

Horse and *Buggy* Days

Two long-time members of the Long Grove Community Church recall what it was like to walk in for Sunday service when the heating system was a pair of pot-bellied stoves and the parking lot was an open horse shed.

By **Aaron Underwood** · Long Grove Historical Society



ARCHIVES ROOM · 2015 **Erik Hill** of the Long Grove Community Church, paging through the Society's archives for material on the church's earlier days — here holding an early mounted photograph of the building itself.

Recently Erik Hill from the Long Grove Community Church paid our Society a visit. He is working on a historical display of the church's history, and we spent an afternoon browsing the archives for anything we could turn up. Two firsthand accounts of the church's earlier days seemed too good not to share.

If you could be transported back in time a hundred years and drop in on a service at the Church, what would be your first impression? Apparently — *how cold it was*. Both of our recollections led with the heating.



Two voices from the pews.

Arthur Potts was recognized in 1981 for his sixty-two years of attendance at the church, and was asked to say a few words to the congregation.

Arthur Potts

SPOKEN 1981

CONFIRMED 1919 · MEMBER 62 YEARS

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In 1919, at the age of 15, I started confirmation school, and when I was through with confirmation, I was confirmed. It was then that I became a member of the Long Grove Church. When I joined the church there was no furnace heat. There were two stoves in the church. They burned wood in them. Every Sunday morning the men would gather to start the fire in the stoves at about 6 o'clock so it would be warm in the church by 10 o'clock when services would start.

Also when I joined the church it was horse and buggy days. There were a lot of members that were farmers, and there were open sheds on the west and north sides of the church. The roof and back sides were closed. The people would come to church with their horse and buggy. They would put the horse and buggy in the open sheds. The buggies would stand halfway out of the sheds — but the horses were protected from rain and snow. These sheds were left standing until the horse and buggy days were no more. ”

In 1977, another old-timer, Bessie Geest, was interviewed by a local paper about the church.

Bessie Geest

INTERVIEW 1977

JOINED 1935 · QUIET REFORMER

“

My husband and I started attending in 1935, when we were first married. The service was in German and the simple frame building was heated with two pot-bellied stoves. We didn't mind the foreign language or the barely adequate heating system. But the tradition of seating men on one side of the aisle and women on the other did bother us. I went in and sat with my husband. Then other people started doing it. I was the one that started the integration of men and women. ”

IN MEMORIAM

Bessie departed us in 1982. Arthur passed away in 1989, and is buried in the Long Grove Cemetery.

With thanks to the Long Grove Community Church for the visit, and to the people who took the time to write any of this down.

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