

# Long Grove History

LONG GROVE LIVING  
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## Smithies, Taverns & One Tall Flagpole

*Up Old McHenry Road toward Route 22 — past two ghost buildings, the oldest restaurant in Illinois, and a flagpole once used to signal a Chicago gangster.*

By Aaron Underwood · Long Grove Historical Society



**BOLLENBACH · C. 1900** Chas. Bollenbach's Blacksmith Shop at 111 Old McHenry Road — the largest building in town until 1900. Charles, an Alsatian immigrant who apprenticed under Daniel Rose, manufactured carriages, buggies, and wagons here; the upstairs hosted community functions.

Part two of our four-part walking tour begins again at the crossroads, then proceeds up Old McHenry Road toward Route 22 before looping back. The first two stops require some imagination — they are buildings that are no longer there.



*Two ghost buildings, and the man who replaced them.*

7

**Rose Blacksmith Shop**

Formerly · 404 Robert Parker Coffin Road

LGBCP #43

Long Grove's first "smithy" was **Daniel Strunk Rose**. Daniel was born in Pennsylvania and moved to Long Grove with his mother and father — also a blacksmith — around 1847. In the late 1850's, Daniel took on a young teenage apprentice, **Charles Bollenbach**, who had recently emigrated from Alsace (Ostheim, just north of Colmar). Charles lived with the Roses, eventually became a formal partner, and opened his own shop next door. Charles, a bachelor, took some time off to fight in the Civil War — hired by his brother (who had a wife and young children) to serve in his place. Daniel Rose died in 1870.

8

**Bollenbach Blacksmith & Wagon Shop**

Formerly · 111 Old McHenry Road

LGBCP #44

It was probably around 1870 when Charles built his own shop and began manufacturing all classes of carriages, buggies, and wagons. He partnered with a fellow Alsatian, blacksmith **George Umbdenstock**, who took over Daniel Rose's smithy duties. The Bollenbach building was the largest in town until 1900, and the upstairs was often used for community functions. Charles turned the business over to his son **Louis** when he retired in 1900; in turn, George passed his smithy to George Jr.

When Lake County widened McHenry Road in 1946, the Bollenbach building was moved around the intersection west on Coffin Road and converted into a three-apartment complex; today it houses a number of shops and no longer resembles its former self. The cement-block building presently at 111 Old McHenry was built in 1946 by George Jr. as a blacksmith shop and garage.

9a

**Zimmer Tavern**

135 Old McHenry Road

LGBCP #45

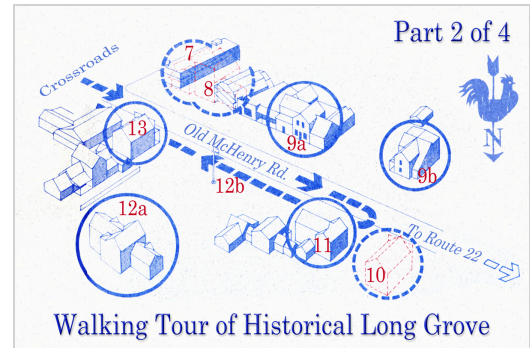
Continuing up the street brings us to the Long Grove Tavern complex. The south section is a recent addition to the original two-story building, built as the **Zimmer Tavern and Wagon Shop** circa 1850. It was issued one of Lake County's first liquor licenses, and claims to be the *oldest restaurant in Illinois*. Its grandfather clock is from the 1893 Chicago World's Fair; its bar was rescued from the "Great McCormick Place Fire" of 1967. During Prohibition, the tavern became an ice cream parlor. In 1962, one of the matriarchs of modern Long Grove, **Norma Sales**, took over and transitioned it to the family-friendly atmosphere it has today. The tavern is now operated by Norma's son's family — the Ullrichs. The house to the north (9b) was a Zimmer residence.

**10** Long Grove Union Hall  
*Empty lot, north of present hotel building*

As you cross over Old McHenry Road heading back toward the crossroads, you'll notice an empty lot north of the present hotel building. From 1900 until 1951 this was the site of the Long Grove Union (or Town) Hall — dances, plays, meetings, and church suppers held here for half a century. It burned in 1951, despite the fire department being practically next door. Ironically, the firemen were attending a dance in another town that night. By the time of the fire, the building had been converted to a factory making *wooden ducks*, and the materials related to that manufacturing were thought to have hastened the blaze. The original financing was rather unique: a company was formed and local entrepreneurs bought shares to raise construction and operating capital, receiving dividends from event proceeds.

**11** Zimmer Hotel  
144 Old McHenry Road

Originally the home of Long Grove's first smithy, Daniel Rose. When the Zimmer family acquired it in 1871, they converted it into a hotel. This former ten-room hotel has changed little over the years, retaining much of its original Victorian trim on the porch and windows. Annexed onto the hotel was one of the carriage sheds from the Long Grove Church.



**PART 2 · STOPS 7-13**

Up Old McHenry Road from the crossroads toward Route 22 — dashed circles mark ghost buildings; solid circles, those still standing.

**12a** Ritzenthaler Farmhouse  
132 Old McHenry Road

LGBCP #3

Behind the flagpole and Towner Green stands the former home of **William Umbdenstock**. Note the brackets at the side of the house and the detailed trim on the porch post. When O'Hare Airport was created in 1947, it displaced the Chicago Golf Club (now known as Twin Orchards Country Club). Looking for a new location, the club chose the Ritzenthaler Farm in Long Grove, a short distance to the northwest. They offered William the old farmhouse on the property at no charge — provided he could move it to a new location in 30 days. He succeeded.

**12b** The Most Infamous Flagpole in Lake County

One of Long Grove's more notorious residents in the 1930's was Chicago gangster "**Terrible Terry**" **Druggan**, who owned a farm outside of town on Long Grove Road. He erected a giant **100-foot-tall** flagpole, visible a mile away from Rand Road. His lieutenants would use it to signal Terry if he were to stay away from the property. A lightning strike cut the pole in half in the early 1950's. Enterprising William Umbdenstock salvaged the top forty feet and dedicated it in a Fourth of July ceremony in 1954, in honor of his father — Civil War veteran **Mathias Umbdenstock**. Mathias also served in place of a draftee, and received the equivalent of \$15,000 in today's dollars for doing so.

**13** Meat Market & Butcher Shop  
128 Old McHenry Road

LGBCP #6

William Umbdenstock built this two-story building, which originally contained a meat market and barber shop. Old timers were known to tell stories about Chicago gangsters stopping in for a haircut here from time to time.

**NEXT MONTH / PART THREE**



We start at the crossroads again and head west up Robert Parker Coffin Road — past the Long Grove Creamery and a few more vanished buildings — before looping back toward the bridge.