



FLASHBACK



THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 2006

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BOARD MEETING FEBRUARY 19th, 2006

Meeting of the board of directors of the Hammond Historical Society was held on February 19, 2006 in the Suzanne Long Local History Room of the Hammond Public Library. President Ken Stromberger called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.; a quorum was present.

The secretary's report was read and one correction made: A painting and certificate are on loan from Woodmar Country Club; other items are ours. Larry Knoerzer presented the treasurer's report and it was approved as given. Membership Committee has no report.

OLD BUSINESS: Re: certificate of deposit, treasurer is to handle. Re: Hohman Inn marker; proof sheet not ready.

NEW BUSINESS: Richard Lytle suggested we send a letter of recognition to the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad for their 110 years of business. He will also bring a proposal to our next meeting regarding the copying of a book on the Pullman Strike since we have only one copy of this document.

GRANTS: Richard reported that the Indiana State Libraries have grants every year and that we might be able to secure funding for a digitalization project. We have a letter of support from IHB to take photos, so we might make a video which could be sold for fund raising. Deadline for application is 3/31/06. Question was raised concerning possible casino money grants. Deadline for applications is 2/28/06. We will pursue the IHB project.

ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER: will be held Tuesday, May 16, 2006 with gathering at 6 pm and dinner at 6:30 pm at the Seventh Day Adventist Church, 6910 Walnut Street, Hammond, Indiana.

Discussion was held regarding status of library's scanning equipment requirements. There is still the question of how to finance this. Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm and was followed by a program on Hammond's Eastside, presented by Richard Lytle, Willie Mae Duerr and Ron Sims.

Esther Kristoff, Secretary

Last Chance to Join at Old Rates

Now is your chance to renew your membership or take out a lifetime membership before rates increase on May 1, 2006.

Individual memberships will remain at \$10 per year, however a new **Joint membership** for couples will cost \$15 per year beginning May 1, 2006.

Lifetime memberships will go from \$100 to \$150 per individual as of May 1, 2006.

Be sure and check the expiration date of your membership, it is located just above your name & address on the cover of this newsletter.

Your membership is current if the date reads 04/30/2007, if you have already renewed it will be updated next month.

Due to the Easter Holiday on the third Sunday of April there will be **NO GENERAL MEETING THIS MONTH** — enjoy your holiday!

Editor in Chief — William J. Uzdanovich
Co-Editor — Roy J. Speelman
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The Hammond Historical Society — President, Ken Stromberger — First Vice President, Margaret Evans — Second Vice President, Richard Lytle — Secretary, Esther Kristoff — Treasurer, Larry Knoerzer 2005-2006

WOODEN WATER TOWERS *VANISHING URBAN ICONS*

Once a familiar sight on the city's skyline and horizon, these stout wooden water towers were an easily recognizable feature that one would see when you looked skyward or off into the distance.

These giant wooden barrels on the roofs of several of the larger structures located mainly in the city's downtown district, have disappeared over the years. Two that quickly come to mind were high atop two of Hammond's largest department stores, the Goldblatt's and E. C. Minas buildings. One still stands today looming high above the former L. Fish Furniture store.

When constructing a water tank, the components were brought up to the roof and assembled there. Construction was usually quick and easy. The bulk of the tank consisted of wood. The preferred woods that were most used were redwood, fir, cedar and cypress. These woods were used mostly because they were more resistant to rot, mold and insects.

Giant galvanized steel hoops would hold the wooden planks together. No glue was ever used, because the pressure of the water inside when the tank was filled, along with the swelling of the wood planks kept the tank from leaking.

Once the towers were drained and no longer used, the wood was vulnerable to rot and insects and would quickly deteriorate.

The tanks were huge structures and held an enormous volume and weight of water. The tank that was once on top of the Edward C. Minas store, held 30,000 gallons of water and the water alone weighed over 250,000 lbs or 125 tons.

For the most part, these massive wooden water towers sat there just waiting to be put into service. The building tenants, one would assume would, just prefer that all they did was just sit there idle and not be used at all.

If the need would arise and they were called into service, they would do their job, after all they were placed there for a reason. They were the main component of the building's fire suppression system.

The Minas Department store tank, was installed and completed in 1913 and saw use rather quickly. Extremely cold temperatures on the evening of Sunday, February 16, 1914 froze a defective pipe and caused all of the 30,000 gallons of water to drain out.

Damage to the store was minimal, since most of the water flowed over the roof. However, the entire south rear wall of the new building was covered in a thick sheet of ice. Some water did leak into the third floor and basement, causing damage to ceilings and some stock.

Following that "dry" run so to speak, the water tower was "pressed" into service once again. This time for real. A fire on the eve of Thursday, May 7th, 1915 broke out in the second floor millinery workroom. A worker for some reason forgot to turn off an iron which led to a blaze that set off four of the newly installed sprinkler heads.

In the end scavengers fought over its redwood remains after the store was demolished in the fall of 2002.

Source Information: microfilms of The Times newspapers Feb. 1914, May 1915, USA Today & online.



A series of photographs showing the last days of the water tower atop the old Edward C. Minas building dating back to August of 2002.

Reserve Your Dinner Table

2006 Annual Dinner Reservations Form _____
 Hammond Historical Society—Tuesday, May 16th Arrive @ 6:00 pm Dinner @ 6:30 pm

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ ZIP+4 _____
 Phone _____ Email _____

Attending Dinner _____ @ \$10.00 donation per person
 Total amount I have enclosed is: _____

Please enclose check or money order **DO NOT SEND CASH**
 Make your check or money order payable to the: **Hammond Historical Society** Mail payment to —
Lois Sherby Stromberger — 6919 Ridgeland Avenue — Hammond, IN 46324-2234
 ▶▶▶ PLEASE NOTE: Deadline for receiving reservations by mail is Tuesday, May 9th, 2006

Please photocopy or clip out this form above, place in an envelope and send in with your payment as soon as possible

Join us for _____

OUR ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Tuesday, May 16, 2006—6:30 p.m.

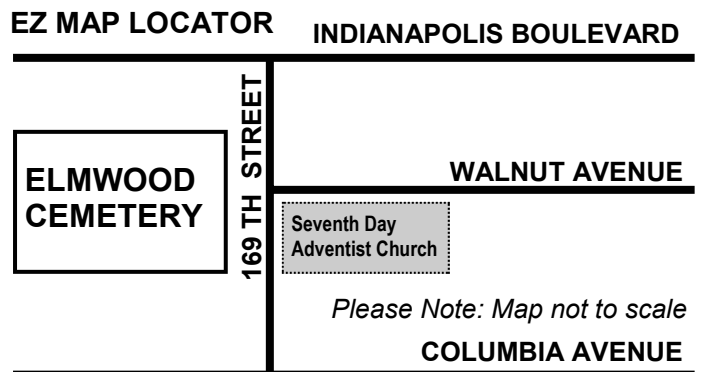
**Seventh Day Adventist Church—6910 Walnut Ave
 Hammond, Indiana**

—Why Not Bring a Friend!

Make plans to attend our Annual Dinner and Meeting, this year's event will be special. Our hosts will prepare and cook our meal. It was agreed by members of the board that the money collected by those in attendance will be donated to the congregation for all of their efforts. New board members will be elected and installed for next year. We look forward to seeing you in attendance.



Hammond Tech High School cafeteria circa early 1950's.





THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
564 STATE STREET HAMMOND IN 46320-1532

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS:
NO GENERAL MEETING IN APRIL
Annual Dinner & Meeting Tuesday,
May 16th, 2006 RSVP Required
GET THE DETAILS INSIDE _____

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



DATED MATERIAL

Postmaster Please Deliver by April 18th, 2006

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY -



20 YEARS AGO APRIL 1986

A Transportation Plaza is proposed for Downtown Hammond. A total of three grants are being secured from several government agencies to finance the project. Centennial Plaza will be located on the old Eire Lackawanna Railroad right-of-way between State and Sibley Streets. The building will house offices for the Hammond Transit System and will resemble an old fashion railroad depot. Plans had originally called for the former Michigan Central Railroad structure along Oakley Avenue and Willow Court, but it burned down before it could be moved. || The Hammond Historical Society will present an informal program of recollections of the Hohman and Mott families by relatives Rosemary and Averill Colby, Barbara May, Charles Hohman, Fred R. and Marie Mott on April 20 at 2:30 in the Community Room of the Hammond Public Library, Downtown.

The not for profit Robertsedale Foundation has filed a plan to fill in Lake George with the US Army Corps of Engineers. It's new plan is a "radical departure from a previous one that would have drained the lake and mined the sand. The money would be used to help draw down the \$3 million debt incurred by Calumet College, owners of the property. || Some 677 exhibits were entered in the 29th annual Calumet Regional Science Fair at Purdue University Calumet. || A proposed spur road would link Indianapolis Boulevard and Calumet Avenue, the route would make access to the planned lakefront marina much easier. || Highlands Apartment Complex at Kennedy and I-80/94 has been purchased by a group of Chicago businessmen. It was sold at a price "in excess of \$8 million." The complex has 25 buildings with 718 units and houses about 2,000 residents. The name was changed from the Kennedy Park Apartments just over two years ago and had undergone a \$2 million renovation preparing them for this sale. If the apartments weren't updated, they would have been demolished and deeded to the city for a park. Prior to this sale they had been losing \$1 million a year.

Source info: The Times microfilms of April 1986