

# FLASHBACK

THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 2025

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WEB: [www.hammondhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.hammondhistoricalsociety.org) EMAIL: [contact@hammondhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:contact@hammondhistoricalsociety.org)

## The Hammond Historical Society in conjunction with The Hammond Public Library

### Presents the Oral History Workshop Series



This workshop is sponsored by the Lifelong Arts and Indiana Arts Commission. It is free and open to all. It will be presented by Samuel Love. Sam is a social and civic practice artist who organizes public projects that connect communities to their cultural and ecological histories. He is the editor of "The Gary Anthology" [Belt Publishing, 2020] and producer of two documentary shorts for Indiana Humanities, Calumet: The Region's River and Grown in Gary.

Sam will teach the complete process for conducting oral history-style inter-

views. He will cover how to craft open-ended questions, discuss equipment, instruct how to transcribe, and preserve these histories. As family and friends leave us, their fabulous histories also disappear. This workshop will teach you to make sure to capture all the fascinating history knowledge your interviewees possess.

Sam will be our guest to introduce us to the program. The classes will be held each Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. in the Community Room. [Please note: there will be no session the week of Indiana's Primary Election on May 6th].



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to the Hammond Historical Society

**THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**



Our Next Scheduled  
Meeting ———

**Saturday 10 a. m.  
April 5th, 2025**

In The Community Room of  
The Hammond Public  
Library 564 State Street  
Downtown Hammond, IN

Featured Program—  
Oral History  
Workshop Presentation

With Guest Speaker—  
Samuel Love

#### PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

A Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. prior to the general meeting. All officers and board members are asked to attend the board meeting.

Editor in Chief — William J. Uzdanovich  
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The Hammond Historical Society — President, Tom Novak — Vice President, Keri Tharp —  
Secretary, William J. Uzdanovich — Treasurer, Brian Poland — Officers serving for 2024-2025

## OTHER BUSINESS / OTHER NEWS

### Remembering Janet Moran



**b. March 30, 1935**  
**d. February 25, 2025**

Janet Moran served on the Board of Directors of the Hammond Historical Society and was made an Honoree Member of the Society.

Janet was a very civic minded individual and cared deeply for her community and the city of Hammond. She was the first woman to be elected to the Hammond City Council, where she served three terms. During her tenure she was instrumental in the development of the Hammond Marina and laid the groundwork for what will become the soon-to-be operating West Lake Corridor of the South Shore Railroad extension.

After completing her terms on the city council, Janet continued to work for the betterment of Hammond as the founder of the Towle Theater along with other civic projects. She also returned to her journalistic roots by writing a weekly column for the NWI Times.

In more recent years, Janet sat on the boards of the Indiana Historical Society, the Legacy Foundation, the Hammond Public Library, the Towle Theater and Community Services of Northwest Indiana.

As a tribute to her many years of public service to the City of Hammond and the community, flags were flown at half staff until her funeral services were concluded on March 3rd, 2025.

### A NIGHT ON THE TOWN

## Hammond Historical Society



**WHEN:** Saturday, February 22nd  
**WHERE:** Hammond Civic Center

The Hammond Historical Society participated for the first time in the ninth annual 219 Day. This celebration has taken place in Hammond's historic civic center since its inception. 219 Day gives homage to the region's culture, foods and customs.

Many from not only Hammond, but from all around the region, gathered for an evening of fun, games and entertainment. This year's event had a Las Vegas theme.

We would like to give a shout-out to the volunteers who manned our booth and to those who stopped by our booth.

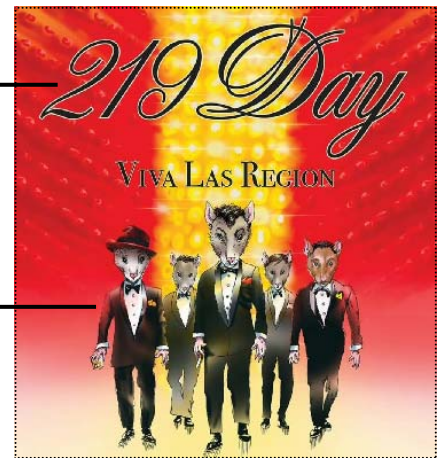


### HAMMOND TRIVIA CONTEST

Visitors to our booth at 219 Day tried their luck at answering trivia questions relating to the history of the city of Hammond. Players received a prize regardless of their answers.

If you answered correctly... you were a SMARTIE

Answer wrong and you were a DUM-DUM



### PHOTO KEY:

**A:** Civic Center poster on display  
**B:** Our 219 crew Left to Right Keri, Ginger, Mark, Tom and Lee  
**C:** Are you smarter than a Region Rat?... Try your luck—play our trivia game. WIN PRIZES!





# Montgomery Ward's WARDWAY HOMES

**Dateline June 1931**

Structural work was well underway on the construction of a model home in the Woodmar development of Hammond. The "Kelton" model Wardway Home was a product of Montgomery Ward Company. The home was a prime example of the attractive designs from the Wardway Homes for the families of average means in Hammond. The home is still located on Olcott Avenue just south of 169th Street.

The Wardway ready-cut Homes Department had an office inside of the First Trust Bank Building in Downtown Hammond at the corner of Hohman and Fayette Streets. The local manager and his staff offered their services free of charge to prospective Hammond home builders. They were prepared to visit the home building lot of anyone desiring to erect a home and would recommend the type and style of home best suited to the lot. They would also prepare a detailed estimate of the cost showing exactly what the monthly payments on the home would be without any obligation to the person who was given that service.

As shown in the Wardway Homes catalog published in 1930, the Kelton home was priced at \$1,447 with average mortgage payments from \$30 per month. The Kelton was a four-room house with a dining nook and bathroom.

The price listed included—framing lumber, roof sheathing, wall sheathing, sub-flooring, lath, roof shingles, sidewalls, flooring, door and window frames, windows, interior doors, trim, kitchen cabinet, medicine cabinet, telephone cabinet, clothes chute, building paper, hardware, eaves, gutters and downspouts, paint, varnish, wood filler, stain and a complete set of plans and specifications. The price did not include cement, brick or plaster.

From *Kithouses.org*— Like Sears, Roebuck & Company, Montgomery Ward established a catalog business well before it ventured into kit house fabrication. Traveling salesman Aaron Montgomery Ward launched his mail-order business in 1872, capitalizing on the rapidly expanding rail system that made

cross-country delivery possible.

With the enactment of Rural Free Delivery in 1902, Montgomery Ward could deliver orders to homes and businesses outside urban areas. By 1895, the United States Postal Service described Montgomery Ward as their biggest patron, and by the turn of the century, they had become the largest U.S. retailer.

Its first house plan book, *The Book of Building Plans* [1909], offered plans for twenty-four houses and several agricultural outbuildings. In 1917, the company introduced "Wardway" prefabricated houses.

The company sub-contracted manufacturing, and eventually designing, to the Gordon-Van Tine Company. This explains why many Gordon-Van Tine and Montgomery Ward designs are essentially identical. Gordon-Van Tine ceased production of Wardway homes in 1931.

To keep pace with its competitors, Montgomery Ward began to offer mortgages in 1926. This plan proved successful at first, with the company claiming its highest ever kit house sales data in 1929. The mortgage program would prove to be the Wardway brand's undoing, however, when the financial difficulties of the Great Depression left many customers unable to make their mortgage payments.

Montgomery Ward began closing departments that were no longer profitable to survive the Great Depression, and with the lost revenue from unpaid mortgages and decreasing sales, Wardway prefabricated houses were discontinued in 1931. —

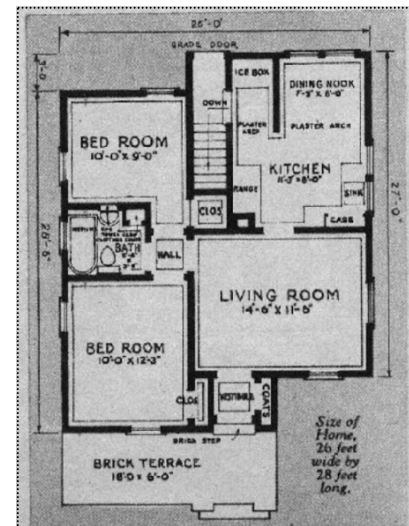
Source: *NWI Times/ Newspapers.com*  
Except where noted



Above image: Flickr .com



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## KENNEDY PARK APARTMENTS

### DATELINE DECEMBER 1963

A 700 plus unit apartment complex geared towards middle-income residents was under construction along Hammond's south-eastern border with the town of Highland. The new development was just off of the Kennedy Avenue exit of the Tri-State Highway [Borman Expressway].

Construction was underway on the first two buildings, with the initial occupancy projected to take place in early 1964. A rental office was also planned to be on the site after the first of the New Year in 1964.

The total cost of the project which will be known as the Kennedy Park Apartments is estimated to cost \$4 million. To put this in perspective, the cost in 2025 dollars would be \$41 million. The project encompassed 24 acres and consisted of 22 two-story buildings with 32 apartment units in each. The units included studio, one bedroom and two bedroom units. The apartment buildings' architecture was in the Georgian design.

At the time of the complex's opening, the studio apartments rented for \$79.50, the one-bedroom units rented for \$99.50 and the two-bedroom units rented for \$119.50 per month.

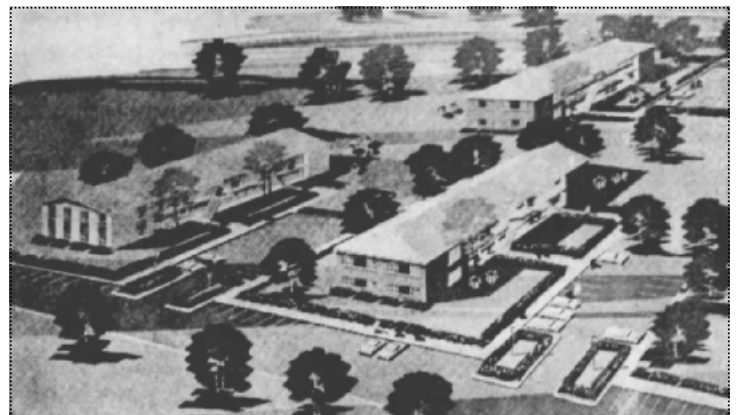
The apartments were designed with a perfect blend of charm and simplicity. Many luxury features were included in each unit, such as wall-to-wall carpeting, luxurious draperies, a deluxe range and refrigerator and free cooking gas. At the Kennedy Park Apartments you controlled your own climate with individually controlled thermostats for central heating and through-wall air conditioners.

Tenants also had use of a large recreation room for informal gatherings in each building. A bright, airy laundry room that included the most modern washers and dryers was located in each building. Private, spacious storage lockers were also provided for each tenant. Reserved off-street parking was also made available for every resident.

*Source information:*  
NWI Times  
via Newspapers.com



*This undated photo shows a view of one of the 22 buildings of the Kennedy Park Apartments complex. Photo credit unknown*



*An overall view of the Kennedy Park Apartment complex from a 1969 newspaper advertisement. Photo Source NWI Times*