



# Grayslake Historical Society

164 HAWLEY STREET + P.O. BOX 185 + GRAYSLAKE, ILLINOIS 60030-0185 + 847-223-7663

# UPDATE

February 2015

Village Municipal History Museum  
164 Hawley Street  
Grayslake, Illinois  
Hours: Wednesday - Saturday 12:00 to 4:00  
Tours by appointment

Grayslake Historical Society  
164 Hawley Street  
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## LOOKING BACK

Did you miss the fall programs of the Grayslake Historical Society? Here are summaries of them.

On **Wednesday, September 10**, Charlotte Renehan gave the program "From Farm to France": The story of her Father's experience in World War 1. Twenty-four year old Charles Kuebker lived alone on a seventy-seven acre Grayslake farm but took his meals with his parents, Mary and Charles, on Center Street. He was their only child.

The United States entered World War 1 on April 6, 1917. Charles registered for the draft on June 5, 1918 and later became one of the fifty-four men from Lake County to leave from Libertyville to report for duty.

They went by train to St. Louis, Missouri where they were billeted in Jefferson Barracks. Charles described the land he viewed from the train window, telling about the livestock and crops. When the group moved to Camp MacArthur in Waco, Texas, he noted that the farmers plowed differently than at home and went barefoot, not wearing any more clothes than absolutely necessary. Charles was surprised at the amount of woods in the U. S.

At Camp MacArthur the recruits underwent a major health inspection. While Charles was at Camp MacArthur, he wrote numerous letters home. He constantly told his parents not to work too hard and to not worry about him. He asked many crop and livestock questions. He told his mother not to send cake and candy to him because it got ruined in the 100-plus degree Texas heat. His company learned about warfare from French military men and followed army routine, up at 5:30 A.M., reveille at 6:00 A. M. etc.

On July 19 the troops pulled out of Waco, crossing through the states of Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania, finally reaching Camp Merrick in New Jersey. At stops along the way they received treats from the Red Cross and postcards to send home. Charles wrote he "saw some of the prettiest sites he ever hoped to see".

His folks came to visit him before he was shipped out to Europe on the USS Leviathan. On August 11, 1918 the ship docked in Brest, France.

Charles described French farm buildings as being of stone and concrete with the outside in good shape. Wheat, rye and oats were staples, but corn didn't do well. The combines were U. S.-made while thrashers were horse drawn.

After he had been at the front for awhile, his feet gave out and he was transferred to a hospital in Paris on October 23. Then on November 11, 1918 the war ended. By the twenty-third, the censorship was lifted so Charles could write home about his war experience. He had been within twelve miles of the front, in reserve at the Argonne and then at Verdun. Charles received none of his mother's letters and they were sent back to Grayslake. They were opened eighty-four years later by his daughter, Charlotte.

On January 23, 1919, Charles arrived back in the United States and reached Camp Grant in Rockford Illinois on January 31. He was discharged on February 5, 1919. In addition to over forty letters and postcards, the family still possesses Charles' Red Cross bag, dog tags, small notebook, uniform, leg wrappings, hat and patches.

The seventeenth annual Grayslake Cemetery Walk was held on **Sunday, October 5**. It had a World War 1 theme but also highlighted the Grayslake American Legion. Tim Holst, portraying Lawrence Forvor, read a history of the veterans' organization. Douglas Getchell, who became a Legion commander at the state level, was played by Shawn Vogel. Vogel led the audience to the various grave sites.

High School student Dusten Knull read a letter written by Joe Davis, who was born in England but served in the war for the United States. Grace Schlottman, whose husband was a newspaper publisher and World War 1 soldier, read a letter written by one of the DeGraff brothers. Their grandfather is buried in the cemetery. Grace was portrayed by Krista Holst. Foreign-born Katherine Pech, played by Virginia Fitzgerald, died before her two sons served as World War 1 doughboys. Will Frank, as Harmon Smith, read a letter that Smith wrote. A letter by Fay Brandstetter was read by his neighbor Joseph Peterkort, who was played by Dan Graham. Earl Darby was the first commander of Grayslake's American Legion and his letter was read by Megan Willhite. Willhite had the role of Mrs. Herbert Struthers, who served in the medical corps during World War 1.

"Grayslake Through the Decades" presented on **Wednesday, October 8** was a unique video program. It was composed of short videos made by students of Grayslake Central High School. History teacher Adrijana Bisevac said the student project was undertaken by four honors history classes at the school. She said the documentary approach to history included interviews, research and innovative ways to present the historical story. One of the educational themes of the project, Bisevac said, was "they learned about the history of Grayslake and learned how to be a historian".

The history of Grayslake for each of the decades in the 1900s was traced in individual, innovative and sometimes comical videos. Several Grayslake residents were interviewed for the video presentations. A question and answer session followed. A long-time Grayslake resident remarked that the students did a good job of finding and telling the outstanding events of each decade.

On **Saturday, October 25** the Society witches handed out treats during Downtown Grayslake's Trick or Treat event.

The **Wednesday, November 12** program was declared excellent. It was "Letters from the Front". The letters were photocopied by Charlotte Renehan from microfilm of the *Grayslake Times* which is in the archives of the Grayslake Historical Society. They were transcribed by Linda Willhite.

To set the scene Willhite gave an overview of the significance of the letters. They were important to the morale of both the men and their families. However, only good news was allowed in the letters home. They were also a source of first hand information in what was happening on the front lines. Willhite then introduced Will Frank who read Mark Neville's June 1917 letter home. The letter describes life at the Jefferson Barracks.

After every letter Connie Dunbar gave a short bio of each correspondent's life: where and when they were born, what they did after the war and the place and year of their death.

An April 1918 letter from James Peck was read by Dan Graham. Peck was part of the Second Engineer team mule train and his letter dealt with the many trials and tribulations of handling fifty mules on a trip to New Mexico.

Frank and Graham alternated reading letters from First Lieutenant Doctor John Arthur Turner, Andrew Elsing Decker, Captain Doctor John Palmer, Irving Orlando Hook, Darrell James Burnley, Sergeant Elmer Beckwith and Corporal LeRoy Turner. Willhite read a letter from Rena Grace Decker describing what the life of a nurse was like at Fort Sill and Fort Sam Houston.

The program gave everyone a unique word picture of how the young men and women viewed the war and the world of their day. It added a personal touch to a war that has receded in the minds of many.

The Society's annual Holiday Open House held on **Sunday, December 14** featured Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus with the Society's vintage sleigh. Children enjoyed making an ornament to take home plus decorating a link for the traditional tree's chain which has been growing since 2004. Guests enjoyed hot chocolate as they listened to the Warren Township High School Alumni Choir.

#### **PLANNING AHEAD**

**Wednesday, February 4** - Search and Share genealogy discussion group. 2:00 PM. Historical Society Archives. Open to public. Free.

**Saturday, February 7** - Grayslake Heritage Center program. Servant Margaret Powell, whose memoir inspired the TV series *Downton Abbey*, will be portrayed by actress Leslie Goddard. Community Room. 2:00 PM. Suggested donation.

**Wednesday, February 11** - Grayslake Historical Society program. Last year the audience enjoyed the video featuring Hazel White, Kate Hook and Florence Carlson. This year we will show a video featuring the guys. Come and hear the stories of Wes Druce, Wally Stang, Dick Lawrence and Jim Davis. The program starts at 7:30 PM in the Heritage Center Community Room. Refreshments. Open to public. Free.

**Thursday, February 12** - Lake County Civil War Round Table. Community Room. 7:00 PM.

**Wednesday, March 4** - Search and Share genealogy discussion group. 2:00 PM. Historical Society Archives. Open to public. Free.

**Saturday, March 7** - Grayslake Historical Society Reminisce session. "Lake Street". Past and present residents of Grayslake's Lake Street are invited to recall stories of

events and of people who lived along this important Grayslake thoroughfare. The round table discussion starts at 10:00 AM and continues for an hour. Open to public. Coffee. Free.

**Wednesday, March 11** - Grayslake Historical Society annual meeting and program. Officers and board members will be elected. The Society by-laws will be reviewed. Following the brief annual meeting, Grayslake World War 1 letters will be read plus bios of the authors. The letters read last November were outstanding, and these different ones promise to be as interesting. 7:30 PM. Heritage Center Community Room. Refreshments. Free.

**Thursday, March 12** - Lake County Civil War Round Table. Community Room. 7:00 PM.

**Wednesday, April 1** - Search and Share genealogy discussion group. 2:00 PM. Historical Society Archives. Open to public. Free.

**Wednesday, April 8** - Grayslake Historical Society program. Washington Street is under construction. Until 1968, the stretch from Center Street, Grayslake to Cedar Lake, Round Lake was known as Renehan Road. Charlotte Renehan will present "The Renehan Road: the history of the area and of the family which settled in Avon Township in 1836." Refreshments. Open to public. Free.

**Thursday, April 9** - Lake County Civil War Round Table. Community Room. 7:00 PM.

**Saturday, April 11** - Grayslake Heritage Center program. Actress Lynn Rymarz will present "The Ghost of Mary Surratt". Surratt was a conspirator in the assassination of Lincoln. Community Room. 2:00 PM. Suggested donation.

**Sunday, April 19** - Grayslake Lions Club Pancake Breakfast. 7:30 AM to 1:00 PM. Grayslake Hawley Street Fire Station. Museum open.

**Wednesday, April 22** - Grayslake Heritage Center program. Poetry and Songs from World War I. Community Room. 7:00 PM. Suggested donation.

**Wednesday, May 6** - Search and Share genealogy discussion group. 2:00 PM. Historical Society Archives. Open to public. Free.

**Wednesday, May 13** - Grayslake Historical Society program. Chicago has the Sox and the Cubs but Grayslake also has some interesting baseball history. Learn about Grayslake individuals, such as Jay Hook, who made it "big time". Learn about former teams who represented the town. Learn about the places where the local games were played. Refreshments. Open to the public. Free.

**Monday, May 25** - Grayslake's Memorial Day Parade. Watch for the Society's entry.

**Wednesday, June 3, July 1, August 5** - Search and Share genealogy discussion group, 2:00 PM, Historical Society Archives. Open to public. Free.

**Saturday, June 6** - Grayslake History Museum. "Sox vs. Cubs: The Chicago Civil Wars". This special traveling exhibit opens. Suggested Donation.

#### **VOLUNTEERS**

The Grayslake Historical Society is fortunate to have faithful, committed volunteers. Thanks are extended to Lisa Androus, John Baier, Jason Baker, Lori Baumgartner, Adrijana Bisevac, Chris Brenner, Philip Bruno, Dennis Craig, Doris Craig, Jim Crofton, Amy Corey, Darlene Dorfler, Connie Dunbar, Virginia Fitzgerald, Kitty Flary, Carroll Flood, Harold Flood, Marie Frandsen, Will Frank, Rich Gaddis, Lily Gaines, Rich Garling, Daniel Graham, Grayslake Fire Protection District, Grayslake Public Works, Grayslake Village Hall, Marion Grinnell, Paul Groh, Charlie Groth,

Nurhuda Hanani, Ken Hansen, Peter Hill, Kay Holden, Krista Holst, Tim Holst, Dick Johannsen, Nancy Johannsen, Gemma Johnson, Jared Johnson, Timothy Johnson, Dusten Knull, Kyle Kulovitz, Kendra Laughlin, Joanne Lawrence, Bill Leider, Cynthia Lee, Carly Manshum, Karl Molek, Joyce Norton, Terry Norton, Corey Pearson, John Potter, Joel Reed, Nancy Reed, Charlotte Renehan, Ron Roselli, Robin Shumate, Edied Spencer, Kathi Starzec, Jane Tiffany-Hansen, Shawn Vogel, Westlake Christian Academy, Linda Willhite, Mark Willhite, Megan Willhite, Patty Yopp, Angela Zmuda,

### DONATIONS

The Grayslake Historical Society wishes to thank the following people for their generous monetary donations between August 1 and December 31, 2014. John Brandstetter, Joyce Norton, Bob Parker, Charlotte Renehan, Senior Shepherds, Dorcas Brausch Thompson, Marilyn & Wally Walz, Jack Wightman.

The Grayslake Historical Society thanks the following people for adding to its collections between August 1 and December 31, 2014: Marie Frandsen - BVI electric knife; Robert & Kelsey Druce - 2 G.C.H.S. yearbooks, 4 Angelus yearbooks, 3 school photos, Rockenbach employee photo; Steve Filbert - photos of early Grayslake; Joanne Lawrence - Lake County Farm Bureau program; Chris Brenner - collection of G.C.H.S. emblems & patches; Carol Brookover - Hazel Gift Shop photo & clipping; Dawn Wright - Gamble's sewing kit; Barbara Richardson-Cannon - Longabaugh water color paintings, commemorative plates; Hal Young - book *Huskies & the Christmas Fawn*; Marilyn Geary - copies of Everett Hook's World War 1 photos & documents; Marilyn Brant - 2 books *Summer in Europe*; Grethe Pripp - American flag; Harold Wilkinson - 3 Camp Grant photos, book "33rd Division"; Nancy Reed - Julie Chittenden poster & clipping, Last Chance building brick; Doug Rockenbach - copies of scrapbook pages; Larry Leafblad - 3 Penfield records; Don & Darlene Placko - Kapple milk can.

In-kind donations were graciously accepted between August 1 and December 31, 2014 from Lori Baumgartner, Chris Brenner, Connie Dunbar, Kitty Flary, Harold Flood, Will Frank, Marie Frandsen, Mary Friis, Joanne Lawrence, Joyce Norton, Terry Norton, Dave Oberg, Nancy Reed, Charlotte Renehan, Ron Roselli, Kathi Starzec, Jane Tiffany-Hansen, Linda Willhite, Patty Yopp.

### EXHIBITS

In October the Grayslake Heritage Center and Grayslake Historical Society received a Certificate of Merit for its exhibit *Farms: Seeds of our Community* from the Illinois Association of Museums. This exhibit was followed by *Made in Grayslake*, which highlighted past and present industries of our community. Authentic artifacts and pictures were used to tell the stories.

Presently the first floor gallery is exhibiting *Over There: Grayslake in the Great War*. Over fifty letters written by Grayslake soldiers were published in the local newspaper. They were used as the basis of the exhibit. Visitors can listen to snippets of the letters. In addition to the letters, World War 1 artifacts were loaned by Grayslake residents. Family photos of the soldiers complement the exhibit. A replica of a trench attracts the attention of all. Adults as well as children participate in the hands-on area.

The Upper Gallery explains *The Gathering Storm: Our Community on the Eve of World War 1*. It describes Grayslake before the war and compares it to the nation.

The Annex has received a complete renovation. Part of the farm exhibit was moved to become a permanent part of the Annex displays. The farm kitchen is changed

periodically. The Society's horse drawn vehicles plus the 1954 Grayslake-made fire truck are the center attractions. The Annex is receiving "Wow" reviews.

### **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

The Constitution and By-Laws of the Grayslake Historical Society were adopted when the Society was chartered in 1976. They were revised in 1992. These documents need to be reviewed. All paid members will vote on proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws at the annual meeting on March 11, 2015. There are three major changes: eliminating the February program, changing the annual meeting from March to April, and adding a dissolution article. Please take time to read the documents, and if you have questions or comments, contact Charlotte Renehan at 847-987-5509 or ChaRenehan@aol.com before March 1, 2015 so the amended Constitution and By-laws of the Grayslake Historical Society can be adopted at that time.

### **A PAGE FROM THE PAST**

The following was transcribed from the September 12, 1918 issue of the *Grayslake Times*.

#### **Jas. Catalano Is Killed In Big Battle**

#### **Boy Who Left Here A Year Ago Battled On The Marne Front**

Another blue star has turned to gold. This star on the Avon banner represents James Catalano, who entered the service one year ago this month. "Jimmy" as we all know and liked to call him, was in the battle of the Marne when he paid the penalty. His name appeared in the casualty list on Monday of this week, although his father in Chicago received official notice last Thursday.

Jimmy left Grays Lake for Camp Grant on the 19th of September last. In the company in which he left were Earl Richardson, Frank Dowell, Anton DeGraff, Ray Faulkner, Forrest Thomson, John Krumery and Ray Hibbard from Grays Lake.

Jimmy came to Grays Lake nine years ago, then a mere boy. He was just 21 when he enlisted and but 22 at this time. At that early age, he left his Chicago home and took refuge on a farm in this community. Here he labored and grew to manhood, won for himself a warm spot in the hearts of all our people. Although a self made man, he was mannerly, industrious and thrifty. When he was called by Uncle Sam he lived in Oakland Sub. where he had bought a lot and built a small house.

There was genuine sorrow and falling of tears when the news of his death arrived here, he had many loyal friends who felt the sting and were sad.

"A hero is dead. He died for liberty...he died for us. He is at rest. He sleeps in the land he was helping to make free under the flag he rendered stainless. Under the solemn pines and tearful willow along the blood stained Marne. He sleeps beneath the shadow of the clouds, careless alike of sunshine and storm, the windowless palace of rest."

When the local American Legion Post was organized in the 1920s, it was named the James Catalano American Legion Post. Following World War 11, it was renamed and is known as Grayslake American Legion Post 659.

### **MEMORIALS**

On the second floor west wall of the Grayslake Heritage Center are several plaques. They are in memory of deceased members and friends of the Grayslake Historical Society. The Society is sad to announce that recently the names of member Nan Rockwell and life members Avi Brandstetter Shinnors and Nancy Wightman Pease

were added. Donations in their memory or others may be addressed to the Grayslake Historical Society, P.O. Box 185, Grayslake, Illinois 60030.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Unless you are a life member, it is time to renew your Society membership. To vote on the amended constitution with by-laws and to vote for officers of the Grayslake Historical Society, a person must be a current member of the Society. Your membership status is with your address. A membership form is included with this newsletter.

Clip Here \_\_\_\_\_



**Grayslake Historical Society  
Membership Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

		Quantity	Total
Individual Annual Membership	\$ 10	_____	_____
Individual Annual Senior (65 years and over) Membership	\$ 5	_____	_____
Student Annual	\$ 3	_____	_____
Individual Life Membership	\$ 250	_____	_____
Couple Life Membership	\$ 400	_____	_____
Annual Business Membership	\$ 50	_____	_____
Please accept my additional donation		_____	_____
Total:		_____	_____

Annual Memberships are from  
March 1 to February 28

*Make check payable to:  
Grayslake Historical Society*

To become a member of the Grayslake Historical society, please print this form and mail the completed form to:

Membership Chair  
 Grayslake Historical Society  
 P. O. Box 185  
 Grayslake, Illinois 60030-0185

To receive your membership card, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

## A MEMORY

In 1982 life-long Grayslake resident, Alta Neville (1900 - 1997) was interviewed. She was one of six children, including brothers Carson and Mark. Here is what she told an interviewer when questioned about World War 1.

"Both Carson and Mark served overseas in World War 1. Mark served overseas in a drug store in the General Headquarters in Chaumont, France. Carson was a Private and served in the trenches. He was wounded in action 27 October and spent the rest of his service in the hospital there. Mark went to the Riviera one leave and to England to visit my Dad's relatives on another leave. My Dad wanted him to go there so badly. He wrote back and said he found a picture of my Dad in their living room hanging up on the wall, which of course surprised him. At that time, it seemed so many people in this area would suddenly inherit a fortune from some relative who died in England. I remember Mark writing home and saying not to lay any hopes on that because it doesn't look like the people over here have any fortune to leave to us."

*Marcy*

*Life*

*"Saving the Past for the Future"*

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