

THE DEPRESSION YEARS



1930 - 1940



From the first Washington Township Officials in 1856

Renssallear Richards
Supervisor and Assessor
 E.C. Richards
Town Clerk

W.A. Connor
Collector
 W.A. Bliss
Overseer of the Poor

Henry Bahlman, Joseph Irish, and Joseph Maxwell
Commissioners of Highways

Joseph White and William Watkins
Justices of the Peace

Isaiah Goodenow and J.H. Irish
Constables

To the current Washington Township Officials in 1995

Martin Schmidt Jr.
Supervisor and Treasurer
 Warren Wiggenhauser
Town Clerk
 Jerry K. Meyer
Commissioner of Highways
 Howard Bettenhausen, LeRoy Buck,
 Dennis Koehn, and Richard Seitz
Trustees

Carol Ann Blume
Assessor
 Flora Cirks
Collector
 Robert Morgan Jr., Harold Karstensen, and
 Charlene Wiechen
Community Building Managers

Congratulations to Beecher on its 125th Anniversary

THE DEPRESSION YEARS

The decade of the 1930's was a difficult time for Beecher area residents, but they never seemed to lose heart.

It was a major economic calamity for the local farmers and the employees when the Beecher Creamery plant closed in 1931. Farmers had long depended on income from their daily delivery of milk. The employees were suddenly out of work.

Both Beecher banks were closed in March 1933 during the national banking crisis. This naturally caused much concern. The First State Bank opened the following month, but it took two years of negotiations before the Farmers State Bank could open its doors.

The area was not immune to the rash of robberies sweeping through the countryside. The A&P Store and the Farmers State Bank were robbed, and farmers were susceptible to chicken thieves.

As the Depression wore on, the merchants sought ways to encourage business. It was not easy. No one had

much money. Free movies and cash drawings proved successful, and at least provided some entertainment and relief.

Then, toward the end of the decade, the area began to recover from the throes of the Depression.

The outlook seemed brighter.

BEECHER BUSINESSMEN

A real economic blow came to Beecher area farmers when the Dixie Dairy Company closed the Beecher Creamery plant in December 1931. Farmers had been bringing their milk in each morning since the early 1900's. They depended on the regular income from the sale of their milk to supplement their seasonal agricultural income.



SUMMER FLOOD ON PENFIELD STREET — A record downpour in June 1935 flooded a large section of the village. Water on Penfield Street was several feet deep. Residents reported it was the worst flood in 40 years.

All the milk processing for the Dixie Dairy Company was being concentrated in the Gary, Indiana plant which was a newer facility.

C. B. Eskilson's decision to close the plant was a financial one, but he expressed regret for the move. He had begun his career in Beecher, he still resided in Beecher, he was the village president; but above all, he realized the impact it would have on the community.

The Beecher Creamery building (built in 1905) was demolished and the site donated to the Beecher Women's Welfare Club. It was cleared, landscaped and developed into a village park by the club.

By 1933, the entire country was in the midst of a banking crisis. On March 4, 1933, the Farmers State Bank of Beecher and the First State Bank, along with all the other banks in the country, were closed. This was one of the first acts of Franklin Delano Roosevelt after he was inaugurated as President that day.

Congress passed the Emergency Banking Law on March 9, 1933, which was to provide "strict supervision of all banking and credits and investments..."

The First State Bank was allowed to reopen on April 6, 1933, for business on an unrestricted basis. In January of the following year, the First State Bank was admitted to membership in the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, assuring depositors that their account of \$2,500 or less was insured by the United States government. Depositors were encouraged to redeposit their funds in order that the money could be back in circulation.

The Farmers State Bank did not receive permission to reopen until July 27, 1935, following two years of lengthy

meetings with the State Auditor and other officials. The argument used against the Farmers State Bank's reopening was that a village the size of Beecher was too small to support two banks.

Les Engelking remembered the meeting held in the Washington Township Community Building when the Farmers State Bank announced that they would reopen.

"It (the Depression) set up a lot worries for an awful lot of people here. When the moratorium was lifted... every depositor in the bank received a letter about a meeting being held... I had a little bit of a bank account, \$56, I think. I got a letter just like my Dad did. I came here with him and they had a lawyer from Chicago. They opened the bank and everyone got their money ... including my \$56!"

The stock holders of the Farmers State Bank added two new directors, William J. Hinze and Dr. E. H. Kupke, in February 1936. Other directors were Henry Wehmhoefer, Emil Klein, Byron Hunte and H. E. Ehlers. The following were elected as officers: Byron Hunte, chairman of the board; Henry Wehmhoefer, president; Emil Klein, vice-president; and H. E. Ehlers, cashier.

The Beecher Barber Shop announced their reduced prices: "On account of the Depression, we have made a substantial reduction in prices. Hair cuts have been reduced to 40 cents on week days; Saturdays and holidays to 50 cents."

In 1934, the Beecher Herald made an offer to their readers, encouraging them to continue supporting the newspaper: "Will again give out a beautiful calendar with every renewal or new subscription, and in consideration of the unusual economic conditions and as an added incen-



FARM SALE — Automobiles line the road and are parked in the field on a cold, winter day in January 1937 while their owners attend a local farm sale. Economic conditions in the 1930's were not kind to farmers.

tive... We have decided to allow a discount of 25% on the yearly rate of \$2 on all renewals or new subscriptions.”

In an attempt to increase business, the Beecher merchants inaugurated a drawing for cash prizes in 1936. For the first drawing, 10,935 stubs were collected. Four winners were picked, but the amount of the cash prizes is not known. The drawing was held in the Batterman store, which was “crowded to overflowing”.

The merchants were pleased with the turnout. They “thanked their loyal patrons for the support... in this venture and assured them that they will make further efforts... to improve their service”.

Three months later, the drawing was still taking place and gaining support. It was reported that: “Saturday was one of the busiest days local merchants have experienced in some years, when hundreds of shoppers crowded the stores to take advantage of the many bargains and to look over the new spring merchandise... The drawing for the weekly cash prizes brought a record gathering...”.

Illinois Bell closed their manual switchboard in Beecher in August 1938 when the dial telephone system went into effect. The equipment was housed in a new one-story brick building at 745 Penfield Street.

The move ended the 21-year Beecher career of Elsie Knuth Ruwaldt, chief operator, and the other three operators. Lillian Ohlenkamp had worked at the Beecher switchboard for 15 years; Helene Hoppensteadt Boyens and Marie Heldt for 14 years.

Elsie Ruwaldt reminisced about the early years: “In the old days, all the operators rubbered (listened in on conversations) and I can remember when it was really something if an airplane flew over Beecher... When I heard somebody on the phone telling somebody else that a plane was going over, I’d run right outside to make sure I didn’t miss it.”

Helene Boyens remembered with fondness her days working at the switchboard. “Elsie taught me many

things. She set me on the right track — started me on my career.

“There were about 270 Beecher (telephone) numbers. I worked a split shift, from 7 to 11 a.m. and from 3 to 5

p.m. After 11 a.m., I did book work and banking because we also collected bills. We were more or less like an answering service too. (When a business person left town) we’d either transfer their calls or keep the messages. They would call in when they came home.”

Beecher’s first telephone was installed in 1900 by the Chicago Telephone Company, a forerunner of Illinois Bell. It was in the Hack Hotel. Mr. Hack’s telephone was listed in the 1900

Chicago Telephone Directory as a 25 cent toll call from Chicago to Beecher.

Before 1900, Dr. M. R. Miley and Dr. D. D. Van Voorhis had installed rural telephone lines of 10 miles and 13 miles respectively for the convenience of their patients.

There were a few bright spots during the 1930’s. Beecher Cash Grocery & Market opened in April 1935 in the building which formerly housed the Stade Brothers General Store. Martin E. Firnhaber was the proprietor. A year later as his business gradually improved, Mr. Firnhaber was proud to announce that he had installed “a new refrigerator and an automatic cooled meat counter”.

Another new business was the Beecher Asparagus Farm, managed by Herman Deeke. In the spring of 1938, there were about 30 employees, with the possibility of more being added later. The farm appeared to be a success, about two tons of the asparagus was being harvested and shipped daily.

Shady Lawn Golf Course weathered the hard times. Most of the customers were from the city. They arrived on the train. In 1935 a tournament was held. “The entry fee for those participating in the competition for (valuable and useful) prizes will be \$1, while others may play all day for the usual fee of 75 cents.”



BEECHER SWITCHBOARD — Elsie Knuth Ruwaldt and Helene Hoppensteadt Boyens at the telephone switchboard at 749 Penfield Street in 1938. Other operators were Lillian Ohlenkamp and Marie Heldt.



BEECHER CASH GROCERY — Martin Firnhaber opened a grocery and market in the Stade Brothers Store, corner of Penfield and Gould Streets, in 1935. His new automatic cooled meat counter is located in the rear of the store.

In the fall of 1938, it was reported that Shady Lawn Golf Course had “enjoyed a banner year, and Beecher has profited accordingly not only in prestige but also in actual dollars and cents... on an average between 200 and 300 golfers... enjoyed the unusual facilities each weekend”.

Later Beecher residents were let in on a secret: “You’d be surprised how many notables are among the hundreds who enjoy Beecher’s popular playground... They are hard to recognize, because everybody seems to make themselves at home... For instance, Sunday, two prominent characters in Kottenheimers’ famous radio school room skit were pointed out.”

The medical practice of Dr. Homer Hiatt, Dr. E. H. Kupke, and Dr. E. A. Albers who joined in 1936, was outgrowing the building at 751 Penfield Avenue.

They purchased the old Hack Hotel, which had closed in 1932, and remodeled it into “one of the most pretentious office buildings that had been added to

Beecher’s business section in many years”.

The doctors moved in February 1937. The first floor had a spacious 22-foot by 24-foot waiting room with a sun porch across the front. It also contained a business office, three separate doctor’s offices and two drug rooms.

The second floor contained three rooms with iron hospital beds, a small operating room, two treatment rooms, a laboratory, library and bathroom.

Many tonsils were removed in the upstairs operating room. The nurse would administer the anesthetic; and when the patient was ready for surgery, she would bang on the heating pipe to alert the doctor downstairs that it was time for the operation.

The structure, with some changes over the years, continues to house the Hiatt

Medical Center, 58 years later. It is located at 605 Reed Street

The Hack Funeral business moved from the Reed Street building around 1934 into the H. F. Thielman home



THE NEW HIATT CLINIC — The clinic opened in February 1937. It contained offices, an operating room, beds for overnight stays, treatment rooms, and a laboratory. The remodeled structure was the former Hack Hotel, which had closed in 1932.

at 753 Hodges Street. The home had been vacant for some time. It was built during the early 1900's and was the second home on the site built by Mr. Thielman, a real estate agent. The first home, a frame cottage, was moved to the north to make room for the larger, brick house. The cottage is still occupied at 715 Reed Street

Jean Hack Ohlendorf remembers the house and grounds in need of much repair and cleanup. The house had stood empty for years, and vagrants used it for sleeping quarters.

In 1948, the brick home was enlarged and remodeled into the present Hack Funeral Home.

The Hack Garage, the former livery stable, was now the Hack and Reising Chevrolet dealership. In about 1935, Roy Reising moved the operation to a new cement block building at 700 Dixie Highway. It had a large show room in front for automobiles and a repair shop in back. Milford Ruge's insurance office was located in the building also.

A fire in March 1938 totally destroyed the building and 20 automobiles which were inside. A large amount of oil aided the huge blaze.



REISING SERVICE — Mail carrier Alfred Bremer's 1935 Oldsmobile is repaired in the Reising garage by left to right: Martin Waterman, George Salzman, Stanley Kuasnicka, and Wilbert Rohlman.

REISING CHEVROLET GARAGE — A cement block building housed Reising Chevrolet Sales at 700 Dixie Highway in 1936. A fire in March 1938 totally destroyed the building and 20 automobiles which were inside.



FUTURE HACK FUNERAL HOME — The H. F. Thielman home, built in the early 1900's, was remodeled and enlarged to accommodate the Hack Funeral Home at 753 Hodges Street.

ROBBERIES IN BEECHER

With the onset of the Depression, Beecher area residents were victims of armed robberies.

The Farmers State Bank of Beecher was held up by two men who walked in at 10 o'clock on a Thursday morning in October 1930. They escaped with \$2,465.

There were five customers in the bank at the time: Peter Krohn, Ed Willie, Herman Kurth, Helen Selk and John Kaczynski. They were held in a back room, with cashier H. E. Ehlers, assistant cashier William R. Ruge, and Miss Viola Ehlers.

The two robbers had guns and announced that "they meant business". While one man guarded the people, the other took the currency from the money drawers and cleared the vault.

They left in a big Studebaker Sedan, carrying two other men who had driven around the block during the holdup.

Witnesses reported that "the two robbers who entered the bank could be easily identified. One was tall the other short... (they) were foreigners, presumably Italian".

Following the robbery, barber Rube Wegert kept a shotgun in his shop across the street in case another holdup ever took place.

On January 1, 1931, a Chicago man, George Gardner was charged with stealing chickens from the Walter Stoeven farm and the Martin Wilkening place. He was bound to the grand jury in bonds of \$3,000 in cash and \$6,000 in real estate.

Mr. Gardner's arrest came after he abandoned his Dodge Touring car and it was traced to the address of his wholesale poultry business.

The following summer, there was a near disaster at the White Lily, a two-pump filling station and fried chicken restaurant, located on the east side of Dixie Highway. The White Lily was named for Lillian Whitehead, wife of the proprietor, Clarence Whitehead.

Mr. Whitehead was closing one night when "five young self-styled bandits" drove up and "took on" five gallons of gasoline.

"One of the men stuck a gun in Whitehead's face and told him to 'stick 'em up'. Instead of complying to the command, Whitehead sent the fellow sprawling with a right uppercut. At this moment, the gun was discharged and Clarence sustained powder burns on his cheek. Luckily the pistol contained blank cartridges, or the result might have been more disastrous. The hoodlums made their getaway, apparently satisfied with the five gallons of gasoline."

As the threat of robbery continued, farmers organized a vigilante group called the F Men. They were successful in at least one instance when five youths, ranging in age from 16 to 23, were taken to the Will County Jail at 3 a.m. and charged with chicken theft. One boy was charged with taking more than 90 chickens.

The F Men testified that the boys disposed of the chickens in groups of 10 to 12 at Frank Hunte's General Store or the Poultry House in Peotone. Employees at both businesses had become suspicious and contacted the F Men.

SOCIAL ACTIVITY IN THE 1930'S

Most of the social activity centered around local participation and home talent.

A tennis court was laid out along Dixie Highway. Tennis was the "latest fad" in the summer of 1934. Teams from other towns journeyed to Beecher for a series of 'hot matches'. In one match, the Momence team was more experienced and the "local racquet wielders" were defeated.

The firemen flooded a large pond on Ed Batterman's property southwest of the village for children to use as an ice skating rink in the winter of 1939. It was recommended "as a delightful and healthful playground for both young and old".

The young girls organized a kittenball team, which was coached by Walter Boyens. They were known as the "Beecherettes". During one of their away games in Chicago Heights, Florence Buchmeier hit the longest home run ever recorded on the Chicago Heights diamond.

The boys played basketball, but the program was short of funds. In 1935, the students sold season tickets and refreshments during the games to raise money for the basketball program. The school district provided only the gym, lights and heat.

A Beecher Boys' Club was organized for boys between five and 15 years of age. Its goal was "personal and neighborly development". Meetings were held each Monday evening. Dues were 1 cents per week.

Laws and penalties included: swearing, 3 cents; fighting, 3 cents; stealing, 5 cents; misconduct on streets or in public places, 2 cents; lying, 2 cents; absent from meetings without good excuse, 1 cent. Five penalties resulted in a dismissal for one month; ten penalties resulted in a discharge from the club.

The Beecher business men sponsored "free talking movies" each Saturday night on vacant lot on north Gould Street. The free movies were provided in an attempt to bring more people into the village to shop. The plan was successful and began drawing shoppers from other areas.



BEECHER FRESHMEN BASKETBALL TEAM IN 1934 — Lined up beside the school are left to right: C. E. White, superintendent, Fred Kuhlman, Robert Selk, Orville Oldenburg, Wayne Deeke, Glenn Matson, Orval Stedt, Paul White, Norbert Meyer, Lawrence Pauls, and Bill Hovic, coach.

Eventually, surrounding towns began to offer their own free movies.

A typical Saturday night offering was the feature, “The Spirit of the West”, coupled with a short comedy, “Alice on the Farm”.

Les Engelking recalled the movies: “During the Depression, they would have movies in the vacant lot where the water tower is now. Screens were hung on the bank building. The people came into town for their Saturday evening shopping. That was a popular pastime those years. It was almost a necessity, you didn’t have time during the week. You’d come in Saturday early evening, do your shopping and then watch a movie. Kids had a ball running around...”

The stage in the auditorium of the new Washington Township Community Building was the scene for numerous plays, as all groups “got into the act”.

The Beecher Women’s Welfare Club produced plays to raise money for their civic projects. The Beecher High School presented a three-act comedy “Paula Goes Modern” in May 1934. Those in the cast included Lucille Guritz, Marcella Riechers, Joyce Van Voorhis, Howard Wehmhoefer, Harold Oldendorf, and Raymond Hinze.

The “Lively” Reading Circle gave “Judy” a three-act comedy and the Zion Lutheran Church Choir, on two separate nights, presented “Such a Girl”. The PTA suggested that their minstrel show would be “an unusual treat... for all lovers of good fun and entertainment”.

Howard Paul gained a loyal following when he wrote, produced and directed three plays “When Nan Takes a Hand” in 1935; “Trouble Gushers” in 1937; and “The Model Husband” in 1939. He received very favorable reports on the productions and “those who came out to attend... were well rewarded”. Admission was adults 25 cents, children 15 cents.

VILLAGE



Street and road improvement, a new well, and expanding the storm sewer were the main concerns of the village officials during the 1930’s.

Penfield Street was surfaced with 800-feet of water-bound macadam, 8 inches thick and 20-feet wide, for a cost of \$1,500 in 1935. It was paid for by gasoline tax allotments and done by relief labor. The east end of Penfield Street had never been surfaced and it was almost impassible in wet weather.

The other streets were “oiled”, putting them in their “usual high class condition for the summer”, although some visitors complained of the mess when they drove on the streets before they hardened.

Bids were taken in the fall of 1938 for the resurfacing of the Beecher–Peotone Road six and one-half miles to the west. The bituminous surface was estimated to cost about \$60,000. The work was completed the following summer.

Frank Hunte and Dr. D. D. Van Voorhis attended a meeting, with representatives from 21 other municipali-

ties, at the Danville Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was called to ask for needed improvements on Dixie Highway, which was now 25 years old.

In 1936, the village board requested the State of Illinois to place speed signs along Indiana Avenue and Dixie Highway.

A new well was dug in 1931 to provide the village with an additional supply. It was 230 feet deep, including 91 feet of earth and 139 feet of rock. A new pump was installed; the cost of \$4,658 would be raised by the water rentals.

In 1939, more work was done on the water works plant. In order to keep it in good condition, the tanks and piping were overhauled.

Work on the expansion of the storm sewer system was begun in the summer of 1936, with a crew including 20 relief workers. A storm sewer was put in from Hodges Street to Trim Creek, from the corner of Woodward and Miller Streets to the creek, and "short ends" from Dixie Highway west on Miller Street. The project was state-funded (through WPA – the Works Project Administration), with little expense to the village.

In a joint meeting in February 1937, the village board and the Volunteer Fire Department decided to purchase a new fire alarm system from the Federal Fire Equipment Company in Chicago for \$450. Residents were warned that "it is to be blown every day for a week at noon...don't think this is a fire call".

4TH OF JULY IN FIREMEN' PARK

The Firemen's 4th of July Celebration was moved to Firemen's Park in 1937. It was a small event, planned only two week's in advance. It made \$1,600 for the Volunteer Fire Department and provided the impetus for a larger celebration the following year.

The 1938 celebration was a huge event. For the first time, there were carnival rides. The Merry-Go-Round alone sold 2,230 rides. The first automobile, a 1938 Plymouth Sedan, was won by Albert Kurth of Grant Park. It is owned by his son, Virgil, who still drives it in Beecher's 4th of July parades.

There were over 50 floats in the parade. Beecher's band was headed by the state champion drum major. Bands from other towns also participated. An estimated 5,000 to 7,000 people attended; they ate 6,000 hamburgers, 1,300 bags of popcorn, 90 gallons of ice cream and drank 5,640 bottles of pop.

Some of the comments from the happy revelers were: "It was just like the World's Fair." "Ten acres of space and standing room only." "I saw celebrations, but that was a CELEBRATION!"

The event was acclaimed to be "the premier event in the area on July 4th". As word of it spread to neighboring areas, the celebration continued to grow. Twenty years later in 1958, 20,000 people attended the one-day celebration.



A TRUSTWORTHY SERVANT RETIRES

"It will probably seem a little unusual for us at first not to meet Mr. Fred Hinze traveling his usual beat. His customary witty retorts and the kidding he enjoyed in friendly exchanges of conversation on many occasions made us like him.

"Twenty-seven years of police service is the record of which he can proudly boast, and at no time, to my knowledge did he ask for assistance when in the act of arresting troublesome characters.

"Mr. Hinze possesses a frankness that at times did not appeal to all, but which was usually appreciated after due consideration. His character and his good work as an officer is worthy of praise. I am sure I speak for a great majority when I say, 'Thank you, Fred, for your faithful service'."

—C. B. Eskilson, Village President
Beecher Herald, May 21, 1931

In the fall of 1938, a young Beecher girl began teaching in the rural Meyer school. She was happy to be hired for \$75 per month.

In recalling those early days of her teaching career, Vera Steben (Westerberg) had many pleasant memories:

"I lived at home and I didn't have a car. I just planned on walking. Then I got a ride. Elmer Beseke and Kenny Wehling were going to Gallagher Business College in Kankakee and they would pick me up in the morning and drive around that way to take me to school. Sure was nice of Elmer. I would walk home at night ... I always had children walking with me who were on their way home too... We'd walk up to Indiana (Avenue) and then I'd walk the rest of the way home. Once in a while, someone would come along and I'd get a ride.

"We had all (subjects) — reading, language, history, geography, math, science. With language, I would try to teach some literature. I would have some story telling.



MEYER SCHOOL CHILDREN AND TEACHER — Children of all eight grades attended the rural Meyer School. They are front row, left to right: Betty Stolzenbach, Dale Stadt, Orlin Meyer, Ralph Minor, Fern Wilkening; second row: Norman Stuenkel, Garland Stade, Dale Loitz, Wesley Wilkening; third row: Marcella Meyer, Arlene Haseman, Vera Steben, teacher, and Marcella Stadt.

"One day I had them (the two first graders) sit on chair while I was at the blackboard.

"I said 'We are going to have a little phonics lesson.'

"One boy said to the other, 'Do you like phonics?'

"The other one said, 'I don't know, I didn't get to taste it.'

"I turned around and said, 'You know what, I'm going to give you a taste of it now' So we had a phonics lesson.

"I had all grades but second. The first graders would take quite a bit of my time. I had to teach them to read. I'd have my program all outlined for the day. Then I had my classes. When I was through with the little ones, I'd go to the next group. If one of the bigger ones would



**MEYER SCHOOL
& MISS STEBEN**

see the young ones needed help, they would just get up and walk over and give them help. It was really wonderful the way the upper grade students would help. You just couldn't get through if they didn't. There was so much to do.

"They got their books from Hinze's. They would buy from one another, too. I would help them. If they had some books, we'd try to sell them at school. If they had a sister or brother who needed them, they could keep them.

"We ate (lunch) at twelve o'clock. We just all sat together and ate and talked. Some noons we would pop some popcorn for an extra treat. We had a popper one of the children brought. We'd pop it on the stove. Someone would bring butter. I had taken a big pan so we could mix it. That would be an extra treat once in a while in the winter time. After lunch, then we'd go out to play. I

went out and played with them almost every day.

"We played 'Drop the Handkerchief', 'Red Rover', 'Annie, Annie Over'. In the winter, we played 'Fox and Goose'.

"I remember one noon, someone came. He said to one of the boys, 'Where's your teacher?'

"'She's out there playing', the boy said.

"'Oh, is that what she does, comes down here and plays?'"

Vera Steben was born in the family home at 531 Woodward Street. She graduated from Zion Lutheran School, attended high school in Beecher for three years, then graduated from Bloom High School in Chicago Heights. She completed her two-year college education at Northern Illinois in DeKalb.

She taught at the Meyer School, on the northwest corner of Church Road and Ashland Avenue (northwest of Beecher).



The Meyer School was named for George Meyer, a farmer on whose land the school had been built. It had no running water, no electricity, and a stove which had to be started each morning with cobs and coal. Drinking water was carried from the outside well. It was poured into a stone crock cooler, and everyone drank from a common dipper.

Vera Steben married Howard Westerberg on June 27, 1942, in the parsonage of Zion Lutheran Church. They lived for a time with his parents in Grant Park while she taught in Sollitt. In the late 1940's, they built a home at 522 Maxwell Street; and Vera began teaching third grade at the Beecher Public School. She retired in 1973, completing a 35-year career.

Congratulations Beecher for 125 Years



Shady Lawn Golf Course & Clubhouse 708-946-2800

**Restaurant and Lounge
Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner
Complete Banquet Facilities up to 200 People
Golf Outings • Weddings • Birthdays • Showers • Luncheons**

Shady Lawn was known as the Highland Stock Farm back in 1870 when Timothy Miller raised prize Hereford cattle, as mentioned in James Mitchner's book *Centennial*. In 1908, the property was sold to Dr. D.D. VanVoorhis who renamed it "Shady Lawn" with high hopes for the young trees he planted. Indeed, many of these same trees still shade us today. In 1929, the doctor opened a nine hole golf course followed by a second nine in 1931. In those days, Chicago golfers were met at the C&EI Depot and transported by hayrack for a day of golf and all the chicken they could eat. The clubhouse was built from salvaged lumber of an old barn on the property. After many additions over the years, the building was replaced in 1964 by the brick clubhouse used today. Many changes have taken place in the club house and on the grounds; a third nine hole course was completed in 1987, but now as then, our reputation will always be,

Great Golf, Fine Food & Friendly Folks...WELCOME!