



FLASHBACK



THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2006

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Black History In Early Hammond

In those days of adolescence, the eighteen-nineties, there was one familiar character on our streets who must not be forgotten for they were a real part of the Hammond of that day.

For years and years there was only one black person in the town, Black Joe. He could be seen any day quietly about his work. No one seemed to know just where he came nor how he happened to come to Hammond. He did odd jobs for several families especially the Towles and slept in the M. M. Towle carriage house. He was quiet and bothered no one. He was quite a source of curiosity. Many of the children followed him about begging him to tell them of his favorite yarns (*stories or tales*).

Joe was always law-abiding and took great pride in being so. But there was one day in the year when he really forgot his good intentions and celebrated. That was St. Patrick's Day. On that day it was a common sight to see him parading up and down Hohman Street, dressed in his best suit, wearing his tall crowned hat all decorated with bright green ribbon and carrying his cane also decorated with green. Usually he was followed by a group of wide-eyed children, greatly enjoying his antics. In a day or so the celebration was over and the bright ribbons laid away until another year. As the years passed Joe was still a loved character on our streets. His passing was mourned by old and young alike for he was a part of Hammond.

*From the book **Thru the Years with Old First** by Alice E. Brown*

— Please Note —

Minutes from the Board of Directors meetings — Past Board of Directors meetings that normally appear later in editions of the newsletters are not included in this issue. Since no meeting was held in December, our January Board of Directors meeting minutes will appear in the March issue.



February Program "East Hammond & Brooks House"

Ron Sims—Speaker
SUNDAY 2:30 pm
February 19th, 2006
Community Room
At The Hammond
Public Library
564 State Street

PLEASE NOTE: All board members are encouraged to attend the Board of Directors Meeting at 1:30 pm in the Suzanne G. Long Local History Room 2nd floor prior to today's General Meeting.

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

1860 CENSUS DATA

Editor's Note: Although Hammond did not become a city until 1884, it did play a very important roll in the growth of the Calumet Region and Lake County, IN.

The data was researched and compiled by Richard Lytle, curator of the Suzanne G. Long Local History Room located at the Hammond Public Library Main.

His findings are detailed below _____

The 1860 census for Lake County showed that population growth had more than doubled to a total of 9,145 men, women and children. North Township, though, had grown a little more than to seven times its previous census figure and now stood at 729 people. Lance Trusty reported in his book that only twelve families lived in and around Hohman's Bridge but exactly how many men, women and children that translated to is impossible to accurately determine. Each of those families took in boarders who worked on one railroad or another simply because there was no other accommodation available and it was good income. Another reason for the impossibility of exact numbers was that the census takers of 1850 and 1860 did not include a street address or any location markers in the census information they gathered from each family.

What is known from the 1860 census data is that North Township held: 182 white adult males of which 163 were foreign born; 149 white females of which 116 were foreign born; No colored adult males, and only one colored adult female who was born in Ohio. The black woman, thirty-four year old Catherine Burris, was employed as a domestic servant in the household of farmer David Gibson and his wife Kitty. It is certain that she was not a slave, although just what her wages were remains unknown. Of course, most of the people living in North Township at the time were farmers but there were a wide selection of individuals from other occupations. There is then only one hotel and one hotel proprietor with his family and one clerk to assist him. There were also only one blacksmith, one physician, one butcher, one tailor, one teacher, and one fisherman, one sand agent, and one road builder, three railroad agents, four merchants, four shoemakers, six carpenters, seven domestic servants, ten farm laborers, thirty-two general laborers, thirty-five railroad hands, and 105 farmers including some who listed as part of another household as their husbands instead of receiving one of their own.

In addition to those numbers there were another twenty-five men plus five females age twenty-one and older living within households. Also living within those households were nineteen boys and twenty-five girls between the ages of fifteen and twenty; forty boys and twenty-five girls age ten to fourteen; 135 boys and 119 girls between the age to one month to ten years of age..

The breakdown of nationalities among the foreign born of all ages and sexes is as follows: Australian, 3; Belgian, 1; Canadian, 10; Danish, 1; English, 50; French, 11; German, 259; Dutch, 27; Hungarian, 9; Irish, 38; Polish, 1; Swiss, 4.

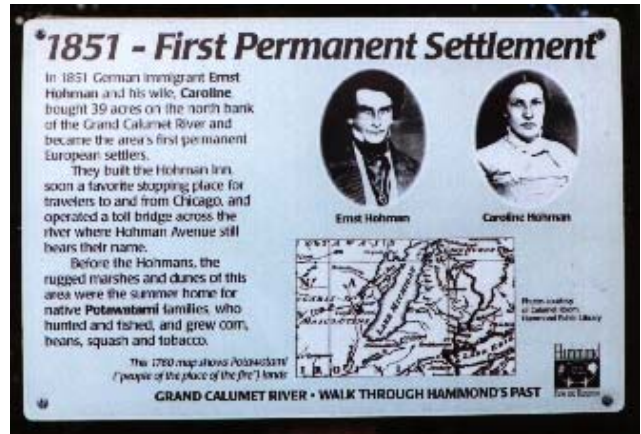
The other 315 native born Americans, mostly all younger children, were born in the following states as follows: Delaware, 1; Illinois, 82; Indiana, 136; Kentucky, 1; Maine, 5; Massachusetts, 6; Michigan, 6; New Hampshire, 1; New York, 38; Ohio, 16; Pennsylvania, 11; Rhode Island, 1; Vermont, 6 and Wisconsin, 4.

The biggest reason there were disproportionately more foreign born adult men then foreign adult women was the presence of two different railroad gangs in the region that year, the first Irish in origin and the second gang all German in origin. The Irish gang was listed in the 1860 census as being railroad hands and they were the actual track layers. The German gang was listed as just labors and they were the ones who prepared the railroad roadways for the Irish gang to lay the rails. Neither one of these work crews should be confused with the additional ten men who were identified in that census as farm labors.

Except for sending about 1,000 men and boys from all of Lake County into the Federal Army, the Civil War, which began a little less than one year later, had little effect upon the Calumet Region of Northwest Indiana. Indirectly, it had a great effect. Farm prices were steadily climbing during the war years and, with so much of the 1860 manpower called to military service, farm and railroad labor was hard to find. All of the townships in Lake County felt the shortage but none more than North Township. Finally, when called upon by the Indiana State Government to provide a company of men for the 99th Indiana Regiment of Infantry in late 1863, there were so few available men in Hobart and North Townships that other townships had to provide extra volunteers just to meet the county quota.

Story continues on page three —

1860 CENSUS DATA



Six months later Mrs. Hohman's prediction of future excitement was coming true. She began her June, 1870, diary with the statement. "The old days are gone. We are getting to be quite a town now. Ernst is selling land all the time to people who want to locate here."



Samples of typical census forms circa 1860.

Generally, the effect of the military draft when it was begun in 1864 was relatively light in North Township as well as the rest of Lake County and the state of Indiana, but it did go into effect. At least one individual who would one day become a prominent Hammond figure had to find a substitute to send into the army. In December, 1863, the bounty being paid in Lake County for a new recruit was already at \$1,000. By mid-1864 that figure was even higher when Jacob Rimbach went to find his substitute he ended up paying \$1,400 and never fully got over it.

The end of the Civil War in 1865 did not bring any important changes within Lake County, North Township and the people living around Hohman's Bridge other than the return of absent loved ones from distant military service. However, changes were not all that long in coming to the area. The December, 1869, entry in Caroline Hohman's diary best describes the arrival of the catalyst. . . . Hohman's Bridge is at last going to have some excitement, only I suppose we will lose our present name. Sometime ago the children came running in to tell father and I that there was a fine buggy coming down the stage road and two men were in it. Ernst went out to meet them and found they were from Detroit. Their names were G. H. Hammond and M. M. Towle and they wanted to buy forty acres from us and put up a packing house. They would employ at least eighteen men, and their families would soon be here to live. Mr. Hammond said they considered this is a good location, and they could get away from Chicago's high taxes, they could put up their own ice from the river, and they would be near the Michigan Central Railroad. He assured us the trains would stop here if they located here. Then, too, with these additional families we could have a school for the children and perhaps a church. Of course, we sold the land and they are already beginning to put up buildings.



THE HOHMANS — HAMMOND'S FIRST PERMANENT SETTLERS

Ernest Hohman left his homeland of Germany in 1849 for London, there he met a young English girl named Caroline Sibley. They were married in Paris, upon which they left for America, later to settle in the Midwest.

In 1851 they left Chicago fleeing a cholera epidemic. After selling his tailor shop in the city he purchased land in Lake County, which would later become the future site of the city of Hammond.

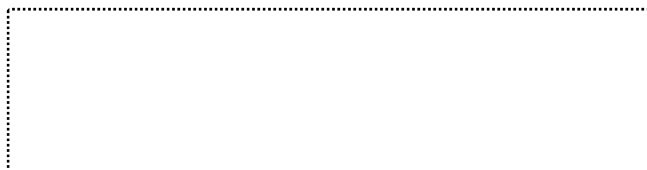


THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS:
Sunday, February 19th at 2:30 p.m.
"East Hammond & Brooks House"
Ron Sims — Speaker

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



DATED MATERIAL

Postmaster Please Deliver by February 18th, 2006

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY -



25 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1981

Difficult times at Goldblatt's may force cutbacks, store closings and a possible Chapter 11 bankruptcy. However the Downtown Hammond store will probably remain open as long as the company remains in business. The Hammond location is thought to be the third most profitable store in the chain. || Fire claimed yet another Downtown Hammond landmark when the former Millikan's Sporting Goods store at 449 State Street was destroyed. Forty-five firemen braved the elements in 15 degree temperatures for three and a half hours to bring the stubborn blaze under control. The bitter temperatures turned the water from the firemen's hoses into massive icicles that covered the shell of the structure that remained, creating an eerie sight for onlookers. Sections of the front and back walls collapsed in dramatic fashion during the early morning hours. || Major expansion continues at St. Margaret's Hospital, the new construction will change the face of Downtown Hammond.

Source information: Microfilms of The Times newspapers, February 1986 & February 1981

20 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1986

Demolition work is well underway on the former St. Ann's Home (Lyndora Hotel) located at Columbia Avenue and Highland Street in the Pullman Standard district. The empty structure was heavily damaged by a suspicious fire on Halloween 1985 and was ordered torn down by the city. || Harrison Park neighborhood clears the first hurdle in becoming the city's second historic preservation district. || A fire that started on the top floor of the former Greyhound Bus terminal located at 44 State Street in Downtown Hammond guts the entire building. The fire burned for almost eight hours, only 9 of the 18 apartments were occupied at the time of the blaze. Some 20 residents were thought to be in the apartments at the time the fire started. Only two people were taken to the hospital for treatment and later released.