

## Clark Center, IL

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Clark Center, Illinois, was established around 1833. The first settler was Jonathan Rathbone. He lived in Clark Center until he died in 1839. The National Road was one of the main reasons for settlement in the town. The building pictured is used as a polling place.

There were two blacksmiths in Clark Center, or Auburn as it is known, and two grocery stores, one of which is still standing. The Auburn Methodist Church and ten houses also still remain. Approximately 75 to 80 people presently live there. The soil is good for crops so many are farmers. At one time, there were seven gas stations in Clark Center, but none exist now. The last existing station building was torn down in the summer of 1997.



The first house was built in Clark Center around 1846 by Thomas Leiser. Its first school was built in 1838. Grades one through three attended this school. Older children went to Marshall. William T. Pennel owned the first store which was on the north side of the town. There was also a store on the south side owned by James Mellrath.

Auburn even had a post office at one time. It shut down several years ago. The mail was carried to and from the railroad by one of the boys from the town. The boys also delivered the mail to homes.



The Auburn Methodist Church is very old but has been restored and is well-kept. It is small and doesn't hold very many people. It still has Sunday School and church every Sunday morning.

Clark Center (Auburn) hasn't really changed that much although a lot of the stores have shut down and there are no more gas stations. Because Auburn is close to Marshall, it never had a water tower. People either got water from Marshall or had their own well. There weren't that many things for kids to do when they were growing up in Clark Center in the 1800's and there aren't many now. Years ago, before televisions and radios, kids could ride horses or play marbles for fun. Now kids ride three wheelers or work on their cars for fun. Even though there are not a lot of places to go in Clark Center, the people are friendly, everyone knows everyone else, and it is a nice place to live.