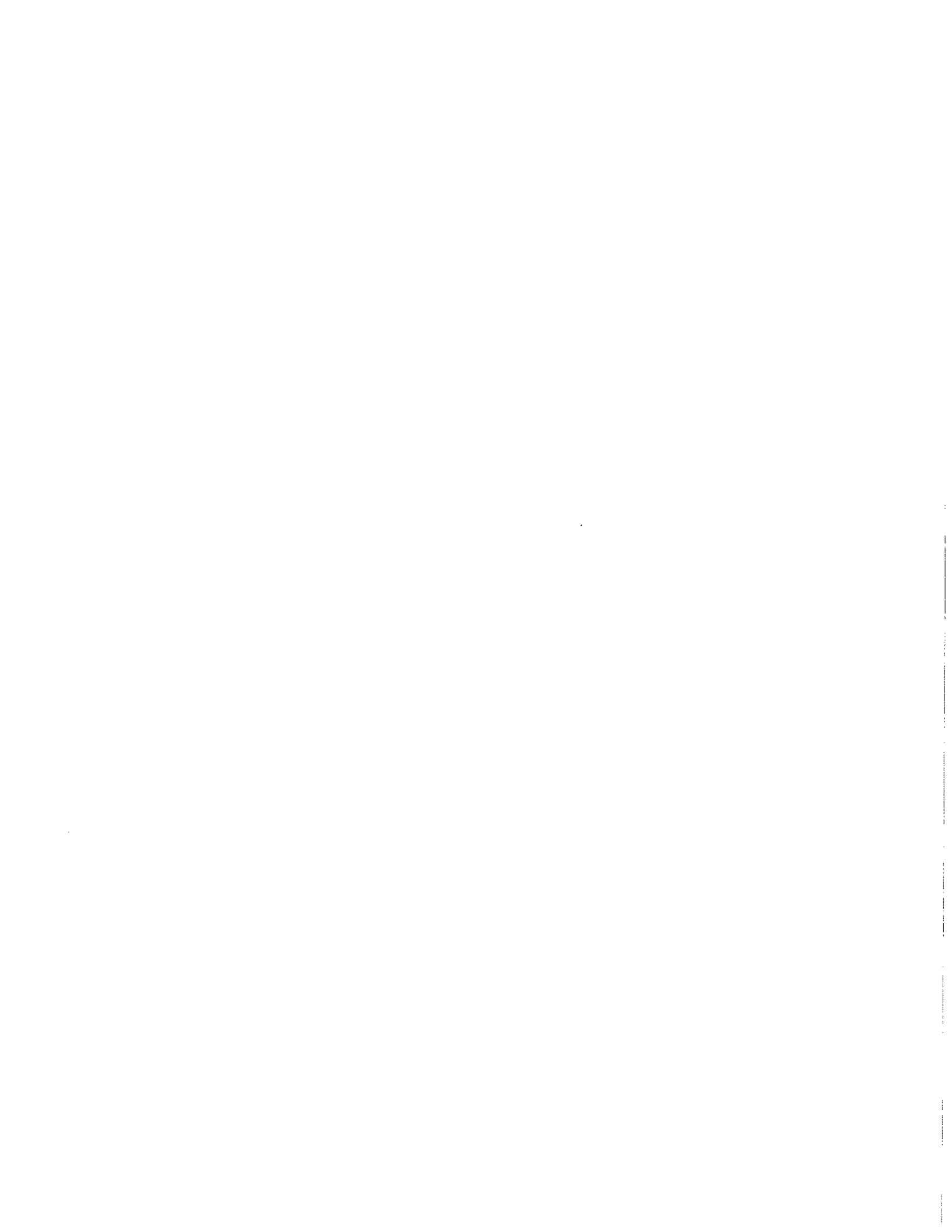


HISTORY OF PARCHMENT

1933

(author unknown)

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PARCHMENT HISTORY

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The village of Parchment had its conception in the fall of 1909 when Mr. Jacob Kindleberger came to Kalamazoo from West Carrollton, Ohio, and organized the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment (KVP) Company. Mr. Kindleberger, together with a handful of loyal employees set up shop in a little "two-by-four" brick building that had formerly been a sugar beet factory. Here it was that Mr. Kindleberger, present President of the Company, started the manufacture of KVP products. One old steam boiler, one small parchment machine, one waxing machine, and a little finishing room equipment completed the layout. Since then, KVP papers have become famous the world over. (April 8, 1910 was the first shipment of paper). Ruled papers for schools and universities, bond papers for the printers, household specialty papers for the home and office, bread wrappers for the bakers, genuine vegetable parchment paper for the protection of ice cream, celery, fish, meats, butter and all dairy products, as well as all kinds of high class plain and treated papers for the protection of delicate foods for shipment to the four corners of the earth are manufactured here..

Today the number of employees has jumped to one thousand; the capitalization has increased from \$50,000.00 to \$5,000,000.00, with physical assets of over \$10,000,000.00; the daily production from all modern and up-to-date machines has reached the sum total of over 300,000 pounds of paper; and the plant measures over a mile and one-tenth in length.

The village was incorporated in the summer of 1930. It has the commission form of government. There are five commissioners, including the Mayor, Frank L. Libby, who was appointed to the office by virtue of having received the largest number of votes in the election. The village is located just on the outskirts of the city of Kalamazoo along the beautiful Kalamazoo River. The population at the present time is about 650 in the village proper. The population of what might be called greater Parchment, which takes in quite a settlement directly to the north of the village is about 2,500.

Though only three years old, the village has a smooth working governmental organization. It has a splendid water system, the supply being furnished from deep wells owned and operated by the company. The fire department, equipment of which is first class and owned and operated by the company is efficient. The personnel consists of volunteer members living in the village and subject to call night or day. Their work during the past three years proves their value, not only to the village but to the surrounding community. The law enforcing body consists of members of a private detective agency who patrol the streets at night and are subject to call night or day. They have proved themselves very efficient. It might be well to mention that this same agency also serves the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company. The village is just completing a large sewer system that will take care of all sewage from all homes in the village.

The school system consists of an excellent ten grade all-modern school with an enrollment of about three hundred students. The percentage of students who continue on with their education by going

to Kalamazoo Central High School is very high. In fact, every one of the students who completed the tenth grade in Parchment School last spring have expressed their intention of entering Kalamazoo High School this fall. This is indeed commendable. Mr. J. P. King is the superintendent, Mr. George MacDonald, assistant superintendent and Kenneth Ruse, principal of Junior High.

A large Community House for the residents of the community was built and dedicated in the spring of 1922. This proved to be the center of social and religious activities of the community from the very start and every night during the fall and winter nights there is some form of entertainment or some important meetings being held there. In the basement is a modern equipped cafeteria which, up until about one year ago, served employees of the company. The employees of the company and residents are now served by an up-to-date restaurant known as the Hudson Manor Coffee Shop, located on the ground floor of the modern Hudson Manor Apartment Building. It might be well to mention here that the business section of the village consists of two drug stores, two barber shops, a novelty store, three grocery-meat market stores, coal dealer, two gas and oil service stations, garage, ice cream store and creamery.

Buses operated by the Kalamazoo Motor Coach Company render prompt and efficient service to and from Kalamazoo.

The vitality of a living religion is to be found in the varied church activities of the Parchment Union Methodist Church and its various adjuncts. With the Rev. W. H. Helrigel as pastor, the local church assumes a very important part in the lives of Parchment citizens. Services are held in the Community House. A large and beautiful church site has already been set aside awaiting sufficient funds for the erection of the edifice. The Sunday School, with an average attendance of 375, convenes at 9:30 A.M. every Sunday morning. There is an eighteen piece orchestra that furnishes the music for the school as well as many community activities during the course of a year. The village also boasts of a forty piece band that is considered a fine musical organization. Alfred Southon, Sales Manager of the KVP Company is the superintendent of the Sunday School. Don McDowell, Employment Manager, is the leader of the KVP band and the church choir. He is also director of the Kalamazoo Male Chorus.

There is a health department with headquarters in the Community House also and is in charge of an efficient full time health director, Mr. H. F. Bennett.

"There is much work to be done, in order that our village may grow beautifully and at the same time practically." This statement was made by Mr. Jacob Kindleberger two years ago upon the occasion of the induction program when the first group of Parchment commissioner were sworn into office. The date July 28, 1930 is memorable, not only for this event but also for the presentation to the village of Parchment, on that date, of a beautiful 38 acre park by Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kindleberger. Work on this piece of ground was started immediately after the presentation and was climaxed when the park

was dedicated on June 17th of this year. The recreational activities of the community and mill center in this beautiful project. Here is to be found the finest baseball diamond in the state outside of Detroit. Tennis courts, shuffle board courts and horseshoe courts. An archery plain, well kept drives and paths lead all through the park. A beautiful sunken garden and beds of beautiful flowers greet the eye of the visitor as he enters from the west--all the work and planning of the Parchment Club of Little Gardens. A large toboggan slope serves the children as well as the grownups in the winter time. The tennis courts are also flooded to make an excellent place for skating in winter.

Parchment is always well represented in sports of every kind. It boasts of a baseball team that has won five city championships during the past five years and bids fair to win it again this year. A good live tennis club takes care of all of the tennis enthusiasts. In the winter a large bowling league is organized and KVP is always well represented in the city leagues by a good basketball team.

There are two other industries within the confines of the village including the American Wire Cloth Company and the Paper Makers Chemical Company. The former manufacture wires for paper machines and employ about six people. The Chemical Company manufacture all kinds of chemicals for paper mills as well as many by-products for pharmaceutical concerns. This company started here about fifteen years ago and have enjoyed a steady growth so that at the present time they employ one hundred and fifty persons.

(This history was written in 1933)

(author unknown)

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