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# Town of Chelsea, Illinois (1837-1852)

In the early 1830s the McGovney and Van Horne families and others settled along the banks of Hickory Creek, a tributary of the Des Plaines River and built homes in the Hickory Creek woods. As early as 1837 the settlers were served at Chelsea post office. The Chelsea post office received mail once a week by a "horse express fast line" that followed the route between LaPorte, Indiana, and Joliet.





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When the Rock Island Railroad came through it passed less than a mile north of Hickory Creek and Chelsea. Chelsea was only partly laid out (platted) as a village and was abandoned. By 1880 it had completely disappeared, while Mokena, Illinois sprouted up at the Rock Island rail stop.



*Hickory Creek*

The first post office actually within the village of Mokena, Illinois limits was established in 1853.

The growth of Mokena paralleled that of many Chicago suburbs that began as railroad stops. One of the earliest buildings was the public school, built in 1855. A Baptist Society formed in 1851, followed by a German United Evangelical congregation in 1862, St. Mary's German Roman Catholic Church in 1864, and a Methodist church in 1867.



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This range of congregations, along with a German Lutheran church started in 1850 several miles to the east of town, reflects the presence of many German immigrants along with residents from various parts of the United States.

Mokena became the market center for a large farming area and by the late 1870s included five general stores, four blacksmith and wagon shops, three hotels, two butcher shops, seven saloons, and a variety of other businesses. When the village was incorporated in 1880, its population was 522; in 1940, it had increased to only 657.