

## Lockport Area

# Genealogical & Historical Society

3<sup>rd</sup> Year, Volume 3, No.7

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JULY 2002



"Preserving the Past  
is our Present  
to the Future"

### Executive Board

<b>President</b>	Dr. Reno G. Caneva
<b>Vice President</b>	Gordon McCluskey
<b>Secretary</b>	Charlene Giardina
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bonita Packley
<b>Librarian</b>	Ruth Waldvogel
<b>Genealogist</b>	Jacqueline Munch
<b>Historian</b>	Georgene Bankroff

### DIRECTORS

Paul Burandt  
Richard Cronholm  
Erwin Klopstein  
Steve Potter

### Newsletter Staff

Charlene Giardina  
Judith Richardson  
Bonita Packley

E-mail correspondence:  
cgiardina@dnrmail.state.il.us

### Membership Dues and Special Events Tickets:

Bonnie Packley, treasurer  
1016 Maitland Drive  
Lockport, IL 60441

## Message from the President

A sincere "thank-you" for re-electing me to two more years as your president. A hearty "congratulations" to our newly elected board members and to our veteran board members who have so willingly agreed to serve another two years. We are pleased to have the support of the membership and look forward to sharing and preserving our local history and genealogy with you.

Also, many thanks to those of you who have contributed much time and effort. A total list of people to thank would not be possible, but a few names do stand out – Barb Sowiak, Lockport Township Park District Co-ordinator; Char Giardina, our Secretary; and Bonnie Packley, Treasurer. A big "thank-you" to those who served on our board through our first year, namely, Ramona Hilsabeck, Bill Molony, Cliff Stewart, Jim Raue.

Our meeting on Saturday, July 27<sup>th</sup> will be at the Homer Township Town Hall. Our focus will be "Yankee Settlement," originally comprised of Runyontown, Goodings Grove and Hadley. This area began eastward from the Des Plaines River and ended somewhere westward near what today is the Homer-Orland boundary, north to the Cook County line, and south to a northern portion of New Lenox township.

Share a ride with someone if you can and ask anyone who can connect their family genealogy and history to this historical site. A "thank-you" is due to Homer resident, Ann Karkut, who made arrangements for our meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to salute our early settlers whose faith, skills, and knowledge have provided us with a sense of belonging to a large, caring, industrious family bound together in mission, purpose, and kinship. We are extremely proud of the accomplishments of our progeny whose education in all aspects of life stem from those early roots laid down by our role-model ancestors.

Dr. R. G. Caneva, President

# New Executive Board Installed



From left to right: Ann Caneva, Reno Caneva, Gordon McCluskey, Charlene Giardina, Bonita Packley, Jacqueline Munch, Georgene Bankroff, Erwin Klopstein, Ruth Waldvogel, Paul Burandt. Not pictured are Richard Cronholm and Steve Potter. Observing are J.R. Lowry and Alyce Loose.

## THE ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting was held on June 22 at the Gladys Fox Museum with 36 members in attendance. Board members submitted their annual reports to the general membership.

## THE ELECTION

J. R. Lowry conducted the election. Members consulted their program for the list of nominees, which was published in the June newsletter. Paul Burandt and Steve Potter were nominated to the two vacant directorships from the floor. The slate passed unanimously.

## THE INSTALLATION

Ann Caneva, daughter-in-law of Reno Caneva, performed the installation ceremony. An active member of various civic organizations, Ann reminded each of his responsibilities, and concluded aptly with, "We don't know where we are going until we know from where we came."

## THE BRUNCH

Members enjoyed conversation and a buffet of scrambled eggs, an egg & mushroom dish, sausage, ham, breads, fruit, orange juice, and coffee.

## Let's Get Together— Help & Have Fun

Sign up, send suggestions and comments to Bonnie at 1016 Maitland, Lkpt. or E-mail: [blpackley @att.net](mailto:blpackley@att.net)

### Newsletter

**Producers:** produce publications  
Help type, copy, prepare mailing.  
Submit articles, ideas for columns.

### Programs

**Planners:** coordinate events  
**Laughers:** greet, set-up, take down; decorate

### Volunteers

**Officer or Director:** serve on board  
Chair committees.  
**Staffers:** staff office & reading room



# HOMER, LOCKPORT ALWAYS CLOSE

By John M. Lamb

Lockport and Homer Townships have always been closely connected.

The two townships were once linked together under the general name of Yankee Settlement. That name came about in this way: the area was originally settled by people from Indiana about 1830. This group was soon overwhelmed by a large influx of settlers from New England, New York and Ohio. The entire area of Homer and Lockport Townships east of the Des Plaines River went under the name of Yankee Settlement because of this. When news of the Black Hawk War hit the area in 1832, the first thought of the settlers was to take refuge at Fort Dearborn in Chicago. But they had hardly arrived in Chicago when they decided, at the suggestion of Armstead Runyon, to go back to Yankee Settlement and build their own fortifications.

Fort Sisson was built on Holder Sisson's property and was actually little more than a blockhouse. The fort was the headquarters and garrison of Sisson's company. The attack from the Indians never came and Yankee Settlement's first and only military operation came when the company went to reconnoiter the scene of a massacre that took place in La Salle County. And today nothing remains of that early symbol of pioneer fortitude, Fort Sisson.

After the Black Hawk War, settlers flooded into Yankee Settlement. In 1836, Will County was separated from Cook County, and Yankee Settlement was broken up. The larger part became Homer Township, and the settlement at Lockport became part of Lockport Township.

Homer was named for Homer County in New York, the home of one of Yankee Settlement's county officials. Despite the rush of settlers into Homer, there were only two towns established there. Both had post offices in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The more important was Hadley, which was named after Hadley, Mass. It was a little larger than Goodings Grove. That hamlet was named after James Gooding, who came from New York with his family in 1832.

The most famous of the Gooding brood was William, who grew up to be the engineer responsible for building the Illinois and Michigan Canal. William Gooding was also said to be responsible for planting the first orchard in the county. He wrote articles for the *Prairie Farmer* before becoming completely involved in the construction of the canal. In that journal, he wrote on such topics as types of fencing other than timber that settlers could use on the prairie. In early Yankee Settlement, timber was as rare as hen's teeth.

Both Hadley and Gooding's Grove shrunk to crossroads settlements; their promise was denied by the fact that no railroads were built through Homer Township. So, Lockport remained the capital of Yankee Settlement, even though it was outside the township boundaries.

Homer may not have developed any towns, but her importance in the history of the county rests



upon the number of important figures that settled there. Of the early settlers, the most important was John Lane because of his contribution to the development of farming on the prairie. Lane developed the steel plow that enabled the early settlers to effectively break the rich soil on the Illinois prairie. He had come west with several families who were to settle in Homer in 1833. These pioneers came together by ship from Buffalo to Chicago. From Chicago, they went overland along the Des Plaines River. They crossed the river at Lockport at what was called Butterfield's Ford. It took two days to get from Chicago to Homer.

Other settlers came west overland directly. That trip from the east took four weeks to reach Yankee Settlement. But whether by land or water, those that came to Homer found the soil to be extremely fertile. The prairie there was regarded as the most beautiful in Will County. However, the prairie did not last long; it was soon settled and plowed under to provide the rich farm land that made the township prosper.

After 1849 a new group arrived at Yankee Settlement. These were wealthy Scottish and English families who bought out many of the early Hoosier settlers. The result was a number of very prosperous farms in the township.

There was also some manufacturing. John Lane was making his inestimable steel prairie plow until his death in 1857. A saw mill was built on Spring Creek in 1838 or 1839. Charles M. Gray manufactured such early hand-operated farm implements as grain cradles and fanning mills. This sort of equipment would later be replaced by reapers, threshers and mowers. Charles Gray moved to Chicago where he held an important position with the Michigan Southern Railroad. He also became mayor of Chicago.

Even though Yankee Settlement was not populous, it produced some imminent figures in the early history of Illinois.

*Reprinted with the permission of John M. Lamb. The article was originally published in The Lockport FREE PRESS/"Old Canal Days" Special/Thursday, June 15, 1978/9.*

*Lamb is currently director of the Lewis University Canal and Regional History Special Collection and is active in many local heritage and preservation organizations.*

**Remember !**

**JULY 27<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

**8:30 a.m.**

**HOMER TOWNSHIP HALL**

**South on Cedar R. from 159<sup>th</sup>**



# Chasing Your Tale—genealogy tips

By Jacqueline Munch, LAGHS Genealogist

## **DONATIONS**

MADOLIN CANNON donated a much needed new bookcase for our growing collection at The House in the Park.

CATHERINE PASSAS donated the following items: Cemetery readings she made in the 1970's - Barnet Cemetery at Gougar & Bruce Roads. Rudd Cemetery at Cherry Hill Road in Joliet. Maplewood Cemetery in New Lenox. Her family genealogy includes Groth, Koerner, Murphy, Thomas, Miller, Woock, Munch, Berlin, and Boe.

## **SEARCHING** IN WILL COUNTY

A great resource is the GenWeb site at <http://rootsweb.com/~ilwill/>

There you will find obituaries, locations of cemeteries, early towns and villages, 1878 landowners and biographies, and an 1875 county map. You can also post queries about surnames you are researching and ask volunteers to do reference look-ups.

Catherine can be contacted at the following address: 146 Inner Court, New Lenox, IL 60451 or by e-mail: Dskirman@aol.com (Identify yourself in the subject line).

# Dellwood Park Highlights— Past & Present

by Erwin Klopstein

## **ANSWER TO "Who are these Ladies?"**

Barbara Cronholm McCarthy (left) and Mary Kinsella Galick (right) pose on the old welcome sign in the park. Barb, a LAGHS member, called me to let me know that she recognized herself and Mary.

## **Historical Reproduction POSTCARDS**

**Dellwood Park  
or  
Downtown Lockport**

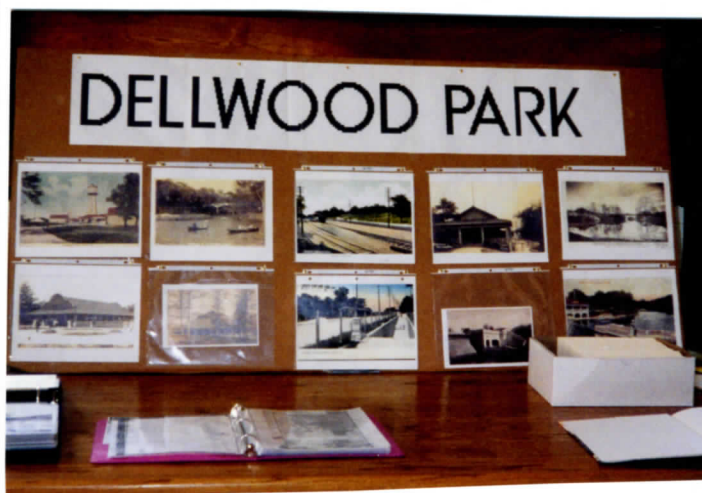
**FOR SALE**

**Each Set of 12 \$39.95**

Available at the monthly meetings  
or call Bonnie at 815.838.9388

## **Dellwood Lecture**

Erwin Klopstein presented a slide show and lecture on Dellwood Park at Prairie Bluff Golf Course on July 1. Barb Soviak coordinated the event for the Senior Men's Club, a program of the Lockport Township Park District, and reported that everyone appreciated the program and enjoyed sharing memories.



Lockport Area Genealogical & Historical Society  
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1016 Maitland Drive  
Lockport, IL 60441  
(815) 838. 9388

Inside:

**Dellwood Highlights**

Chasing Your Tale

*Homer, Lockport Always Close*

**REMINDER:**

Renew your membership— Today!

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Summer Concerts in the Park

**Great Lakes Navy Band**

**August 14 7 PM**

Performing Arts Center  
in DELLWOOD PARK

*All veterans as special guests will be honored.*

This concludes the summer series of the  
Lockport Township Park District.

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**MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**SATURDAY JULY 27 8:30 a.m.**

**Homer Township Town Hall**

Directions:

From 159<sup>th</sup> St. turn south on Cedar Road. Pass Shilling School. The Hall is just a short distance down the road – across the street from the Fire Station. The phone number for the Hall is (708) 301.0552 0522

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**BOARD MEETING**

August 10, 8:30 a.m.  
The House in the Park