

# WELCOME BACK FROM THE ATTIC

## YESTERYEAR AROUND CALEDONIA STATION

No. 3

1975



### WHERE IS HAMMOND STATION?

Hammond is located in the northeast part of Gaines Township. It is and always has been an unincorporated village. The village began about 1870 when the Grand River Valley Railroad came through the farm land owned by Stephen A. Hammond. Mr. Hammond owned about 186 acres of land over which the railroad was built. The railroad began service between Jackson and Grand Rapids, January 1, 1870. The railroad built a large passenger and freight depot with telegraph office and the area was named Hammond Station.

Hammond was given a post office on January 27, 1870, with George W. Woodward as its first postmaster. Twelve years later after the Michigan Central took over the Grand River Valley Railroad it was renamed Dutton on December 6, 1882. The name Dutton was for an official in the Michigan Central Railroad.

The railroad was put through with teams of horses, and land in this area sold for \$1.25 per acre. Besides the railroad and post office in 1870, Hammond included a large grain elevator owned by Woodward and Buckingham, two general stores operated by William W. Pierce and Philetus Marsh, Esq.

Stephen A. Hammond had Robert S. Jackson, a surveyor from Alaska, Michigan, plat and record the area as Hammond on December 29, 1875. By this time Stephen A. Hammond and John McQueen had built

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lunch and play and another 15-minute recess in the afternoon. Dismissal time was 4:00 p.m.

In 1949 there were 36 pupils in the eight grades. The school had a basement containing a furnace and indoor toilets. There was a drinking fountain right in the classroom. On bad days they could play in the basement. They had a good radio, a piano, a victrola and a beautiful 48-star flag that was put up on fair days. Out on the playground they had a merry-go-round, teeters, volleyball equipment, a basketball, football, and a softball. Again in 1955 the building became a two-room school with two teachers. This school was closed on May 24, 1956.

The fourth school located at 3820 68th Street opened as a three-room school in the fall of 1956. In 1966 it was enlarged to seven classrooms and an auditorium. It became part of the Caledonia Community Schools in 1959.

### DUTTON SCHOOL — GAINES TOWNSHIP — 1912



Back Row: John VanDyke, Bill VanDyke, Lee Huizinga, Harold Leatherman, Clifton Bloss.  
Second Row: Milton Cole, Stanley Johnson, John Huizinga, Ed VanDyke.  
Third Row: Maggie VanDyke, Floy Blake, Grace Troost, Alice Bloss.  
Front Row: Burnice Lafler, Nellie Troost, Gilbert Heintzelman, Mary Lynn, Maxian Kraft.

The committee staff for the third issue has been Editor, Kenneth R. Gackler; Photo Reproduction, Jay L. Shook; Layout and Printing, Edward and Don Passenger; Research, Mary Crumback, Eve Geerligs, and Lorraine Crumback.

The following people supplied "WELCOME BACK" with photos, newspaper articles, books, stories, etc. for this issue: Mrs. Atta Olthouse, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Leatherman, Mrs. Grace Strick, Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Kraft, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Heintzelman, Mr. Victor Lett, and Mr. Lewis Good.

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a hotel on the northwest corner of Hammond and Damon. The town also included S. R. Stall as a boot and shoemaker with W. W. Porter as the station agent.

Some of the years mentioned in this story are approximate. It is believed that W. W. Porter was the railroad station agent until about 1880 when G. H. Carey took over. Mr. Carey stayed until about 1886 when O. W. McCall took over. By 1895 Orr W. Bergy was the agent and telegraph operator. Mr. Bergy stayed until about 1901 when his apprentice Clarence Blain assumed the position. H. V. Healy was the agent in 1917. Victor Lett was the agent in 1923 to 1932.

In 1871 Charles H. Deming built the general store that is located on the southwest corner of 68th Street and Hammond Avenue. The post office was put into this store and he became the postmaster. This store has been operated by the same family for more than 100 years. Over the years it has been a center of activity. It has always been the post office except for a few years in the late 1800's when there was a Democratic president in Washington.

In the mid 1890's the telephone came to Dutton with the Citizen's Telephone Company in the Deming's Store, with Mr. Deming as the manager.

In 1913 Frank D. Heintzelman, the son-in-law of Charles Deming, took over the store. He later became postmaster in 1917.

In 1926 it became known as Leatherman and Heintzelman. The new owners were Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Leatherman and Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Heintzelman. They were the third generation to own the store. Now in 1975 Mr. and Mrs. Heintzelman continue to operate the store after nearly half a century in business.

The Hammond Hotel was built by 1875 and operated by Stephen A. Hammond and John McQueen. In 1877 they were grain buyers and had sold the hotel to Kibble. He operated the hotel until about 1886. In 1899 E. Z. Hammond owned the hotel until about 1904 when C. L. Hammond took it over. C. L. Hammond had it until about 1912. About 1914 J. Pierce used part of the hotel and started a small grocery. He soon sold it to Arthur Hilsey who went to great expense and had the whole building rotated ninety degrees

store. By 1917 John Roberts had purchased the business. He sold it to John VandeBunte about 1922. In 1925 John Wieringa took over the store and owned it until January 1, 1947, when his brother Peter took on the store.

The first grain elevator was owned by Woodward and Buckingham; they were in business in 1870. By 1877 John McQueen and Stephen Hammond were grain buyers. Mr. Hammond soon left the partnership and John McQueen continued alone until about 1883 when Sandbrook joined him. Sandbrook was with McQueen until about 1892.

On December 24, 1885, the Good Brothers, Joseph and Aaron, had their saw mill equipment shipped to Dutton from Indiana. Their first saw mill had been in Indiana. With the arrival of their equipment they built a mill on the east side of Hammond Avenue next to the railroad. This partnership continued until



Mr. and Mrs. Orr Bergy

## DUTTON SCHOOL, GAINES TOWNSHIP DISTRICT # 1

The first school was a log structure 18 x 24 feet built by Josiah Drake about the year 1844. The roof was built of hand-made split shingles. There was a door in the end and two windows on each side. The floor of one-inch boards was not matched and grooved as ours are today. The desks were made by boring holes in the logs of the walls and driving in plugs, and on these were fastened a slab shaved from a log, putting flat side up, not planed smooth either. The teacher's desk was a slab of wood with two holes in each end and legs driven in them. The seats were made in the same fashion, and were placed by the slab on the wall. Scholars sat facing the wall. The stove was a long narrow cast iron set in the middle of the room, that would keep your back warm and your feet cool. There was a very small attendance. The teacher's wage was low and most of the time they boarded around in the district from one family to another. An 1851 contract with teacher Eliza R. Bates showed her contract was 2½ months long. Her salary was \$8 a month or \$2 for each week.

The school was located on 68th Street about one-fourth mile east of the railroad. At this time the community was a wilderness and when the road was put through the school building was in the center of the road. The structure was so sturdy it could not be easily torn down or moved, so it was burned. On the green Michigan pastures that log school symbolized the American ideal of popular education.

The second school was a frame building 30 x 40 feet, built about 1860 or 1865. It was erected on the north side of 68th Street on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Woodward, a few rods west (3607 68th Street) of the log building. It had three windows on each side and two in the rear, two doors in the front, one on the girls' side and one on the boys'. Between them was the teacher's desk which sat upon a platform eight inches high, with a blackboard on the wall between the doors. The desk was built of lumber, the top 3 x 4 feet with a drawer under the top where the teacher kept the ruler and other things of importance. On the left side were three other drawers.

Around 1880 they had a very large attendance, as high as 75 pupils on the roll, and they worked for some kind of a prize that kept things going, especially the high spelling class. The teacher had a gold medal, and the one who was at the head of the class had the privilege of wearing it until the next night. The teacher would pronounce the word and the pupil would spell it right or wrong, and the next word, and so on, but if another noticed it was wrong, he would spell it right and go above the one who missed it. So, you see, they had to keep their ears open.

In 1893 the third school house was built on the same site, and the old building was purchased by William McCrodan and moved to his farm to be used as a horse barn. This school was originally a two-room school and had two teachers. Ten grades were taught then. July 1, 1909, it was decided at a meeting to remove the partition and make one room of it and to have only one teacher and eight grades.

In 1912 there were 30 pupils in the eight grades and the teacher that year was Miss Elizabeth McConnell. School began at 9:00 a.m. with a 15-minute recess during the morning, one hour at noon for



Dutton School, 1912  
Teacher, Miss Elizabeth McConnell

Nestled on a knoll amidst the rolling hills of 92nd Street is the picturesque Queen Anne styled home of one of the early settlers named Valentine Geib. He was a well-known man of his time, having served his township as Supervisor several times and also having been on the School Board for District #8.

In the fall of 1854, at the age of ten months, he came with his parents Nicholas and Elizabeth Geib to Gaines Township where they purchased 320 acres of land – half of section 22 – on the corner of 92nd Street and Hanna Lake Avenue. On this corner a log cabin was built in which they lived for ten years. After the land had been cleared and they were growing crops, a farm house

was built way back from the road. It was to this farm house that Valentine Geib brought his bride, Ellen Bowman, to live in 1876. All eight of the Geib children were born in the farm house. Part of it stands today, in spite of an explosion and fire, and has been used over the years as a garage. The windmill that was used to pump water is also still standing.

The elegant home that stands today was begun in 1896 and it took two years to build. Mr. John Witmer was the builder and an architect was called in from Chicago to design it. All the lumber that was used in the home was virgin maple, beech and oak, and came right from the land there. It was cut and taken by horse and wagons to Grand Rapids to be dried and cured. All the brick for the two large chimneys and some of the exterior was brought by horse and wagons from the brickyard on Eastern Avenue in Grand Rapids where the bricks were made from sand and clay. The Geib home consisted of eight bedrooms, six upstairs and two downstairs. On the second floor in the tower was a guest room decorated all white for the minister or company to stay overnight. There was also a playroom in the tower on the third floor. There were no fireplaces, but there was a furnace that burned logs, which was not common in the early 1900's. The upstairs was attained by climbing an elegant stairway with a newel post and landing. The home did have a bathroom and a bathtub. Water was obtained for the bathtub by pumping the water stored in a cistern.

The Geib family moved into the home when the youngest of their eight children was two years old. They had four hired persons to help them and two of them were a married couple who remained with them most of their life. The family always dined together in the dining room. Mrs. Geib sewed all her children's clothes and knitted their wool socks. The family made twenty gallons of apple butter one year. It was made in a big kettle outside and it took two days.

The Geib family lived on the farm for 65 years and some of the other families who have lived on it since include the Lobbezoos and Waayenbergs. It is now owned by the Zandenbergs.

The Valentine Geib family consisted of four boys and four girls: Fred Geib, Warren Geib, Jessie (Geib) Weitz, Arletta (Geib) Hanna, Atta (Geib) Olthouse, Horace Geib, Nellie (Geib) Hanna, and Frank Geib. The family remembers many happy times living in this beautiful home, truly a landmark of time.

(Written from the memories of Mrs. Atta Olthouse.)

## THE VALENTINE GEIB HOME



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about 1895 when Aaron kept the saw mill and Joseph purchased the McQueen grain station.

About 1900 the saw mill burned down one night. It was rebuilt on the west side of Hammond Avenue. The saw mill burned a second time in 1910 and was rebuilt a third time.

For a period of time between 1917 and 1924, Aaron's son Nelson operated the saw mill. After 1924 Aaron continued it until his death in 1936. From 1936 to 1965 Aaron's son Lewis operated the saw mill and manufactured wooden parts for the Bissell Carpet Sweeper Company.

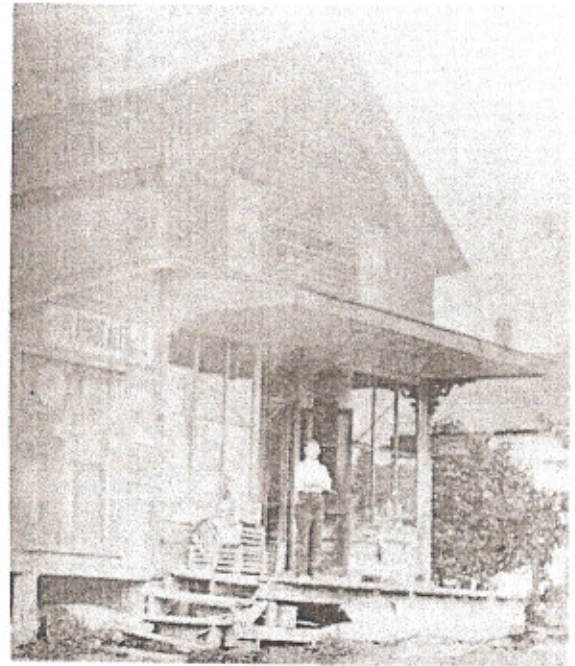
Joseph Good operated the feed mill and elevator until M. C. Brake took it over in about 1920. In 1925 it became a branch of the Caledonia Farmers Elevator Company.

Several businesses were located along the north side of 68th Street. The Charles L. Keefer drug store was started in about 1881. It was located just west of the railroad and operated until about 1890. In about 1881 Thomas Draper set up a blacksmith shop (3377 68th - Wiersma Body Shop). He was the village blacksmith until about 1910. Later William Soloman took over the blacksmith shop until about 1927. In 1883 Frederick Draper was building wagons. In 1887 Milton Strock took up this business. He sold it to Marion Strock in about 1899. Marion continued it until about 1924. In 1887 Al Blain had a general store on the north side of 68th Street (old fire barn). He was a grocer until about 1894 when D. McQueen took it over for a few years. He was followed by Joseph Allison from about 1900 to 1905. Then Dan McKersie had it as a general store until the early 1920's.

About 1886 Miss Laura Mains, a school teacher, came to Dutton and was interested in having a Christian school for girls. She supervised the construction of a building that would serve as a school, girls' dormitory and church. This building is located on the southwest corner of Hammond and Damon. The girls lived in the upstairs back part of the building. Money to operate it was obtained by faith in God.

Around 1895 W. Olds started a new business, the fruit evaporator. This was located on the south side of 68th Street just east of the railroad. The business was sold to Bryan G. Russell about 1904. He operated it until about 1916. About 15 people, mostly women, worked for the fruit processor preparing apples to be dried. Apples were pared, cored and sliced. Later they were dried in the upstairs of the building and shipped out by railroad. The school children often stopped on their way home from school and were given a handful of dried apples to eat.

Other early Dutton businesses included carpenters George Eyre, John Moyers, and J. B. Worley; a barber, Edison Huntly; physicians J. K. Hanna and Grant Ide; a dressmaker, Ella McConville; a shoemaker, Nicholas Haines; a creamery, Aaron Clark; cement workers William Cudney and Freeman Monseau; a wagonmaker, Amos Leatherman; a cattle buyer, Arthur Hilzey; and Good's auto garage.



Al Blain's General Store

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**THOMAS DRAPER BLACKSMITH SHOP ABOUT 1900**



**DUTTON APPLE DRIER ABOUT 1904**

Back Row: Dora Clingman, Bessie Hammond, Lizzie Lynn, Florence Mead, Lucy Lafler, Edith Loveless, Unknown, Ella Anderson, Pearl Draper, Mamie Draper, Bessie Troost.  
Front Row: Jay Lynn, Mrs. Russell, Bryan Russell, and son Earl Russell.

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**HAMMOND AVENUE ABOUT 1910**



**MICHIGAN CENTRAL DEPOT ABOUT 1900**

Standing: Section hands Freeman Monseau, Art Clingman, unknown, Frank Gillette, unknown;  
Seated: Station agent and telegraph operator Clarence Blain.