

**Hezekiah Duncklee – Early Settlers Information**  
**By Marv Lou Mittel**

At Hillsboro, New Hampshire lived Hezekiah Duncklee, and from this place he immigrated in the summer of 1833. Having crossed the Green Mountains he arrived at Potsdam in the State of New York, where he was joined by Mason Smith, and the two men started west. Their road lay along the old historic grounds of Fort Staniorx (Rome, New York), then across the Genesee River at Rochester and onto Buffalo where they boarded a boat for Detroit. There they bought a horse and wagon and continued their journey across Michigan to Chicago. Arriving on September 3, they rested three days and again started west toward the Des Plaines River. Crossing the river at the present site of Maywood, they found a well-traveled road, which led westward across an apparently boundless prairie.

Before continuing their journey, they decided to camp by the river for the night. You can well imagine the strangeness of this new low, flat prairie land to these two New England men, but the geographical differences were the least of their surprises, for camped on the river bank that same night were 300 Pottawatomie Indians. These natives were just preparing to leave their homes to make room for the newcomers and were on their way to Chicago to make a treaty which would give Northern Illinois east of the Rock River to the United States. The next morning they resumed their journey, following the trail (later called Elgin Road, Army Trail Road, and finally Lake Street) over which Scott's Army had passed eleven months before. Toiling along their way on this narrow path between two oceans of green, they came upon the remains of a camp on Salt Creek (the present site of Addison) with the tent poles still standing as the Army had left them. They crossed the creek and made camp. Pushing forward through the next morning, they reached the settlement which the Meacham's had made six months before. The area was then and for many years called Meacham's Grove, now called Medinah.

Six month's experience in a country as wild as nature could make it was productive of much practical information. Everything was to be built new and the Meacham's gave Mr. Duncklee and Mr. Smith the benefit of their experience. Upon their advice Duncklee and Smith took an old Indian Trail (Irving Park Road) east to a grove of trees on Salt Creek. On September 12 after again crossing the creek they selected a location on the northern verge of the grove in what was to be Sections 10 and 15 of Addison Township. This grove, which was and is situated in the center of the Township, covered a vast area bordered by what is now Irving Park Road on the north, Church Road on the east, Grand Avenue on the south, and Salt Creek on the west, was called Duncklee's Grove for many years.

Duncklee's claim consisted of suitable portions of prairie and timber as first claims always did, until the timberland had all been taken. They proceeded to build a house. Timber was there for the taking, and for tools all they needed were an ax, hammer, saw, and an adze to smooth the surface of the floor, which was made of split logs, flat side upward. With a frow they rived out clapboards for the roof. The house was finished in two weeks and Hezekiah Duncklee became the first freeholder in Addison Township.

The following summer of 1834 a Mr. Perrin came with intentions of settling near Duncklee's Grove; however, he became sick and died within a few weeks. This being the second death of a white man in Addison Township, the first being one of Scott's soldiers buried near Meacham's Grove.

Early the same summer of 1834, Hezekiah's brother Ebenezer came with his family and made a claim. *This original home stood approximately at Hemlock Avenue on the north side of Irving Park.* In August, Hezekiah's family arrived at their new home to find the fields abundant with the first crops.

Also during the summer of 1834, Richard Kingston, Thomas H. Thomson, James Bean, Demerit Hoyt, D. Parsons, Thomas Williams, and E. Lamb, all from the Eastern States, came and settled mostly on the southern side of Duncklee Grove.

Thus far, the settlement was exclusively American, but close on their heels came German immigrants seeking both political and religious freedom in this wild prairie. Among them were William Henry Bosque, Barney H. Franzen, Frederick Graue, and his five sons - Diedrich, Frederick Jr., Ludewich, Heinrich, August, and one daughter Willimine, and his wife. He built the mill, which is now a landmark open to the public.

In 1835 Edward Lester with his five sons Marshall, John, Daniel, Frederick, and Lewis, came from New York to settle in the area.