



Grayslake Historical Society

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

UPDATE

September 2018

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

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RECALLING THE PAST

February 17, 2018 - A reminisce session on the Manor subdivision was held at the museum. About 27 residents and former residents gathered to share their memories and stories.

The discussion began with the development of the area. Around 1948 the DeGraff and Gier farms were sold to Mike Reiners who was given great credit for dredging and draining the lowland and creating Manor Lake. He ran pumps 24 hours a day and moved dirt from the wetlands. The lake was 3 acres and rather deep with a slimy bottom which the kids used to smear on each other.

In the beginning the basements of the houses were dug by hand. It was said that you needed a shovel, a wheelbarrow and your neighbors to put in the basement. Seekatz built many of the houses in the Manor and Peterson did the same in Highland Homes.

Everyone in the Manor belonged to the North East Grayslake Civic Assn. and activities included swimming, ice skating, Halloween parades, and Christmas parties. Residents remembered going trick or treating, then changing costumes and going to all the houses a second time. Swimming lessons were offered at the lake also. The group recalled a home plate in the middle of Highland Road and they would play baseball there. The Grayslake Gelatin factory whistle would be the signal to return home for lunch and supper.

Children in the Manor attended Avon school for grade school and they would walk through the fields to get there and stop at Mrs. Bishop's store on the way home every day. After school they would play Red Rover, Kick the Can and football. They attended Grayslake High School.

The group remembered several tornadoes, one of which destroyed the boathouse. Because of being a former lowland, the subdivision did have some floods also including problems from the 2017 flood. At least two trucks were known to have been driven into the lake.

Many of the past residents still keep in touch with each other, and it was evident

that their childhood experiences in the Manor had developed into lifelong friendships.

March 14, 2018 - The Grayslake Historical Society program was extremely interesting. It was a genealogical-based event called "Family Heirlooms". Nancy Plotz Reed and her cousin, whose fathers were twins, Vernie and Ernie, shared matching scrapbooks that the cousins' grandmother had kept for the brothers when they were in the service. It was a clever presentation. Nancy's father had skills in typing and shorthand and therefore was assigned a desk job. His brother served on a ship.

Steve Lawrence had been asked to talk, but he gave the task to his mother, Penne. He held the framed drawing of St. Andrew Episcopal Church as his mother told the story. Penne knew the early history of the church and the story behind the building as her grandfather, Carl Clausen, was the architect. In 1913 Rev. White had been appointed as priest-in-charge of the Grayslake mission and the Ladies' Auxiliary raised \$1,000 to purchase the property. In 1927 ground was broken for the new church. Mr. Clausen provided labor and material at cost with interior finish work done by the parish men.

Cynthia Rockenbach Lee showed three tulip-shaped cookie cutters, the first being a cardboard pattern. These were part of a family Christmas tradition where each person was greeted by a decorated tulip cookie on their plate. When her father could not attend, his cookie was sent to him by mail by his sisters. The tulip reflected the family's friendship with the Franken family in Deerfield who owned a nursery that specialized in fine Holland tulip bulbs. Another Christmas tradition came from her mother's family. The children received oranges in their stockings and tried to see who would be the first to suck the juice from the orange through a candy cane. Both traditions still continue in the family. Her presentation ended with a huge outline of her family tree which she received from a cousin.

Joyce Norton, a Grayslake transplant, told how she ended up living here. Then she showed a framed piece of tatting done by her grandmother. The tatted piece was very intricate and beautiful. Her grandmother was also a talented artist.

Nancy Johannsen was not born in Grayslake either. She wove an interesting tale with items she brought in a clothes basket. It started with an item in an aged cookbook telling how to wash clothes. It ended with a picture of grandmother holding two washing sticks. Nancy had the two sticks. She also showed a well-worn quilt made from well-worn clothes.

The final presenter was Kim Denny. He told of the house where he lives which is well over one hundred years old. The heirloom he brought was "four generations of his family."

April 11, 2018 - Jane Trump presented a program on the Grayslake Area Public Library.

Through the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, the Grayslake Woman's Club received "traveling library" trunks of books starting in 1902. They were housed in Florence Druce's Drug Store, located in the Merchants & Farmers Bank building at Center and Whitney. For almost three decades the Club staffed and financially supported small libraries off and on in several downtown locations.

In 1941 a vote to create a tax-supported library passed overwhelmingly. In 1950 the library moved into the Village Hall. In 1958, it became a district library, called the Grayslake Avon Public Library. In 1960 it moved to the house at 47 Whitney Street, which had been used as a residence by the Battershall family. The next location was a

storefront at 148 Center Street. Joan Crilly of the library staff remembers the high school Latin Club helping with the move, and recalls pranks pulled by children, including riding bikes through the building. In 1980 Avon was dropped from the name in favor of Grayslake Area. The library grew from 3,600 to 7,000 square feet when Ethel's Dress Shop next door was purchased in the 1980s. In 1993 a \$4.5 billion referendum to construct a new building passed and, thanks to Laurie Epstein, a location was secured south of Central Park. The 34,300 square foot building at 100 Library Lane opened January 6, 1997.

Staff, Trustees and volunteers have shaped the library's development. The first library director was Irene Grutzmacher, who served from 1941 until 1973. Dedicated and strict, she enforced quiet and regularly relocated any children who dared to enter the adult stacks. Staff members Florence Carlson, Joan Crilly and Ruth Shelton were able to hold down the fort after Mrs. Grutzmacher's sudden death, until the Board replaced her with a local musical theater star named A. Robert Topel. Mr. Topel increased the staff, organized it into departments, and started the first Friends of the Library. When he retired in 1993, Roberta Thomas was hired to lead the staff as it transitioned to the new building. Myriad services have been added on her watch, including a website, online catalog and databases, a foundation, and extensive programming. She announced plans to retire in June, 2018, so a new director will soon be at the helm.

Spring, 2018, saw the debut of The Hub, a combination makerspace (sewing machines, 3D printers, laser cutters and much more) and digital studio with green screen and sound booth. Five new study rooms boast electronic screens which will facilitate collaborative projects.

Throughout its history, the library has enjoyed enthusiastic community support, all the way from traveling trunks to makerspace marvels.

May 9, 2018 - Justin Hall, curator of the National Museum of the American Sailor presented a program on the women who had passed through the Great Lakes facility. He highlighted twenty women who were stationed there since the bases's opening in 1911 until the present. These women broke the barrier to be included and recognized in the U.S. Navy. One of these women was Adaline Geo-Karis of Zion, who became an Illinois Senator. The Society is grateful that the National Museum of the American Sailor, the Navy's newest official museum, offered us a free program when our scheduled program had to cancel.

July 21, 2019 - This Reminisce session was based on objects "Objects Unveiled" . Audience members were asked to bring in a mystery object. No one knew exactly what one object was, even Jackie Hansen who shared it. did not know. A personal item was brought in and later attracted comments on facebook. Charlotte Renehan brought in her first pair of glasses worn at the age of two. It appeared that most people got glasses when they were in grade school and some remembered being called "Four Eyes". On the "What Is It" table were a graduated measuring spoon, a butter mold, vintage ice cream scoop, cherry pitter, cracker and more.

PREDICTING THE FUTURE

Wednesday, September 5, 2018. Search and Share genealogy discussion group; 2:00 pm., Community Room, Free.

Saturday, September 8, 2018. Saturday Kids, 10:00 am, Community Room, Free. Time to harvest the crops, rake the leaves, clean the garden --Fall fun.

Saturday, September 8, 2018 - Grayslake History Museum event. Noon. Community Room. Winners of the "Focus on Illinois" photo contest will be announced.

Wednesday September 12, 2018. Grayslake Historical Society event. 7:00 pm, Community Room. Refreshment. Free. Program: 'Tales Unveiled: The Rest of the Story'. Each artifact in the exhibit "Tales Unveiled" only briefly told its story. Each one had more to tell but space would not allow it so the artifact is now being given time to tell its story. The audience will learn more about the water tipper, quilt, head dress, loom and bird cage.

Sunday, September 16, 2018. Lake County Folk Club concert. 7:00 pm. Community Room. Admission charged. Concerts are the third Sunday of each month. Museum galleries are open.

Wednesday, September 19, 2018. Grayslake Farmers Market. 3:00 pm - 7:00 pm. Centennial Plaza. Kids will have the opportunity to shell corn.

Saturday, September 22, 2018. Grayslake Historical Society even. Free. Society welcomes Grayslake High School alumni for coffee, chat and tours.

Sunday, September 23, 2018. Lake County Folk Club concert. 7:00 pm. Community Room. Admission charged. Museum galleries will be open.

Sunday, September 30, 2018. Grayslake Historical Society event. Living History Tour of the Grayslake Cemetery, NE corner Lake & Belvidere. 1:30 pm & 2:30 pm. Donations Appreciated. Costumed performers will tell about themselves and an event in Illinois history. A related Grayslake story will also be told. Performers will portray John Cleveland (1804 - 1891), William Hall (1875 - 1949), Anthony Harvey (1851 - 1924), Anna Hendee (1852 - 1929), Maria Morrill (1818 - 1903), George Thomson (1884 - 1909), Blanche White (1875 - 1918), Carrie Wilkinson (1857 - 1933).

Wednesday, October 3, 2018. Search and Share genealogy discussion group. 2:00 pm. Community Room. Free.

Wednesday, October 10, 2018. Grayslake Historical Society event. 7:00 pm, Community Room. Refreshment. Free. Program: 'Tales Unveiled: The Rest of the Story Continued" Each artifact in the exhibit "Tales Unveiled" only briefly told its story. Each one had more tell but space would not allow it so the artifact is now being given time to tell its story. The audience will learn more about the wedding night gown, shards, play pipe, tally sheets and other artifacts.

Saturday, October 13, 2018. Saturday Kids! 10:00 am. Community Room. Free. Learn about Lincoln, one of Illinois' most famous citizens.

Saturday, October 13, 2018. Grayslake Heritage Center program. 2:00 pm. Community Room. "Why Illinois Was Ground Zero for Innovation" presented by John Wasik.

Friday, October 19, 2018. Grayslake Area Public Library event. 6:00 pm. Community Room. B-IL-NGO. Illinois Bicentennial-themed bingo.

Sunday, October 21, 2018. Grayslake History Museum. All four galleries will be open during the Grayslake Exchange Club Pancake Breakfast at the Grayslake Fire Station next door.

Thursday, October 25, 2018. Grayslake Area Public Library event. 7:00 pm. Grayslake Library. "Illinois Trivia Timeline", an Illinois-themed trivia game anyone can play.

Saturday, November 3, 2018. Grayslake History Museum. Exhibit "Focus on Illinois"

proposition. No matter what it is, it is bound to be better than to have the factory lying idle as it has been the past two years.

MEMORIES

Marlene Horenberger Badgerow shares this about her father who started as a salesman for the Epsteins and became Sales Manager.

"Art, my father, worked at the Grayslake Gelatin Company, starting in approximately 1930, until the time of his death in 1966.....Harry Epstein, the owner of the Grayslake Gelatin Company, owned several pieces of property around the county. One farm was located on Washington Street west of the railroad track. There was a small lodge there and Mr. Epstein would invite his friends and associates to come to the lodge and go pheasant hunting. My Mother Rose and Dad would prepare food to serve the hunters and Dad would take it out, heat it up and serve it. Chili was always a big hit as hunting season was quite cool.

"When this property was sold, it became Haryan Farm, which it is today. The name came from Harry Epstein and his wife Ann - thus Haryan."

Cheryl Rinker's father also worked for the company. "My Father Earl Rinker, worked at Grayslake Gelatin from the late 50s until his retirement in the late 70s. He worked in the boiler room under Bernie Waters also from Grayslake. During that time Grayslake had a volunteer fire/rescue department and all the emergency calls came through the Gelatin Company. The engineers would answer the calls and then announce where the emergency call was to all the volunteer firer/rescue squad members through a radio system. During the evening hours the volunteers would keep a radio in their bedrooms. They always knew when my Father was on duty since he had the loudest voice that would echo through the volunteers' radios awaking them from a night's sleep.

"In addition to answering emergency calls, the engineers would blow the whistle that was also housed at the Gelatin Company. At 8 am, Noon, 1 pm and at 5 pm the whistle would blow on schedule telling not only the gelatin factory workers but many other factory workers in town when they should be at work, go to lunch and when to go home. Neighboring children out playing knew when the 5 pm whistle blew, it was time to go home for dinner."

WITH SYMPATHY

It is with with sympathy that the Historical Society reports that is has lost more supporters. Robert Barton, George Diebold, Dorothy Groth and Donald Steffen Sr. have passed away since our last newsletter. Condolences are extended to their families and monies have been donated to the Society in their memory.

DONATIONS

Numerous people gave a monetary, in-kind or artifact donation to the Grayslake Historical Society between February 1, 2018 and July 31, 2018. Some people gave when renewing their membership, some donated in memory of a loved one, some for flood recovery and some for cemetery restoration. The donations varied in amount and all are greatly appreciated. In-kind donations include refreshments, office supplies exhibit supplies and items to sell in the gift shop.

Monetary donations were received from Sandra Adams, Beth Adenau, Betty Anderson, Tony Anton & Patti Miller, Nathan & Martha Barry, C. R. Barton, Bette Best, Mark Billstein, Tony Birong, Feliatias Blackburn, Dick & Maureen Blaasius, Lisa Bolton,

the walls have been covered in black to give the feeling that the items were hidden and now are coming to light.

The Annex displays have been enhanced with the addition of the Chicago Christmas tree cut and the Last Chance's cowboy and Indian.

Lobby display cases feature Illinois Bicentennial information and unusual artifacts.

Society vice-president and Museum volunteer Linda Willhite created a Bicentennial scavenger hunt. Symbols and icons of Illinois are scattered through the galleries for kids to find. Finders become keepers of a small prize when all symbols are located.

RECOVERY UPDATE

The Grayslake Historical Society continues to be an active participant in community activities. It partners with the Heritage Center to have booths at Farmers Market and Village festivals. Wilbur, the fire truck, is seen on the streets. Behind the scenes, however, it is moving very slowly to get the archives and collection areas in order. The artifacts still need to be reorganized and many items need to be recatalogued. Only a couple images and a map are at a conservators.

The society office and archives are in a temporary location in the Museum. Collections are stored at an off site location.

Financially the Society has been able to pay the bills, totally over \$40,000, because of good financial planning and the generosity of many. More money will be needed in the future to get everything back to "first class" condition.

The Society Board is thankful for all the support it has been receiving.

"Saving the past for the future"

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