METAMORA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

NEWSLETTER

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To Promote and Preserve Metamora's History
Metamora Association for Historic Preservation
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Illinois

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Recognize Any of These Students? Let Us Know…!!

This picture of the Germantown Hills Grade School was taken about 1896-1900.

Newsletter reader and contributor Larry Hagemann shared this picture which originally belonged to his great-uncle, August Blum (1876-1955), who taught at the school for a few years when he was young.

It is believed that the school was located approximately at the corner of what is today Route 116 and Fandel Road. Fandel Road was a direct route from August's home to the school.

August was the youngest child of Leo and Mary V. Blum, who owned a 140-acre farm around the Lake Santa Fe area next to St. Mary's Lourdes. They owned the farm from approximately 1860-1900.

Any Idea When This Picture was Taken?

This is the school at Germantown Hills. We're not absolutely sure if it's the same one as the picture above. But we do know that the school in Germantown Hills was the first school in Worth Township and started in 1836.

(See the Germantown Schools history below.)

Fire Destroys Germantown Hills School

What was described at the time as the "newer Germantown Hills School," this school was destroyed by fire in 1953. Check out the old water wagon and old fire truck. Quite a change from today's equipment! If you can help with any of the details, we would love to hear from you. (Did you attend this school? Recognize any of the fire fighters or by-standers? Who were the teachers? Where was the school located? What caused the fire? Who was the fire chief? Any interesting side notes?)

Quoted from the 1878 Woodford County History. "The first school of which we can get any record was taught by a Mr. Ellmore at a very early day, in Squire Williams' barn. He stayed a great deal at Mr. Williams, making it a kind of home, and while there, taught this school, which is supposed to be the first in the township, and among the first taught in the county. The first schoolhouse in the town was built in the neighborhood or Mr. Hall's, years ago, so long that the site is forgotten. Hosher built a log schoolhouse at Germantown in 1851 which, after being used many years, was replaced by the present frame building, the best schoolhouse in the township, in 1876, and cost $1,000."

In 1878, Germantown was known as one of the most "pretentious" hamlets in Worth Township. To quote, "Worth has no large towns or villages, but has two or three little places of public resort that might, without violence to the same, be termed hamlets. Of these, Germantown is the most pretentious. It consists of a tavern, a lager beer saloon, a grocery store, a blacksmith shop and a sawmill, and is on the state road, about six miles from Metamora. The Germantown House (tavern) was built in 1850 by William Hosher. Hosher also built the Union House, which is a tavern one mile east of Germantown."

The old state road, which ran from Peoria through Germantown (now Germantown Hills), was a part of the law circuit that Abraham Lincoln rode as a lawyer. Mr. Lincoln rode past the old Germantown Inn and the Union House Inn.

School History. In 1878, there were 324 students attending school in all of Worth Township. There were four male and two female teachers. They were paid a grand total of $1,600 for the school year.

The original 1876 structure went through several modifications over the years. A basement was added and a hot lunch program instituted. A four-room frame addition was put on in 1940. In 1950, the school enrollment was 60, and four teachers were employed.

On December 8, 1953, at 3:40 p.m., the 1876 school was destroyed by fire, and consequently the complete frame structure had to be razed. A new three-room building had been completed in 1950, so half-day sessions were used until additional facilities could be completed. Additional rooms were added in 1952, 1954, 1960, and 1970.

Contact Us

Questions, ideas - Love to hear from you

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