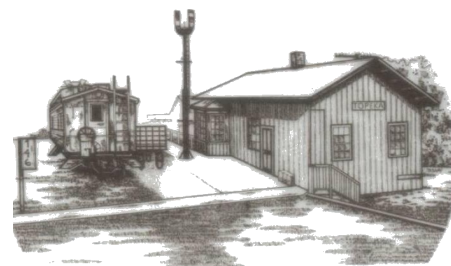


Mile 146

January — March 2014



Volume 7

Topeka Area Historical Society

Number 1

In the Heart of Downtown Emma

Located at the corner of four townships, at the crossroads of 600 W and 200 S, Emma-town has a unique history. For a time it was known as Eden Mills, then Emma-Town, but today most people just refer to it as Emma. While Emma has never been incorporated, it continues to be a vibrant lake community as well as the home to the Emma Mennonite Church, Emma Warehouse, Wickey's Garage, and Westview Jr. Sr. High School. But the cornerstone - the central point - of the village continues to be the Emma Café, owned and operated by relatives of some of the first owners.

Frequently historical facts fade, as Maggie Glick wrote in "Celebrating a Century 1893-1993", into folklore. That was never more true than the story of how Eden Mills became the Emmatown we know today. In a 1961 article for the LaGrange Standard, Oscar S. Hostetler said that, "Legend has it that the name of Eden Mills was used in connection with the large sawmill." Hostetler served as the Bishop of the Emma Mennonite Church for many years. In Glick's article "Why Emma?" she noted the research of Gerald W. Fisher of LaGrange who discovered that the village post office was officially recorded as Eden Mills from 1868 to 1875.

Mail was delivered by circuit rider on horseback twice a week from LaGrange. Peter Brough (Prough?) was listed as being the postmaster. But exactly where the mail was delivered is not clear, presumably in the house he built on the southwest corner of the intersection which would have been in Eden Township.



Legend has it that when the application was made for a new post office permit in 1880, the postal service objected to the name. It seems Indiana already had an Eden Mills and the postal service didn't want two. So the applicants were told they had to come up with a new name. The name they chose was Emma.

Harvey S. Frye in his 1984 "Emmatown History" maintains that the village was named after Emma Prough, the single daughter of Peter and Barbara Prough. If the postmaster's last name was really Prough and not Brough, then the mystery is solved. Frye also says that Emma was appointed the "Post-Mistress" for a short time. "And her name being Emma," Frye writes, "the community suggested to call the village Emma and that was acceptable even to this date." Besides, as Hostetler explained in the 1961 LaGrange Standard article, the name Emma "representing a most beautiful maiden of that day." And after all, he was a Bishop, so he should have known. However, Emma's term of service didn't last long according to Frye, because she got married and moved. It seems that newlyweds and sauerkraut don't mix.

Peter Prough, as Frye remembers him, was a great lover of sauerkraut. "In the fall of the year they would prepare a barrel of sauerkraut and set it between the kitchen range and the wall of which there was just enough space for the barrel." Emma and her husband had planned to live with the Proughs. But Emma's husband

Continued on page 2

In this Issue

- In the Heart of Downtown Emma
- Track Notes
- The Mile 146 Quiz
- Hawpatch History Detective

soon tired of the kraut and said, “that sauerkraut barrel will have to be moved out of the house... That sauerkraut is too much for me.” They moved and the kraut barrel stayed.

The Emma Post Office operated from September 21, 1880, until May 15, 1903. Records show that Jacob J. Hostetler opened the 1880 office. Mail was delivered daily from Topeka until free rural delivery routes were established in 1906.

Valentine (Felt) Yoder purchased 160 acres in the northwest corner of Clearspring Township. Yoder then dedicated the northwest corner of the property to “setting up a needy business.”

Frye says that “the corner” was given to Uriah Stutzman who built a store in 1881. Jacob and Andrew Hostetler, Oscar Hostetler’s uncles, purchased the store in August of 1881. The village post office was located in that building. The Hostetler brothers operated the business for the next 16 years.

Harman and Rose Jahn from Chicago bought the business from the Hostetler brothers. Since the Jahns spoke High German and most of the locals spoke Pennsylvania Dutch, there were a few misunderstandings. None was more classic than when Harman tried to get his driver, 13 year old Harvey Frye, to speed up so he wouldn’t miss the train to Chicago.

Periodically either Harman or Rose would take the 8 o'clock Sunday morning train from Topeka to Chicago so he could buy supplies for resale. One morning he told Frye in High German to “make the horse go faster”, what Frye understood was “go slower”. They missed the train by two blocks.

After nine years the store was sold to Henry Klemm who also spoke High German. But the Klemm family was also fluent in English, which helped endear them to the community. With more cars in the area, Henry installed an underground storage tank and began pumping gasoline in 1906. Previously gasoline was sold from a makeshift 75 gallon galvanized tank that Jahn had set up in the small building behind the store.

In 1926, Klemm sold the store to Jacob Eash of Middlebury and his son Glen. According to

Frye’s history, Glen also sold farm implements from the adjacent blacksmith shop built by Samuel D.

Frye. After a fire destroyed the implement business, Glen became the Sheriff of LaGrange County.

Samuel W. and Clara Miller purchased the Emma Store in 1930. A year later, on Sunday morning November 1, 1931, the store burned to the ground. The rebuilding began almost immediately with the help of volunteers from the community. The rebuilding was complete for business business to reopen between Christmas and New Year. The “new” brick structure endures to this day,

Ross and Alice Fought purchased the store’s inventory from the Millers in the summer of 1934. From 1936 to the spring of 1938, Fought’s daughter and son-in-law, Clayton and Lucille Martindale, operated Fought’s General Store.



In April of 1938, Howard Fought left his sales job in South Bend and bought the inventory from his parents who moved to Maple Heights, Ohio, where Ross took a teaching position. The following August Howard married Evelyn Bull and for the next 44 years they operated the store. In 1945, they purchased the

buildings from Samuel and Clare Miller. The Foughts raised their four children in the adjacent living quarters...all of whom graduated from Topeka High School as had their parents and grandfather Ross.

It remained Fought’s General Store until Richard and Myrna Gerber purchased the business and the property in 1982. Once again it became the Emma Store.

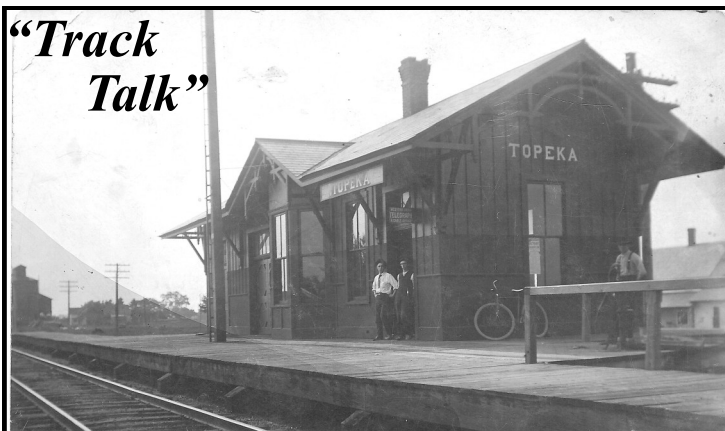
The Gerbers added freezer lockers in a separate building in 1986, and operated the store until July of 1989. Following the liquidation of the inventory, the store was closed.

Glen and Sharon Herschberger later purchased the property and operated the store and lockers of a period of time.

Continues on page 3

- Answers:
- 1) Harman Jahn
 - 2) A barrel of sauerkraut
 - 3) Howard & Evelyn Fought
 - 4) Oscar S. Hostetler
 - 5) 10 cents

“Track Talk”



40th Annual Topeka Quilt Show & Sale

Acclaimed as the premier show in northeast Indiana, the Topeka Quilt Show & Sale will celebrate it's 40th anniversary when the show opens on June 23 –27, 2014.

Originally started by Sue Christner, the show draws quilters and quilt lovers from across the nation and around the world. Online go to: <http://edenworshipcenter.co/#/quiltshow>

(In the Heart of Downtown Emma, continued from page 2)

In January 2007, the business was purchased by lifetime residents of Emma, Ron and Colleen Hostetler and their daughter, Molly. The Hostetlers expanded the restaurant side of the business and added catering.

Ron, a great, great son of Oscar Hostetler, is a dairy and crop farmer. Colleen is an elementary school teacher. Molly, who was 21 at the time, was in college studying Hospitality Administration. Owning a restaurant had been one of Molly's dreams. Having spent her entire high days working for a restaurant and catering business, she developed a love for the people and the business.

Unbeknownst to Molly, her mother also had dreams of someday owning a small café. Soon after Molly began college in the fall of 2006, the family heard that the Emma Store was up for sale. Everything fell into place and Emma Café & Catering was born. .

Today Emma Café and Catering is truly a family business with numerous family members involved. From delivering pizza to serving up Molly's Grandma Barb's famous Swiss Steak, Emma Café is a great place to stop, eat and get in touch with a bit of local history. *HG*

The Mile 146 Quiz:

1. Who missed the train to Chicago?
2. What did Peter Prough keep in his kitchen next to the stove?
3. Who operated the store in Emma for 44 years?
4. Who was the Bishop at Emma Mennonite Church?
5. How much was a single copy of The Index ?



Schedule of Events:

May 20, 2014	TBA Topeka Branch Library
June 14, 2014	THS Alumni Banquet Topeka Elementary School
July 15, 2014	Show & Tell (Carry-in) Topeka Branch Library

The Depot Museum will open in May.
Visit us online at: www.topekahistoricalsociety.com



The Topeka Rose

It was Doris Haggard who located and adapted the Topeka Rose quilt block pattern which is the official emblem of the Topeka Quilt Show & Sale. A barn quilt of the Topeka Rose hangs on the historical society's Depot Museum



(L to R) Rebecca and Travis Hostetler; Ron and Colleen Hostetler; Jill (Hostetler) Hamm; Ben and Molly (Hostetler) Michael

Topeka Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 33
Topeka, Indiana 46571

www.topekahistoricalsociety.com

2014 Board of Directors

Harold D. Gingerich, President
Doris Haggard, Vice President
Cathy Strawser, Secretary
Janice Gingerich, Treasurer
Keith Bobeck, Director
Ezra Miller, Director
Michael Zehr, Director

Museum Curator

Susie Parker

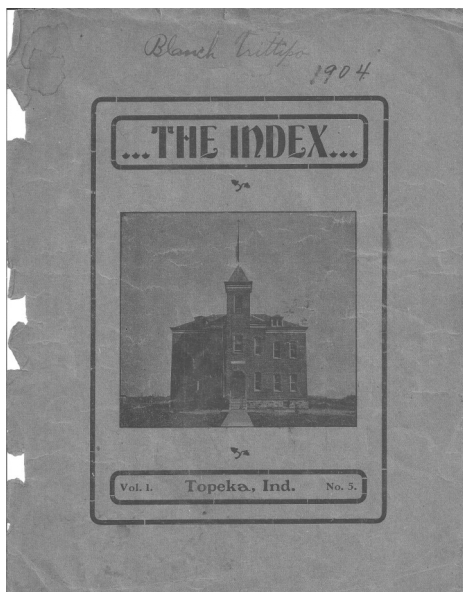




Hawpatch History Detectives Investigative Report

The Index

Most of us who graduated from Topeka High School in the 1950s and 1960s remember the old “*Student Echo*” that was typed on to stencils, then mimeographed and stapled together. Who knew that in the early days students at THS published a monthly periodical during the school year that appears to be typeset and commercially printed.



The cover of this March 1904 issue says Volume 1, Number 5. However the masthead on page one reads Volume 1, Number 4. The handwritten name on the cover is that of Blanch Trittipo.

Inside the front cover is a large ad in the form of an open letter by Gay & Keller (Drugs, Groceries and Furniture) dated March 19, '04. It's addressed to ladies not men (“Dear Madams:-”). The ladies were encouraged to bring “*your market baskets well filled with eggs that you trade for goods out of our store or receive cash, just as you wish*”

Stutzman & Hooley of Topeka invited their customers to “*Meet Us at the Meat Market....Where we mete out meat to the meat eating public*”. The State Bank of

Topeka’s ad boasted that “This is one of the safest banks in the state.” Georing’s Bakery for Bread offered loaves to 3 cents and 5 cents as well as meals for 25 cents. D.T. Miller & Son’s had “*Spring Hats & Caps*” along with *W.L. Douglas’ Shoes*.

The 26 page issue is filled with alumni and school notes, reprints of debate speeches and orations. There are several pages of humor and pages of words of wisdom. However, there is no mention of any school sports. *HG*

THE INDEX

Published Monthly During the School
Year by Pupils of the

TOPEKA HIGH SCHOOL

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-in-Chief..... Maurice Yoder, '05
Assistant Editor..... Charles G. Miller, '06
Business Manager..... Leland Miller, '05
Advertising Manager..... Forrest Parks, '07
Subscription Manager..... Lee T. Decker, '04
Exchanges..... Ruth Meroney, '06
Alumni..... Albert Watters, '00

REPORTERS

GENERAL

Current Events..... Walter E. Yost, '05
Literary..... Beulah Gay, Eighth Grade

HIGH SCHOOL

E. Cletus Hooley, '04 Ina Coppes, '05
Purl R. Zook, '06 Fannie Coldren, '07

GRADES

Seventh, Lena Barnes Eighth, Edwin Yoder
Fourth, Fifth and Sixth, Earl Neuffer

TERMS—Subscription price, 50 cents per year.
Single copies, 10 cents. Special prices on
quantities.
Bills payable to Business Manager. Subscrip-
tions payable to Subscription Manager.
Address all communications to **THE INDEX,**
TOPEKA, INDIANA.

Entered at the Postoffice at Topeka, Indiana, as Second
Class Matter

**We believe in Reciprocity. Patronize
the advertisers.**

Online: www.topekahistoricalociety.com



Topeka Area Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 33
Topeka, Indiana 46571