was then published by E. B. Perry, and instead of continuing his paper, the new owners founded another one under a new name.

The Nashua Reporter and Weekly Post was later sold to Robert J. Goodsell. He had been working in **The Reporter** office for some time as printer and reporter before purchasing the business. He was called

into the Army late in World War II, and **The Reporter** suspended publication for about 18 months. During this time a "free sheet" was published and distributed by a Cedar Falls print shop. Following his military service the newspaper resumed publication in 1945. Goodsell continued the business until January 1, 1948, when it was sold to yet another publisher.

On July 1, 1951, Tom D. and Leila Conklin, took over. The Conklins came here from New Ulm, Minnesota, a city of approximately 10,000 citizens, where Tom had been managing editor of **The New Ulm Daily Journal**. Leila was new to the publishing field, but she displayed marked aptitude for printing and was soon able to run, expertly, every back shop machine save the typesetting machines.

The Fredericksburg News was purchased by the Conklins in September of 1951, and about a year thereafter consolidated the two print shops in Nashua. This made it necessary to move into larger quarters, the former Diamond Brothers Grocery store across the street. Under the Conklins, **The Nashua Reporter** had grown to the greatest circulation in its history, averaging more than 1870 issues per week through the year.

The Reporter has had four different office locations. When established in 1893, the office and printing plant were in the second story rooms of the three-story Greeley building on the west side of Main Street.

DOCTORS

Dr. Dewey, Nashua's first physician and druggist, migrated from New York in 1862. In 1866, he left his practice to lecture about the medical field in the Midwest. He returned to Nashua each spring to

work on his farm property. Dr. Dewey was also an early editor of the Nashua Post. He purchased the paper in 1889.

Dr. Troy, who had been a physician in Bradford, returned from the Civil War and became a partner in the drug business with Mr. Morrison.

Nashua has always maintained a good local physician. Doctors Dewey, Troy, Spaulding, Straus, Tucker, Henry, Aldrich, Waters, Horton, Goodale, Cole, Brackett, Myers, Browne, Stuart, McDannell, Blatherwick, Pelz, Clark, Ackerman, Turner, Trefz, Weinmeister, Schiller, Benson, Schweizer, Bloom and Blum have all served the needs of the Nashua community.

INCORPORATION

Nashua became an incorporated town on June 3, 1867. The first officers were: T. S. Bradford, mayor; O. F. Herron, recorder; M. Rosenbaum, J. Vance, James A. Webster, A. L. Flint, and W. A. Fleming, councilmen; A. Herron, marshal; George Wood, street commissioner. The charter election was held and 146 votes were cast and the town recorded a population of 745. Those men who signed the petition for incorporation were: E. D. Woodbridge, S. P. Leland, E. P. Greeley, R. M. Nevins, S. W. Byers, A. J. Felt, John Coler.

With the city now incorporated, the official board realized the importance and necessity of furnishing a safe and easy crossing and the high grade connecting the north end of the bridge with the high bank northeast of the flat was determined. The town gave some money and labor and with the help of some money from Chickasaw County, the work on the grade or turnpike was completed to secure the bridge crossing. Mr. R. M. Nevins planted willow slips, which eventually helped to reinforce the grade from frequent washings.

BRIDGES

For a considerable time in the early days, there was no bridge over the Cedar River at Nashua. When the water was low, teams of horses crossed by fording. A flat boat ferry was established for conveying teams across the river when the water was too high for fording. This ferry was in use as late as 1863. In 1864, the county voted to spend \$4,000 out of the swamp fund for the proposed bridge across the Cedar at Nashua. In June, 1866, more money was needed, so \$500 was added to the tax money and \$1500 was raised by popular subscription. The wooden bridge was completed in 1867. An iron bridge replaced the original wooden bridge in 1878. A steel bridge, the last on this location, was assembled in 1921 and remained in use until the fall of 1984 when it was replaced with a concrete bridge below the dam.

RAILROADS

In 1868, the Cedar Falls and Minnesota branch of the Illinois Central Railroad was completed to Nashua from the south. This established Nashua as a strong community for commerce. It was largely through the Greeley family that Nashua secured the location of the Illinois Central Railroad.

Nashua increased rapidly in population and in businesses and in a few years the population was more than one thousand inhabitants. The railroad was also the death blow for Bradford. One after another, Bradford's businesses were vacated. Buildings were removed or torn down. Citizens departed and streets became deserted as they moved west to Nashua, a more favorable location.

In the early 1870's, E. P. Greeley promoted the Milwaukee & Nashua Railroad, generally known as the Greeley Railroad. It was to be a branch of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway and to extend

from Ionia through Nashua and Clarksville southwest to the coal fields and Des Moines. The right of way was secured and grading was done from Ionia to Clarksville, and ties were on the ground from Ionia to west of Nashua. It was a promising project and it was no fault of the promoters that it failed to operate. The panic of 1873 came and the bonds could not be sold and the work was suspended. The construction was never to be resumed. The depot was to have been about two blocks east of the Illinois Central depot. The road extended north across the Cedar, passed the fairgrounds, and continued northeast to Ionia.

BUSINESSES

By 1867, Nashua supported water power, timber land, two boot shops, one shoe shop, a wagon factory, two saw mills, one lawyer, a flour mill, one cooper shop, two lath and shingle mills, a steam saw mill, three blacksmiths, a woolen factory, a brick manufacturer near Pearl Rock, a hardware store, a tin shop, four dry foods stores, one variety store, a drug store, a printing office, one millinery, two hotels, one meat market, six mechanics shops, mail service, and five churches.

The Rosenbaum Brothers opened a private banking office in 1874, one of the first in Chickasaw County, which was succeeded by Loser & Slimmer. After the retirement of Mr. Slimmer, it became the Banking House of Lipman Loser. A stock company was formed and bought out the firm, and organized the First State Bank of Nashua.

Another bank was established in 1875. Two years later, it was reorganized under the name First National Bank, with A. G. Case, President, and A. J. Felt, Cashier. This bank was dissolved in November of 1894, and became a private bank, known as A. G. Case & Co., Bankers. In 1915, the Case bank organized into a state bank - The

Commercial State Savings Bank. This bank suspended in April of 1927, and later that year the Nashua State Bank was organized.

In August, 1931 the Nashua State Bank was merged with the First State Bank, with the title "First Nashua State Bank" continuing to do its banking under the charter of the First State Bank granted in 1909. This institution was a continuation of the bank established by the Rosenbaums in 1874. In 1992 a new bank building was constructed on Cedar Street. Lincoln Savings Bank, from Reinbeck, Iowa, merged with the First Nashua State Bank on May 1, 1999.

First State Bank of Britt located a branch bank in Nashua. A new building was built on Main Street and opened on September 27, 2004.

The first hotel in Nashua was a frame structure upon the corner where the DeNoyelle's house was constructed. It was owned by Montgomery and built by John Hall. The Castle Hotel was built in 1857 on the river bank where the Cannon Park is located. Early in the 1870's, it was moved to Main Street to be nearer to the depot. In 1875 the Castle Hotel burned.

Nashua had one of the few successful woolen mills in Iowa, which was owned by William J. Bowen & Son. Local wool was spun into six grades of thread used to manufacture a large range of products, from the finest cloth to the coarse horse blankets. The United States Navy contracted 200,000 blankets in September of 1919. After a disastrous fire in September of 1923, and again in November of 1926, the factory moved to Cedar Falls.

In 1892, the Nashua Pickle Factory contracted 100 acres of cucumbers. The year before, they shipped 20 rail cars of pickles to Chicago. Slowly, area farmers began growing more traditional crops and this part of Nashua commerce failed.

Nashua was the site of the manufacturing plant for Bloom Spreaders and harrow parts for many years. Hauser Manufacturing also made spreaders in addition to parts for the Army Engineer Corp. and cabs for Shield-Bantam in Waverly.

The Nashua Creamery was a pioneer in the great dairy industry, having the distinction of being the first creamery in the United States to use all machine separated cream in the manufacture of its butter. This took place in 1897, when the creamery was privately owned, and operated by W. I. Moody, who was also the agent for the Sharpless Cream Separator in that early day. The Nashua Creamery Association was established on April 20, 1894 and operated for 10 years. The Nashua Creamery Association and P. M. Sharpless Creamery were both in operation in 1900. The Farmers Co-operative Creamery Association of Nashua made its initial beginning at a meeting held Dec. 8, 1901. The creamery was incorporated and directors were chosen during the January 1902 meeting. G. H. Gurler sold his creamery and curd plant to the newly formed association. A fire in 1911 destroyed the creamery. Temporary quarters were used until a new creamery was finished in the fall of 1914.

There was a big gain in the butter production at the Nashua Farmers Co-operative Creamery in 1940. Here is an idea that may help you visualize the large quantity of butter manufactured that year. Imagine the Kirkland Hotel, Nashua's largest downtown structure, being surfaced on the outside with pound cartons of butter, laid like bricks. Then imagine 4 more buildings the same size, in other words, a total of five buildings the size of the hotel built out of butter. This is a total of 599,241 pounds of butter made in Nashua in 1940.

With the decline in area dairy farmers, increased competition, the change from canned to bulk milk and stricter waste water regulation on

the industry, it became difficult to justify modernizing the Nashua Creamery. On April 29, 1977, the last batch of cheese was made and operations ceased at the Farmers Co-operative Creamery Association of Nashua.

In 1872, a new fairgrounds was completed in the Brooklyn section of Nashua and hosted a four county fair. The fairgrounds were established by the Union Agricultural Society. In 1900, The Big Four Fair Society was organized which replaced the Union Agricultural Society.

In the 1920's, the Kendall Christian Women's Home was established for widows in the Andrew Sample house on the lofty hill at 208 Cedar Street. Several years later, the home was sold and the business moved to Cedar Falls.

The Nashua Equity Cooperative Association stemmed from the purchase in 1917 of A. H. Nafus & Sons Elevator and operated as a cooperative. In 1924 the company was reorganized as a corporation under the 1935 Iowa cooperative law. The Bellamy Lumber Company was purchased in 1951. The Equity Cooperative had expanded and offered a wide range of service to its members and the Nashua community. This included: a locker plant, a lumber yard, coal sales, an elevator, grinding and milling facilities, a fertilizer plant, petroleum (fuel oil & LP) as well as redi-mix. The J. F. Anderson Lumber Company was purchased and the lumber department moved to the Anderson yard, now the site of Nashua Lumber, on Main Street.

The lumber division of the Nashua Equity Cooperative was sold to Strotman Building Center and the redi-mix plant purchased by Schroeder Concrete. This occurred several years before the Nashua Equity Cooperative Association was purchased by Farmer's Co-op, now the Five Star Co-op, on September 1, 1985.

The Nashua branch of the Crystal Ice and Fuel Company was established in 1920 and had furnished hundreds of tons of high quality natural ice for the refrigerators in this community. The ice was also used for refrigeration of freight cars for the Illinois Central Railroad. The ice house, built here in 1920, was one of the largest in this section of Iowa. A large crew of men worked on the ice harvest every winter and a smaller car loading crew and delivery force worked there during the summer months. On a good days run, 72 to 78 railcars would be loaded with ice to be used by the railroad and surrounding communities. In the spring of 1946, a strong wind caved in the roof of the local ice house, thus ending the "ice harvest" for Nashua.

The Bric-Block Company at Nashua began in March of 1947. This company was sold in 1948 to N. T. Fosse and it became known as the Nashua Tile Company, and later, the Hydrotile Machinery Company. Hydrotile became Nashua's largest employer, first manufacturing tile and cement pipe, then later developing and manufacturing concrete products equipment. Products from Hydrotile were sold worldwide and additional production facilities were built in Woodstock, Ontario, Canada and Blaubeuren, West Germany. The Black Clawson Company bought Hydrotile and it became a subsidiary known as BC Hydrotile. BC Hydrotile operated in Nashua until 1991 when a competitor bought the division from Black Clawson. The factory was purchased by Featherlite Inc., of Cresco, Iowa. Aluminum trailers were made here until April of 2001.

NASHUA PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Nashua Carnegie Library was erected in 1905 and opened to the public after a program at the Nashua Opera House in January of 1906. The building, built on the site of the E. P. Greeley Mansion, was

constructed of pressed brick and Bedford Stone trimmings with a beautiful red tile roof. The total cost of the new library was \$6,000. Andrew Carnegie, of United States Steel Company wealth, donated \$5,000 to Nashua for the construction of the building. He stipulated that the community must provide the site and an annual maintenance before he would commit his money to the building of a library. Carnegie would give over \$300 million back to society and created one of the largest philanthropic associations in the world.

Miss Fannie Eastman was the first librarian and remained in that position for about a half a century. A beautiful addition to the public library was completed in 1986.

CEMETERIES

The Oak Hill Cemetery Association was established on February 4, 1868. R. M. Nevins was the first president of the Association. Lots were sold for \$5 per lot and all proceeds were used to buy the original 8 acres that make up the east end of the cemetery. On June 19, 1868, Mrs. Sarah Carpenter became the first person buried in the cemetery. A road had to be cut through the bush for the funeral party.

On May 26, 1904, Saint Michael's Cemetery ground was purchased from W. F. Getsch and the old cemetery at Pearl Rock was no longer used for burials.

CHURCHES

Nashua hosts churches of the leading denominations in fine edifices.

METHODIST - Methodism began in the Nashua vicinity in 1851. The first sermon preached in Chickasaw County was by a traveling Methodist minister at the home of John Bird; the second by Rev. Mr.

Coleman, a Congregational minister at the same place a few weeks later. The first Methodist church edifice, the original Nashua wooden school house, was obtained by the Methodist Episcopal Church at Nashua at a cost of \$800. The building was purchased in 1869. On May 28, 1878 a building committee was elected. The congregation was ready for a better place of worship. The following day the committee authorized the purchase of stone for a foundation and construction began yet that spring.

The church was dedicated on February 23, 1879, at which time subscriptions were taken to liquidate the \$7,500 cost. On June 5, 1884 this church building was destroyed by fire. Four days later, the Quarterly Conference appointed a committee to settle with the insurance companies.

An architect was hired and the lot south of the church site was bought and construction began on the present church building and a parsonage. The new Methodist Church was dedicated on April 26, 1885.

EPISCOPAL - St. Mark's Episcopal Church of Nashua was dedicated on July 11, 1869. The first service held in the church was on June 19th, the funeral service of Mrs. Sarah Carpenter, who was also the first person buried in Oak Hill Cemetery. The church was consecrated by Bishop H. W. Lee on December 18, 1870, with the Rev. Mr. Day of Waterloo and Rev. William Wright assisting. This is one of the oldest Episcopal church buildings in Northern Iowa. The church, located at 610 Lexington Ave., was built by Joseph Coler at a cost of \$1500. The church later used as a residence was torn down in the 1990's.

CATHOLIC - The first Catholic Church at Nashua, located at 302 Madison Street, was erected in the year 1868 on property acquired in

the same year. Previous to that time, Mass was offered in the country home of the O'Donnell family and at the Dougherty place in town. In 1902 the property was sold and the current church property was purchased from C. A. Greeley for \$1,600. It was in August 1902 that Reverend William A. Kunkel was appointed as the first resident pastor. He at once set about having the church repaired and enlarged. A choir loft was built and beautiful statues were donated by Father Kunkel himself. In the fall of 1912 Reverend August Bomholt was sent to take charge of the parish. He was an energetic priest, and under his able leadership a new brick church, the present church, was built costing approximately \$18,000.

CONGREGATIONAL - The first meeting relative to organizing a Congregational church in Nashua was held in a school house July 7, 1866. The organization of the church was not completed until August 16, 1866 with 16 charter members. For four years the young church held services in the schoolhouse.

The church society was organized in 1866 and the old church was dedicated July 3, 1870. Rev. J. K. Nutting was the first pastor. The question of a new edifice was agitated culminating in the decision to build and on May 29, 1914 the corner stone for the new structure was laid. The building was completed in the spring of the following year and on March 28, 1915 the church was dedicated free from debt.

LUTHERAN - In 1893 arrangements were made to hold services above one of the store buildings in Nashua with the Rev. A. W. Guetzloff Sr. of Ionia as pastor. On September 19, 1898 the congregation incorporated under the name St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church. A lot was obtained on Merrill Street and construction began on the west edge of town at the site of the current church. It was finished in 1898 at a cost of \$1,277, a debt of \$300 was liquidated in 1905. In 1928, the

congregation of 70 confirmed members decided to relocate at the corner of Cedar and Brasher Streets. The church structure was moved and this church was used until disaster struck on February 25, 1961 when the building burned. On March 5, 1961 the congregation voted unanimously to build the present church on Merrill Street. The apartment building on Cedar Street now occupies the lot of the church destroyed in 1961.

BAPTIST - Public Baptist church services were held in the Opera House until a hall with a capacity of about 300 was rented for one year, during which time arrangements were made for the building of an edifice. Plans were secured from an Osage architect and work was begun. On January 10, 1897, the beautiful house costing over \$6,000 with furnaces, opera chairs, electric lights, etc. was dedicated with a membership of 140. This church sat on the lot of the Old Bradford Masonic Lodge Temple on Main Street.

WRITERS OBSERVATION

There have been many changes to Nashua in the past 150 years, but one thing remains constant. Nashua, once referred to as the Gem City of the Cedar Valley, is a friendly, caring community- a good place to raise a family.

- Jerry Adelmund, June 12, 2005.

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