

Street Scenes – “Eliminate the Duplicates”

Street Scenes is a regular feature of the CLHS newsletter. With hundreds of streets in Crystal Lake, we thought it would be interesting to learn how many of them came to be named.



This issue's Street Scenes article focuses on a unique situation which occurred in Crystal Lake.

The City of Crystal Lake traces its origins to two separate communities which were established in the 1800's. Those communities were generally known as Nunda and Crystal Lake.

The area known today as "Downtown Crystal Lake" was first called "Dearborn" and then "Nunda." The Village of Dearborn came into existence in the mid-1850's after the railroads extended their lines through the area. Because of its close proximity to the railroad, Dearborn's population and business district quickly grew.

At that time, the main business district for the Village of Crystal Lake was located on Virginia Street (near today's McCormick Park).

In 1868, Dearborn's name was changed to "Nunda" after an area in New York from which many settlers had come. In 1908, the name of the village was changed to "North Crystal Lake." Several attempts were made to consolidate the two villages. Finally, after much disagreement, the Village of North Crystal Lake was annexed to the Village of Crystal Lake in 1914, and a new city form of government was established.

The merging of the two communities caused a problem with the duplication of street names, as seen in the following December 18, 1919 article in the Crystal Lake Herald:

Change Names of City Streets

As one of the preliminary steps towards establishing a sewer system in Crystal Lake, a special meeting of the city council was held Wednesday evening, for the purpose of renaming several of the streets of our city, the names of which were duplicated, and also giving

names to some of our streets which had not heretofore been officially named.

The duplication of some of our streets is a result of the annexing of North Crystal Lake to Crystal Lake. Illustrating the need of renaming some of our streets is the fact that there have heretofore been three Center Streets, two Crystal Lake Avenues and so on.

An ordinance was introduced, fixing the names of the streets affected as follows: Oak Street, Railroad Street, Nelson Avenue, and an extension of Crystal Lake Avenue for its entire length (including a portion of Crystal Lake Avenue between its intersection with Nelson Avenue and with Oak Street) were officially named, keeping their same names. The street lying immediately north of and parallel to the C&NW tracks was named North Railroad Street. The name of Center Street in Smith & Hill's addition was changed to University Street, and the name of the street platted and known as Third Street in Vail's addition was changed to Illinois Street. That part of Williams Street commencing at the intersection of Crystal Lake Avenue and Williams Street is to be known as South Williams Street. The street heretofore known as Crystal Lake Avenue and more familiarly known as the street on which the ice tracks are located, was named Ice Track Street.

The street commencing at the intersection of Woodstock Street and running north known as Sweden Street in Hickok's addition, was renamed North Nelson Avenue. The Center Street in Douglas' addition was changed to Spring Street, and the street heretofore called Crystal Lake Street was changed to Grant Street. Mechanic Street was changed to Elmhurst Avenue, a petition for this change, signed by residents on the street having been placed before the city council at its last meeting.