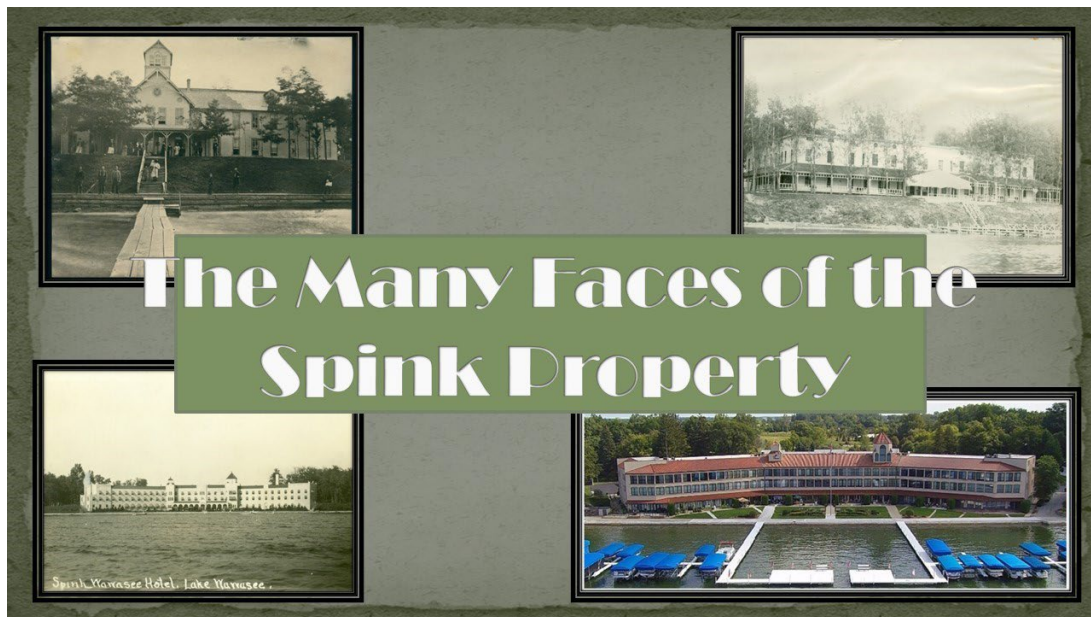


Presentation for Wawasee Prep Reunion (September, 27, 2025) commemorating 50 years since its closure.



successively on lot #003
(1879 – 1891) North Lake and River Association Clubhouse, Cedar Beach Club,
(1892 - 1919) Wawasee Inn,
(1926-1947) Spink Wawasee Hotel,
(1947 – 1967) Our Lady of the Lake Seminary,
(1967 - 1975) Wawasee Preparatory School,
(1979 – Present) Wawasee Spink Condominiums

For the history of the property up to the building of the Spink hotel, see “From the Ground Up, The History of the Spink Property,” presented July 12, 2025.

The third time was the charm for the site. The Milford Mail, January 7, 1926, reported ground had been broken by the E.G. Spink Co. of Indianapolis, general contractor; the hill was dug out; and on 350 feet of the waterfront, a three-story Spanish Revival-style hotel with 130 guest rooms was being constructed. A month later, the hotel was one-half built. A little over 6 months later on Saturday night, July 24, 1926, the Spink Wawasee Hotel opened with a dinner-dance attended by over 300 people; EIGHTY GUEST ROOMS AND THE 1ST FLOOR WERE COMPLETED in a little over 6 months!

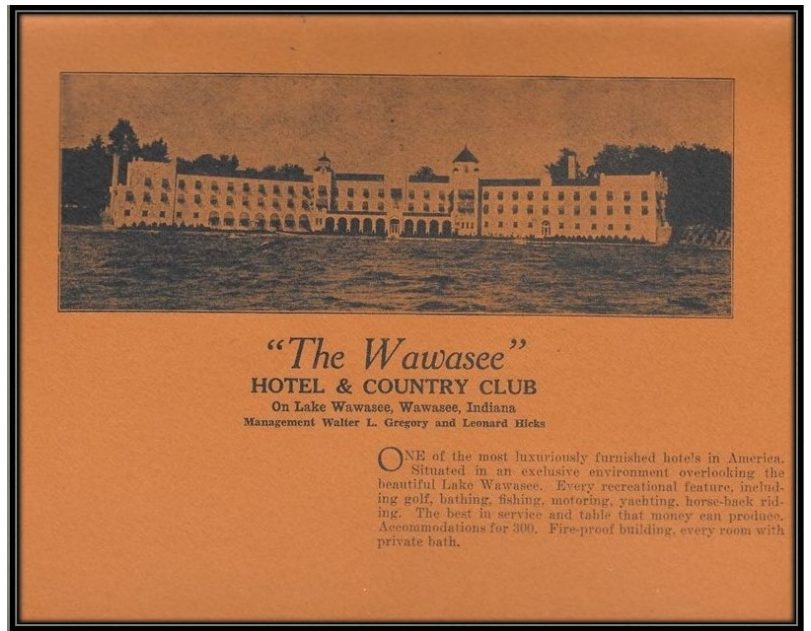


Edgar George Spink was a man so filled with ideas that he reportedly had 2 or 3 men following him around, writing them down. He also developed and managed several hotels and apartment buildings in Indianapolis. Unfortunately, Mr. Spink never lived to see this hotel's success; he died in 1927, less than a year after the hotel opened its doors. Two of his sisters, Dr. Urbana Spink and Mrs. Bonaventura Cunniff, along with "Bonnie's" husband, Bernard, ran the Spink-Wawasee hotel.



The hotel was a most popular vacation spot. A convention hall was built in the early 1930s to attract more events. Guests arrived by automobile, bus or by rail at the B. and O.'s Wawasee station. Some arrived by plane at the nearby Wawasee airport (built in 1934) or even landed on the lake.

The 1928 Wawasee Directory contained a photograph of the new building, along with the following description: “The Spink-Wawasee was one of the most luxuriously furnished hotels in America; situated in an exclusive environment overlooking beautiful Lake Wawasee, it offers every recreational feature, including the nearby Wawasee Golf Course, bathing, fishing, yachting, horseback riding, dancing to a house band, diving exhibitions and more.”



In a July, 1988, newspaper article, T.L. Farris wrote, “Viewing the Spink from the lake created an image of a Spanish Mediterranean castle, with its regal magnitude, carefully positioned turrets and towers, and the long rows of arched windows and doors.”

It was an American plan hotel – meals were included; the hotel offered the best in service and table that money could buy. There were accommodations for 300; every room had a private bath. Most importantly, it was a fireproof building!”





Dining Hall



Lounge



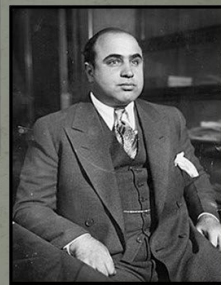
Lobby



Marine Porch



MARINE PORCH
WAWASSEE HOTEL



Entering the Spink from the back of the building, a stairway led down into the lake level lobby, soda fountain, barber shop, dining room, and casino. Purportedly the casino was run by Al Capone's syndicate out of Chicago; locals were denied entrance. Slot machines, declared illegal in 1930, were placed around the building.

On a cold wintery day in Feb., 1947, a tragic accident befell the two Spink sisters who had been running the hotel. As they were driving back to Indianapolis from a trip to Mississippi, Bonnie and Dr. Urbana were caught in a blizzard in the Great Smoky Mountains. When their car stalled in a snowdrift, the sisters chose to walk in search of safety. The next morning – seven miles from their car – a



snowplow crew found Bonnie frozen to death and Dr. Urbana suffering from severe exposure but alive. The Spink closed its doors at the end of the 1947 season. The 21 years that the Spink was open as a hotel covered quite a cross-section of history. The span included four presidencies, the great stock market boom, followed by the crash, Prohibition and its repeal, the depression, and WW II, to mention a few.



In spite of the Spink hotel's sins of the past, confession was served, and the facility was in store for a dramatic turnabout. Neighbor William Noll, whose brother was Archbishop John F. Noll of the Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend, had the Catholic Church of the Little Flower built (dedicated July, 1926) nearby when he tired of taking the family to Ligonier for services. The Noll family had controlling interest in Pinex Cough Syrup; during the Depression, buying cough syrup when you were sick was cheaper than going to the doctor.



In 1947, with the assistance of Our Sunday Visitor Foundation and Mr. Noll, the hotel and 15-wooded acres were purchased by the Fort Wayne/South Bend Catholic Diocese as part of an educational expansion program. This aerial shot shows the central buildings of the Spink complex after the Catholic diocese took over. The hotel rooms were turned into dorms and classrooms with the old Spink ballroom/exhibition hall breathing

new life as an auditorium with a stage. New structures built were: the gymnasium (work begun, June, 1950; free-standing building to the left in the photo); if the photo was a wider shot, you could see to the left of the gym, the detached auditorium and attached (1953-'54) Music Shack. A chapel attached to the main building was constructed with classroom space beneath (completed spring, 1949) - now the site of the condo swimming pool.



The open lakeside porch in the center of the building was enclosed & remodeled as a library (during winter of 1952-'53).



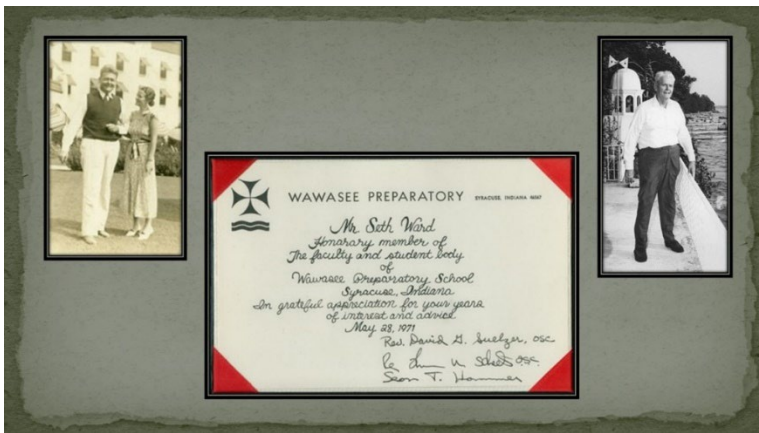


Moving its operation from Ft. Wayne to the lake, Our Lady of the Lake Seminary opened in September, 1948, operated by the Crosier Fathers. First-year enrollment was 123 students who were offered a six-year seminary (four-year secondary school plus a junior college dept.). Enrollment peaked in the 1960-1964 years when there were 260 students, but in June, 1964, after 16 years, the junior college was closed due to changes in church educational

policy, leading to the shift from a strict seminary program to a college preparatory program.



In 1967, the Crosier Fathers bought the facility outright and changed the name to Wawasee Preparatory School, a private, boys boarding high school program. The school, with its fine reputation, drew students internationally, not all being Catholics. Wawasee Prep was accredited by the North Central Association (of Colleges and Secondary Schools). Students participated in sports including hockey. Throughout the summer, the complex was kept busy with CYO and sports camps, Scouts, college football summer conditioning and other activities. Approximately one-half of the faculty were priests. Two-thirds of the faculty members held masters' degrees or higher. At this time, the student-to-teacher ratio was 12 to 1. The school was also known for its strong physical education and athletic programs. Throughout the summers, the complex was kept busy with CYO and sports camps, Scouts, college football summer conditioning and other activities. Additional remodeling and structures were completed throughout the years.



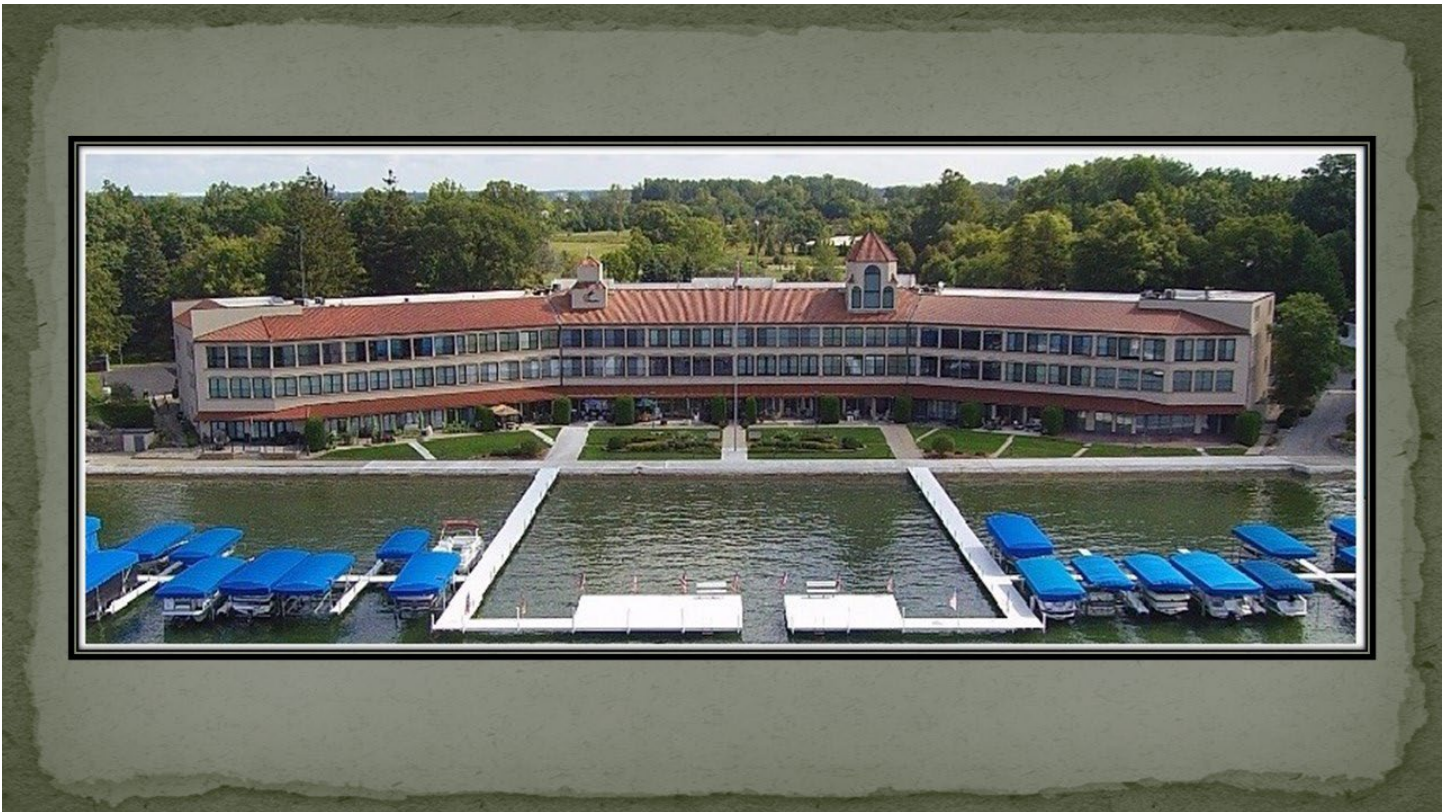
Seth & Betsy Ward¹ lived nearby and considered the priests their friends. They allowed Wawasee Prep the use of a portion of their property across the road as a soccer field for a short period of time. They fielded the first varsity soccer team in the area Sept. 16, 1968.



In 1971, females were admitted to Wawasee Prep; the nearby Church of the Little Flower was converted into a girls' dormitory and renamed Noll House. Sue Strasser of Goshen and Sandy Chapkowski (daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Forrest Cook) of Syracuse will be the first two girls to graduate from Wawasee Prep on May 6, 1972. One teacher whose

impact would be felt in years to come was biology teacher Marsha Shaffer, who spent two years running water testing programs for the Syracuse Lake and Lake Wawasee property owners' associations in connection with their Lakes Study fund. Wawasee Prep closed in June 1975, for a number of reasons, including reallocating resources & declining enrollment. In all, the former Spink Wawasee Hotel was a Catholic school for almost 30 years.

¹ During Prohibition (1920-33), Seth Ward was a Revenue Enforcement Officer for the U.S. Treasury from 1922 to 1925. D.C. Stephenson was the politically powerful Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan of Indiana and 22 other states, operating out of Indianapolis. In 1923, at age 23, Seth aided in the apprehension of Stephenson by wire-tapping his telephone. Stephenson's conviction and life imprisonment led to the collapse of the Indiana Klan.



The property remained vacant until 1979, when the building and grounds were sold to Wawasee Villa Development Corp. (Miller family - developers of health care facilities) who planned to develop the complex into luxury condominiums. Due to adverse economic conditions, plans did not develop until 1984. The main building was converted into 32 condominiums which went on sale in 1985. The four outside walls were left intact so the structure could remain so close to the lake. The building remodel added five elevators; lower-level expanded dining and study facilities lakeward for additional units and a common area; new siding material replicated the original stucco. The chapel, classrooms, gym, assembly and music halls were demolished. Some units have been combined to the present number of 27 units.



Wawasee Spink Condominiums did major exterior renovation during 2014 (upgraded sliding glass doors, windows, flashing; complete refacing of building, adding some arches and banding in the stucco design).



As the sun sets on the history of an iconic Lake Wawasee property, I thought you'd enjoy these views from the Spink Condo patio AND its "golden windows" as viewed from the lake.



Ann Garceau thoroughly enjoyed her time with the Wawasee Prep classes from the early 1970s! Images primarily are from the Syracuse-Wawasee Digital Archives & current Spink resident Bill McCully. Much of the research was done on Hoosier State Chronicles & the Wawasee Spink website.