



FLASHBACK



THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY 2005

501(c)(3) STATUS

The long and time consuming process of completing a final draft of the revised bylaws for the society is expected to be completed soon.

ALL BOARD MEMBERS are urged to attend this month's board meeting. It is important for you to pick up your copy of the revised bylaws to read and review so they can be voted on for the February meeting. As this is a major step towards establishing a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. After this they can be sent to the general membership for a vote.

HOHMAN RAILROAD TOWER DOOMED?

Next year will mark four years when talk on saving and relocating the old Hohman Avenue Tower began and it hasn't moved an inch yet.

In October 2003 we reported to you that things were progressing well, that was then—today all talks and activities have ground to a halt.

Prospects on saving and moving the century plus tower now look bleak to say the least—WHAT HAPPENED?

REMINDER—

Join us for our monthly meeting
Sunday 2:30 p.m.
January 16, 2005

Our Annual Show and Tell

in the Community Room
Hammond Public Library
564 State Street
Downtown Hammond, IN

Members and guests are invited to bring any items of historical interest relating to Hammond to share with other members.

Popular items include pictures, postcards and other memorabilia.

This is one of our most popular and enjoyable events—hope to see you there!

OF SPECIAL NOTE:

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 564 State Street Hammond, IN.

FLASHBACK Revamped New Feature Added

As we turn the page on the calendar we decided to freshen up the look of the FLASHBACK newsletter as well.

We have introduced a cleaner easier on the eye and quicker to read type font for the body copy and created a bolder masthead for the newsletter.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



Fun new feature that takes a look back in time at some of the more notable and interesting events that took place in Hammond over the years. Reminisce as we reflect on the past month by month. What do you recall?

Treasurer's Report



2004 Oak Hill Cemetery Tour

INCOME

Tour Receipts	\$791.00
Book Sales	85.00
Dues	40.00
TOTAL RECIEPTS	\$916.00

EXPENSES

Economy Signs	\$ 10.00
Food Costs	19.93
Book Costs	72.00
Printing	37.50
Dues	(40.00)
Book Sales	(85.00)
NET PROFIT	\$651.57

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The Hammond Historical Society — President, Ken Stromberger — First Vice President, Margaret Evans — Second Vice President, Richard Lytle — Secretary, Marjorie Sohl — Treasurer, Larry Knoerzer 2004-2005

Editor in Chief — William J. Uzdanovich
Co-Editor — Roy J. Speelman

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THIS MONTH IN HISTORY —



5 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 2000

Construction continues through the winter on the rebuilding of Hohman Avenue from 169th Street to Elizabeth, ornamental lighting will also be installed.

15 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 1990

Port Authority Officials report that 104 boat slips have been reserved for the new Hammond Marina which is still a year and a half from completion. | The proposed new four mile bike path over the former Eire RR tracks gets closer to reality.

20 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 1985

Auction of the shuttered Edward C. Minas department store drew no bids. | A one-two punch drops heavy snow as two storms drop nearly a foot of snow. | Burger's Supermarket chain sold set to close. | More funds sought for Hohman Avenue underpass project. | Work is suspended for the winter on the Kennedy Avenue railroad overpass. | Plans move ahead for the Centennial Plaza, the two acre site sits between State & Sibley on the old Eire RR right-of-way.

25 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 1980

Average price for a gallon of unleaded premium gas hits \$1.20 a gallon in Northwest Indiana. | Architect L. Cosby Bernard submits plans to renovate Tech High School into a technical training center.

30 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 1975

Hammond Public Library salutes the "Golden Years" of Hammond's history, librarian for the Calumet Room Mrs. Florence Cleveland reminds residents not to discard old items. She stated "We are always happy to accept these old items. If anyone is cleaning out their attic or basement, they are welcome to bring in any old photos and printed materials they feel could add insight to our city's history."

35 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 1970

Last long distance passenger trains to serve Hammond stop at the Eire-Lackawanna station at Douglas Street.

40 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 1965

Hammond Valve Corporation unveiled plans for a \$1 million expansion of its facilities. The project would add 75,000 square feet of factory space and add 200 jobs. | County officials reveal plans to build a two story Hammond Courthouse directly in back of City Hall in Maywood Park. The building would replace the aging 65 year old structure at Hohman and Rimbach. | Maywood Park area residents quickly oppose the courthouse plan. | School City officials unveil plans for a new \$7.2 million Morton High School. | The Illinois Bell Telephone Company announces that Calumet Region residents will be able to have touch tone telephones installed in the fall, "a new concept in telephone communications." | Demolition began on Monday, January 18th on the old Mercantile National Bank building at 5253 Hohman Avenue, work should be completed by January 31st. Work on a new structure will start as soon as the demolition is complemented. | St. Margaret Hospital announces its plans for a \$7 million addition/expansion. | On January 25th Smith Chevrolet opens its new showroom at Indianapolis Boulevard and 164th Street. The dealership permanently closed its location at 5508 Hohman Avenue the Friday before. | Preliminary construction begins on Mobil Oil Company's property at Columbia Avenue and 141st Street in north Hammond. The \$1.5 million project will consist of 10 oil storage tanks.

45 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 1960

A gasoline price war is underway in Hammond. One Hammond station had gasoline posted at 23.9 cents per gallon. While most other stations were selling gasoline for 25.9 cents per gallon.

55 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 1950

Edward C. Minas Sr. – Founder and owner of the department store that bore his name dies on New Year's Eve at age 86, funeral services were held on Tuesday, January 3rd.

Information for this story was obtained from the microfilms of The Times newspapers located at the Hammond Public Library. January, '00, '90, '85, '80, '75, '70, '65, '60, '50

Did You Know?

Here's an interesting fact—

The very first Walgreen's Drug Store to open outside the city of Chicago opened right here in Downtown Hammond. The store was located at the corner of State and Hohman in the Indiana Hotel Building.

The store opened on the morning of Saturday, December 15, 1923. The official grand opening did however take place on Tuesday, December 18, 1923.

Charles R. Walgreen the founder and owner of the company that bears his name, at the time operated forty stores with four more under construction.

Walgreen had limited his operations to Chicago that was until he opened his store in Hammond.

Today Walgreen's opens approximately 425 new stores each year with 7,000 stores scheduled to open by the year 2010.

Info source The Times microfilms January '23 & Walgreens.com

Location, Location, Location

Building a new Tech High School

In the fall of 1939 Hammond school officials were looking for a way to relieve the rapidly overcrowded Tech High School. With a projected enrollment of between 1,250 to 1,400 students for the start of the fall semester, the school city administrative offices currently housed at the school on Russell Street would have to be relocated.

The administrative offices were to be moved to the former Northern States / Lincoln Life Insurance building on Hohman Avenue just south of Harrison Park. This quick fix would help by providing three large class rooms and eliminate the use of current "corridor classrooms."

However, a permanent solution was needed to reduce the overcrowding at the aging school. It was decided that a new school building would have to be built, but where? This seemed like an easy solution to the problem. Interestingly, it would take over a decade until a new Tech High School would be built and ready for occupancy.

Plans for a new Tech building had to jump many hurdles before it became a reality. First school officials would have to overcome the financial difficulties. No funds were available to construct a new school because of the lack of bonding power of the school city.

Once funding was found and the monies were budgeted a whole new set of hurdles had to be overcome. The site selection for the new Technical High School would turn out to be an extremely controversial and lengthy process. The battle lines were drawn as school officials, city officials and neighborhood groups each sought to have the new high school located where they thought it would best serve the needs of the city.

In the spring of 1940 it was first reported that ground would be broken in the early part of 1941 for the new Hammond Tech High School. The location, a tract of land near Columbia Avenue and 165th Street purchased from the Pullman Standard Company.

Several tracts of land near the Columbia and 165th intersection were under consideration, this location was considered favorable by many since it was nearer to the student population base, away from the central business district and had adequate land available for expansion.

School board members and school trustees had a different site in mind; they were in favor of the school to be built just north of the Civic Center facing Carroll Street. Many civic leaders thought that this site was too small to build the school.



Construction begins on the new Hammond Technical Vocational High School north of the Civic Center on Sohl Avenue.

As those involved failed to reach an agreement on where to construct the new Tech High, several other sites were added to the mix. The pros and cons of the four locations made for some very interesting reading in the local paper in the fall of 1940.

Sites under consideration were north of the Civic Center, the area bounded by Sohl, Carroll, Becker and Madison. This site comprises some 14 acres. The Pullman Standard Site, this site was located on Columbia Avenue between 165th and Moss. This area was the largest of the four with 57 acres available. The Douglas Park site, on the city's north side was bounded on the north by 138th, on the south by 140th, on the east by Cameron and the west by Hohman and contained over 20 acres. The Frank S. Betz Site, a 10 acre piece of property that was originally offered to the city for use as a park. This site straddled the state line to Wabash Avenue, between the South Shore and IHB railroad tracks.

Over the course of the next seven plus years it seemed the location of the new Tech High School would materialize in various parts of the city until a final decision was made to build the new school at the Civic Center site.

**NEXT MONTH MORE DETAILS & PHOTOS
BUILDING A NEW TECH HIGH SCHOOL — PART TWO**

Information for this story from The Times microfilms at the Hammond Public Library Sept. 1939 to Oct. 1940.

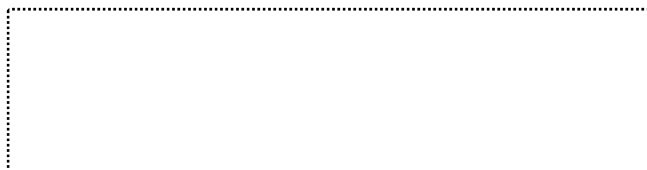


THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
564 STATE STREET HAMMOND IN 46320-1532

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

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS:
January 16th — 2:30 p.m. Annual Show & Tell

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



DATED MATERIAL

Postmaster Please Deliver by January 15th, 2005

Who Could Forget Trains Were Traffic Stoppers



Source information for this article obtained from the microfilms of The Times newspapers at the Hammond Public Library. Jan. '65

Trains in Downtown Hammond stopped traffic one third of the day! Several traffic studies were conducted in the early to mid 1960's and they alluded to the fact that most of us already knew back then. Trains blocked the railroad crossings in downtown anywhere from 6½ to 8 hours plus per day.

A Douglas Street survey taken in early January of 1965 for one week, showed the heaviest volume of traffic occurred on Thursday when 5,915 vehicles crossed the tracks, with the crossing gates down a total of 8 hours and 4 minutes for an average of 20 minutes each hour.

Day	Vehicles	Crossing Blocked
Sun	3,205	7 hours 43 minutes
Mon	3,822	6 hours 37 minutes
Tue	3,976	7 hours 46 minutes
Wed	4,164	6 hours 58 minutes
Thu	5,915	8 hours 4 minutes
Fri	5,403	8 hours 38 minutes
Sat	5,389	7 hours 22 minutes

A survey of Hohman Avenue was initiated in 1962 by the police department's traffic safety division. This was the city's most notorious railroad crossing where seven railroads crossed Hohman Avenue.

Here the statistics revealed that the gates were lowered on average 198 times within a 24 hour period, or 1,386 times each week, or 5,940 times in a month.

The average number of trains for a 24 hour period was 127, or 889 a week, or 3,810 in a month. The train's length averaged 57 cars, with the longest at 108 cars not including the engines.

The average number of vehicles crossing the Hohman Avenue tracks in a 24 hour period from Monday to Friday was 15,753. The delays averaged 20 minutes and 41 seconds or 8 hours and 15 minutes for a 24 hour period.