

Long Grove History

LONG GROVE LIVING
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Long Grove Station

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Part of the reason Long Grove was able to maintain its charm and pastoral nature was because it was bypassed by the railroads. I'm sure many of you have heard this story. What you may not realize, especially if you live on the south side of Long Grove, is that there is a train line that cuts through Long Grove. It's on the far northern edge of the village and borders Indian Creek Club Subdivision. There have been occasional discussions over the years about the possibility of a "Long Grove Station" on this line.

The line is currently operated by the Canadian National Railway and is freight only, with no passenger traffic. It was originally created circa 1889 as the Waukegan & Southwestern Railway, though was acquired shortly thereafter by the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railroad. The idea was for the line to be an "outer belt" connecting the Great Lakes port of Waukegan with the 39 other railroads that radiate out of Chicago. It starts in Waukegan and loops around through Long Grove, Lake Zurich, Barrington and heads south to Plainfield.

There used to be a station at Gilmer on this line, immediately west of today's Long Grove boundary. Passengers could catch a train there to Lake Zurich or Barrington, or ride all the way down to Normantown, which is just north of Plainfield.



IF THERE HAD BEEN A STATION

Railroad cap and a station clock — period accessories for a station Long Grove never quite got.



In 1910 there was a fatal train wreck on this part of the line when the train derailed and the engine was crushed by the heavy freight cars it was pulling. Ironically, the County Coroner was riding in the caboose of the train and was unharmed.

The Gilmer station site might have been best known as the home of the Zeman Brewery, which brewed beer from the early 1940's into the 1960's. In the late 1950's, Zeman entered into a partnership with the Fox Head Brewery in Waukesha, Wisconsin. It was during this time frame that Fox Head became somewhat infamous for being under control or influence of Chicago's organized crime syndicate. Not much is known about the Zeman business - they were a keg only operation and appear to have primarily supplied various taverns in Chicago.



ZEMAN BREWING CO.
Waukesha, Wisconsin. A model boxcar from the brewery's partner operation up north.

LONG GROVE BREWING HISTORY

Zeman was as close as Long Grove came to having a brewery.

That is until later this year when Long Grove's own Buffalo Creek Brewomg is set to open in the historic downtown. Who knows, maybe with a bit more digging into the Zeman story a tribute beer could be inspired from our local brew master.