

A Closer Look at Historical Architecture

Test your knowledge of Bloomingdale and Wheaton historical architecture!

These questions refer to items in the display case. Answers are on the back of the page.

- A. In what year did the first settlers arrive in what is now Bloomingdale?
- B. Who owned the land that the first settlers purchased?
- C. Why “Pickle” Piano?
- D. Where did Henry Holstein come from? Where are the millstones today?
- E. What major retail store sold “kit” homes, and where is there one in Bloomingdale?
- F. Photos show a train station at nearby Cloverdale. Was there once a Bloomingdale train station?



These questions refer to the number on the wall title cards below the photographs. Answers are on the back of the page.

- 3 What was the Bloomingdale Park District Museum before it became a museum?
- 7 Where was the original Bloomingdale Post Office located?
- 8 Saint Isidore Church is located in what was once unincorporated Cloverdale, south west of Bloomingdale. Saint Isidore is the patron saint of _____?
- 17 Why was Blanchard Hall, on the campus of Wheaton College, part of the Underground Railroad?
- 28 Who was Edward Hurley and what did he invent?

Answers

Bloomingtondale display case and photographs

- A. Silas, Harvey and Lyman Meacham arrived in what is now Bloomingtondale from Vermont in 1833. The Meacham's neighbors for the first year were the friendly Pottawatomie Native Americans.
- B. The Meacham's claimed about 1200 acres of timber land - some granted by the government and some purchased for \$1.25 per acre.
- C. "Pickle Piano is really a metaphor for the process involved in restoring pianos. Like a cucumber is transformed into a pickle after much seasoning and preservation, so too are our pianos. The name is really a reflection of our commitment to transforming used pianos into the beautiful pieces of art that they once were." Information courtesy of Pickle Piano website.
- D. Henry Holstein was born in Hanover, Germany, in 1821. He came to the United States in 1849 and eventually bought farmland in unincorporated Bloomingtondale. In 1874 he bought the land and wind-powered mill (windmill build date is unknown). Remnants of the millstones can be seen on the north side of the Bloomingtondale Park District Museum.
- E. Sears, Roebuck and Company's Modern Homes program began in 1908 and ended in 1940. During those years, about 75,000 economical houses were sold. In 1918, some of the most popular models cost between \$3,600 and \$4,600. The building at 135 S. Bloomingtondale Rd. was built in 1926 as a Starlight model home from the Sears Catalog.
- F. The Chicago and Pacific Railroad had a stop in what would become Roselle. The Cloverdale station on the Illinois Central railroad became an important milk shipping point for local farmers, giving them access to the Chicago market. Farther south, in Wheaton, the Chicago and Northwestern railroad had two passenger stops. No railroad ran through Bloomingtondale.

Photographs

- 3 The east wing of the building was originally the First Baptist Church of Bloomingtondale, built in 1849. Bloomingtondale Academy took over the property in 1860. In 1892 the building was purchased by the township for the Township Office and Town Hall. A jail cell was installed in 1910. The historic building was sold to the Bloomingtondale Park District in 1965 for \$1 and converted into the Bloomingtondale Park District Museum.
- 7 The "movable postal unit" was in Bender's Hardware Store. Although repurposed, the building is still at 112 S. Bloomingtondale Road. The post office unit is on display in the local history area of the Bloomingtondale Public Library.
- 8 Saint Isidore is the patron saint of farmers.
- 17 Wheaton College was an abolitionist school and Blanchard Hall was a stop on the Underground Railroad for "passengers" traveling north.
- 28 Edward Hurley was an industrialist, then president of First National Bank of Wheaton, and later became chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. In 1896 he invented the first pneumatic drill, the jackhammer's predecessor. Six years later he founded the Hurley Machine Co. which manufactured the first self-contained electric washing machine.