



FLASHBACK

HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY 2003

Greetings

Now that the holidays are completed and are one for the history book. Now it's time to pack away all of those holiday decorations and dust off the old keyboard and get back to the business of putting a newsletter together.

One of the more important items of note for the new year is the change in the location for our monthly meetings.

ALL MONTHLY MEETINGS for the remainder of the first half of the calendar year of 2003 — January through April, with the exception of our Annual Dinner in May will take place at the Howard Branch of the Hammond Public Library. For more specific details and directions see the related story in the Special Notice story located directly to the right of this article.

Any other changes in the location of our upcoming meeting schedule will be listed in the Flashback Newsletter.

Updates and corrections in our membership list will be taking place over the next few months. So there is still time to get that information to us.

Please remember that this does take time, so it may still be a month or two until you notice the changes have taken affect. Thanks for your help in this matter.

SPECIAL NOTICE —

New Library Hours Put Us On The Move Once Again

A pending budget shortfall has prompted the Library Board to curtail the Sunday Library hours from January to May 2003. That means all of our scheduled monthly meetings we be held at the Howard Branch at Grand and 171st.

For easy reference the Howard Library Branch is located just south of Morton High School. See the E-Z Locator map on the cover of this newsletter for directions.

Reminder: Don't forget we need your help in making this year's upcoming Oak Hill Cemetery Tour a huge success.

We would like to have the Oak Hill Cemetery Tour serve as a fitting and lasting tribute to Suzanne Long, founder and creator. If you have any ideas or would like to volunteer for this event please contact us as soon as possible.

Happy New Year!



Meeting Info:

Two Purdue University Calumet graduate students will focus attention on their Veterans History Project

Faced with the grim fact that every day thousands of veterans of WWII are dying, this group has taken on the daunting task of preserving the history and experiences by conducting interviews and meetings.

Please Join Us!

Time and Place:

**SUNDAY, January 19th
At 2:30 p.m.**

Note the NEW LOCATION!

**Howard Branch
Hammond Public Library
7047 Grand Avenue
Hammond, Indiana**

Board Members: A meeting for all members of the board of directors will take place at 1:30 p.m. one hour before our general meeting.

*Editor in Chief — Roy J. Speelman
Layout Editor — William J. Uzdanovich*

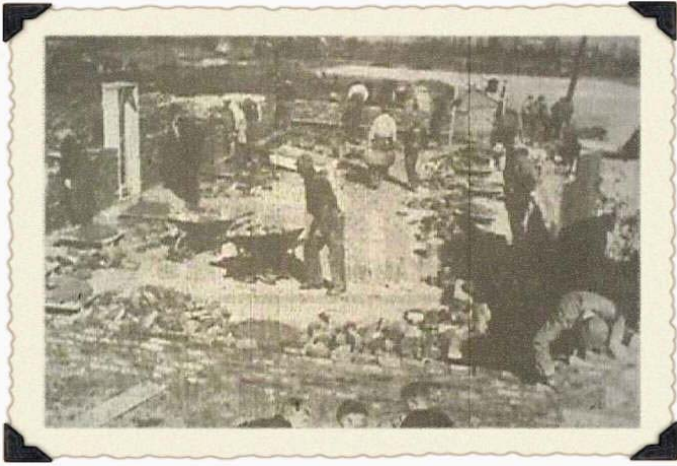
FLASHBACK is published monthly from October thru May—Eight times a year

— FLASHBACK is a publication of the Hammond Historical Society
All Content Copyright © 2003

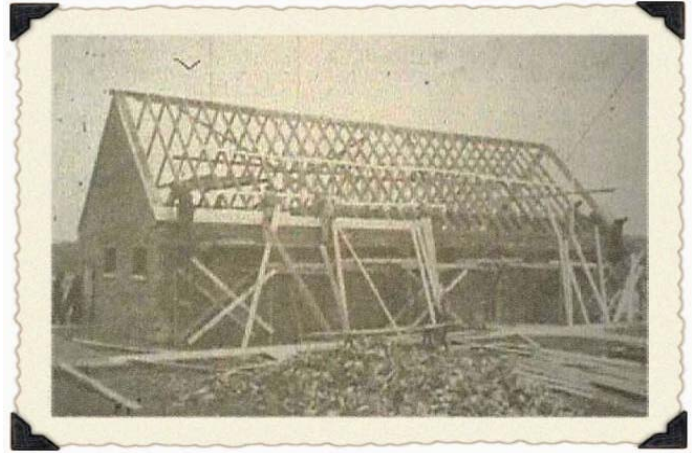
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

VOLUME MMIII — 1

NEW IRVING PARK AND SHELTER HOUSE—1938 / 1941	2
JOSEPH HESS — FOUNDER OF HESSVILLE	3
1910 LAKE GEORGE PICNIC GROUNDS	COVER



GIVE ME SHELTER . . . **THE IRVING PARK SHELTER HOUSE**



Photos above show the progress being made with the construction of the new Irving Park shelter house. Left in early October and right later that same month in October of 1941.



History of Early Hammond Parks

PART FIVE —
Of A Special Continuing Series

PARKS EXPAND WITH NEW IRVING PARK FACILITY

August 24, 1938 It's now official northside Hammond citizens will finally get their park with the sale of some \$45,000 worth of park district bonds. A part of this funding will allow the park board to purchase a tract of property at the southeast corner of Columbia Avenue and Chicago Street. This new playground will later be known as Irving Park.

Neighborhood residents fought long and hard for adequate park facilities in the area. It was announced by park commissioner Irving Chayken, that the construction of an up to date park playground would be built shortly after the sale of park district bonds was completed. Councilman Garland Fowler refused to give up his stand for the long awaited and much needed Irving Park facility, until park officials and Mayor Frank Martin guaranteed him that the park would be constructed before the upcoming winter months.

Irving Park would feature a field house, playground, swimming pool and baseball diamonds. Finding the money to buy the park real estate was a lot easier then locating the manpower to help build the park. The scarcity of labor delayed the park's construction up until the summer of June 1941. Improvements in Irving park were given a priority over other park projects. However the construction of the field house would not begin until later in October of 1941.

The one story brick shelter house would be home to locker facilities, dressing rooms and a large room for community meetings. The building itself would serve as a focal point for the new neighborhood playground.

A unique arrangement was made in order to get the park field house built. The Hammond city council and park board commissioners enlisted the help of AFL building trades union craftsman to get the job completed. Every Saturday and Sunday various tradesmen from numerous cities and towns in Northwest Indiana and neighboring Illinois volunteered their time at no cost to the city.

Various materials that were stored by the parks department were used in the construction of the new Irving Park shelter house, including brick from the Park Department's Turner Park storage facility. Other needed materials such as lumber, electrical fixtures and plumbing fixtures were purchased outright with money used from a city council appropriation of \$3,750. This money was from the estate of the late Johannes Kopelka a Lake County Superior Court judge who left the money to the city for civic purposes. The Irving Park field house was built in his honor because of his generous donation to the city.

Source information & photos from the microfilms of "The Times" newspapers

Joseph Hess Pioneer Settler and Founder of Hessville

In 1823 Joseph Hess arrived in America from France at the young age of just 21 years old. He first settled in Chicago before moving his way to the Calumet Region. After leaving Chicago Hess moved to the area then known as West Point, the last stop of the Michigan Central Railroad.

During the late 1840's when the Michigan Central Railroad was laying its tracks in Lake County the end of the line was called West Point. This was only temporary until the remainder of the rail line could be built into Chicago. When passengers were bound for Chicago they would then be transferred onto stagecoaches for the completion of their journey. Before the railroad line was completed to the west this was an extremely busy location.

Joseph Hess was one of the first pioneer settlers to the area, Mr. Hess was here long before the city of Hammond was ever even thought of.

One of the more popular stops at the end of the line at West Point was the small rooming house that was operated by Joseph Hess. Mr. Hess a baker by trade used his talent to whip up many elegant and tasteful French pastry delicacies. Many passengers decided to eat and spend the night at West Point before continuing on to Chicago. Hess was an impeccable host to say the least.

After the railroad completed its track into Chicago, Hess decided to move on as well. Upon leaving the West Point area Joseph Hess moved into the area known as "township section nine" where he labored in the cattle/livestock and general merchandise business.

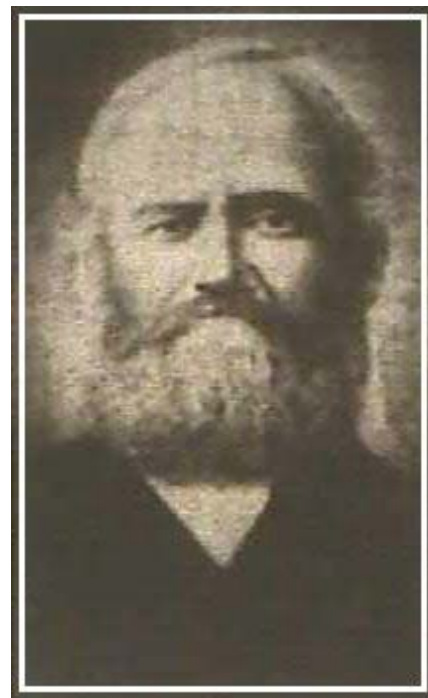
A little village quickly developed around his homestead and later became known as Hessville. In 1852 he was appointed the town's first postmaster, a position he held for almost 40 years. In 1853 Hess opened up a small general store which he continued to operate until his death in 1895. Joseph Hess was 72 years old at the time of his death that year.

Joseph Hess during his life served as the North Township Trustee for 22 years and was considered one of the county's leading citizen's during its formation. Mr. Hess left a family of seven sons and two daughters.

In the early days of Hessville the small settlement was home to 50 residents and had a general store, blacksmith shop and post office all owned and managed by Hess. Mr. Hess was a very industrious businessman.

Photo Top Right: This burly looking gentleman is none other than Joseph Hess himself, the founding father of the settlement that later came to bear his name.

Photo Bottom Right: The original Hessville post office building located in the 6900 block of Kennedy Avenue as seen here in 1906. John Hess, Lydia Hess and Mrs. John Hess shown.



Later Joseph Hess founded two of the first cemeteries here in Hammond. The Hessville Cemetery and the North Township paupers Cemetery. Both are located on 169th Street.

For many years the town of Hessville had its own unique identity until the city of Hammond absorbed the community.

Hessville's annexation attempt first began in 1911 and was starved off by a lengthy court battle and several appeals. In the end it finally gave up and through in the towel. Hessville was officially annexed by the city of Hammond in 1923.

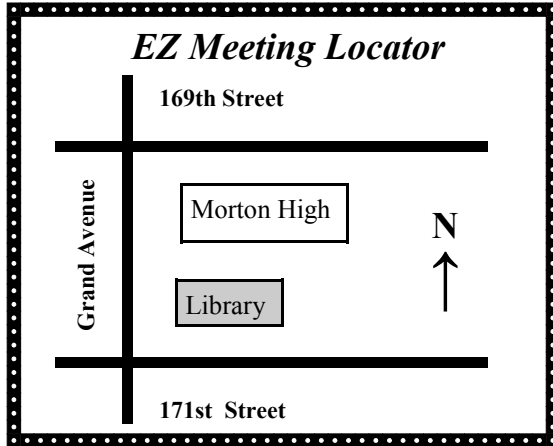
Source information & photos from the microfilms of "The Times" newspapers



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

Nonprofit Organization
 U. S. Postage
PAID
 Hammond, Indiana
 Permit No. 1843

>>> NOTE THE NEW MEETING LOCATION!



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

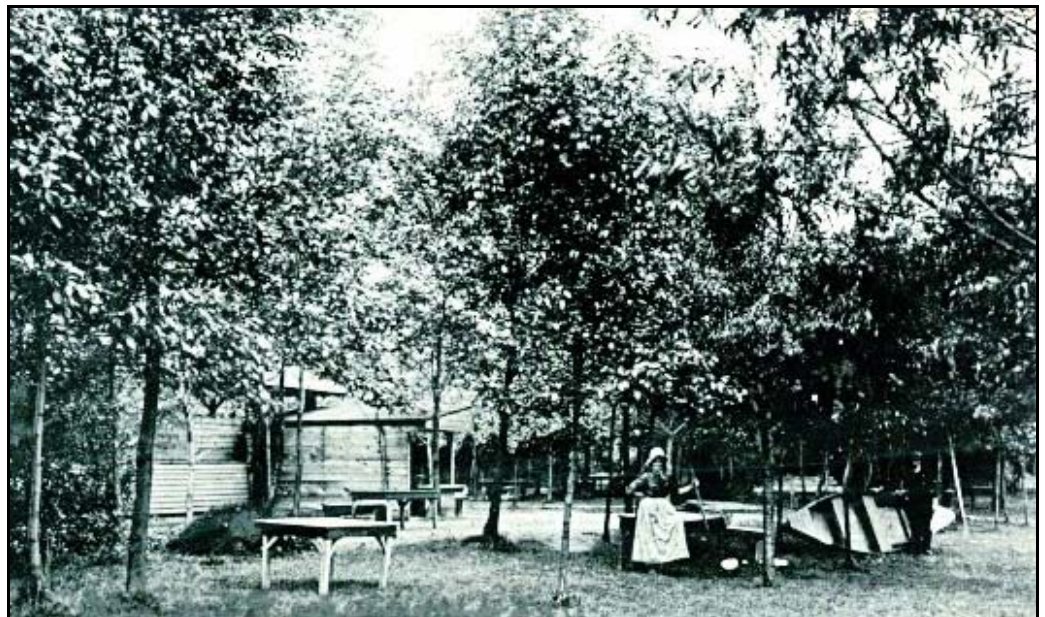
DATED MATERIAL
 Postmaster Please Deliver by January 18, 2003

1910 Lake George Picnic Grounds

Back in early Hammond when the city was still young, wilderness abounded within the city limits. Case in point — the Lake George area located in the northern reaches of town.

Flora and fauna prevailed in the infant metropolis. Hammond and the Calumet Region was home to many wild plant and animal species, many were considered rare and exotic until they were uprooted to make room for the ever expanding industrial base.

The Lake George picnic grounds was quite a popular spot as a summertime playground. Fishing and boating was a favorite pastime for many. Camping and picnicking was quite the rage as well in the nearby woods.



During the first part of the early twentieth century Lake George and the nearby Wolf Lake area were considered a hunter's paradise. Waterfowl were once so abundant here that early hunters recalled the days when swarms covered the lakes.

The rich and lush tree cover of the Lake George vicinity made for an idea picnic grove. Back then the area was accessible mainly by the street car line that ran down Sheffield Avenue. Calumet Avenue would later fill in most of the Lake.