

Kewanee Timeline

1836 – Wethersfield founded by New Englanders

1853 – Military Tract Railroad announced location 1½ miles north of Wethersfield

1854 – Kewanee founded by Wethersfielders; Wethersfield remains separate village

1856 – Union Academy started for Kewanee and Wethersfield students

1858 – Lincoln and Douglas speak in Kewanee

1860 – Population 1461

1861 – Civil War started, Kewanee recruits three companies of 100 men each

1865 – Civil War ended, coal-mining has become economic mainstay

1867 – Kewanee incorporated as a village; first village board elected

1870 – Population 2000

1870 – Wethersfield sells share of Union Academy to Kewanee, Academy becomes Kewanee High

1874 – City Hall built, initially called Library Hall

1875 – Haxtun Steam Heater Co. formed, forerunner of Kewanee Boiler and Walworth

1880 – Population 2704

1880 – Library moved to Odd Fellows Building

1887 – Center School built, replaces Academy as Kewanee High School

1890 – Population 4569

1891 – Haxtun Steam Heater becomes Western Tube Company

1892 – Kewanee Boiler Company formed as Western Tube sells boiler business to E.E. Baker

1893 – Boss Manufacturing Co. incorporated

1897 – Kewanee incorporated as a city; John Pierce, president of Western Tube, elected first mayor

1900 – Population 8382

1902 – St. Francis Hospital established

1903 – Wethersfield's Blish School built; Kewanee Business College started; Streetcars begin running in Kewanee

1904 – Kewanee High School built on Lyle Street

1906 – Windmont Park opened by Streetcar Company

1910 – Population 9307 (land added to city increasing population by 4 to 5 thousand)

1911 – Kewanee voters adopt commission form of city government; H.F. Baker elected mayor

1917 – Walworth Company buys Western Tube

1919 – Voters create Kewanee Park District, Kewanee Public Hospital established, Kewanee Manufacturing formed (becomes Kewanee Corp. in 1982)

1920 – Population 16,000

1921 – Wethersfield annexed to Kewanee making population of “new” city 18,000

1926 – First “hard road” reaches Kewanee from the east (Highway 34)

1926 – Fred Francis leaves his Woodland Palace to Kewanee in his will; it becomes centerpiece of city's Francis Park three miles east of city

1927 – Savings Bank of Kewanee bankrupts previewing Great Depression in Kewanee

1930 – Population 17,093

- 1930 – Kewanee Airport south of town established
- 1931 – Northeast Park adds new swimming pool and lighted ball field
- 1938 – New Central School opens thanks to financial help from U.S. Public Works Administration
- 1939 – Fairview Apartments opens (first federal-subsidized housing in Henry County)
- 1940 – Population 16,901
- 1942 – Great Kewanee Fire destroys 15 downtown business buildings
- 1942-45 – Kewanee's industries achieve Army-Navy E Award for war production
- 1945 – War's end leads to housing boom especially on south side of Kewanee
- 1949 – Kewanee claims title of "Hog Capital of the World" since Henry County leads nation in hog production