

Long Grove History

LONG GROVE LIVING
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LONG GROVE PLUMBING • WHY WE HAVE MORE WATER COOLERS THAN YOU

Land of *Many* Wells

By Aaron Underwood · Long Grove Historical Society

Next time you're in a social establishment and need some trivia, ask who invented the toilet. You'll probably get at least one semi-knowledgeable person who will tell you the story of Englishman Thomas Crapper and his mid-1800's patent. All this Crapper info is probably true, but he didn't invent it. Humans have been inventing things for a very, very long time and have had to deal with the output side of human existence even longer. You can be sure just about everything dealing with that subject has been tried already. The earliest known flushable wooden seat toilet I can find record of was one used by the Minoans in Crete circa 3000 BC.

Lest this article venture to far into the gutter, let's turn our focus to the input side, and the most popular input – water. Long Grove is unique amongst big city suburbs in that a large number of its residents still pull water from their own wells. There are more water coolers per capita in Long Grove than elsewhere, owing to the not so tasty quality of our local aquifers. Water coolers are not a modern appliance. Pictured is one of our Society board members, Amy Gayton, with a water cooler that would have been typical of a 1930's Long Grove household. Those old-timer's well hole might typically have been located on the porch, and the routine would have been to fill it up once a day and return it to a central place like the kitchen. Getting water would have involved dropping a cylinder shaped bucket into the well hole, dozens of feet until you heard it hit water, then a little farther to let the water spill over the top to fill it, then hoist it back out of the hole and empty it into your water cooler.



AMY GAYTON · SOCIETY BOARD
Typical of a 1930s Long Grove household: a stoneware cooler refilled once a day from the porch well.



The Minoans used similar cooling pottery for their water also. The cooling in both cases was caused by the vessel being just a little bit porous, so water that weeped onto the surface would evaporate into the air. The evaporation process consumes heat from the vessel, thus lowering its temperature and the water inside of it. Lick your finger and blow on it to feel this effect.

Our communities many wells can make firefighting a challenge. Long Grove is unique in that it was the first Illinois community to require residential sprinkler systems. Now there's something even the Minoans didn't have.

LONG GROVE · A FIRST IN ILLINOIS

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