

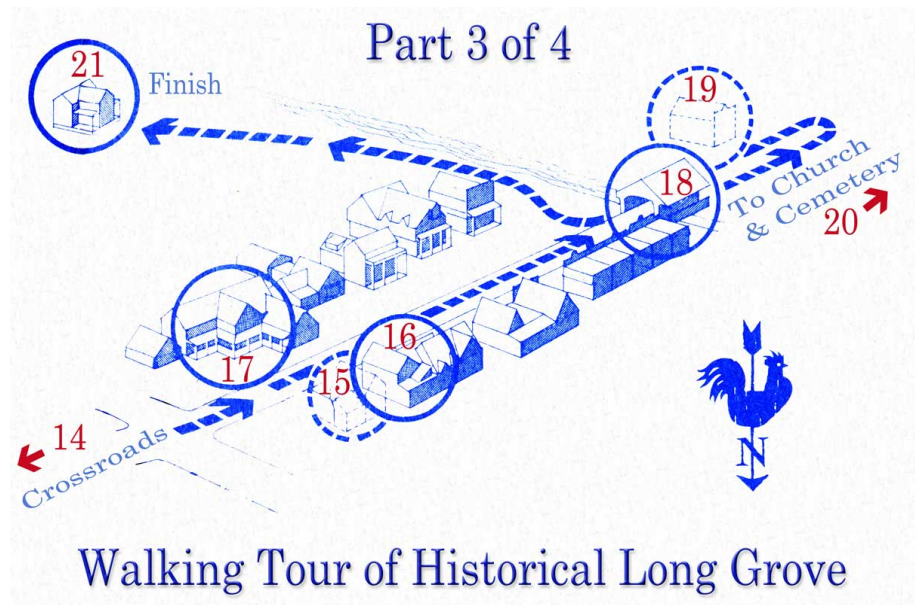
Long Grove History

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A Creamery, a Dynamiter & The Blues Brothers

West up Robert Parker Coffin Road past the old cheese factory, around to a brief Hollywood cameo, and on toward the church and the bridge.

By Aaron Underwood · Long Grove Historical Society



STOPS 14-21 Part 3 begins again at the crossroads and heads briefly up Robert Parker Coffin Road toward Route 83 before looping down toward the bridge, the church, the cemetery, and finishing at the restored Weidner farmhouse in the Stempel parking lot.

Welcome back. This is part three of our four-part walking tour. As before, the LGBCP numbers in each entry correspond to the merchants' directory map at the downtown Info Center. We'll start at the crossroads, walk briefly west, then loop back toward the bridge.



14 Long Grove Creamery / Cheese Factory
240 Robert Parker Coffin Road

LGBCP #14

From the crossroads, walk west up Robert Parker Coffin Road (away from the bridge) to find the old factory. The first building on this site was constructed in 1879, but was destroyed by fire in 1897. It was immediately replaced with a more up-to-date plant. One resident remembered as many as **100 wagons** coming in on a busy day. Its superior-grade cheese found a market in Chicago and Long Grove Creamery Butter was sold as far away as **New York City**.

In 1908 one of the "mega" dairies, **Bowman's Dairy** from Gurnee, bought out the Creamery and continued to operate it into the 1920's. These large dairies eventually controlled enough of the milk market to drive the price paid to farmers so low that strikes were called and the farmers would *spill* their milk as a way of forcing higher prices. The situation got out of hand when the Depression hit in the 1930's, and the government interceded by establishing pricing controls (which continue to this day). Bowman's was bought out by Dean's in the 1960's. In the 1970's, the Long Grove village government offices were located in this building. Rumor has it there was even a make-shift *jail cell* in the building at that time.

15 Bollenbach Home

Formerly · north side of Robert Parker Coffin Road, near the crossroads

Head back down Robert Parker Coffin Road toward the bridge. As you cross over the crossroads, look to your right. The former home of the Bollenbach family sat on this site until it burned in the 1950's. The family had moved away in 1905, but the house remained in use up until the fire.

16 Umbdenstock Home

410 Robert Parker Coffin Road

LGBCP #42

Also on your right as you proceed toward the bridge is the former home of **George Umbdenstock**. The original home is the eastern two-story section. The building had some momentary cinematic fame in the 1980's when it briefly appeared in *The Blues Brothers*. The story goes that Director John Landis was looking for a covered bridge to use in a scene — and that brought the film crew to Long Grove. Though no scenes with our bridge made the movie, some street footage approaching the bridge was used. *The Peppermint Stick*, as the building was then known, had red-striped columns and is easily recognizable (albeit briefly) in that scene.

17 **Bollenbach Wagon Shop**
407 Robert Parker Coffin Road

LGBCP #35

Across the street, you'll find the current resting place of the old Wagon Shop. As discussed in last month's stop, it was moved around the corner from its original "tavern side" location.

18 **Long Grove Covered Bridge**

We'll save the story of the bridge for the final installment of this walking tour – next month.

19 **Eisler Cider & Grist Mill / Dynamite Shop**
Formerly · southwest side of the bridge

While the cider and grist operations were the primary function of this "ghost" building, the proprietor, **Jake Eisler**, was perhaps more infamous for his dynamiting skills. Jake could be called upon to use dynamite to clear large rocks or stumps. He had a reputation for using too much explosive – on one occasion lofting a stump *onto and through* the Village Tavern roof.

When Route 53 was being built, Jake badly wanted the job of removing the stumps from the proposed roadway, but ran into some disagreements with the road construction manager – a Mr. Capsule from Deerfield. When the front porch of Mr. Capsule's home was blown up with dynamite, Jake was immediately suspected, convicted, and imprisoned. And while it would make a nice story to say the old mill eventually blew up due to some unstable dynamite, as near as village elders can recall it simply became dilapidated and was torn down.



20 Long Grove Community Church
1110 Robert Parker Coffin Road

You can continue up the road to see one of Long Grove's most historic buildings, or simply read about it in the shade of the bridge. The church was originally known as *The German United Evangelical Lutheran Reformed Church of Long Grove*. Records in German date from 1846; the cornerstone was laid in 1847; the first service in the completed sanctuary was held in 1848. Services in German continued up until the First World War.

With minimal renovation over the years, it remains the original structure — with 20 feet added along with a bell-tower extension in the 1870's, new windows and a portico in the 1930's, and additions to the rear over the years since. The addition to the west rear was the former German school, a separate building moved over to accommodate a Sunday school after it was no longer used as the German Catechism School. The Church's original bell was presented to the German-speaking congregation by their English-speaking neighbors as an early ecumenical gesture. Back in the day, the bell would ring at noon to bring farmers in for their meal, and was rung on the occasion of a member's death — *one ring for each year the deceased had lived*.

West of the Church is the cemetery where many of the original settlers of Long Grove are buried. Note the interesting ironwork of the old arched gateway. Beginning in the 1970's, the combination of picturesque church, bridge, historic buildings, and banquet facilities — all within walking distance — made Long Grove a sought-out wedding destination. An additional bit of cinematic/celebrity trivia: **Barbara Eden**, of *I Dream of Jeannie* fame, was married here in 1977.

21 Weidner Farmhouse
Stempel Parking Lot

LGBCP #28

Returning back toward the crossroads, immediately turn right after exiting the bridge and follow the trail along Buffalo Creek through the parking lot to the two-story white farmhouse at the south edge. This early farmhouse, dating from the 1850's, was moved here by the Long Grove Historical Society to be used as a museum, store, office, and meeting place. It is generally open only by appointment. The farmhouse was originally owned by the Weidner family and located on Buffalo Grove Road. Family lore has it that the *Great Chicago Fire of 1871* was visible from the house.



THEN & NOW · 1900 / 2013

*Long Grove Community Church, 1110 Robert Parker Coffin Road. Cornerstone laid 1847; first service 1848. Originally *The German United Evangelical Lutheran Reformed Church of Long Grove*.*