

FOURIER SOCIETY

"In 1845, a Fourier Society of about twenty families was organized, and purchased a large quantity of land in the township. For about three years the society was in an apparently flourishing condition. A large building was in process of erection for its use, when dissension arose and it was disbanded, the property being divided among its members (History 940)."

VILLAGE OF LOAMI

According to Lee R. Grahams statements in an undated *Illinois State Journal* article, "Loami is one of the oldest towns in the county. . ." The first name given the village was that of Lebanon, but since there was already a town by that name in southern Illinois, it was soon after changed to Loami.

"William and Ebenezer Colburn built a small horse mill upon their place shortly after their arrival, and for some years ground the grain of the neighboring farmers by that slow process; subsequently they built a water-mill, having an over-shot wheel, which proved a failure. They then erected a steam saw and grist-mill, in 1836. Around this mill grew up the village of Loami.

The village was laid out and platted in August, 1854, by O.B. Kidder, H.D. Gibson and others, and comprised the northwest part of the east half of the southwest quarter of section eleven, township fourteen, range seven. Prior to this time quite a settlement had been effected, as already stated, which grew up around Colburn's mill.

Colburn & Smith were the first merchants in the village, and opened a general stock of merchandise in 1858. Other firms have commenced business, flourished for a time, and passed away (History 940)."

The Colburn Family was one of the first families to arrive in this area, building a gristmill. After losing 3 mills to fire, Mr. Colburn, supposedly quite dejected, sat down and said, "well low am I." Hence "Lo-am-i."

The Village was incorporated July 30, 1875. The three-pound Village Seal (stamp) is still used by the Village Clerk today on legal papers. The revised Ordinance book for #1-21 was passed and approved on October 18, 1886, and was signed by President T.D. Vredanburgh, Clerk R. E. Short. Ordinance #1 relates to boundaries, giving descriptions and the Village Corporation limits of one square mile.

A map printed in 1917 shows population to be 550 with no water facilities or fire department. Streets were rolling and non-paved with public lighting by oil lamps.

By this time (1911) the elevator and three churches were built. There were many frame buildings in the mid-town along with a brick two story school (steam heat, no lights), brick bank, meat market, two restaurants, barber shop, post office (corner of Main and Gibson*), two General Merchandise stores, two blacksmiths, two feed stores, harness shop, implement shop, brick garage (20 car capacity), lumber yard & sheds (west of railroad), Doctor's office (east side of square), Livery stable, wagon shed, poultry house, ice house, two grocery stores, two drug stores, piano shop, brick Town Hall (lodge on 2nd floor and the jail in rear).