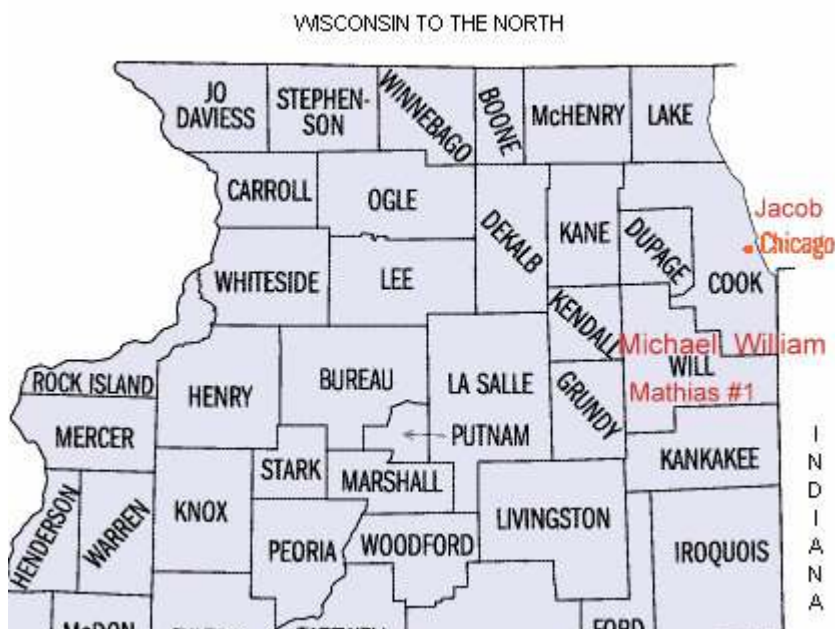


THE HOMMERDINGS WHO SETTLED IN ILLINOIS

Mathias Hommerding No. 1. Michael and William Hommerding



*Counties of Northern Illinois
Hommerdings who settled in this area noted in red*

MATHIAS NO. 1 Will County, Illinois

The next to arrive was Mathias No. 1 Homerding (1804-1882) in 1855. He and his family settled in Will County, around the border of Cook and Will Counties, between Lemont and Orland Park. They were farmers and eventually their descendants held quite a large area of land in that region - now a very fast-growing suburb of Chicago, 30 miles to the northeast. The records from C. Thielen of Luxembourg indicate that Mathias was a shoemaker.

In the 1870 census Mathias and his wife were living with their son, Peter. The History of Will County (publ. 1878) shows Peter as a property owner with a "Hadley" post office. In the 1880 census they are living at "Homer" with a younger son, Mathias. As of 2001, Homer Township became the village of "Homer Glen," This region was formerly an unincorporated place known as Goodings Grove. This [Google map](#) shows Hadley as "A" with "Homer Glen" and "Gooding's Grove" just to the north.

Will County Scenes Today



Rural scene in the Goodings Grove area



*A not-so-rural scene in Homer Glen,
formerly part of Homer Township*

More Information about Mathias No. 1 and His Descendants



MICHAEL and WILLIAM HOMMERDING

Lemont, Cook County, Illinois

Michael Hommerding (1848-1905), a nephew of Jacob and Mathias No. 1, arrived in Illinois in 1872. Four years later he married native-born Magdalena Thealen in her birthplace, Lemont, Cook County, Illinois. Michael and his family lived in Lemont, and later adjoining Will County, Illinois. 1880 census records indicate that the family lived briefly in Momence, Fillmore County, Nebraska and then returned to Will County.

Three years later, in 1875, Michael's brother, **William Hommerding** (1855-1914), age 20, arrived. Census sheets indicate William settled near Michael, living in the same places at the same times. In 1880 he married Magdalena Thealen's younger sister, Catherine. All of their children were born in Will County, Illinois. Lemont is indicated with an "A" on this [Google interactive map](#).

Some Lemont History

The following is from the [Lemont Wikipedia website](#):

Established in 1836, the Village of Lemont stands as one of the oldest American communities in northeastern Illinois. It's historically significant for its role in transforming the northern region of the state from a sparsely settled frontier to a commercial, agricultural, and industrial region that supplied Chicago and areas beyond with commodities. Lemont is also unique in boasting an authentic historic district that remains intact and has been continually used since the 1800s.

Both Lemont's history and architectural uniqueness connects to the Illinois and Michigan Canal (I&M Canal). Two rail lines have been a big part of the town's history: the Chicago & Alton built in the 1850s and the Santa Fe in the 1890s. By 1854, railroads transported goods faster than water and the I&M became obsolete as Lemont evolved into a railroad community.

Immigrant workers, mostly Irish, settled in Lemont to work on the canal and later moved along the corridor of the canal, improving farms within the many communities that sprang up along it.

During the Civil War, Lemont was required to sign up 33 soldiers, the village recruited 293 soldiers; only 63 returned.

The Illinois & Michigan Canal

The need to link Lake Michigan with the Mississippi River through a canal had been envisioned as early as the 1600's when the Great Lakes area was first explored. Construction of the Illinois & Michigan (I &M) began in 1837. It was also the last major Canal undertaking in the United States. When it was completed in 1848, it provided a continuous waterway stretching from New York (through the Erie Canal, Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Michigan to Chicago, then through the I & M for 97 miles entering the Illinois River at La Salle, Illinois to the Mississippi River, to New Orleans) to the Gulf of Mexico.

The glory days of the horse-pulled I & M canal boat era started to decline with the completion of the even faster and convenient railways through Lemont starting in the 1850's. Still some 30 years later, it provided a viable alternative for shipping heavy items such as Lemont's limestone which was in high demand in Chicago after its great fire in 1871. The quarry owners dug the rock in quarries purposefully sited next to the canal so as to minimize the difficulty of moving the heavy stones from the quarry to their boats on the canal.



I & M Canal Looking West, Lemont, IL

*Photo and Information from
[Lemont Area Historical Society's website.](#)*

If you would like more information on Mathias, Michael or William Hommerding and their descendants, please contact R. Atwell at: raybarb.wlaf@gmail.com

[Next--Mathias No. 2, Settling In Minnesota](#)

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