



History of Naperville, IL

Naperville, IL is located in DuPage and Will Counties, 28 miles west of the Loop that is located near Chicago, IL.

In 1831, Joseph Naper is said to have founded Naperville along the banks of the DuPage River. In 1842, he drew the first plat of land. That year he also was elected President of the town board. Naperville was incorporated in 1857.

Early settlers, such as the Naper, Scott, Hobson and Paine families, came from the Northeast and by the 1840's emigrants from Pennsylvania, Germany, England and Scotland arrived. They built seven churches and most held their services in German.

Naperville became the center of transportation activities. It became an important stage coach stop where two main routes that ran from Chicago to Galena and to Ottawa crossed over. By 1832, 180 residents had become a bustling town that included sawmills, gristmills, stores, and the Pre-Emption House hotel. In 1839, the town became the county seat of DuPage County.

In 1851, eight town businesses helped develop the Southwest Plank Road. This road connected Chicago, Naperville and Oswego. When the growing railroad prospectors came to town these business opposed the right-of-way for the Galena Line, however, they got a second chance in 1864 when the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad decided to run its line through Naperville.

Over the next 100 year's the town of Naperville continued to grow with the help of the railroad. Establishments such as the North Central College, the Stenger Brewery, and the Kroehler Manufacturing Company – Naperville's largest furniture employer, and stone quarries used the railroad extensively.

In 1890, the City of Naperville was established. By 1900, population had grown to 2,629. Between 1890 and 1920, residents started to receive city services such as water, sewer, electricity and telephones. By 1960, Naperville had a population of 12,933.

After World War II, the Chicago suburbs started to expand. During the 1950's and 1960's, businesses such as Argonne National Laboratory, Northern Illinois Gas, Amoco Research Center, AT & T Bell Laboratories and Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory were established.

In 1954, plans for the East-West Toll Road were announced for the northern part of Naperville. With this development, more residential, retail, industrial, and services industries started to move in. By 1993, the city had grown to 50 square miles and in 2000 it had a population of 128,358.

Today, Naperville is a well established community with many things to do and see. The Naper Settlement is a 19th century living history museum that tells the story of how Naperville grew from a simple frontier outpost. The DuPage Children's Museum has explorative art, science and math displays. The Naperville Riverwalk allows one to pursue recreational activities and enjoy the sights and sounds of the DuPage River. Naperville awaits your arrival.