



## *50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration Events*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
<i>Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> – 1 to 3 pm 67<sup>th</sup> Street and Clarendon Hills Road</i>	<i>St. John Cemetery Historical Tour Founded in 1859</i>
<i>Friday evening, December 13<sup>th</sup> Carriage Greens Country Club 6:30 pm Open Bar/7:30 pm Dinner</i>	<i>Happy Birthday Gala More details to follow – Mark your Calendars! Everyone is invited to attend</i>

*From Past to Present.....*

*Look where Darienfest is being held!!!*



Yes, this is the original “community park”, home to today’s Darienfest! Charlie Schmidt’s family farm was on Clarendon Hills Road and extended from 69th Street to Plainfield Road. Charlie sold 22 acres of the farm to the City of Darien to be used specifically for a park. Today, it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest park maintained (and how well it is!) by the Park District. It features 2 picnic pavilions, 4 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, 2 sand volley courts, a soccer field, 2 playgrounds and restroom facilities. It is also home to the VFW Memorial, paying tribute to all who have served in the Armed Forces. The park was developed through a matching grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The south pavilion at the park was constructed with a donation from the Darien Lions Club.



### ***What do you know about Marion Hills.....***

After World War II, farmers in Lacey, Illinois, began selling lots to individuals who wanted to leave Chicago to live in the country. Marion Hills was the first community to emerge as Lacey began transitioning from farmland to residential housing sites. Most of the homes in Marion Hills were shell-constructed and the homeowner completed the building project. Marion Hills covered about two and a half square miles bordered by Route 83, Clarendon Hills Road, 67th and 75th Streets. Homeowners formed civic and social organizations to improve their burgeoning community. In 1949, residents created the Marion Hills Civic Association to address the lack of municipal services and to provide adequate education for their children. Women who lived in Marion Hills formed the Pioneer Club for socializing and for raising money to support local projects. From 1950 to 1958, members of Marion Hills published mimeographed copies of *The Village News* to keep residents informed and connected.

One of the first issues the Marion Hills Civic Association tackled was the need for a nearby school for their children to attend. The existing school, Lacey, was a one-room schoolhouse built to serve local farm children. Its facilities could not accommodate the student population which by 1949 had grown to around 60 students. To deal with the overcrowding, half the students attended Lacey School in the morning, and the other half went during the afternoon. Parents were also concerned for their children's safety as they walked almost one and a half miles along busy roads to reach Lacey School. Rather than expand Lacey School, homeowners pushed to have a new building constructed at a location closer to their homes.

In 1949, Marion Hills residents passed a referendum to purchase land at Eleanor Place and Plainfield Road to build Marion Hills School. The school opened with four classrooms and a basement gym; enrollment in 1952 was 53 boys and 46 girls. Members of the Marion Hills Bible Church used the school gym to teach Sunday school. Church members worked tirelessly to construct a building which they completed in 1956. The church was located on Plainfield and High Roads across from the school. A steeple and additional Sunday school rooms were added later.

In 1956, homeowners approved the construction of Lacey-Marion Hills School to serve students from fifth to eighth grade. The building opened in 1957, and was located just north of the Lacey schoolhouse. Students in first to fourth grade attended Marion Hills School; together the schools were known as Lacey-Marion Hills. Older students attended Hinsdale Central High School until Hinsdale South High School opened in 1965. Parents not only worked hard to provide their children with a high quality education, but to also provide them with recreational activities. In 1959, a group of fathers formed the Lacey-Marion Hills Youth Club which was a baseball league for boys. The Lacey-Marion Hills Band Parents' Association supported band activities such as participation in the Fourth of July parade.

Although residents succeeded in creating schools and recreational activities, the Homeowners Association struggled to provide residents with adequate municipal services. In 1955, the first of several referendums to incorporate failed. Property owners established the Marion-Brook Sanitary District in 1963 to oversee the replacement of septic systems with a sewer system. The following year, the Village of Willowbrook blocked another attempt by Marion Hills homeowners' to incorporate; efforts to be annexed to the Village of Willowbrook also failed.

From the 1950s to 1960s, additional housing developments and subdivisions began to populate what had once been Lacey farmland. As the area's population increased, so did the need for additional services and schools. In 1968, the Marion Hills Homeowners Association joined representatives from Brookhaven, Hinsbrook, Clarefield, and Knottingham homeowners' associations to form the Combined Homeowners Study Group to investigate the options of incorporating, annexing to another village, or remaining unincorporated. The study group decided to pursue a referendum to incorporate as a city. After a closely contested vote, Marion Hills became part of the newly incorporated City of Darien on December 13, 1969.



***From a book mobile .....***



***to a rented store front ....***



***To an award winning library...***

In 1981, the Darien Volunteer Library board received a grant for a [demonstration library](#) to serve Darien and unincorporated areas adjacent to the city. The grant required that a referendum on the establishment of a tax-supported library be held within one year. In March 1982, nine years after the Darien Woman's Club's first referendum, residents approved the establishment of the tax-supported Darien Public Library District. When the 6,000 square foot space that Massey's Drapery became available, the library moved to this location with plans on remaining in the space for at least five years. The Darien Library District's storefront was within one mile of the [Willowbrook Public Library's storefront](#) location. Both libraries struggled with inadequate funding and space for their collections and services. After reviewing their options, the libraries merged to become the Indian Prairie Public Library District on July 1, 1988. Read more about the history of our award winning library and the valiant efforts of the Darien's Woman Club! <https://ippl.info/blogs/localhistory/darien/darien-volunteer-and-district-libraries/>

### ***As we celebrate the beginning of the United States... Let's see how Darien got started...***

The story of Darien begins in the 1830s with the settlement of two communities, Cass and Lace, which became the city of Darien.

The Potawatomi, Ottawa, and other Native Americans were the first inhabitants of this area. The surrounding waterways were their trade routes. In the 1700s, settlers pushed westward from the eastern part of the country and Canada. Conflicts between Native Americans and the settlers culminated in the Blackhawk War in 1832. After the war, Native Americans were forced to move west of the Mississippi River, easing settlers' concerns. This, along with the promise of the building of the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the fertile soil of the area, lured more people here from the east and from Europe.

Thomas Andrus and his wife, Melissa, were the first to arrive in what would become Darien. They traveled from Vermont by boat through the Great Lakes to Chicago and came here in horse drawn wagons. The Andrus farm was on the west side of present-day Lemont Road and the I55 North Frontage Road. Once an Indian Trail, the North Frontage Road was the route of a stagecoach line. The Andrus farm house served as an inn for stagecoach travelers. Thomas also kept horses for the stagecoach line. The families of brothers, William and Elisha Smart, and John Oldfield joined the Andrus family in establishing the community of Cass.

The Lace community grew north of the Cass community. It was centered at the intersection of present-day Cass Avenue and 75th Street. Among the first families of Lace, were the Andermanns and the Buschmanns who had emigrated from Germany. Joining these families in Lace were the Wehrmeisters and Warkentiens. Bordered by Plainfield Road, Cass Avenue, and 75th Street, "The Point," was the center of community life in Lace. "The Point" included a general store and blacksmith shop, St. John Lutheran School, and the church parsonage. Directly east of "The Point" stood Conrad Buschmann's creamery where farmers brought their milk to be processed into dairy products. McDonalds stands on the site today. Just north of "The Point" was Lace Hall where dances were held. The entrance to Fred and Sophie Andermann's farm is now the street leading to the Country Lane Apartments off Plainfield Road.

Both Cass and Lace established churches that served as the anchor of not only religious life, but social life as well. The Cass community established the Cass Methodist Episcopal Church that no longer exists. The Lace community established the St. John Lutheran Church. The Cass cemetery and the St. John Lutheran Church cemetery each contain the graves of the first families and also include the graves of Civil War veterans. Both Cass and Lace established their own schools. The first Lace School was built in 1856. It burned and was replaced with the second Lace School built in 1925. Today, the 1925 building is known as Old Lace Schoolhouse and Museum and is the home of the Darien Historical Society. It stands at its original location, the northwest corner of the intersection of 75th Street and Cass Avenue.

Martin Barnaby Madden's family emigrated to Lemont from England in 1869. A barge accident on the

Illinois and Michigan Canal led to him being employed at the Western Stone Company. He rose to become its president. Madden married Josephine Smart, the daughter of Elisha Smart. In 1903, Madden built a summer home on Smart family property. His home, which he called Castle Eden, was built to be a replica of the White House in Washington, DC. It is now a part of the Carmelite Spiritual Center. Madden had an illustrious political career culminating in his election to the United States House of Representatives where he served from 1905 until his death in 1928.

Cass and Lace were close knit farming communities. People living here grew up, married, raised their children, and lived out their days in familiar surroundings, embraced and supported by their extended families. The late 1940s, following the end of World War II, saw an increase in the affordability of automobiles and better roads. Better transportation led to people moving out of Chicago and the establishment of suburbs.

Fields of wild asparagus were paved-over and orchards were felled as farmers sold their land to developers and subdivisions began to emerge where farmers had once raised crops and livestock. As the population increased, the need for increased services such as police and fire protection became apparent. Deciding that these concerns could best be addressed by becoming a city, four subdivisions, Marion Hills, Hinsbrook, Brookhaven, and Clarefield, formed the Combined Homeowners Committee for Incorporation. In order for the issue to be voted on by the residents, the proposed city had to have a name. A member of the committee, Sam Kelley, having recently enjoyed a visit to Darien, Connecticut, suggested the name Darien. The vote on incorporation was held on December 13, 1969. It passed by less than 50 votes. Over the years, Darien has grown and changed, but it has continued to be a **"nice place to live"**.



1849



1899



1959

***St. John Lutheran Church has played an essential role in Darien's History. On January 22, 1859 three acres of land at 67th Street and Clarendon Hills Road were purchased for \$30 to build a church and a cemetery. St. John Lutheran still owns the cemetery. In 1893 the congregation added a parsonage and a steeple and a bell to the church. The steeple was 10 feet square and 48 feet high. Conrad Buschmann donated the bell which weighed 921 pounds and cost 168.56. The bell hangs in front the present church. In 1899 the congregation built a new church on land donated by Conrad Buschmann (where the Taco Bell is today on the corner of 75th Street and Cass Avenue). In 1915 a monthly service in English was started. In 1922 English services were held (in lieu of German services) on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. In 1950 German services were discontinued. On August 25, 1968 the last service was held in the Church located at 75th and Cass Avenue. On September 12, 1971 the current church was dedicated at its present location of 7214 Cass Avenue. On September 21<sup>st</sup> from 1 to 3 pm there will be a historical tour planned of the St. John Cemetery located at 67<sup>th</sup> Street and Clarendon Hills Road.***

***In 1884, Lehmann General Store stood at the "point" in Lace, Illinois. The general store also served as the post office and was the hub of the community. After the general store burned down, Hinsdale was the main post office for the community. The West Suburban Bank currently sits where the General Store was located***



***From 1881 to 1885, The Conrad Buschmann Creamery at 809 Plainfield Road processed milk from the local dairy farms. The milk was then taken by train to Chicago, IL. Today, milk shakes and ice cream are still popular at the Darien's McDonalds that now occupies the site!***



## **Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Darien! 1969-2019**



### **My How Time Flies and So Much to Celebrate!**

This year is a very significant one for the City of Darien. Fifty years ago, on December 13, 1969, Darien became a city when the voters made the decision to incorporate. To commemorate and celebrate **Darien's 50th Birthday**, community and civic groups are coming together to plan several events for the entire city. Please mark your calendars for one of the first events – The Darien Historical Society Ice Cream Social - taking place on Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019 starting at 5:30 pm at the Old Lace School House located at 75<sup>th</sup> and Cass. Hot Dogs, Ice Cream, music and historical timelines will be highlighted... something for everyone, young and old! Continue to watch for other announcements of events throughout this coming year celebrating this monumental event.

All are invited to the city's Birthday Party events...  
Who doesn't like birthday parties!

*So much to be proud of...  
Since 1969 . . .*

With significant new housing attracting young families in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Darien's population boomed. Its cross streets of 75th and Cass Avenue have been widened twice to accommodate increased traffic. Also, the city's five wards with two aldermen have grown to seven wards represented by one alderman. Darien's original City Hall now houses the Old Lace Schoolhouse and Museum and a new police station was completed in 1995 with a City Hall in 1997.

City resources and services have expanded to meet the needs and wishes of the residents. Flooding issues have been addressed. Working with DuPage County, almost all of the 27 miles of ditch projects have been completed as well as the basins that were needed to direct water run-off. All the city streets and ditches have been catalogued and each year the city repaves up to 5.5 miles of streets that are scheduled for repair. Three years of planning by city administrators, engineers, and the City Council resulted in a new water tower built in 2007. The new tank, with its "lighthouse" design, was named Tank of the Year by the Steel Tank Institute/Steel Plate Fabricators.

The hard work of invested citizens led to a voter approved merger of the Darien and Willowbrook Public Library Districts and the creation of the Indian Prairie Public Library District on July 1, 1988. The Indian Prairie Public Library has grown from a volunteer operated bookmobile to a state-of-the art facility that opened in 1996 with a major building renovation completed in 2010. Its mission has grown to becoming a valued community center providing a place to learn and gather.

Darien students attend one of three separate elementary/junior high schools districts: Darien District 61, Cass School District 63, and Center Cass District 66. All three elementary districts now are organized by grade level centers. A continuing influx of young families has stabilized the school age population. Darien high school students attend either Hinsdale Township High School District 86 or Community High School District 99, depending on their geographic location.

The Darien Park District offers a wide range of programs for all ages. The Park District Sportsplex includes three National Hockey League sized ice rinks and an indoor soccer field. The Darien Youth Club began as the Lace-Marion Hills Youth Club in the 1950s and has continued to provide opportunities for children to have fun and hone their skills by participating in a variety of athletic endeavors.

In addition to many service oriented businesses, shopping areas now include stores located in Brookhaven Shopping Center, Darien Towne Centre, Darien Towne Centre II, Chestnut Court, Darien Plaza, and Hinsbrook Plaza. Darien Pointe Plaza is the city's newest enterprise with a Clock Tower and fountain marking a cornerstone of Darien.

Civic pride and a commitment to volunteering is evidenced in numerous ways. Darien has strong and vibrant organizations which contribute to the community. The Darien Lions Club is one of the largest in the state with residents also benefitting from the commitment of the Darien Woman's Club, the Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, Safety Village, The GoodWorx Sunny Patch Project, the VFW, and numerous places of worship. Darien groups sponsor Darien Fest which brings residents together each fall to enjoy music, food, and camaraderie, Arbor Day, Veteran's Day, the Independence Day Parade, the Annual Lions Halloween Party, a Hoe Down, as well as music concerts and activities throughout the year. In addition, these groups' philanthropic endeavors include food pantries, holiday giving, clothing drives, art and writing events and scholarships, to name a few.

The volunteer-run Darien Historical Society emerged out of the nation's bi-centennial celebration. The society preserves the artifacts and archives that tell the history of the city in Old Lace Schoolhouse and Museum, a former one-room schoolhouse.

Darien is home to the National Shrine Museum of St. Therese. It is located on the 40-acre Carmelite Campus that includes the Carmelite Spiritual Center, the Carmelite Meditation Garden, and the Shrine Museum devoted to the saint. The museum holds relics and memorabilia of St. Therese.

Darien's location has also been a draw for residents. The commuter train is three miles to the north and part of the south border is the I55 Expressway, Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve and Argonne National Laboratory. Now with a 50 year history, Darien continues to live up to its motto: "A Nice Place to Live. "