

History of the Peoria Climatological Database

Weather observations began in Peoria in 1856, by Dr. Frederick Brendel. He made nearly continuous temperature and precipitation readings from 1856 through 1905. These observations serve as the backbone of the Peoria climatological database.

On February 1, 1905, the Weather Bureau (as the NWS was known back then) opened an observing station on the Bradley Institute (now Bradley University) campus. This station remained in operation until August 15, 1944. The station measured temperatures, wind speed and direction, precipitation, snowfall, and barometric pressure.

On March 1, 1935, a new Weather Bureau Airport Station (WBAS) was opened at the Peoria Municipal Airport. Occasional surface observations for airway operations were taken for the first year, then additional equipment was added. The operations of the City Office (Bradley campus) were merged with the Airport Office on May 4, 1943.

At the airport, the Weather Bureau office was located in the Administration Building. In October 1959, operations moved to the new Administration Building. They remained there until October 1979, when the NWS office moved to the Business Aviation Building.

On October 1, 1995, the Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) was commissioned at the Peoria Airport. This system automated most hourly and climatological observations. However, contract observers and tower personnel have monitored the ASOS for accuracy, adding data as needed.

A detailed history of the observation locations:

- **1856 to 1862:** Corner of Washington and E. Franklin
- **1863 to 1864:** 72 S. Adams (2 blocks north of previous site)
- **1865 to 1868:** Corner of Water and E. Franklin (3 blocks south)
- **1869 to 1872:** Corner of Pecan and Meyer (9 blocks west-southwest)
- **1873 to 1884:** 202 Liberty St. (11 blocks east-northeast)
- **1885 to 1888:** 315 Harrison St. (1 block northwest)
- **1889 to 1905:** 701 4th St. (9 blocks northwest)
- **2/1/1905 to 8/15/1944:** 101 S. Institute Pl. (City office -- Bradley campus)
- **3/1/1935 to 10/1/1959:** Peoria Municipal Airport, Administration building (5 miles west southwest of central post office)
- **10/1/1959 to 10/14/1979:** Greater Peoria Airport, new Administration Building (2300 ft. west-northwest)
- **10/14/1979 to 9/30/1995:** Greater Peoria Airport, Business Aviation Building (800 ft. east-northeast)
- **10/1/1995 to present:** ASOS plot on northeast corner of airport grounds