



 **HSHM**
HOME SWEET HOME MINISTRIES

Celebrating 100 Years of Hope
1917-2017



*Celebrating 100 Years of Hope
1917-2017*

Home Sweet Home Ministries

303 East Oakland Avenue
Bloomington IL, 61701
(309) 828-7356
www.hshministries.org

Mission Mart

301 East Oakland Avenue
Bloomington IL, 61701
Monday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
(309) 828-1530
www.missionmart.org

HSHM Warehouse Operations

1700 West Washington Street
Bloomington IL, 61701
(309) 533-7240

“FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE”



In 1 Corinthians 13, St. Paul lists the essential gifts of a disciple as Faith, Hope, and Love.

While the theme of our centennial is Hope, all of these qualities mark the founding and progress of Home Sweet Home Ministries, and its work today. Born out of the hopelessness of one man's desperate situation, and begun with the Good News preached at a gospel revival, Home Sweet Home Ministries provides shelter, medical care, food, recovery, guidance, and self-respect to those who need it. Jesus turns us toward the hungry, the thirsty, the lost, the naked, the sick, and those imprisoned — either literally or by the circumstances of life — and tells us to help them. That is what we all can do in partnership with Home Sweet Home Ministries. Let this 100-year-old agent of Faith, Hope, and Love show you the way.



Table of Contents:

100 YEARS OF HISTORY 2

A HISTORY OF HOPE:

Photographs from the history of Home Sweet Home Ministries 4

THE REALITY OF HOPE:

Testimonials from individuals who have shared help and kindness at Home Sweet Home Ministries 10

100 YEARS OF HISTORY

| | Home Sweet Home Ministries | McLean County | USA and the World |
|-------|--|---|--|
| 1900s | Billy Shelper's conversion at a Billy Sunday revival, January 28, 1908 | 1902 McLean County Courthouse built 1906 Interurban railway connects Bloomington and Decatur | 1903 First flight of the Wright brothers 1906 San Francisco earthquake |
| 1910s | First Home: (1917) City Rescue Mission at 233 E. Front St Second Home: (1918) 119 S. Main St | 1913 Miller Park Zoo opens | 1914 Panama Canal opens 1917 World War I 1919 Prohibition |
| 1920s | Third Home: (1920) 111 S. Main St 1921 Branch Mission 1100 W. Washington Fourth Home: (1926) 212 S. Main St 1926 Christmas dinners begin 1929 Community Center 911 W. Washington | 1922 State Farm Insurance founded 1922 First paved road to Chicago completed | 1927 Lindberg flies solo across the Atlantic in The Spirit of St. Louis 1929 Stock Market Crash |
| 1930s | 1933 expands to include 210 S. Main St | 1934 Steak 'n' Shake founded 1934 Bloomington Normal airport opens | 1932 Amelia Earhart's trans-atlantic solo flight 1933 New Deal recovery measures begin |
| 1940s | 1940 The Mission feeds 600 people for Thanksgiving | 1945 Beltline built around the east side of town | 1941 World War II 1945 First Atomic Bomb used in war |
| 1950s | 1952 Billy Shelper dies | 1952 Adlai Stevenson II is the Democratic party's presidential candidate | 1950 Korean War 1958 First American satellite put in orbit |

Home Sweet Home Ministries

McLean County

USA and the World

1960s

1967 Urban renewal condemns the Main Street facility, causing Home Sweet Home to relocate to a nearby warehouse

1964 Illinois State Normal University becomes Illinois State University

1961 63-year-old Coliseum razed

1963 Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech

1963 John F. Kennedy assassinated

1970s

1971 Acquires Funk Seed complex

1972 Home Sweet Home Ministries' Women's Auxiliary forms

Fifth Home: (1973) what is now 303 E. Oakland

1978 Disastrous fire destroys much of the building

1971 New headquarters for State Farm built, still in use today

1974 President Nixon resigns

1978 Camp David accord between Israel and Egypt signed

1980s

1988 The basement of the Mission becomes a thrift store called the Mission Mart

1987 The Constitution Trail is opened along the old Illinois Central right of way

1988 Diamond Star Motors opens a factory

1981 Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court

1987 President Reagan in Berlin declares "Tear down this wall!"

1990s

1997 Current Mission Mart opens

1991 The McLean County Museum of History moves into the old courthouse

1991 Desert Storm

1998 President Clinton impeached by Congress

2000s

2003 Threshold program begins

2004 Named changed to Home Sweet Home Ministries

2006 Shelter named the Billy Shelper Center

2001 Central Illinois Regional Airport has a new terminal building

2001 September 11 attacks

2005 Hurricane Katrina

2010s

2011 Warehouse acquired

2013 HSH Renew begins

2013 Bridge of Hope begins

2014 Bread For Life begins

2014 Mobile Health Center begins

2015 Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center opens at the McLean County Museum of History

2012 Hurricane Sandy

2013 Affordable Care Act passed

A HISTORY OF HOPE:

Photographs from the history of Home Sweet Home Ministries



Billy Shelper, the founder of Home Sweet Home Ministries, was born in 1871 and became a salesman in his adult life. He married Isabel in 1906 and they had a daughter, Martha Elizabeth. Isabel died in 1911.

Not unlike other travelling salesmen, in 1907 Billy went on a binge of drinking in Chicago. Billy awoke from this experience sick and remorseful, and vowed never to drink again. After making this promise to himself, he returned to his home in Bloomington and, at the invitation of a friend, attended a series of revival meetings conducted by the renowned evangelist Billy Sunday. On January 28, 1908, a day that Billy would celebrate for the rest of his life as his "spiritual birthday," Billy Shelper dedicated his life to God and to the service of others.

In 1913 poor health caused Billy to stop going on the road, and he settled down to run a candy store at 623 N. Main St. He began to organize others to hold gospel meetings with him at the County Jail, and on November 25, 1917 he opened the first of his Rescue Missions at 233 E. Front St.

1917

This building, **home of the first Home Sweet Home Mission**, was the birthplace of Mission founder Billy Shelper.



1917

Here is the **interior of the first Rescue Mission** at 233 E. Front St in Bloomington. It is notable for what might be called "quaint" signage. "Mother" is a prominent subject, as in "How long since you wrote to Mother?" and "God Loves You. Mother Loves You. We Love You."

Furnishings on the main floor include folding chairs, an organ and a piano, and a lectern. There were always multiple American flags in the Rescue Mission buildings. There were sleeping rooms for men downstairs, and transients and the homeless could stay there if they attended services in the room you see here.





1918

Here is the **second home** of the Home Sweet Home Rescue Mission. It was at 119 S. Main St in the location of the old Log Cabin Saloon. As usual, there is a combination of religious and what might be called "practical" messages on the signs outside: on the one hand "Jesus Saves" and "Ye must be born again," and on the other "Safety First" and "Do It Now."

1918

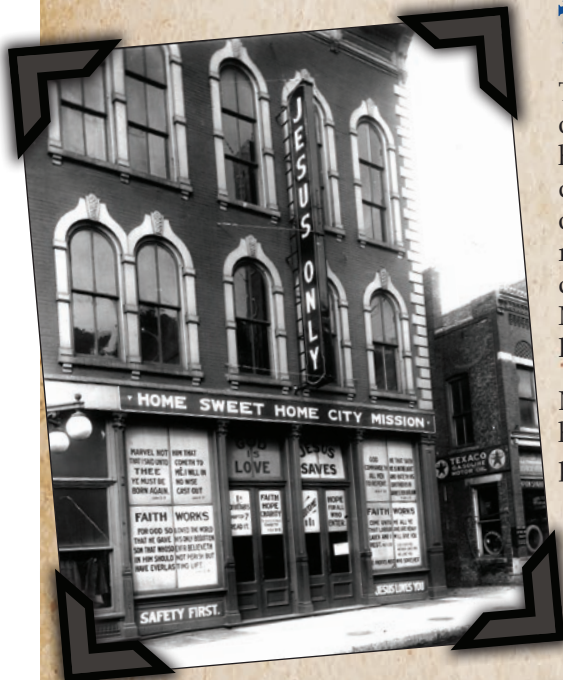
Here is the **interior of the meeting room** at 119 S. Main St. Admonitions to write to Mother are typical of all locations of the Mission. Other repeated motifs include the extravagant use of the American flag. Notice the flag attached to the ceiling.



1920

The property housing the **second location** of the Rescue Mission was sold, and so the Mission had to move. Billy was able to move just next door, to 111 S. Main St. This location needed a lot of work to make it safe and comfortable, but Billy received all kinds of donations and help from the community. Individuals who wanted to stay at the Mission helped with the renovation of the new location.

Note the "Jesus Only" sign, variations of which have appeared on the Mission headquarters to the present day.



1920

Here you see **men eating a meal** at the 111 S. Main location. Billy Shelper is at the left of the picture, by the front window of the meeting room.



A large black and white photograph of a group of children and adults standing in front of a building with large windows. The windows display various religious signs, including "JESUS", "HOME SWEET HOME", "MISSION", and "BLOOMINGTON for I.R.I.T.". A sign on the right says "WEEKEND SHOES REPAIRING".

A large black and white photograph of a group of children and adults standing in front of a building with large windows. The windows display various religious signs, including "JESUS", "HOME SWEET HOME", "MISSION", and "BLOOMINGTON for I.R.I.T.". A sign on the right reads "WEEKEND SHOES REPAIRING". The group consists of many children in white dresses and a few adults, including a man in a suit on the far right. The building has a modern, flat-roofed design with large glass panes. The photograph is framed by a thick black border with white corner accents.

are being conducted at the Branch location of the Mission. There are children in angel costumes and Easter lilies atop the organ console, in the back of the room.



The **McLean County Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument** in Miller Park was dedicated in 1913 and was a favorite location for group photos of events held by Home Sweet Home Mission. Here is a picnic for several groups of orphans: the

A large black and white photograph of a group of people, mostly children and young adults, posing in front of a building with a sign that reads "HOME SWEET HOME MISSION PIC-NIC". The photo is mounted on a dark album page with black photo corners.

1921

This picnic, also from 1921, was held for, as the photo caption says, "colored children." You can see that Billy Shelper and two women at the left of the photo are the only white people in the group. Sadly, segregation was a fact of life throughout the country in those years. It is remarkable to realize that Billy reached out to these children and families as he reached out to many groups that he perceived as **needy and worthy of love**.



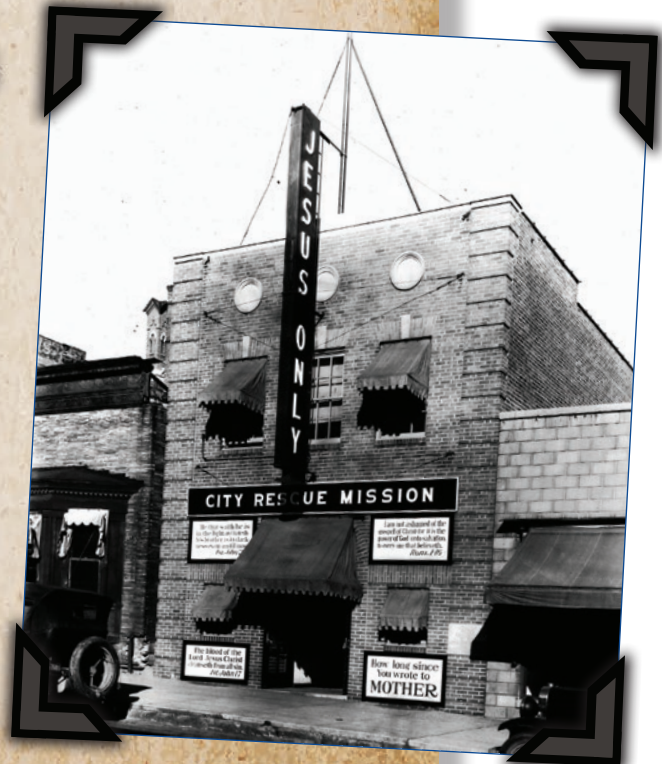
1923

Billy Shelper celebrated his **Spiritual Birthday**, the date of his conversion to Christianity, on January 28. Here, in 1923, he celebrates this day with a substantial group of supporters in the McLean County Circuit Courtroom. It was in this room that evangelist Billy Sunday held the Bloomington revival services that changed Billy Shelper's life. One of Shelper's biographers has a perfect phrase for this location: "On the spot where many criminals had stood, he found the Lord (Lois Wood, 1979).

1926

This is the **fourth home** of the Mission, a building opened for use in 1926. Again, this property needed a lot of work before the Mission could move in, but helpers were able to salvage thousands of bricks, wooden stairways, and lumber from a nearby school that had been demolished. There was substantial help from churches and the community at large. The message on the cornerstone that you see here at 212 S. Main St thanks the Masonic Fraternity for their help in the renovation.

In time the Mission would expand to the property next door, 210 S. Main St., with new construction in exactly the same style. There was remodeling in the 1950s, and in 1954 a room was set aside for the use of women and children in emergencies, sadly an ongoing need of a rescue mission.



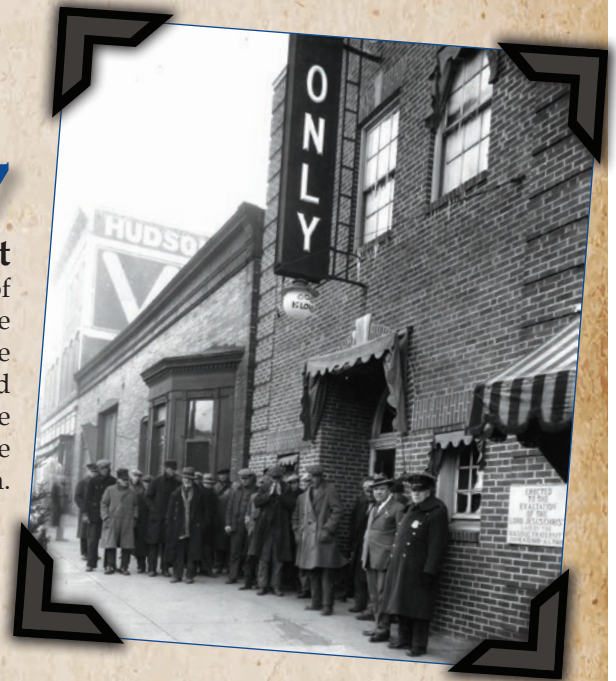


1927

The homeless, transients, the unemployed and other needy persons sit down for **Thanksgiving dinner** in 1927. Billy Shelper reported in the 1930s that the Mission often served meals to more than 150 people a day.

1927

Men line up for breakfast outside the 212 S. Main St location of the Mission in 1927. One practice of the time was for drifters to be housed at the jail, to keep them out of trouble, and then marched by a police officer to the Mission for a meal and a religious service before being escorted out of town.



1929

The **Community Gospel Center** was opened by the Mission at 911 W. Washington St. in 1929. Facilities here included a community shower, tub baths for children, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, church services, kindergarten, and classes in "domestic science" (sewing, budgeting, etc.).

1930

Community support, formal and informal, allowed the Mission to **extend its reach** and its services to more needy people. Here is a huge donation of food from employees of the Williams Company that was provided for Christmas dinner in 1930.



1931

Here is yet another celebration at Miller Park, with a group photo taken of children and parents at the McLean County Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument. The occasion is the **60th birthday of Billy Shelper** in 1931. Billy would live and be instrumental in the leadership of the Home Sweet Home Mission until his death in 1952.



1971

In 1969 the city of Bloomington announced plans to build a crossover from Main to East, a project that would result in the demolition of the Mission building. As these plans progressed, in 1971 the Funk Brother's Seed Company sold a complex of buildings on the city's south side to the Mission, at a substantial discount. The company recognized, as many did, the **value of Home Sweet Home** to the community, and responded in gratitude with this generous gesture.



1973

Here is an early version of the current location of Home Sweet Home Ministries, the **fifth location** of the Mission. It is described in histories as being at Gridley and Arthur, then at 300 Mission Drive when it was occupied in 1973, and finally at 303 E. Oakland Ave. These are all the same location.



In 1974 a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for hundreds was served here.

1978

In 1978 a **fire at the Home Sweet Home headquarters** did a great deal of damage. Many individual donors, helpers, churches, and community organizations pitched in to fund and execute the repairs.



THE REALITY OF HOPE:

Testimonials from individuals who have shared help and kindness at Home Sweet Home Ministries



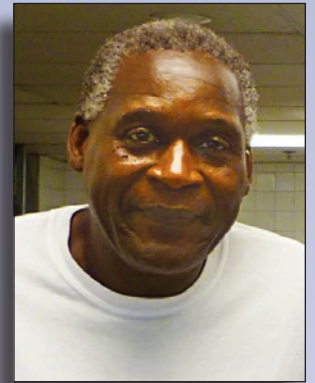
Brian

When I came here I was hopeless. The biggest thing I took away from here is that I have hope again. I found hope in devotions and talking with other people. You think you can do it on your own, but you're wrong. I came to realize that I couldn't do it alone. Everyone needs help whether they're willing to admit it or not. Home Sweet Home Ministries gave me more confidence in myself. That's what people need. I want people to see that if I can get hope back, they can, too.



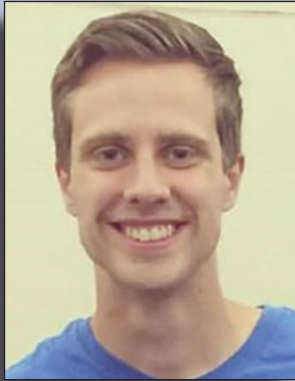
Sarah

Home Sweet Home Ministries breaks down barriers and transforms us as individuals, as a community, and as the world. We are able to see people not as "others," but as God created us and as God sees us. I feel that **it's our calling to build relationships with one another.**



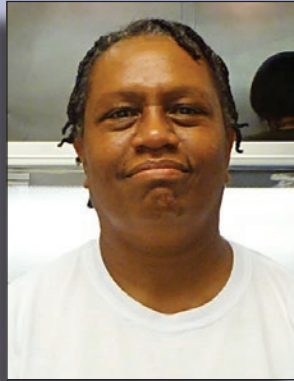
Maurice

God has always taken care of me. At Home Sweet Home everyone treats you with kindness and respect. I try to treat everyone who comes in that same way. I try to minister to them and talk them through their situations. **My whole outlook on life has changed, and I'm grateful for every day.**



Jake

Volunteering has opened my eyes and has given me a different perspective. As Christians we are called to be the hands and feet of God, but it's not always going to be easy. **Volunteering at Home Sweet Home reminds me that serving others is more important** than being comfortable.



Gail

Home Sweet Home is a blessing. God opened doors for me at the right time. One of those doors for me was this job at Home Sweet Home. I'm the type of person who wants to just share love. I love to make people laugh and cheer them up. It's my gift. God gave me this gift to share with His people. I'm just happy I have been given the opportunity to do that through Home Sweet Home.



Josh

Where there's health, there's hope. And where there's hope, there's everything. All healing comes from God. All of our hope is in Him. I try to get to know where people are in their lives and try to help them move forward, to be encouraged, to be empowered, to really understand that they are loved and can move forward. Honestly, **I've just been blessed to be a part of things here.** To see so many people who care about other people and to see the reflection of Christ in so many faces.



Rosamond

When I first came to Home Sweet Home I was apprehensive and scared. I have come to know who God is and to listen to His voice. His voice led me to Home Sweet Home. I have learned to "Trust in God for everything." (Isaiah 41:10) **What I see at Home Sweet Home is love and encouragement.** I came here broken, but now I feel whole. I want to be able to help others as I have been helped. I want to be a good mom. I want to be strong for others.



Saige

The people at Home Sweet Home are very loving and just show Jesus' genuine joy and love. Everything they do is out of love. **You feel loved after you leave and even while you're working.**



Bob

Everybody has value. Everybody has worth. I've always believed that. At Home Sweet Home our focus is providing the best service we can to the most people possible.



Wes

At Home Sweet Home I am reminded of the power of a smile, looking someone in their eyes, and being in the moment with them. My experience as a volunteer has reminded me how simple, yet how powerful, treating others with respect can be. I am glad that through my business many individuals from Home Sweet Home Ministries have found employment. **I support Home Sweet Home Ministries because I believe in their mission and vision,** which are consistent with my faith in Jesus Christ.


HOME SWEET HOME MINISTRIES

*Celebrating 100 Years of Hope
1917-2017*

HELP HOME SWEET HOME MINISTRIES.

Advocate

Share our story with others. Invite us to speak to your group, club, or friends. Help us spread the message that hope can be restored.

Participate

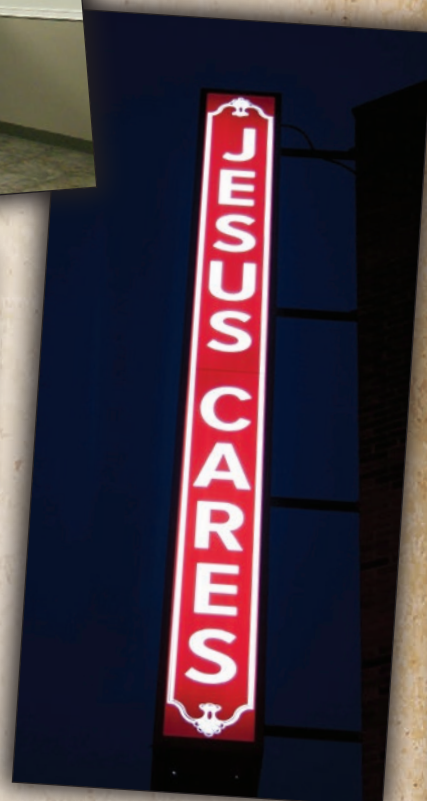
Volunteer your time and talents. Serve a meal, teach a class, or tutor a child. Share your experiences of hope with others.

Donate

Invest your financial resources in the restoration of lives. Become a Partner in Hope through monthly donations. For more information, please visit www.hshministries.org/donate.

CONTACT US TODAY!

Home Sweet Home Ministries
303 E. Oakland Ave.
Bloomington, IL 61701
309-828-7356
www.hshministries.org



HSHM
HOME SWEET HOME MINISTRIES

*Celebrating 100 Years of Hope
1917-2017*