

From the Weinberg Family to a City Park

The Weinberg family arrived in Whitewater in the early 1900's, coming from the Ukraine area of Russia. The Weinberg Family consisted of Bernhard and Mollie, parents of Ben, Anna, Phil (right) and Eddie. Soon after arriving in Whitewater Bernhard and Mollie Weinberg established a scrap business on 4th Street behind the family residence.

Ben Weinberg assumed the business following the death of his father. The scrap yard operation was moved in 1941 to Kidd Street on Cravath Lake, previously referred to as the "Lower Pond". The scrap yard remained active, recycling farm equipment, home products, factory iron and metal waste.

The land remained in the family until the 1970's when it was sold to Melverd Anderson and Dempsey Clark. The land changed hands a number of times until it was sold to the City to create the Cravath Lakefront Park, which you can see today.



Pre-1990

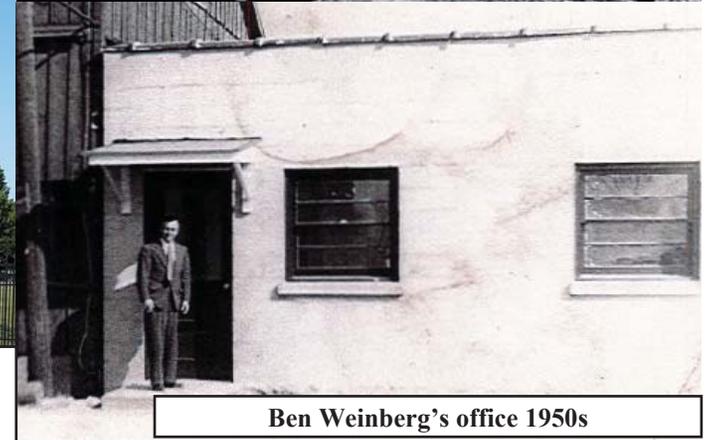


Today

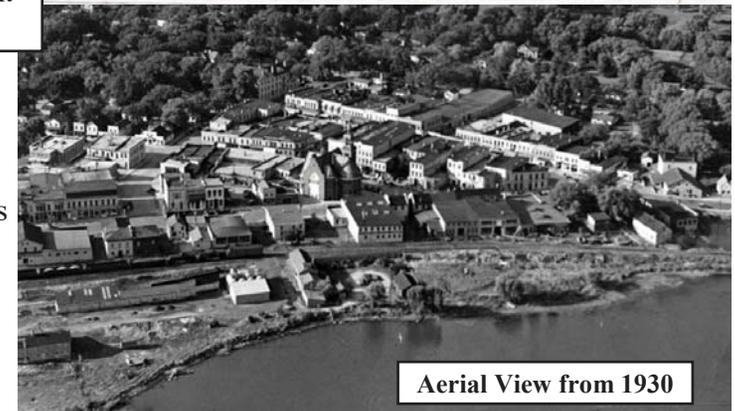
Above you can see the changes of the space. On the left is a picture of the Train Depot before the establishment of the City Park. Buildings and box cars blocked the view of the lake. Today the second tracks have been removed along with the buildings which opened the space for the Cravath Lakefront Park.

In the 1990's, the City of Whitewater opted to create an open space to encourage visitors to the downtown area. The park is home to the Cravath Lakefront Community Center, which was designed to resemble the nearby historic Whitewater Passenger Train Depot.

Events held in the park include Freeze Fest and the 4th of July. In 2008, the Whitewater Arts Alliance worked with the community to provide the Cravath Lakefront Arch. The arch depicts several historical elements of the Whitewater community. In 2009, Whitewater Street was improved and the park benefited. An additional 20 trees were planted in the park. Decorative bump-outs were created to provide small picnic areas for visitors to enjoy the park.



Ben Weinberg's office 1950s



Aerial View from 1930

Learn more by visiting the Whitewater Historical Society's Museum at the Passenger Depot on Whitewater Street, or visit their website, www.whitewaterhistoricalsociety.org

From Brickyard to Iron Foundry to Dog Park!

It might seem surprising looking at this area now, but a number of industrial uses stretched from downtown Whitewater north along the banks of Whitewater Creek. Much of this area gradually changed to residential use by the 1960s, except for the north end of Jefferson Street.

Brickyard Site

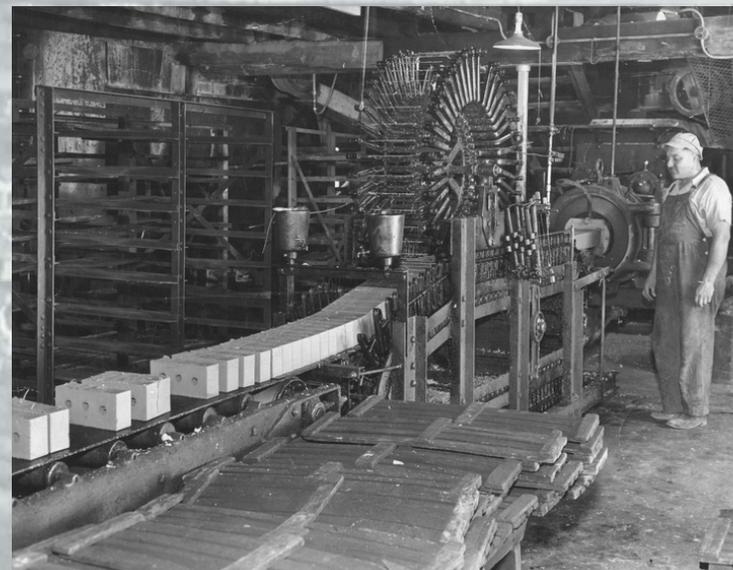
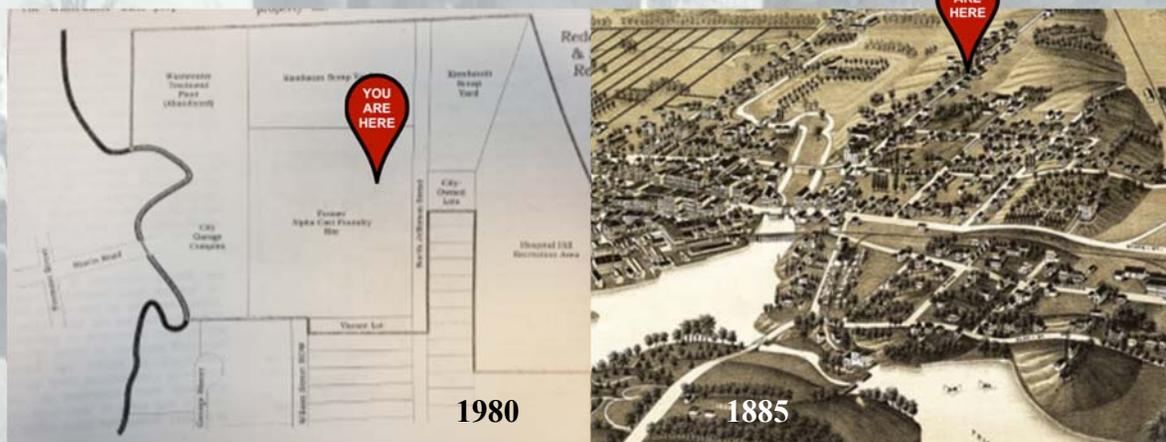
The Whitewater Brick and Tile Company operated its brickyard at the north end of Jefferson Street a few hundred feet south of the Jefferson County line, as early as the 1860s. Because Whitewater is home to high quality, cream colored clay, located along the banks of Whitewater Creek, this brickyard produced hundreds of thousands of cream-colored bricks for both residential and commercial buildings within Whitewater and the surrounding area. In addition, four pottery factories operated in Whitewater between 1841 and 1882, on North Fremont Street, near the train depot on James Street, adjacent to Whiton Street, and briefly near the south end of Jefferson Street.

Foundry Site

In 1939, the brickyard was converted to an iron foundry. Known first as the Whitewater Foundry, and later as the Alpha Cast Foundry, the operation expanded several times, including a final time in 1982. Shortly after, owner Alpha Cast filed for bankruptcy and the buildings were abandoned. In 1997, the City of Whitewater asked Walworth County to acquire the property through tax foreclosure and transfer it to City ownership. The following year the City began removal of the building and rehabilitated the land. This portion of the land became the much-loved Whitewater Dog Park that you see here today.

Dog Park

The City of Whitewater created this Dog Park as one of its 22 municipal parks in 2017.



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The Territorial Oak and the “Point of Beginning”

Surveyors came to Wisconsin in the early 1830s to survey the territory prior to statehood. As the land was divided up, surveyors documented the trees that rested at the imaginary corners and angles of the parcels to mark their boundaries. These trees act as bench marks for surveyors. The trees are also called “witness trees” or “bearing trees”.

The large bur oak tree was surveyed in 1836 when the area was first platted. The red star on the plat map shows the location of the tree and that the tree served as a City bench mark. It became the “Point of Beginning” on many plats and survey point that laid the ground work for what is now the City of Whitewater.

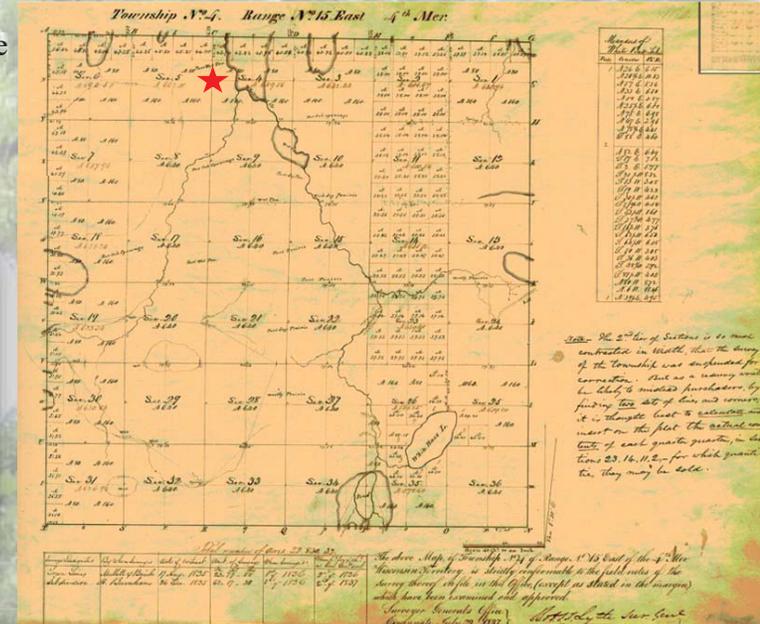
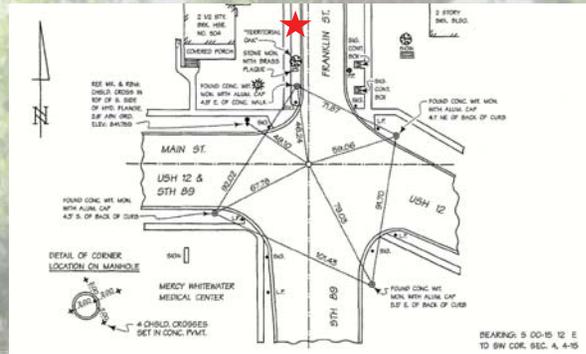
When surveyed in 1836, the circumference of the Bur Oak measured 16 inches. At almost 200 years old the, the tree is in decline and while it still produces leaves and acorns, the upper branches of the tree remain bare.



Local elementary school students have harvested the acorns and planted them producing young Bur Oak saplings that are the “children” of the Territorial Oak.

Learn about this site and others by visiting the Whitewater Historical Society’s Museum at the Passenger Depot or check out the Gems of Whitewater “The Bur Oak Tree” Episode 4 on Vimeo.

For more information on Wisconsin Bearing Trees visit the SCO web page at <https://maps.sco.wisc.edu/bearingtrees/>



The tree has been adopted as a symbol of the City. It can be found on a variety of artwork and logos including the Whitewater mural located at Whitewater and Center Streets.

The Starin Park Water Tower (1889)

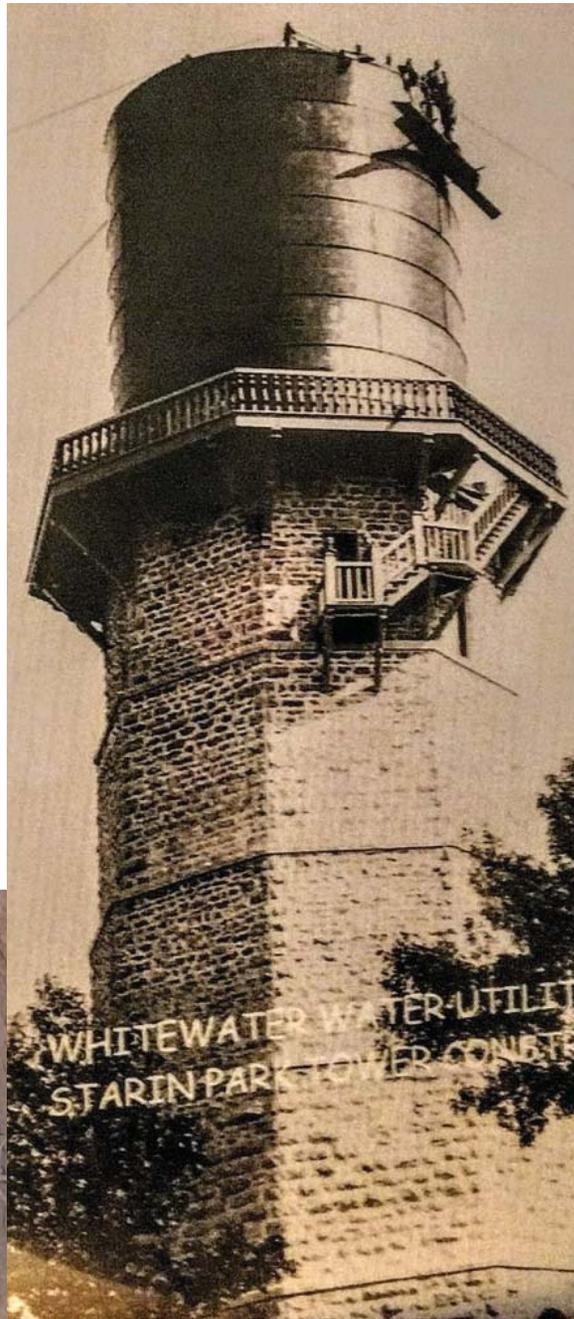
The Starin Park Water Tower is the 2nd oldest operating municipal water tower in the state of Wisconsin. The Tower was built in 1889, by C.E. Gray, a company out of the Chicago area.

When originally built it was a private utility. It was turned over to the City as a public utility in 1912.

The 80 foot tall stonemasonry, supports the steel 20 foot tall water tank. The limestone octagonal base of the tower is 8 foot thick and as the structure goes up it tapers to 4 foot thick walls where the stonemasonry meets the steel tank. The tank holds approximately 185,000 gallons of water.

The location was chosen because it sits 50 feet higher than the surrounding area. At the time the water tower was completed it was the highest built structure in the City.

The original design had a wood observation deck around the outside. It was most likely open to the public when originally built .



The Lore of the Water Tower

Legend has it that witches are drawn to the tower because it is centrally placed within a triangular pattern formed by the communities cemeteries.

The lore of the Witches presumably stems from the spiritualism movement. “There’s a lot of confusion between who the spiritualists were and what they were doing as opposed to other occult practices. Many of the spiritualist mediums were women. They were engaging in nontraditional activities for women, so making that step from mediums to witches was easy for some people to take, I think.” Carol Cartwright

The Water Tower was built the same year the Morris Pratt Institute, a Spiritualist college established in the City of Whitewater. This likely is what spurred the lore of the “Witches of Whitewater”.

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