

Tinley Park owes its very existence to the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. In June 1853, shortly after the railroad was constructed through the area, the Village of Bremen was laid out on the path of the railroad by Dr. Samuel Rush Haven. Its location was planned to develop as a commerce center to serve the surrounding agricultural areas, allowing farmers to send their grain and dairy products to markets in Chicago and elsewhere as well as for local merchants to receive some of their merchandise. The US Postal Service also quickly recognized the value of railroads for improving the speed of mail delivery across the growing country.

Samuel Tinley, Sr. was hired by the railroad as the local station agent in 1854, a position he would hold until his retirement in 1880. (Coincidentally, Mr. Tinley's home was located directly south of the Centennial Engine, on the site presently occupied by Citibank). The local Post Office name was changed from New Bremen to Tinley Park effective New Years Day 1891. When the town was incorporated in 1892, the name Tinley Park was again chosen and confirmed by a vote of the citizens. These events were clearly a posthumous honor bestowed upon Mr. Tinley (he died in 1882). While we have not yet discovered the reasons that contributed to the selection of the name Tinley Park by the community leaders in the 1890s, we do know he had been one of the earliest, and longest continuous inhabitants of the Village of Bremen (now Tinley Park) up to that time. While Mr. Tinley was English, the community population of the time was predominately German, adding to the value of this tribute and leads us to believe he had generally been well liked.

The Tinley Park Engine #1892 started its life as a steam switch or yard engine used by Swift and Company at its Chicago Union Stockyards plant. It was constructed in 1926 by H.K. Porter, Co. (1866-1950). It was used by Swift and Company in the Stockyards area for more than 40 years. The engine has no boiler, and would need to be periodically "charged" with steam to maintain its operation. This was because it would be pulling rail cars into and outside of the Swift complex and it was highly desirable to reduce both the risk of fire and other contaminants that a wood or coal fired boiler would discharge into the confined spaces of the buildings.

After it was retired from service at Swift, it was subsequently purchased and moved to rural Monee where it became part of a private collection of engines, rail cars, and buildings (including a former depot). In early 1992, a photograph of this old and long neglected engine surrounded by tall grass was featured in the Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine with the caption, "The End of the Line." This photo caught the eye of then Assistant Village Manager David Dorgan who thought that the engine would make a fine memorial as part of the community's Centennial celebrations also occurring in 1992.

The Tinley Park Centennial Commission selected this steam engine as a memorial in tribute to the role the railroad has played for what is now over 150 years in the growth and development of Tinley Park and its evolution from a rural agricultural commerce center to a thriving suburb of Chicago. Negotiations for its purchase, and finally the arrangements for moving it from Monee to Tinley Park ensued.

It was moved to its present location on 5 June 1992 and a committee of volunteers subsequently worked on making repairs and painting the old engine to create the commemorative monument to the railroad's role in the history of Tinley Park.

The following companies and individuals contributed to bringing the Centennial Engine to Tinley Park:

- Bechstein Excavating Company
- Imperial Crane Company
- Artwork by Cori Wilensky
- William Collings & Company
- Glidden Paint Company
- Ozinga Concrete
- Cuzick & Son Sandblasting
- Boy Scout Troop #378
- Franson Concrete
- Urbano Engineers
- P & P Promotions
- Willie Brothers Concrete