

First Centennial News Release

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Batavia officially became a city on January 1, 1915 after having been an incorporated village since 1823. The transition involved a progression through several steps during 1914. During 2014, I will be recalling each of these events 100 years to the date after their occurrence.

Today, 100 years ago, the Village of Batavia Aldermen, the equivalent of today's City Council, had become unhappy with the work of a Charter Revision Commission appointed several years earlier. The Commission had developed a proposal for Batavia becoming a city that eliminated wards, eliminated political parties, and established a government run by a manager and five councilmen elected at large. However, despite multiple submissions to the State government, the Commission's charter proposal had failed to gain the necessary approval.

At their regularly scheduled board meeting on Jan. 21, 1914, the Board of Aldermen, led by Republican Mayor Louis Wiard, created a Charter Revision COMMITTEE composed of themselves and announced that within two weeks, they would have an alternative proposal to the one created by the Charter Revision COMMISSION. Political pundits anticipated that the Aldermen's proposal, among other things, would keep a ward structure, continue partisan political affiliations, and retain a mayor rather than create a city manager position.

The Aldermen succeeded in completing their proposal by the target date. Two weeks from now, I will provide another news release, noting to what extent the political pundits were accurate in their predictions.