

HOMER*News & Views*

A PUBLICATION OF THE HOMER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Public Safety

— Priority # 1 for the Homer Police Department

BY KATE VETTER

One of the key factors that influence people to live in small communities is the safety and security issue. It is important that their children be able to play and walk to school in relative safety. People want to be able to walk down the street and through downtown feeling secure. Today, the Homer Police Department provides security which contributes significantly to the quality of life existing in Homer, but this hasn't always been the case.

Looking back just a few years to the late 1980s, it was quite a different picture. Gangs of teenagers congregated in the downtown area screaming obscenities at one another, running in and out of traffic, and throwing frisbees across main street. There were many incidents of drag racing, trucks driven on sidewalks, soda pop poured down the postal drop, fires set in front of the Bank, and under-aged public drinking. A businessman remembers seeing two kids engaged in obscene activities on the front stoop of his establishment. These are but a few examples of how it was. Homer was slowly being taken over by a select group of irresponsible (and largely uncontrollable) people.

Homer's first response was to form a community watch program, enlisting the help of local business people. They would take turns patrolling the streets and report any suspicious activity to the Champaign County Sheriff's Department. There was often much to report but unfortunately, by

the time officers could respond, the activity would have ceased. Soon the Sheriff's department stopped coming because it was a waste of time.

Next, the Village hired MetCad to have extra Sheriff's protection during high-risk hours. The teenagers caught on quickly and curtailed their activities until the law was gone. After many meetings with local business people, it was decided Homer should consider starting its own police department.

Several concerned citizens campaigned and were elected to the Village Board on public safety issues. In July 1988, the Police Committee was established, comprised of Morris Miller, Jim Kirby, Jr. and Kelly Vetter. The committee conducted a survey of surrounding towns to determine cost and feasibility of a police department in Homer. It also considered sharing police protection with other villages to help defray cost but was unable to find a willing participant. Therefore the Homer Police Department was established.

The department's budget for 1988 was \$30,700. These funds came from a tax referendum for an increase of .075% to .40% for police protection. That generated 2/3 of the operating budget, The other 1/3 came from the General Fund and fine money. The committee had to start from scratch and that included a police car with all the trimmings, a uniform with a man to put in it, and an office.

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The committee's most important consideration was to hire the *right* man for the job. Thankfully, the Sheriff's department was very instrumental in this process. Interviews were set up and the Sheriff's department ran background checks and helped with every phase of the hiring process.

On January 1, 1990, the Village Board hired George Richardson and put him in a brand new squad car. Peace and order did not happen overnight, though. Officer Richardson helped clean up the streets initially but it wasn't until John Rouse was hired in 1991 that things really began to take shape as he proved himself to be effective immediately. Today, he spends a good deal of his time with traffic control and speed radar. There has been no small amount of rumors spread concerning his work with the radar gun. However, Chief Rouse has assured this writer, and proved it with records of citations, that no one has been issued a ticket for just a few miles over the speed limit. It may be time to put the "speedtrap" rumors to rest!

In September 1994, Officer Rouse became Chief of Police and vowed the following:

- assurance of the finest in police protection of life, limb and property,
- prevention of crime,
- preservation of the public peace,
- enforcement of all laws and ordinances,
- arrest of violators, and
- as efficient an operation as possible for the tax dollars spent.

Chief Rouse oversees three part-time officers — Kevin Maskel, Jim Dowling and Bruce Blaker. They received special training when hired and are currently being certified by the State of Illinois for more technical training. The Chief occasionally monitors local activities even when he is off duty by listening to his scanner at home.

The village is very fortunate to have Chief Rouse living in our community where he says he 'can keep an eye on things.' He takes his job seriously and notes any new vehicle or unusual activity in town. The Chief says he likes the people in Homer and has bought property here. The Village Board has an excellent rapport with Rouse and his department.

A goal for the near future is to purchase a video camera which would be mounted in the police vehicle to record traffic stops. This would prove especially valuable should a citizen make claims different than what shows on the police report.

One of the department's most helpful tools is the computer mounted in the squad car. It allows the police to run checks on vehicles and provides information about the



John Rouse
Homer's Chief of Police

owner such as a suspended or revoked license, any outstanding warrants and even known involvement with gangs. The computer can also store information and Chief Rouse cites this example of using that feature: He was sitting on his front porch and saw an unfamiliar pick-up truck go by. He wrote down the license number and later entered it into his onboard computer. Several weeks had passed when a farmer complained of a truck running through the ditches in front of his home. He gave the department a description of the truck and partial plate numbers. The Chief was able to compare that information with the license number he had put into the computer weeks earlier and was able to put a person's

name with the vehicle.

The police department also helps keep Homer beautiful by enforcing junk ordinances and trash laws. To date, a total of 84 disabled vehicles have been removed from our community. The department also enforces curfew laws for our children and keeps an eye out for under-aged drinkers. It works with the fire department on some calls, especially medical. Chief Rouse appears in court on a regular basis to make sure cases are prosecuted.

Another responsibility is accurate file and record keeping. They have to fill out forms for the state on all arrests made and if their job isn't done to the letter of the law, the case can be thrown out of court.

Chief Rouse keeps the department on top of all current laws and enforcement procedures. Some of the courses taken are DUI enforcements and procedures, auto theft laws, search and seizures laws, rules of evidence, and juvenile detention procedures. There is also an annual hazardous material recertification. Recently the Chief completed training on child sexual abuse interrogation and interviewing investigative techniques. All this training helps the Homer Police Department serve the community and improve the quality of life for all its citizens.

In September, the police department offered the Kid-Care Photo ID program which gave a free instant photo and ID booklet where parents can maintain statistics and information for use if their child is lost or abducted. This is just another example of the caring attitude of the department.

Homer has come a long way from when our streets were run by local hooligans. Now everyone can walk the neighborhoods and have a sense of security. This is especially comforting to our senior citizens and children. This writer believes Homer is a better place to live because of the work of the police committee and the police department. Doesn't it feel good to know that children can play on our corners without worry about careless drivers? Chief John Rouse and the Homer Police Department — dedicated to serving you! ■

THE HISTORY OF THE HOMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SUBMITTED BY BETTY LACEY

The town of Homer was originally settled along the Salt Fork River. The river was a source of power for a grist mill, a route to travel by to provide settlers with food and water. The heavy wooded area gave them protection from the elements and Indian raids. The Wabash railroad came through in 1856 after the residents had moved their town to its present location. The railroad would now let the people travel to and get supplies from far away places. People had worshipped in the school house and in homes at the river site, so when they were settled in their new home their thoughts turned to organizing a Church.

On March 7, 1857, the Presbytery of Bloomington sent two representatives, the Rev. Enoch Kingsbury and the Rev. C.B. Felch, to Homer to organize a Presbyterian Church in the community. A tentative organization was effected at this time. Mr. Kingsbury visited the group from time to time, preaching for them at intervals and administering the Sacraments. Two years later, in November of 1859, a permanent organization was effected and the Rev. J.B. McNair was called and installed as pastor. There were seventeen members listed on the charter.

Mr. McNair evidently served a rather long pastorate, for the Homer Enterprise of November 18, 1869 (ten years later) records the fact that "Mr. McNair of the Presbyterian Church and Mr. J.L. Long of the Methodist Church are keeping all of their appointments next Sunday." Three years later, the Enterprise of October 30, 1872 contains a notice that the Presbyterians have engaged the service of Mr. Moore as pastor.

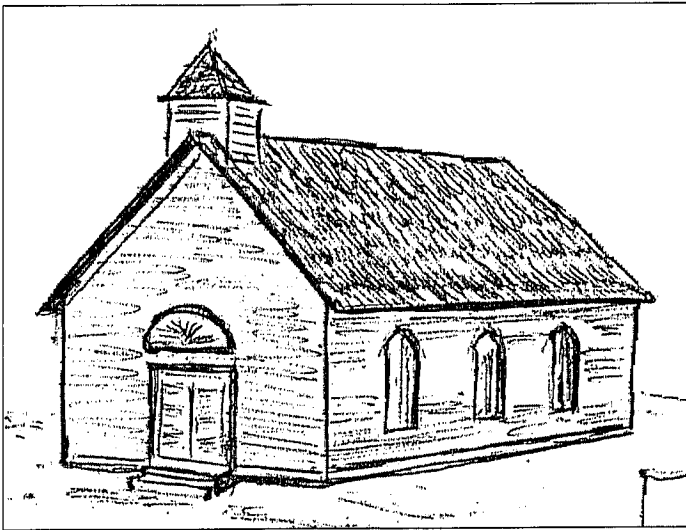
Services of this small group were held in the Gilman Hall, a building on the corner of First and Main Streets where the Hess building once stood, now the site of a small restaurant. The faith of these pioneers was so great that the crippled were carried up the long flight of stairs for the worship services. The Champaign County Gazette of October 29, 1873, informs us that "The Presbyterians of Homer have begun the erection of a church on Main Street in the North side, the dimensions of which are to be 32 by 50 feet. The foundation is already laid and the work is progressing rapidly." Samuael Robinson, father of Florence, Eunice and Howard Robinson, was an elder and gave generously toward the building fund. The money was raised by subscription with the exception of \$600. That amount was borrowed from the Board of Church Erection Fund of the General Assembly at the Presbyterian Church USA, under the date of June 1876. The cost of the building was \$4,500. The mortgage was burned, after being paid off, at a special con-



gregational meeting on March 29, 1946. — three months short of 70 years later.

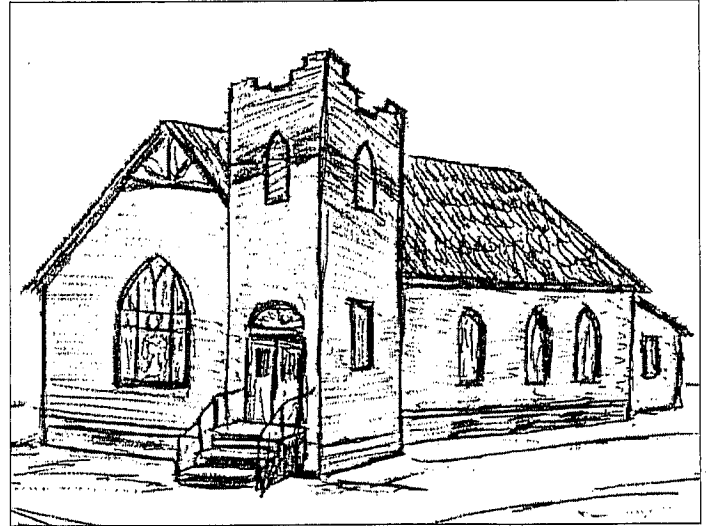
The lot on which the church was built was a gift of Michael D. Coffeen. E.M.C. Elder accepted it for the trustees in 1872. The building was a plain one room, rectangular frame structure. The pulpit was in the east end. The entrance was through double doors where the large stained glass picture window is now. Long stained glass windows were in the north and south sides of the room. These are in the present building. Two big cannon stoves were located in the northeast and southwest corners. Henry Ewing served as janitor for many years without pay. He rang the same bell that hangs high in the belfry today. Parts of the original organ were used to make a literature table that is still used at the back of the sanctuary. Two rows of pews placed end to end with an aisle on either side provided seating. The room was lighted by a big dome suspended from the ceiling consisting of 36 oil lamps. The same dome was used after electricity was installed. The offering plates had long handles and are still in the church. Dr. F. M. Conkey and Fred Gray served as superintendents of the Sunday School. Teachers were Mrs. Effie Conkey, Mrs. Armour, Miss Allie Palmer and Mr. Yates.

The church grew in membership and spirit. A remodeling project began in the fall of 1900 with the raising of the building, excavation of the basement, new foundations and



Homer Presbyterian Church Building started in 1873

chimneys. A 16 by 10 foot choir box was added to the north and the cupola removed. The round window in the choir box was purchased with offerings from the childrens' Sunday school classes. A room was added to the east with stairs to the basement and a room added to the south. These rooms had balconies above. The long windows were moved to flank the center window in front and one in the north wall of the East room. A new entrance was added on the corner and the large picture window was placed where the double doors had been. New pews were purchased. A dedication was held November 1909 after the south addition and brick veneering of the frame structure. The Boy Scout room was added in 1911. It later became the kitchen.



Building was enlarged and remodeled between 1898 and 1901

A project to redecorate the church and lay a tile floor was given to the Women's Association by the Session in January of 1950.

An account of the April 2, 1950 rededication was written by Louvena Michener. Three written histories were used to compile this article. A hand written one on the back of the session minute books and used as a basis for a newspaper story about celebrating the 75th anniversary (1934), and a second written by Mrs. Helen Baird and used during the Centennial year (1955) at a special church service. The third source for this material is from meeting minutes of the session entry of baptisms, marriages and deaths beginning in the year 1880 and compiled by Molly Shoaf and Betty I. Lacey. All of the above sources were used by Edna Lewis in her newspaper articles and in the *Dear Edna* book compiled by Lois Stauter. ■

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The Homer Recreation board is still in need of volunteers. If you are interested, please contact Doc Hatton at 896-2587, Kim Matthis at 896-2689 or Betty Lacey at 896-2365.

Would your non-profit organization or club like to make some money? How about sponsoring a volleyball, horseshoe, softball or 3 on 3 basketball tournament on July 4th, 1997 during the July 4th celebration or for Crazy Daze '97? If you are interested, please contact Doc or Kim at the above numbers.

HOMER HOUSEHOLD

RANCH STYLE HASH

Submitted by Norma Diel

Brown 1 lb. ground beef. Drain well.

Add:

- 3 1/2 cup canned tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped green peppers
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup uncooked rice
- 1/4 teas. basil
- 1/2 teas. salt and a dash of pepper

Cover and simmer 25 minutes. Top with slices of cheese. Heat until the cheese is nicely melted.

LIME PARTY SALAD

Submitted by Norma Diel

Melt 16 marshmallows in 1 cup milk.

Pour hot mixture over 1 pkg. lime Jello

Stir until dissolved.

Stir in

2 3oz. pkgs. cream cheese. Stir until cheese dissolves.

Add 1 can undrained crushed pineapple. Cool.

Blend in 1 cup whipping cream whipped or 1 8oz. Cool

Whip and 2/3 cup mayonnaise

Chill until firm. Serves 12.

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Submitted by Norma Diel

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 cup oleo | 1/3 cup cocoa |
| 1 cup sugar | 2 tbsp. milk |
| 1/2 cup brown sugar | 1 3/4 cup flour |
| 1 teas. vanilla | 1/4 teas. baking powder |
| 1 egg | 1 cup chocolate chips |

Mix oleo, sugar, and vanilla. Add beaten egg. Add cocoa and milk. Sift flour and baking powder. Fold in creamed mixture. Roll teas. of dough into ball. Place 2 inches apart on cookie sheet. Nuts may be added.

Bake 350° for 10 minutes

HOUSEHOLD HINT

Spray your dust mop with Glade Mist Air Freshener just before you use it. This will make the mop slightly damp so dust will be easier to pick up. Also gets rid of musty, dusty smells.

Homer News & Views is YOUR newsletter!

Homer News & Views is a community newsletter and is not intended to be a *newspaper*. Local news regarding Homer is adequately covered in the *News-Gazette*, *Commercial News*, *The Leader*, and *Southern Chapman County Today*. *News & Views* is not intended to carry social news these newspapers carry. It does not address births or deaths, engagements or weddings. It does not present school calendars and happenings because the Heritage newsletter and weekly newspapers cover them well and in a timely fashion.

Homer News & Views is Homer-specific and *does not* accept advertising from businesses outside our community if they compete with local businesses. And speaking of advertisers, we hope you are supporting those you see in this newsletter

So what is the purpose of this newsletter. *News & Views* is designed to promote sharing within the community — everything from opinions to recipes to calendars of events that aren't published elsewhere. Simply put, it is designed to promote community involvement, encouraging people to get together socially, and to get people accepting and talking to one another.

Don't you have something you would like to share?

- News about your organization? First of all, we would like to know more about your organization. Tell us about it and who your officers are. Tell us about your pet projects. Churches can print their upcoming events in the *News From Homer Churches* column. We'll be glad to publish other organization's calendars as well.
- An opinion? Write a letter to the *Letters to the Editor* column or submit a guest editorial. We want to hear your views.
- A favorite recipe?
- A bit of Homer history? If you've lived in the area long enough that you would call your recollections *history*, send us a story such as the one submitted by Betty Lacey and printed on page 11. Newcomers and younger people would love to read it.

Think about the possibilities. There probably isn't a person in Homer that couldn't make a contribution to his or her hometown newsletter!

Put your contribution in a sealed envelope marked: Homer News & Views, c/o Stan Cato and drop off at the Homer IGA office.

“TALK” WILL NEVER BE A MATCH FOR POSITIVE, DECISIVE ACTION

BY TERRY WADLEY

PART ONE

The September 18th edition of the *Southern Champaign County Today* newspaper carried an article about the Heritage Board acknowledging those who helped with the upgrade of what was an easily flooded Homer ball diamond. The diamond now has a thick layer of crushed limestone and dry wells to alleviate the flooding and the community has become richer through the efforts of all those named in the article.

Unfortunately, the article failed to identify the man who spearheaded the upgrade effort. This was somewhat understandable because the man in question is Kevin Wright, a Heritage Board member. Since the upgrade was board-sponsored, the article didn't name any single Board Member. And while I understand all this, I would like to offer additional perspective.

In addition to being on the Heritage Board of Education, Kevin Wright is a Homer citizen concerned with the image of the community. He is a Youth League coach and he is also a caring father. Kevin had sympathized with Heritage coaches for years about the condition of the diamond. He has also been one of many Youth League coaches frustrated with not being able to play ball after even the smallest amount of rain. And while others complained about the diamond, only Kevin took it upon himself to seek funding, take action and direct an effort to solve the problem.

Kevin had visited many area communities with non-water-logged ball diamonds and talked to the people who constructed them. He learned that a top layer of crushed limestone was consistently the answer. He also got reports that the use of limestone wasn't unique to our area but was being used all across the Midwest.

A plan was developed and set in motion. The flooding problems with the ball diamond had been acknowledged by everyone who had to deal with them. Most of these people supported the plan for the limestone layer, but interestingly, there was resistance from a few who wanted to talk about *another* plan. “This will never work,” they said.

Well, this supporter of Heritage sports, and Youth League father, offers this to any naysayers: “The limestone will solve most of the flooding problems because it is work-

ing everywhere else it's been used. But even if it doesn't, at least one man gave it his best shot. Kevin's positive, decisive action was like a breath of fresh air!”

Way to go, Kevin! This community, whether it knows it or not, desperately needs more of the positive action and progressive spirit you've shown us.

PART TWO

At a recent Homer Community Development Board meeting, Norma Diel talked about Atwood Illinois. She noted that a lot of work had been put into revitalizing Atwood's business district and that it has become quaint, lovely, and prosperous.

Soon after that meeting I travelled to see Atwood for myself. Norma was absolutely right. It has a thriving downtown and, small as it may be, it is inviting visitors and shoppers from miles around — sometimes by the busloads! Just think of the sales tax revenues that must be generated for their schools.

When I asked the locals how this came to be, I consistently got a smile and a pride-filled answer. The words varied but their messages were all the same: “A man with vision and energy took charge.” Amazing! It took only one person with *vision* and *energy* to turn a town around. But what wasn't said was that the town wholeheartedly supported all the efforts that went into the revitalization. It could not have been done without the support of the community, and lots of volunteers!

Atwood is one of thousands of examples of community rebirth across the nation. One has to wonder if the citizens of Homer never tire of hearing that progress is stymied by the lack of an adequate water supply. Is the option that would provide an immediate solution to this seemingly insurmountable problem really so bad? One would also have to wonder how many years it will take for the person(s) — with *vision*, *energy*, *intelligence*, *good taste*, and the *ability to unite the community* — to surface and move Homer forward.

Revitalization of Homer isn't going to happen with idle talk, especially if it is negative. Positive decisive action and a progressive spirit are long overdue. ■

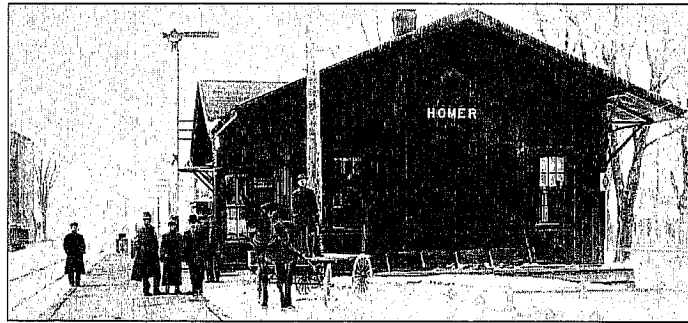
From the Archives

PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY. THE FOLLOWING [AUTHOR UNKNOWN] IS REPRINTED FROM THE HOMER CENTENNIAL BOOKLET, 1955.

PART TWO IN A SERIES

While reading this article please remember, all references made to now, presently or today are referring to 1955.

The greater part of the winter of 1854-1855 was consumed in getting ready to move. Skids were made to put under the houses and plans to utilize the large number of cattle belonging to the farmers were perfected. No snow fell until January and it was the plan to slide the buildings over the snow to their new positions. With a heavy fall of snow in January, the actual work of transporting the town began. It was participated in by the entire community. Within six weeks the work was completed and every house in the town was given nearly the same relative position in the town on the railroad. The only building that was difficult to move was the Methodist Church. While the men were getting this building ready, a string of oxen was attached to the house



Homer Railroad Station, circa 1890

belonging to Mr. Thomas and it was moved to its new location while the women folk got dinner ready. Mr. Thomas told that the weights were taken out of the clock, the dishes were packed so they would not break, and wood and water were brought into the house so the preparations for the noon day meal went on uninterrupted. The total cost of

moving was only \$5.00 per house. One doctor who did not move at the time of the general exodus moved the following fall and it cost him about \$300.00.

With the coming of spring there was nothing left of the old town but the old mill and the doctor's house. The railroad came through in the summer of 1855 and the people knew that they had made a good move. Time has confirmed their belief, for the town of Homer is one of the prettiest and cleanest towns in Champaign County.

How the second village of Homer looked when it was



Homer House was located on the south side of First Street between Main and East Streets, circa 1890

very young is thus described by the editor of the *Urbana Union* in his issue of October 25, 1855: "On Tuesday of this week we visited this town for the first time since its location on the prairie. The present site, on a high and commanding point on the Great Western Railroad, is considered much healthier than the old town. We were informed by the physicians that amidst the great amount of sickness the present year the town has been comparatively free from it. It is expected that the cars will soon pay the town a visit, and that the whistle of the locomotive will wake to new life the business of the town and surrounding country, which is already good. Several new houses are already being built, and many more will be commenced when facilities for getting lumber are better."

In 1859 the local newspaper started as the *Homer Journal*. George Knapp was publisher. Subsequent owners were John W. Summers and W. H. Rhoades. In 1877 the name of the paper was changed to the *Enterprise* and was published in turn by John C. Cronis, I. A. Baker, Willard L. Sampson, J. B. Morgan, J. R. Martin, C. H. Wallace, J. G. White, B. F. Morgan, H. H. Clore, Phillip Clore, and Lowell Terry, present owner.

The burial ground for the people of Old Homer was located on the bluff west of the old town. It is still used for burial but is not under perpetual care. The G.A.R. Cemetery, now owned by the American Legion Post 290, is located at the east edge of town. It is well kept. The earliest records have been lost, but the first burial was in 1886. There are burials that date back as far as 1846, the people having been brought here from other cemeteries.

On June 23, 1889, a contract to furnish electric lighting for the village of Homer was let. The plant was erected just east of the Homer Grain Company. This plant burned in 1928. Mr. Bowen sold out to U.S. Thompson who later sold to James Capel. Later CILCO purchased the plant.

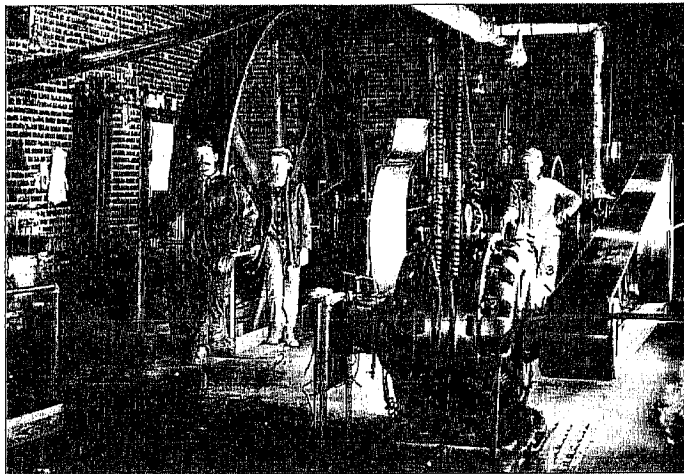
In the 1890s, fairs were held at the fairgrounds, which were located one mile north of town on the west side of the road (Rt. 49). Horse racing, harness racing, and balloon ascensions were held during the warm weather. One man was killed when his parachute failed to open. According to the records, not all racing was confined to the track, but it seems that some of the citizens engaged in such on their way home.

A tile factory and a cigar factory flourished in Homer at one time. The tile factory was operated under the name of Homer Brick and Tile Works. It was located east of the stockyard and was operated by G.B. Yount. Good building brick could be purchased for \$6.00 per thousand.

Orders were also taken and filled promptly for 10 and 12 inch tile.

The first tobacco factory was in the upstairs of the Paxton building. The building burned in 1900 and the factory moved to the Gilman (Hess) Building. Joe Elliot started the first factory and later sold out to A.W. Rosenbaum, who continued it for many years.

Homer House was moved from Old Homer to a site now occupied by Benner's Garage. It was operated as a boarding and rooming house, but this building burned in the early 1900s.



Homer Power Plant, circa 1900

HOMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

A very special WARM Thank you goes out to all who generously donated toward the purchase of our new furnace. This will—for the first time since its inception—allow the Historical Society to be open to the public during winter hours. Beginning October 3, 1996 the Society will be open to the public Thursday afternoons from 2:00 to 4:00pm. Come visit!

Our Crazy Daze Open House was a success with over 250 guests passing through our doors, not to mention the sell-out at our bake sale.

At our next meeting, November 5, at 7:00pm, in the City Building cafeteria, Jim Smith will conduct a

slide presentation of his visit to the Holy Land. Everyone who is interested is welcome. Refreshments will be served.

Announcing Our Fall Fundraiser

Come Join Us!

Ham & Bean Supper

4:00pm Saturday, October 19, 1996
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HOMER HOMEMAKERS EXTENSION NEWS

SUBMITTED BY PAT VARVEL

Homer Homemakers Extension Unit began their new year with a picnic at Homer Lake on September 19th.

The lesson was titled "Partners through History." Ruth Taylor told about her August trip down the Volga River in Russia.

Members sponsored the "Mini Fair" at Crazy Daze in September. Betty Lacey was Chairman of the Committee.

Upcoming program for the 1995-96 Homemakers Extension year will include lesson titles:

October — *Wow'em-Get'em involved*

November — A craft day at Prairie Gardens plus *Hosting the Holidays with Nutritious, Delicious Bounty*

January — *Antiquing*

February — *Decorating with Dried Materials*

March — *What's New in Window Treatments*, plus our International luncheon featuring foods of and information on Wales

April — *Understanding Ethnic Families*

May — *Herb Gardening*

June — *How preserving Food Can Add Excitement and Nutrition to Meals*

The Homemakers hope everyone enjoyed the barrels of flowers on Main Street over the summer. Thanks to merchants and others who helped maintain them. n

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WHEN I WAS YOUNG

BY BETTY LACEY

When I was young my sister and I lived with a childless couple in Danville. Aunt Alice was a sister to our grandmother. We were taken there after our parents separated and lived there until we were old enough to choose where we wanted to live. Each summer vacation we would come to Homer to visit with our grandparents and aunts and uncle.

When we made the trips to Homer we would ride in the back seat of my uncle's 1926 Huppmobile, which was a real luxury car of the times. Most often it would be in the evening and we could tell how close to Homer we were by counting the number of little wooden bridges we crossed. Leaving Catlin we crossed the one at the edge of town and north of Fairmount and one at the Clutter property. We knew then to watch for the moonlit tomb stones at the Cemetery and when we saw them, great shouts of pretended fear came forth.

My grandfather's property was great in size to a seven year old. A barn, barn lot and buggy shed, a chicken house and the privy were at the back of the lot. A coal and cob house finished filling the alley boundary. A smoke house attached to the big porch joined onto the back of the house. There was always a big garden at the north side of the lot. It was fenced in to keep the chickens out.

The barn housed the old white mare that was glad to take the girls for a ride in the spring wagon. There was most often a pig or two in the barn lot for butchering in the fall. Between the smokehouse and the back door of the house was a well with a removable top where butter and milk were lowered to keep cool. The porch was walled half way up and screened to the top and this is where the wash machine and big wooden benches, used to put the rinse water tubs on, were kept. Rain water from the rain barrel or well water was heated on the big cast iron stove in the kitchen. A cake of Lye soap was pared into the hot steamy water. Since there was no electricity, the power source was human pushing a great handle on the side of the washer and turning the handle on a wringer that was between two wash tubs of rinse water. Clothes were hung on the clothesline and rags and old rugs were draped on the garden fence.

This was great summer adventure for two little girls that lived in a house with electricity and even a bathroom. ■

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I would like to personally and publicly thank Kevin Wright for all his hard work on the ball diamond at the Homer building. As a small token of acknowledgement, Kevin was asked to throw out the first pitch at the first home baseball game this year.

—Judy Pacey, Principal

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Dear Editor,

By publishing this newsletter, the Homer Community Development Board is trying to better our town by getting people to work together, communicate with one another and to support our local government. As a citizen, I feel that too often insignificant issues only put up a smoke screen for real problems.

Why do we have seven empty buildings on the west side of Main Street — one with boarded up windows and no roof? They bring in no sales tax money, they are not open for business and have become store houses for old furniture and antiques. Some of them have living quarters upstairs or to the back but there never seems to be a regular time, as the sign out front indicates, for the businesses to do any business. There is no chance for any one wanting to open a small business in any of them. Is it because the owners only care that his business succeeds or that liability insurance and taxes would be higher if they were occupied? There are fewer in number on the East side but once again, the owners must be aware that they are not bettering our community.

What zoning ordinances are there to govern living quarters in business buildings? Is it the same as businesses in living quarters? Or once again, does it depend on who lives there?

Look at our "Business District." Trees, flower tubs and benches are great, but empty buildings only indicate decay.

—The Old Crow

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THE HOMER PEACE MEAL PROGRAM

BY CATHY LENTZ

The Homer Peace Meal site has been open since July of 1983. Since that time, it has served a hot lunch to hundreds of senior citizens in Homer, Sidney, St. Joseph, Ogden and Fairmount.

The site is located at the Homer City Building, 101 North Main. The lunch program is open to any adults over 60 years of age. Home delivered meals are also available to qualified senior citizens. Serving time is 11:45 a.m. Monday through Friday. Suggested donation for the meal is \$1.75.

Convenience and affordability are just two of the advantages the Peace Meal Program offers to senior citizens in the Homer area. A balanced diet and a chance to be out and spend time with friends are two other very good reasons why many seniors spend their lunch hour at the Peace Meal site.

Each month, entertainment and/or special programs are offered at the birthday party celebration. The site is a focal point for senior citizens to get information about other programs and services available to them. In August, Raymond and Robin Gordon, originally from Homer, provided entertainment. September's program featured a speaker on *Rules of the Road*.

The hot meal provides one third of the recommended daily allowances for older adults and allows for a variety in the diet that many people living alone find difficult to get. Senior citizens who would like to participate in this program may do so simply by stopping by at the site or by calling Sharon Jeffers, Homer Peace Meal Site Supervisor at 896-2668 or 896-2121 between the hours of 10:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. ■

This is to publicly recognize Jodie Melton for her dedicated service as organist at the Presbyterian Church. In recent months she has been unable to help us in our worship. We miss her talent and willingness to serve.

Norma Vineyard, Norma Diel and Methy Roberts have been taking up the slack. While we appreciate these who are helping, we look forward to Jodie's return.

—Jim Swathwood

PROFILE OF A VILLAGE TRUSTEE

Joe Huimphrey was elected in April of 1993 as a Village Trustee and is finishing his first term. He currently serves as chairman of the Building and Grounds and Health Committees. He decided to run for the village board after he retired from years on the railroad because he wanted something to do. His interest in Homer's current water shortage also prompted him to get involved. For the full term, Joe has served on the Water Committee. When asked if he was in favor of Homer retaining control of its water system, he was very emphatic in his answer, "No water from Northern Illinois Water. There are too many people on fixed incomes to afford the high rates charged by Northern."

Joe feels his greatest accomplishment in this term are the new pavilion and restrooms at the village park, and the renovations to the Homer Historical Society. As committee chairman, Joe organized the construction projects at the park by acquiring materials, contacting volunteers, and making sure the bills were paid. The Historical Society



Joe Huimphrey

received a new roof, gutters, soffits, and windows.

When asked about his plans for the next election, he said he wasn't sure yet. He would like to see the water project through. If the village gets close to bringing in new water supplies, this would tempt a second term

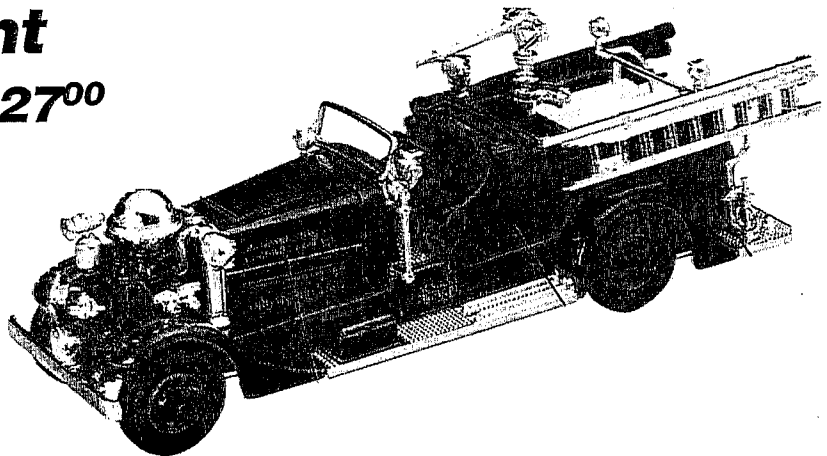
Seeing more business, small factories, and population growth are part of Joe's vision for the future. He would like to

see the empty buildings filled in with new stores and jobs created in town by new companies and factories.

Joe's had this message to the village: "I appreciate all the volunteers who helped my committee accomplish our projects. I especially want to thank the Lions Club members, the Fire Department members, Recreation Board members, D&D Electric, and concerned citizens for what you have done to help. If everyone would get behind each other and work together to accomplish our goals, things can happen. If we work against each other, we won't get anywhere." ■

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NEWS FROM HOMER'S CHURCHES

HOMER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SUBMITTED BY BEV CARTER

Hello from the Homer United Methodist Church. We worship at 301 South Main Street. Next door lives our Pastor, J.L. Penfold, his wife Marian and their three children, Amy, James and David.

We have Sunday School from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 with classes for pre-school to adult. We also have a nursery for Sunday School and Church. Everyone is welcome.

Our rally Day was September 8th at which time classes were promoted and the Sunday School teachers were recognized.

We have an active Senior High TCO (Teen Christian Organization) which does a number of things including going to Henderson Settlement to do missions outreach. We also have a Jr. High TFC group (Teens for Christ).

Our Youth Club registration was September 11th followed by a staff meeting. Our Youth club accepts all children 2nd through 5th grades. The children come to the Church after school. They have snacks, Bible study, music, crafts and a family style meal. Linda Krukiwitt is director and if your child would like to join, you may call Linda at 896-2195. All are welcome!

Martha's Helpers resumed meetings September 17th with a potluck luncheon at Homer Lake. We are making

plans for our Rummage Sale which we have in October and April. This fall our sale will be held October 17, 18 and 19.

The Homer Churches Co-operating will sponsor a Community Thanksgiving Service which will be held at the Methodist Church November 24th at 7:00 p.m. We hope you will all attend.

The Chancel Choir is preparing a Christmas Contata which will be presented December 15th during the worship hour. ■

HOMER CHURCH OF CHRIST

Our fellowship is seeing God work in so many ways. We've had several decisions for Christ recently and several new visitors. Great effort is being made on the new building located just east of Homer across from the G.A.R. Cemetery. Not only have we completed the foundation and floor, but we have continued going up with walls and roof. We are working hard to get this building enclosed by fall. We are doing most of the work ourselves and have had so many from the fellowship who have labored in love for the Lord and the community.

A special *thank you* to the community for donating so many clothes for our last clothes give-away. The need seems to always be great and so is the response.

Our youth encounter 'ROCK SOLID' grew stronger each night and we are already planning to do it again next summer. We gave away some CDs, shirts and cassettes of contemporary Christian groups.

On October 6th, we will be offering a special Bible School Study for the next several weeks on an *Overview of the Bible*. Do you find it difficult to understand the Bible, all the names and places and books and years? Do you know how we got our Bible? This class will be held each Sunday morning at 9:30 at the Homer Church of Christ and is a 16-week course, and we'll pay for study materials. Call the church office at 896-2332 to register.

What are your children doing on Wednesday nights? Remember the song Pharaoh, Pharaoh from V.B.S.? Each Wednesday we have youth groups for 5 years old through high school and lots of fun Christian songs to sing too! Bring your children. Our Senior and Junior High youth group meets on Sunday night at 6:30.

Our church will host the Christian Men's Association on November 26th at 7:00 p.m. This is for men and women and is a night of preaching and singing and refreshments.

Many more activities take place on a weekly basis, so if you do not have a church family, please visit the Homer Church of Christ at 109 N. Main, or call us for more information at 896-2332.

Access us on the Internet at <http://prairienet.org/hcc>

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Our church is located at 201 North Main in Homer. Classes meet at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday with worship at 10:00 a.m. The Women's Association meets monthly in various homes of the members. They also have workdays at the church preparing for their November bazaar. The Adult Fellowship meets in different homes the 3rd Sunday evening each month. The Fellowship's ongoing project is to support a Native American student.

All are welcome, especially those who do not have a church home. Anyone wanting to know more about the Christian faith and/or Presbyterian beliefs are encouraged to contact any church officer.

Jim Swathwood has been serving as Lay Pastor since the first of this year. Rev. Dale Tutje of Champaign serves as moderator of the session which conducts the church's business. Our denomination's General Assembly recently approved expanded duties and responsibilities for lay pastors, such as weddings and baptisms. If approved by the church's presbyteries, it will become effective next year.

Events for October include World Communion on October 6th. Seven area Presbyterian churches will meet in Homer on October 28th to discuss mutual concerns and future directions.

Jodie Melton is Clerk of Session, Phyllis Koerner is Church Treasurer. Other session members are Delores Richard, Jeane Block, Betty Lacey, and Mike Koerner. ■

ST. CHARLES BORROMEIO CATHOLIC CHURCH

SUBMITTED BY VIRNITA WHITT

Our church is located at the corner of Wabash and East Streets. Sunday Mass is at 10:30 a.m.. Holy Days is at 7:00 p.m. C.C.D. classes at 9:30 a.m. Sundays (preschool - grade 12)

Our Pastor, Dennis O'Riley can be reached at 485-5194. Our Co-coordinators of Religious Education are Kathy Sarnecki, 469-7639 and Virnita Whitt, 896-2156.

We have families from Homer, Sidney, St. Joseph, Ogden, and Fairmount. Our C.C.D. classes are small, but our teachers are dedicated. We will have a First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation class this year. Religious Education (C.C.D.) will begin the end of September.

As promised in the last issue, here is a bit of history about our church.

A few years ago Mrs. Jeanette (Hardyman) Anderson brought us some pictures of our church when it was her father's woodworking shop. She told me it had been a buggy factory and a blacksmith's shop. Since then, I have been real curious about our history, both the history of the building and our church.

So when Karin Fish came by my house with an old journal that David Kenney had found among his parents belongings I was thrilled. It is priceless. Included in the journal is a list of contributors toward the purchase and renovation of the A.J. Hardyman Woodworking Shop (one of the oldest buildings in Homer). There are more pictures of the building as it was when purchased, and newspaper articles with pictures of the dedication.

Did you know the first Catholic Mass in Homer was offered December 22, 1946 at the Village Hall with about ten persons in attendance? As the number of people attending Mass grew, a dream for a Catholic Church in Homer began.


On October 14, 1952 the Hardyman building was purchased. On June 4, 1958 the church was blessed and dedicated by Bishop William Cousins. Altar boys assisting at the dedication were Donald, Ronald and Ralph Frye, Jack and Bob Smith and David and Gary Rogiers. After the dedication dinner was served at the home of Jim and Mary Buck.

Father Daniel Monaghan was the first priest. Members of the first communion class were Sue Rowand, Betsy Tighe and David Rogiers. The first altar boy was David Kenney.



If anyone has any pictures, newspaper articles or stories of their family ties to the church or past history of our building, please call Virnita Whitt at 896-2156 and share them with us. ■

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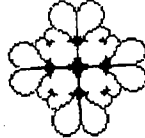
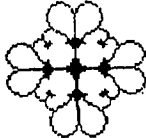
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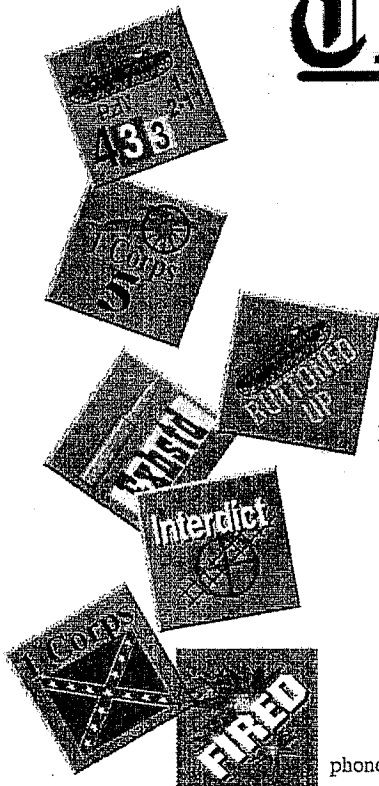
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