



Make Plans Now To Attend Our March Meeting

Just a quick note to remind everyone that next month will be our annual Show And Tell.

This meeting is always a fun and interesting one where members bring items related to Hammond's history.

A popular favorite is old photographs of people, places and things from the city's past, but you're not just limited to pictures. Bring whatever item you might think would be of interest to other Historical Society Members.

So now might be the time to start that spring cleaning and do a little shuffling around in the attic or basement.

You never know what to might find squirreled away, that you would like to share with fellow society members.

Those who remember the last time we had our annual Show and Tell was February 2003 and it was quite an adventure to say the least. It was a very cold and windy day with a foot of snow on the ground, but that changed when we meet poolside at Morton High School!

J. T. Hutton Hammond Architect

In the city's early days, Hammond was home to many prominent architects, with J. T. Hutton at the top of that list.

Mr. Hutton's specialty was designing the large scale public buildings, such as court houses, schools and commercial structures. However he didn't stop there, Hutton also designed several private homes and industrial buildings.

Hutton didn't limit his buildings to just Hammond, the architect had them located in neighboring towns, including Chicago, Illinois and many others around the state of Indiana.

Hammond's first original house of county government, the Lake Superior Court House built in 1903, was a J. T. Hutton design.

The Industrial High School in Hammond, built in 1916 located across the street from city hall is one of the few Hutton buildings that still stand today.

The old Straube Piano factory, near Hohman Avenue and Conkey Street is a fine example of Hutton's industrial designs that is still presently in use.



Original Lake Superior Court House by J. T. Hutton



FEBRUARY MEETING SCHEDULE

**Guest Speaker:
Bill Hutton
Topic:
Hutton Family
Of Architects**

**Sunday, February 15th at
2:30 p.m. in the Community
Room of the Hammond
Public Library 546 State
Street.**

Prior to our General Meeting, a Board of Directors meeting is scheduled at 1:30 p.m. in the Suzanne G. Long Local History Room located on the second floor of the Hammond Public Library Main at 546 State Street Hammond, IN.

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The 1918 Spanish Flu Epidemic



As a sort of follow up on last month's article "Early Health Care and Hammond's First Hospital" this month we will take a look back at the 1918 Spanish Flu Epidemic and how it affected Hammond.

The Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918 was one of the most tragic events of modern history and by far the most catastrophic event to take place in Hammond in terms of lives lost.

First, for those who are not familiar with this event, the Spanish Flu Epidemic broke out during the time of World War I. Many soldiers were being killed as warfare was unfolding in Europe. However those casualties would soon pale after the Spanish Flu swept the globe. A total of over 21 million people worldwide perished from the Spanish Influenza.

In August 1918 the Spanish Flu started taking its grip on the United States, and lasted up until July 1919. During this time some 20 million Americans became ill, killing more than 500,000. During the flu's peak period in October 1918 some 195,000 Americans died.

The disease spread so rapidly because not much was known about the virus, with the exception that it was very contagious. There was very little that doctors could do for those who became infected with it. The Spanish Flu was the third worst epidemic in recorded history, the most dreaded since the Bubonic Plague of the Middle Ages.

Newspaper stories started showing up on September 24, 1918 reporting that Hammond had many ill from the Spanish Flu. Doctors were kept busy as some entire families were stricken with the disease. No deaths had been reported so far. But that would quickly change.

Hammond's first reported flu fatality occurred on September 30, 1918 with the passing of E. J. Hawley. Mr. Hawley was taken ill in route on a train from Phoenix, AZ where he had been visiting relatives. Hawley took a turn for the worse upon his arrival in Hammond. Hawley was with the Red Cross and was expected to set sail for overseas duty.

In mid October 1918 the city of Hammond had reported 1,281 cases and 101 deaths from the flu to date. This was only the tip of the iceberg as 3,630 cases were reported throughout Lake County, Indiana. Many cases went unrecorded as those who were infected passed the final stages of the flu and were not being treated by a physician. A large number of families were unable to get the necessary medical care, which eventually led to their death.

Nearly every doctor's office in Hammond and Lake County was overrun with the ill. Even though many doctors worked 18 hour days, the medical staff of the city and county was taxed to the limit. On October 18, 1918 Hammond reported 6 deaths.

On October 23, 1918 it was reported that Hammond's flu deaths had increased to 15 per day. Sunday, October 20, 1918 – Monday, October 21, 1918 – Tuesday, October 22, 1918 – 45 people died in Hammond from flu complications. On October 22, 1918 a total of 200 new cases were reported citywide, with a East Hammond doctor there reporting 53 new cases in his area alone.

To help control the spread of the deadly disease, city and county health officials went along with much of the nation, by not allowing public gatherings of any kind.

The closing order affected schools, churches, clubs, lodges, public meetings, social events, funerals and athletic events. There was to be no public gatherings what so ever and all funerals must be private.

No political meetings were permitted as well. This put a real damper on elections in Hammond and the nation too. Voter registrations were held down by the rampant flu and the on going war in Europe, resulting in lukewarm response to the candidates.

Obituary columns a rare sight in the newspapers of this era were common place. The obituary notices that we are familiar with today did not take hold until sometime in the 1940's.

Nearly 1,000 people died in Lake County, Indiana in October and November of 1918. October recorded 463 deaths and November had 266. The city of Hammond had 139 deaths in October 1918 and 53 deaths in November 1918. Casualties were on the decline but new cases were still being recorded in Hammond and Lake County.

Source information via the internet and the microfilms of "THE TIMES" newspapers located at the Hammond Public Library.

Making Of An Icon ———

The Planning and Construction of The Hammond Civic Center

Photo Right—View of the Hammond Civic Center sometime in the early 1950's

When it became apparent that city of Hammond would soon be able to build it's much needed civic auditorium, the site selection was narrowed down to two locations. Those areas under consideration were a site near Hammond High School on Calumet Avenue and one near the old Hammond Tech High School between Fayette Street and Douglas Street.

The business community had their sights set on the Fayette Street location since it was nearer the heart of the downtown business district and was a midway point between Robertsdale to the north and Woodmar on the South.

On the other hand the legion of business owners along Calumet Avenue were in favor of the Hammond High site saying that it would complement the city hall development at Maywood Park and provide for more parking then the Fayette Street location.

Designs for the \$483,000 building were being developed by noted Hammond architect L. Cosby Bernard. The proposed auditorium and gymnasium would be constructed and funded by the Hammond Park Board. The structure would be funded in part by a grant from the PWA with the remainder coming from a bond issue floated by the Hammond Park Board.

The Park Board passed a resolution during their Tuesday, July 7, 1936 meeting authorizing the floatation of a \$265,650 bond issue to finance the city's portion of the construction costs. During that meeting the site location for the new civic center was not made public, because the park board had not exercised their options in obtaining the property. That option will be executed only when the PWA grant is approved and the bond issue is authorized by the state tax board.



The reason the park board is undertaking this project is that it was the only governmental division of the city with enough bonding power for the project. Under this arrangement the park board will operate and maintain the building and retire the bond debt.

Plans for the new civic center called for a structure large enough to seat 5,000 to 6,000 people that would be used for all various types of events that included, conventions, athletic contests, commercial and industrial exhibits.

A "Monolithic Concrete and Brick Design" was selected so it would employ a variety of different craftsman in its construction. Architect L. Cosby Bernard was still working on the tentative plans of the new building with hopes that the estimated cost would be enough to factor in all of the necessities the park board had desired.

Bids for the massive project were finally accepted on December 14, 1936. Construction of the building was set to begin on January 2, 1937 on Sohl Avenue near Hammond High School.

The specs for the new civic center are impressive, the main court size is 74 x 50 feet with a seating capacity of 5,000 people. With the entire floor space of 126 x 76 feet it would be possible to play four basketball games simultaneously in the building.

Special Two Part Series

ONE—Making Of An Icon

TWO—Civic Center Happenings

A smaller auditorium that seats 600 and a dining area is also located in the new facility. A swimming pool with shower and locker rooms and various multipurpose rooms are located in the basement of the center.

An interesting fact pointed out by L. Cosby Bernard, the building's architect, the floor of the new civic center is supported by six enormous steel beams each able to support 180,000 pounds for a grand total of 1,080,000 pounds. As an example if one elephant weighed five tons or 10,000 pounds, then a herd of ten elephants would tip the scales at 100,000 pounds or fifty tons. Then according to Bernard just one of the six beams would be able to support the weight of all ten elephants with 80,000 pounds to spare.

Bernard said "If all ten elephants reared up at the same time and fell to the floor simultaneously, the shock would not be sufficiently great to jar just one of the six beams."

To commemorate the opening of the new Civic Center 15,000 copies of a souvenir booklet were issued for this grand event that was held on July 6, 1937. A cornerstone was laid that day and inside it was a container sealed with a four year record of the Public Works Administration, copies of several local newspapers and the 1936 city municipal financial report.

Next Month —

Civic Center Happenings

Events That Took Place There Over The Years

Source information from the microfilms of "THE TIMES" newspapers located at the Hammond Public Library.



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

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

February 15, 2004—2:30 p.m. Meeting Guest Speaker— Bill Hutton
Topic—The Hutton Family of Architects

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL

Postmaster Please Deliver by February 14, 2004

Vintage View

Lyndora Hotel Lobby

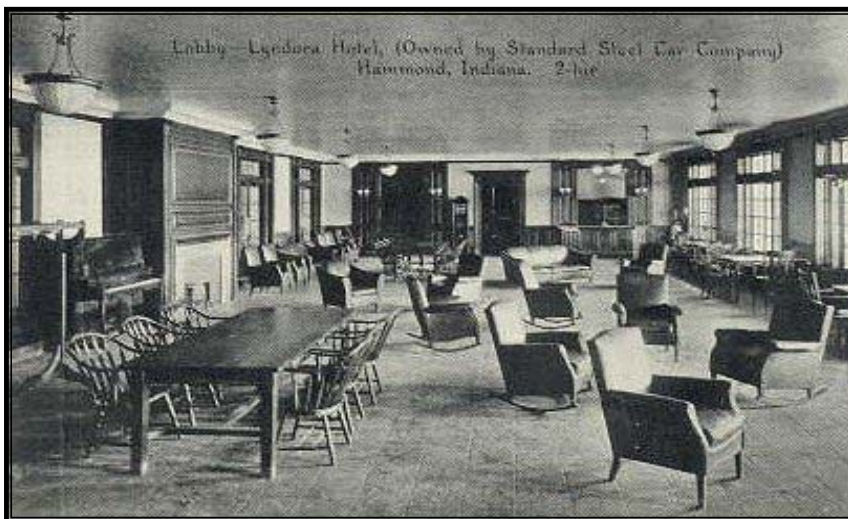
A grand view of the once spacious lobby of the Lyndora Hotel, as it looked sometime during the first part of the early 20th Century.

The hotel was built by the Standard Steel Car Company to house the big influx of workers that were needed for their new Hammond facility.

Located along Columbia Avenue the hotel was directly east of Maywood Park. A streetcar line was only steps from the hotel's front door.

A large and elegant dining facility was just off the lobby and served tasty dishes at very reasonable prices for the hotels 150 guest rooms. The dining room was also open to the public as well.

The building opened in 1917 and was a city landmark for many years until the structure was demolished in November 1985 the result of an arson fire.



At the start many of the guests who stayed at the Lyndora Hotel were the management employees of the Standard Steel Car Company. During the 1933 Chicago World's Fair the Lyndora Hotel was a popular stop over for many travelers on their way over to Chicago, Illinois. The hotel featured special weekly rates for visitors back then.

Most people will probably remember the Lyndora Hotel's days as the St. Ann's Nursing Home, when the hotel was home the area's elderly citizens. The property is now the site of the *Ophelia Steen Family Health and Services Center*.