FLASHBACK

THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY OCTOBER 2025

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OAK HILL CEMETERY 140 YEARS OF HISTORY

The Hammond Historical Society Presents
The Suzanne G. Long Memorial
Annual Oak Hill Cemetery Tour
Sunday, October 5th, 2025
1:00pm - 4:00pm Last Tour Starts at 3:45pm

This annual event is a guided tour of Hammond's oldest cemetery. This year is special as we mark Oak Hill Cemetery's 140 years and pay homage to the "Golden Age".

Those who are buried here from that moment in time were the "Movers and Shakers" who helped build Hammond and its environs.

Admission at the gate is $5.00
Those under 18 admitted free
The cemetery is located at northeast corner of Hohman Ave. and 165th St.

Parking and entrance is located on Kenwood Street one block north of 165th Street off Hohman Avenue.
NOTE: This is a walking tour of small guided groups over grassy paths.

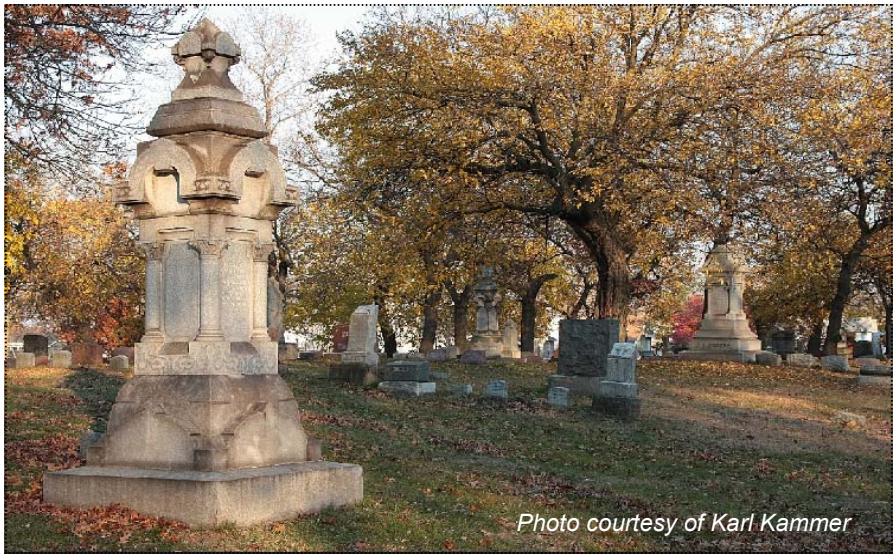


Photo courtesy of Karl Kammer

LOOKING AHEAD

Here's what's Happening

Saturday, October 11th
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Fire Prevention Open House

Come out and join us for the annual Hammond Fire Department event for families and children.

It will take place at the city's new Firehouse #2 at 2403 Calumet Avenue across from Wolf Lake.

Saturday, November 1st
10:00 a.m.— 11:30 a.m.
Hammond Public Library Community Room

Speaker Series: Joseph S. Pete— 101 things to do in Gary & Northwest Indiana Before You Die

Topic— Joseph Pete prolific writer for the Times of Northwest Indiana. Author of "Lost Hammond" & "Lost East Chicago". Presents his book that features unique places of NWI assembled as a region Bucket List.

Month of December Holiday Break
No events scheduled

See you in January '26

INSIDE THIS ISSUE VOLUME MMXXV-10

Editor in Chief — William J. Uzdanovich
FLASHBACK is published monthly from September thru May—Eight times a year except in December, June, July & August

The Hammond Historical Society is a 501 (C) (3) organization, all contributions are tax deductible under section 170 of the United States Internal Revenue Service — Founded 1960

—— FLASHBACK is a publication of The Hammond Historical Society Incorporated
564 State Street, Hammond, IN 46320-1532

Printed on Recycled Paper

OTHER NEWS and OTHER BUSINESS

BOARD MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 20th 2025

Our Annual Dinner/Election was held at the EAT Restaurant at Hohman and Sibley [5201 Hohman Avenue] in Downtown Hammond, Indiana. EAT Restaurant served as both host and caterer. The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. There were twelve [12] Board Members present: Tom Novak, Keri Tharp, Brian Poland, Will Uzdanovich, Amanda Aguilera, Tony Ardunio, Kevin Clutter, Warren Ellis, Peg Evans, Pam Hunter, Mark Tharp, and Ginger Watts. Absent were: Chrissy Sirota, Curt Vosti, and Roman Watts.

The purpose of this meeting was the election of our officers and directors for 2025-2026. The slate of candidates was presented and nominated as follows: Officers—Secretary, Will Uzdanovich – Treasurer, Taylor Hubbard – Vice President, Keri Tharp – President Tom Novak—For the Board of Directors with terms ending in May of 2028—Amanda Aguilera, Warren Lee Ellis, Diane Hensley and Amanda King. For the Board of Directors with terms ending in May of 2026 – Brian Poland. Upon presenting the slate of candidates, a call was made asking if there were any nominations from the floor. No other nominations were made. The slate of candidates was then voted on. All of the candidates were approved by a unanimous yes vote and duly elected.

Brian Poland has stepped down as Treasurer, but will remain on the Board of Directors, assuming the remainder of the term vacated by the passing of Janet Moran. His term will expire in May of 2026.

A motion was made and approved by a unanimous vote to put Treasurer Hubbard on the Society's bank account.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m. Following the general business meeting, dinner and dessert were served. A presentation was given during the dinner by host Raymundo Garcia on investing in Downtown Hammond and by President Novak on the history of the 123-year-old EAT Restaurant building. Also noted at this time: Peg Evans has stepped down from the Board after 24-plus years serving on it. This was highlighted by President Novak and Vice President Tharp, and gifts were presented to her.

Respectfully submitted, William Uzdanovich, Secretary

Special Board Meeting Minutes Saturday, June 21, 2025

The Board of Directors of the Hammond Historical Society called to order at 10:10 am on Saturday, June 21, 2025, in the Community Room of the Hammond Public Library, 564 State St. Those present were President Tom Novak, Vice President Keri Tharp, Amanda Aguilera, Tony Arduino, Kevin Clutter, Diane Hensley, Pam Hunter, Amanda King, Brian Poland, Mark Tharp, Ginger Watts, and Roman Watts. Those absent were Treasurer Taylor Hubbard, Secretary Will Uzdanovich, and Membership Chair Chrissy Sirota. No members of the public attended. Notification via USPS postcard mailed to all members June 2, 2025.

In the absence of Secretary Will Uzdanovich, Director Ginger Watts volunteered to perform the duties of Acting Secretary for this Board Meeting. It was unanimously agreed.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Vice President Keri Tharp motioned to accept the minutes from the Board Meeting of April 5, 2025, and the Annual Meeting of May 20, 2025. Director Hunter seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: In the absence of Treasurer Taylor Hubbard, Director Poland presented the treasurer's report. It was reported that Treasurer Hubbard has been added to the bank accounts. Record retention was discussed; specifically bank statements. Bank statements and financial records Director Poland intends for Treasurer Hubbard to access left in the closet of the Local History Room upstairs immediately following meeting adjournment. Director Poland motioned that bank statements be kept for 7 years. Director Arduino seconded the motion. The motion was amended to give permission to destroy the statements after 7 years and allow the finance committee to determine the process. Director Arduino seconded the amended motion. Director Mark Tharp questioned the insurance covering the memorial marker at the Ophelia Steen Center. After discussion, it was determined that their insurance was sufficient. Director Arduino's motion then passed unanimously. Director Poland reported that he is in the process of standardizing the expense reimbursement form. It was determined that this would be helpful in making the process more efficient. We have not yet received an invoice for the annual dinner from Ray Garcia. Director Tharp indicated that he would contact him to send the invoice. Not all receipts have been submitted to the treasurer for the expenditures from the Hammond Community Corp Grant. President Novak said he will hand those in and that we spent within $1 of the amount received. Director Poland requested that in the future, someone indicate when a member writes one check for both the annual dinner and membership fee, so it may be accounted for correctly. Vice President Tharp motioned to accept the treasure's report; it was seconded by Director Hensley. Motion passed unanimously.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: In the absence of Director Sirota, President Novak presented the membership report. There have been three renewals and one new member. Membership record spreadsheet is now cleaned up and on Google Docs, so it may be viewed and edited more easily. There are 240 members.

NEW BUSINESS: There was a lengthy discussion about committees and subcommittees. Sign-up sheets were available for directors to sign up for various committees. Most directors did not get a chance during the Board meeting to sign up for the various committees. There was a discussion regarding the desire for more historical markers and public events. Vice President Tharp designed a 16-page children's activity book with intention to distribute as the required free giveaway at the City of Hammond's National Night Out celebration at Wolf Lake Park on August 5, 2025.

The Society has a table reserved otherwise free-of-cost. The children's activity book, its cost and where it belonged in the budget were discussed. Director Aguilera stated the library can provide as many as 75 activity books free-of-charge via the library's marketing department and library employee Angela Luna by no later than July 29, 2025. Director Poland motioned to print the books utilizing the services of the library, seconded by Director Arduino. Motion passed unanimously. Director Tharp was able to get FOP donation to fully cover the cost of the crayons.

Vice President Tharp suggested we solicit for sponsorships for the Oak Hill Cemetery Tour to be published in a booklet. It was determined that this should be discussed by the Oak Hill Cemetery Tour Subcommittee and pursued to best of its abilities given the timeframe before booklet must be finalized. Director Roman Watts motioned to digitize the old cemetery tour booklets (#1-8), which contain maps and selections written by Suzanne G. Long and Richard M. Lytle, and to instruct the Publications Committee and/or Oak Hill Cemetery Tour Subcommittee to explore the sponsorship suggestion.
Vice President Tharp seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Vice President Tharp made a presentation of the *Square* payment system. The system will allow the Society to take credit/debit cards and keep inventory and invoices of all that is sold online and in-person, including, if we wish, items and memberships purchased with cash. Membership forms could be filled-out remotely on the Society's Wix-hosted website with members then immediately directed to our Square-hosted website to pay on-line. Automatic email notifications when new forms and new payments are received could be sent to the relevant officers and directors. Vice President Tharp moved to link *Square* to our bank account and create a Log In to explore the system. Director Tharp seconded the motion. Director Poland motioned to amend to allow Vice President Tharp to investigate without linking the bank account. Director Roman Watts seconded the motion. Director Tharp motioned to amend to require Directors Aguilera, Ginger Watts, President Novak, Vice President Tharp, Treasurer Hubbard, and Secretary Uzdanovich to meet within 30 days from today's date to explore and get more answers, as there were more questions including the collection and remittance of sales tax, and that if answers are sufficient, to move forward with the Square payment service. Director Roman Watts seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The 30-day deadline to meet as motioned is July 20, 2025. President Novak adjourned the meeting at 12:06 pm.

Prepared by Acting Secretary Ginger Watts
APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

— MADE IN —
HAMMOND
INDIANA ✪ USA

Over the years, many factories and various manufacturing facilities have called Hammond home. In doing so, they have made the city one of the most diversified industrial cities in the nation. From industrial manufacturing, commercial manufacturing, and food manufacturing, these industries have produced products used within the Hammond region and every state in the union. Some companies even sell their finished products beyond our nation's borders. Here we take a look at just a few of those companies.

Food Manufacturing
BORDEN'S DAIRY formerly at 402 Clinton Street

The ***Borden's Dairy Company*** announced in April 1930 that it was acquiring the Hammond Dairy Company. The Hammond Dairy was started back in 1898 in Hammond. At the time of its acquisition it would not be a complete merger, but in the near future the Hammond Dairy Company would be completely absorbed and managed by Borden corporate executives.

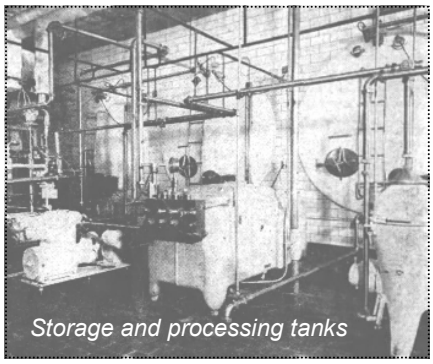
Milk for the Hammond plant was purchased from within a 100-mile radius from Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. It was shipped via tanker railcars or tanker truck, and then pumped into large holding tanks where it was kept at 45 degrees until it was processed. During the bottling process, machines filled about 80 bottles per minute and could instantly and automatically reject cracked or chipped bottles. Those machines even capped the bottles.

At no time after the raw milk was received at the facility was the milk exposed to air or human contact.

Before the bottling process could begin, bottles were run though a special washing machine. Each bottle was soaked, scrubbed, rinsed, sterilized, dried, and cooled. The entire procedure took around a half hour.

Borden's Dairy Hammond Plant.
Storage capacity 125,000 qts. of milk.

After the milk was bottled, the Borden's Dairy biggest job began. Every pipe and tank had to be dissembled scrubbed, and sterilized. Every wall and floor had to be painstakingly washed. That wash-up process accounted for one third of the workload in a milk plant.



Storage and processing tanks

Food Manufacturing
WONDER BREAD formerly at 818 Michigan Street

The ***Continental Baking Company***, the makers of Wonder Bread, purchased the then Dietrich's Bakery of Hammond back in 1925. Fred Dietrich started his namesake bakery in 1917; he would sell interest in 1921 to the Standard Bakeries of Chicago before selling it to Continental.

When the Hammond plant was under the ownership umbrella of the ITT Continental Division, it made nearly half of all the Wonder Bread that was sold in the Chicago metropolitan area. It was deceiving to the eyes that such a modest sized building would even be capable to produce such a large quantity of bread.

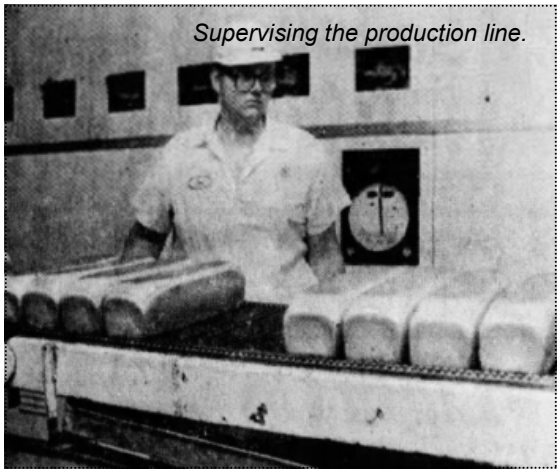
Hammond Production Output
600,000 lbs. of bread a week or
100,000 loafs of bread a day
On two shifts five days a week.

In the 1970s only 70 people worked at the Hammond facility. Those workers were able to turn out nearly 600,000 pounds of bread a week or on average nearly 100,000 loafs a day.

This feat was accomplished through its highly automated operations, from mechanized dough making and cutting to a moving oven line to conveyor cooling racks to automatic slicing and wrapping operations.

The Hammond bakery operated two shifts five days a week. The 70 employees included around 35 who worked in the bread production and supervisory rolls, with the remainder working office, garage, sales, and sanitation and maintenance positions.

A bakery thrift store was also on site.



Supervising the production line.

— MADE IN —
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Food Manufacturing
QUEEN ANNE CANDY
formerly at 604 Hoffman Street

Queen Anne Candy Company was founded in Chicago in 1922 and came to Hammond in 1924. At that time, it took over a portion of the former Betz Company facility. In 1929 it expanded and took over more space of the Betz building. This gave the company approximately 250,000 square feet of floor space while it possessed some of the newest and most modern types of candy-making equipment at the time. During the late 1930s roughly 450 to 500 workers were employed at the company.

The firm's product catalog offered some 3,000 different items. Queen Anne's complete line of candies ranged from the confections sold in chain stores, to the nickel bars, and also to the packaged nut goods. In the fall the company's kitchen was capable of churning out 1,500,000 pounds a month.

The company went to great lengths to turn out fine quality candies. The highest grade Wisconsin sweet creamery butter was used in Queen Anne candies. The candy company also took particular care in its flavorings. It manufactured nearly all of its own flavorings rather than purchasing them on the open market. The company made its own vanilla, extracting the flavor directly from the vanilla bean. Its orange flavoring was made by taking large navel oranges and grating the peel only. The byproduct was sold. The process was expensive, but it was the exact flavor that the company wanted.

It even purchased a complete chocolate manufacturing unit and completed the whole process of producing chocolate under its roof.

Skilled workers supervised the roasting of the cocoa bean, grinding, mixing, refining, and blending up to the very moment that it entered the candy machines.

Vast quantities of raw materials were constantly flowing into the plant; for instance, during one season the company consumed about 4,000,000 pounds of pecans, Brazil nuts, cashews, walnuts, almonds, and peanuts for its enormous output of nut confections. The pecans that were used in the Queen Anne candy bars were grown mostly in Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana.

Plant production capacity up to 1.5 million lbs. a month. Its products were sold in every state and also in Canada.

Industrial Manufacturing
OK CHAMPION formerly at 4714 Sheffield Avenue

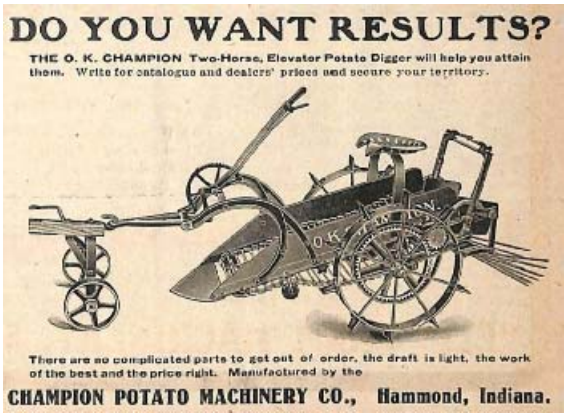
The ***O K Champion Company*** was founded by Otto Knoerzer back in 1897, making it one of the city's oldest manufacturing concerns. The OK Champion potato planter was a unique invention at its time. It was a rather simple piece of equipment. It opened a trench, planted the potatoes at any distance it was set for, covered them, and marked them for the next row.

In addition to the company's flagship potato digger, it also made and sold a line of high-grade implements for the potato farmer that included potato cutters, potato planters, potato sprayers, potato diggers, potato sorters and wagon box irons.

O K Champion developed from a potato machine manufacturing company in its earlier years to a utility construction company, specializing in underground cable handling and pulling machinery, along with sewer rodders and underground maintenance equipment.

Known for its Potato Diggers and other specialized equipment.

In 1935 the O K Champion Company told of a new piece of equipment that had been in development for two years. The new O K Champion Irrigating System was one of the outstanding developments of recent times for farm production. The product was described as a lightweight galvanized pipe with quick detachable joints that made it possible to irrigate one section of a farm in the morning and have the equipment moved to an entirely different section hours later. The company said Florida fruit growers had expressed great interest in it.




Office/Vestibule Library of Congress


First floor shop Library of Congress

— MADE IN —
HAMMOND
INDIANA ✪ USA

Industrial Manufacturing
PULLMAN STANDARD RAILCAR
formerly at 1745 165th Street

In 1975, **Pullman Standard** purchased the Hammond manufacturing plant for the construction and assembly of 236 double-deck long distance passenger cars for Amtrak.

In addition to the passenger car plant, Pullman Standard also operated a freight car parts and flat car repair plant, and the Champ Carry Technical Center. The Tech Center was the largest and most modern privately-owned facility of its type in the United States. It was the home of Pullman Standard's research and development department, and freight car engineering department.

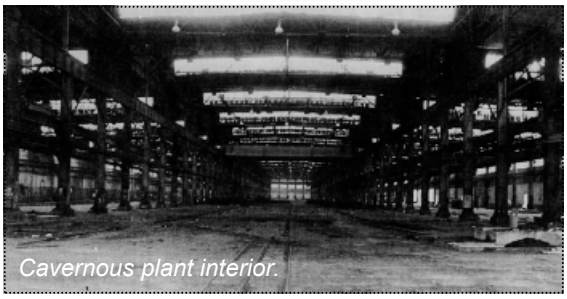
The Hammond location's primary function was the final assembly point for the Amtrak passenger cars.

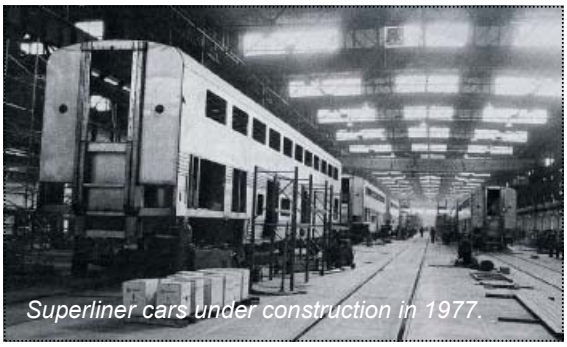
In addition to building the bi-level passenger cars for Amtrak, the Hammond freight car division of the Hammond facility received orders to rebuild and repair 395 covered hopper cars. It had also refurbished and repaired flat cars for the Trailer Train Company.

Assembly of 236 bi-level Amtrak passenger cars.

The Pullman Standard freight engineering department was instrumental in improving existing products and developing new products.

These innovations included a triple-deck enclosed auto-carrier that was designed to minimize damage by vandals and inclement weather that protected the railcar's valuable cargo. Three new automatic-unloading coal cars were introduced. A cement service car capable of carrying 100 tons was developed along with a sugar service car that provided protection from contamination and infestation for its 200,000-pound cargo payload.


Cavernous plant interior.


Superliner cars under construction in 1977.


Welder working on Superliner trucks 1977.

Commercial Manufacturing
RAND McNALLY PRINTERS
formerly at 601 Conkey Street

The **Rand McNally Company** purchased W. B. Conkey plant in 1948. The company was just one of the few facilities in the United States that had both book printing and bindery facilities all under one roof. Shortly after its acquisition, Rand McNally made a series of expansions. First was a warehouse which was quickly repurposed into production use. Second was the addition of more warehouse and office space. And the third project converted a parking lot into warehouse, cafeteria, and office space and transformed a park-like landscaped area facing Conkey Street into a parking lot.

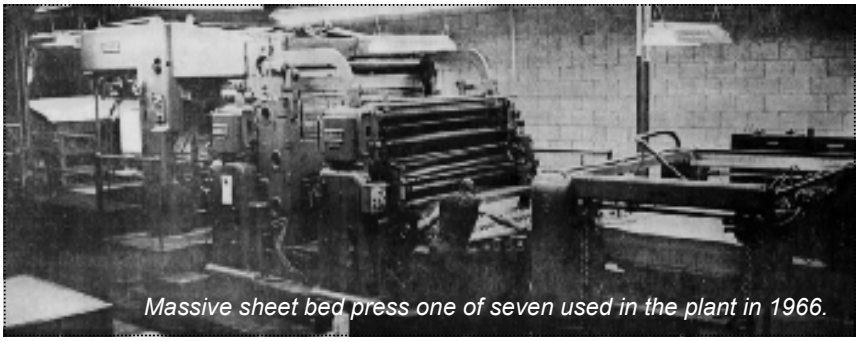
The Hammond plant had a daily production capacity of two million books. If you find that hard to believe, its maximum daily capacity was a staggering three million books in one day.

Production at the plant included making catalogs for several companies, textbooks, reference materials, encyclopedias, trade and commercial materials, and telephone directories.

Daily production capacity: 2 million books. Maximum daily capacity 3 million books a day.

A massive new web off set press that was added in 1962 cost over a quarter million dollars; it was used to print telephone directories. That press used 44 tons of paper during a single three-shift run.

The plant had seven massive sheet-fed presses along with other web feed presses that fed paper from rolls into the presses.


Massive sheet bed press one of seven used in the plant in 1966.


New web offset press in 1962.

Article source: NWI Times/Newspapers.com
Images: NWI Times/Newspapers.com
— Exceptions where noted.

THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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A. L. Spohn Middle School Construction

Groundbreaking ceremonies took place on Monday, September 12, 1966. The new school is located on the north bank of the Grand Calumet River between Calumet and Sohl Avenues.

The new school is composed of three main sections: 1) a classroom / lab section, 2) an administration / office / resource center section, and 3) an auditorium / cafeteria / gymnasium / swimming pool and shops section.

Inclement weather during the start of 1967 slowed down the construction progress somewhat, but school officials hoped that the school would still open as scheduled.

In June of 1967 it was reported that the school was on schedule and 70% completed.

The dedication of Spohn Middle School, 5040 Calumet Avenue, was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 29, 1968. One of the guests included August L. Spohn, former principal of Hammond High School for which the new school is named after.

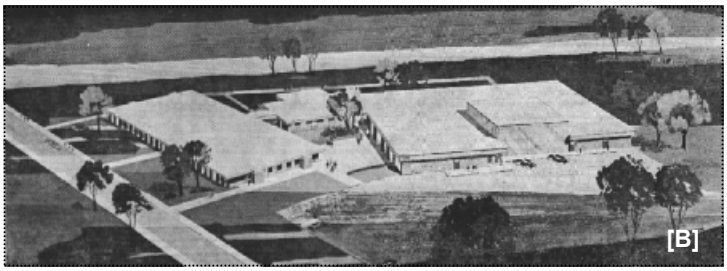
1,200 were on hand to welcome the brand new $3.15 million dollar school that was built to specifically house middle school students.

PHOTO KEY OF THE CONSTRUCTION
[**A]** The ceremonial groundbreaking on Monday, September 12, 1966 -- in attendance were school board members and school administrators. **[B]** An architectural drawing of the proposed new school. **[C]** Structural steel erected as the building starts to take shape. **[D]** View of the partially finished building as seen from the south side of the Grand Calumet River. **[E]** The school as it nears completion. Looking towards the east/northeast.

Source information: NWI Times via Newspapers.com Images; HHS file photos.

Groundbreaking
Artist Rendering
Stages of Construction
Nearing Completion


[A]


[B]


[C]


[D]


[E]