

Long Grove History

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President Grant in Long Grove

By Aaron Underwood • Long Grove Historical Society

Across the street from The Village Tavern is a quaint two-story building called, “The Hotel”. It is so named because it was formerly the 10-room Zimmer Hotel, restaurant, and “travelling men’s accommodation”. Various members of the Zimmer family, who also ran the “Zimmer Tavern” (aka Long Grove Village Tavern), owned and operated the hotel, which was open in the late 1800s and into the early 1900’s. There was entertainment available when one spent the night at the hotel. According to an 1896 write up, “lovers of game can enjoy a quiet game of pool or cards.” As to the establishment’s eventual demise, another telling quote is “in the days before the auto it enjoyed a good business and had a reputation for excellent food”. The ability for people to quickly traverse to bigger markets, beyond our little crossroads, dried up the local economy in the 1920’s and 1930’s.

An old timer once told me that he had heard President Grant stayed there one time on his way to Galena. After some digging on this, I doubt there’s any truth to the rumor. Looking at Grant’s history, relationship with Galena, and how somebody at that time would travel to Galena it doesn’t make sense. A more credible tale told is that people from Chicago would stay there when travelling to Lake Geneva. A quick look at Lake Geneva’s history attributes its post-Civil War growth to just that – summer homes for wealthy Chicagoans. Many of them apparently took up permanent residence in those summer homes when they lost their Chicago abodes to the great fire of 1871. And there are also stories of “wagon trains” of grain that would put in for the night at The Zimmer Hotel.



DEBRA KOCIS • LION’S CLUB

With a historic photo of the old Zimmer Hotel, during a recent Farmhouse tour.



Back in those days there was no Yelp or Trip Advisor to document guests reviews of the accommodation, but in my imagination, I like to think that there were at least a few complaints that “My room smelled like a horse stall! Seriously!”. You see, another interesting tidbit about the advent of the automobile in Long Grove relates to the Long Grove Community Church. When the horse and buggy stalls at the Church became obsolete, they were relocated and attached as an extension to the hotel and remain there today.

This month’s Save The Bridge limerick is a nod to our new neighbor, Buffalo Creek Brewing, as well as the many area residents that find our bridge so special. The Brewery is located on Stempel Parking Lot next to our Historical Society Farmhouse, and is the current location displaying the Tony Stencil Bridge Watercolor Painting we have up for raffle. During the recent Long Grove Living event there, the Farmhouse was open for tours and Long Grove resident and Lion’s Club member Debra Kocis paid a visit. She is shown with a picture of the old Zimmer Hotel.

SAVE THE BRIDGE · NO. 3

*There was a young lad from Kildeer,
Who liked the bridge over here,
Without it, he said,
Your town would be dead,
Toast the town, Save The Bridge, Raise a Beer!*