



The Belgians of St. Joseph County, Part 4

An Historical Sketch

November 11, 2006

St. Bavo's Church, Mishawaka - 1903



First Church built in 1903; used as School in 1905; Remodelled in 1906.

Kapel gebouwd in 1903; gebruikt als School in 1905; Vergroot in 1906.

Built in 1903

**Became the school
in 1905 when new
church was
finished**

Enlarged in 1906

**St. Bavo's Parish
Report for 1906**

St. Bavo's, 1904 to Present



Built for \$20,000+

**1st baptism, Jan. 28, 1904: Paul Alfred
Van Paemele**

**1st marriage, Feb. 13: Camiel Dutoi and
Albina Maria Goethals**

**1st (adult) death Apr. 29: Theresia De
Groote, born Oct. 22, 1828,
Meerendre, Belgium**

Current school enrollment approx 270

513 W. 7th, Mishawaka

**Verslype, The Belgians of Indiana,
and various other sources**

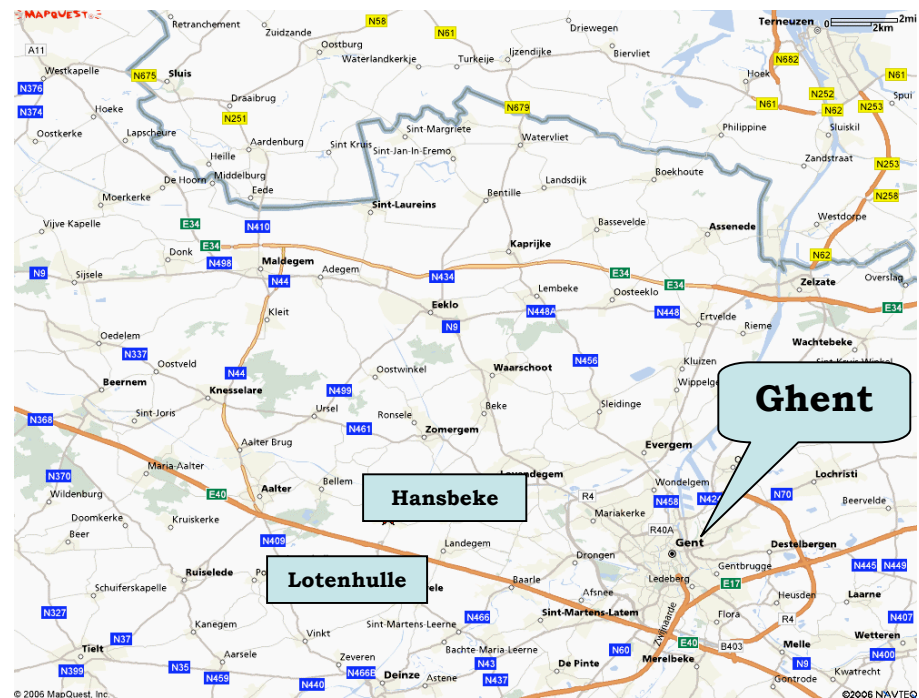
St. Bavo's Parish Registry for 1906

*Getrouwde Personen
die aan St. Baafs Kerk behoren.*

*Married Persons
who belong to St. Bavo's Parish.*

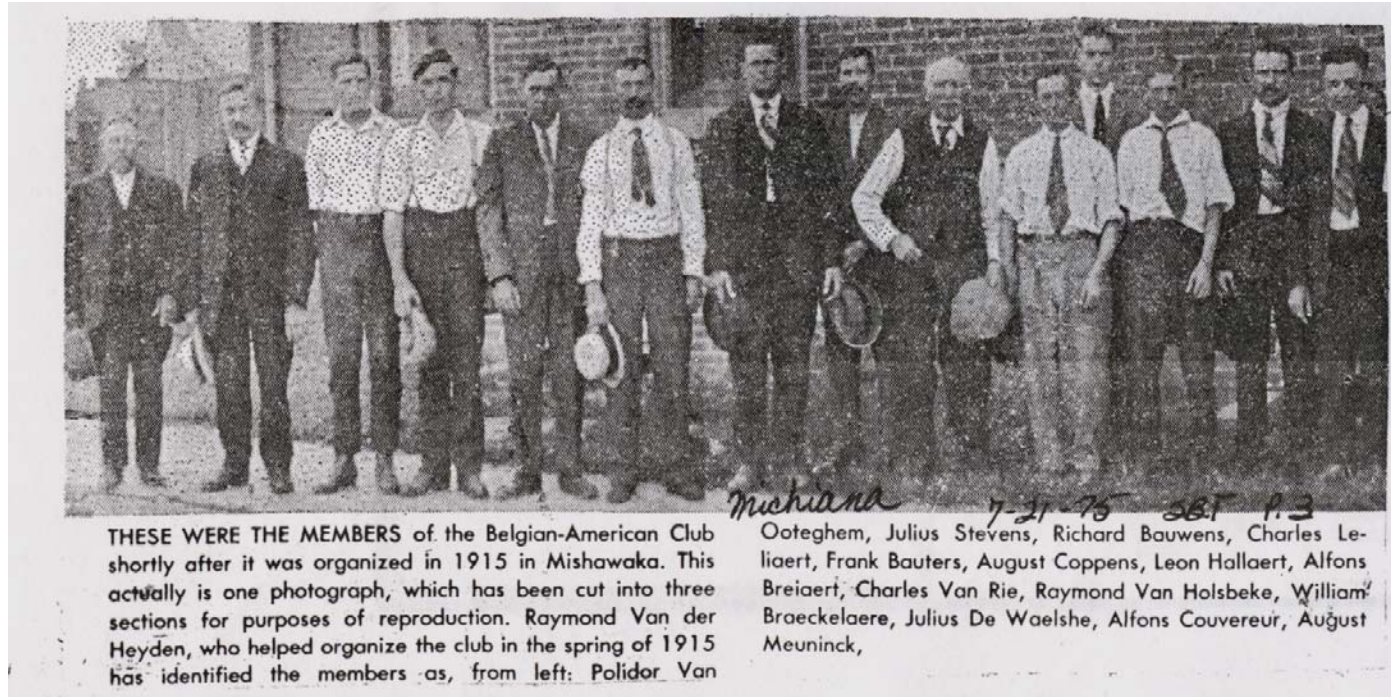
Bank. Pew.	Naam—Name.	Verblyf. Residence.	Geboortepl. Birthplace.
32.	Accoe, Seraphien.....	E. 11th St.....	Eecloo, Belgium
	Bracke, Marie.....		St. Laureyns, Belgium
	Helena.....		St. Laureyns, Belgium
	Achiel.....		St. Laureyns, Belgium
	Germania.....		St. Laureyns, Belgium
	Irma.....		St. Laureyns, Belgium
	Martha.....		St. Laureyns, Belgium
	Marcel.....		St. Laureyns, Belgium
	Florine.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
	Marguerite.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
14.	Baert, Alois.....	219 E. Battell St.....	Zuiddorp, Zeeland
26.	Bauwens, Lodewyk.....	402 Taylor St.....	Cleyt, Belgium
	Van De Moortele, Celine.....		Lootenhulle, Belgium
	Maurice.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
	Alice.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
	Clarisse.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
	Alois.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
14.	Benoodt, Jules.....	126 W. 7th St.....	Hansbeke, Belgium
	Lee, Bessie.....		South Bend, Ind.
	Donald.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
10.	Biesbroeck, Charles.....	W. 8th St.....	Wyngene, Belgium
	Coppens, Julie.....		Ruyssedele, Belgium
26.	Biesbroeck, Ivo.....	506 W. 7th St.....	Wyngene, Belgium
	Lankriet, Prudence.....		Ruyssedele, Belgium
22.	Biesbroeck, Julius.....	413 W. 9th St.....	Ruyssedele, Belgium
	Bultinck, Alida.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
	Maurice.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
26.	Biesbroeck, Maurice.....	413 W. 9th St.....	Ruyssedele, Belgium
	De Roose, Anna.....		South Bend, Ind.
	Marguerite.....		Mishawaka, Ind.
31.	Biesbroeck, Rene.....	506 W. 7th St.....	Ruyssedele, Belgium
	Lievens, Marie.....		South Bend, Ind.
62.	Bleiaert, Auguste.....	W. 8th St.....	Knesselaere, Belgium
19.	Blondeel, Adolf.....	E. 10th St.....	Wyngene, Belgium
	Braet, Augusta.....		Wyngene, Belgium
	Flavie.....		Wyngene, Belgium

The registry lists each person's birthplace. The Belgian villages named are predominantly in East Flanders, in the region immediately west of Ghent.



Courtesy Mapquest

Belgian American Club – Mishawaka 1915



Left to Right: Van Ooteghem, Stevens, Bauwens, Leliaert, Bauters, Coppens, Hallaert, Breiaert, Van Rie, Van Holsbecke, Braeckelaere, De Waelshe, Couverour, Meuninck

South Bend Tribune, July 21, 1975

Mishawaka Population Growth

news times 9/23/31
**Mishawaka Second Largest
Belgian Settlement in U. S.**

By JOHN B. CHESTER

Mishawaka has by far the largest Belgian population of any city in Indiana and in fact, outside of the big centers such as New York, Chicago and Detroit, has more Belgians than any city in the nation, with the exception of Moline, Ill.

The detailed census figures for Indiana cities and counties, just made public, show that out of Mishawaka's 28,630 population, 3,468 are foreign-born white; and of the foreign-born, 1,485, or nearly half, are natives of Belgium.

The variance in racial make-up of two such contiguous cities as South Bend and Mishawaka is marked. While the Poles lead among South Bend's foreign born with Hungarians and Germans next, the Belgians lead in Mishawaka—and the Italians are second.

491 Italians

The statistics show that there are 491 natives of sunny Italy in Mishawaka. Germans are third with 337, then come the Poles with 161, Canadians with 126, with 95 Hungarians, 63 Swedes, and 98 Netherlanders.

The Germans show a more prominent ranking when first and second generations are taken into ac-

count. Adding the native-born children of foreign-born parentage to the figures, the Belgians lead with 2,633, and Germans are second with 1,922, while the Italians are third with 993.

The percentage of Negroes in Mishawaka is much lower than in South Bend—0.2 per cent as compared with South Bend's 1.8. There are only 51 Negroes in Mishawaka.

9,958 Married

Males and females are about evenly divided—14,429 males and 14,201 females. Of the males 15 years or older 9,958 are married, and of the females exactly the same number. The census shows 158 male and 175 female divorcees in Mishawaka.

A little over half of the foreign-born white population of Mishawaka is naturalized. Of the 3,468 foreign-born white, 969 men and 728 women are naturalized. In addition 379 men and 134 women have taken their first papers toward citizenship.

Illiteracy is gaining in Mishawaka, with 550 of those 10 years or over unable to read or write. The percentage is 2.5, as compared with 1.3 in 1920. Illiteracy among the foreign-born white is 14.3 per cent.

South Bend News-Times, April 23, 1931. The article points out that only Moline, IL of the smaller U.S. cities had a greater Belgian-descent population. Nearly half of the Mishawaka foreign-born (white) population were of Belgian descent.

Mishawaka Belgian Businesses Through the Years

1912	20
1919	28
1926	50
1932	71
1942	79
1952	60
1962	37
1972	28
1982	27

Source: Verslype, The Belgians of Indiana

Ties Remained Strong

Two to Receive
Belgian Honor

trib. 9/21/31



A. C. COLPAERT.



DR. L. P. VAN RIE.

Excerpt

Bestowal of royal honors by King Albert of Belgium on A. C. Colpaert, local real estate operator, and Dr. Leo P. Van Rie of Mishawaka will be celebrated next Saturday night with a banquet in their honor given by the United Belgian societies of the two cities in the Hotel Mishawaka. The two men have been awarded the order of Leopold the Second, a royal favor of distinction, in recognition for their personal services and those of the Belgian settlements

**A. C. Caelpart
and Dr. Leo
Van Rie
receive the
Order of
Leopold II**

South Bend Tribune, September 21, 1931

Belgian American Business Men's Association, 1954 - Mishawaka



HEAD, BELGIAN-AMERICAN GROUP—Recently elected officers of the Belgian-American Business Men's Association were installed Sunday afternoon during a regular monthly business meeting held in the group's clubrooms at 417 W. Seventh St. New officers seated, left to right, are: Theo Verleye, secretary; Arthur E. Soens, president, and Oscar Elbode, treasurer. Standing, Edward Honold, director; Rene D'Haenens, also a director; Predan Ghyselinck, director, and August De Cloedt, vice president. Soens has named Hubert Selis as chairman of the entertainment committee, with Adolf Fobe in charge of membership and Cyriel Alley heading the sick committee.

**Seated: Theo Verleye, Arthur E. Soens, Oscar Elbode.
Standing: Edward Honold, Rene D'Haenens, Predan Ghyselinck, August De Cloedt.**

**South Bend Tribune,
March 29, 1954**

The Belgian Presence Today



**Mishawaka "Belgian Town" Photos
September, 2006 - JAV**

- *Sources and Reference Material* -

- Verslype, Henry A., The Belgians of Indiana, Evangel Press, 1987.
- St. Joseph County Public Library Local History and Genealogy Dept.
- Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library Heritage Center
- Northern Indiana Center for History
- Red Star Line Memorial
- St. Bavo's Parish Report for 1906
- South Bend Tribune
- Ellis Island Memorial Foundation
- The National Botanic Garden of Belgium

*“Nothing is History until it has been
Written”*

We need your stuff

Documents

Pictures

Artifacts

Oral remembrances

Before they are lost in a flooded basement or
a leaky attic, or the minds can no longer
remember



Belgian American Historical Society
of Chicago

www.bahsc.org