



Grayslake Historical Society

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

UPDATE

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Grayslake Historical Society
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Grayslake Municipal History Museum
164 Hawley Street
Grayslake, Illinois 60030
Hours: Wednesday - Sunday Noon to 4:00 pm
Tours by appointment

REMEMBERING THE PAST

March 13, 2019 - Jane Trump presented "Milk Wars: Money, Mobsters and Mayhem".

In the early decades of the 20th century, the Grayslake area was rich in dairy farms. In November, 1917, 16,000 members of the Milk Producer's Association began a strike that cut milk deliveries to Chicago by 90%. Emotions regarding the strike were intense. For example, when Chester A. Miller, editor of the short-lived *Grays Lake Tribune* published an editorial severely chastising the farmers for the strike, 125 angry farmers descended on his office intent on applying tar and feathers. Seven deputy sheriffs saved him from that fate. The strike was settled by arbitration.

In 1920, Nestle, the largest purchaser of milk in the world, bought the Wisconsin Condensed Milk plant in Grayslake. Its fate was sealed by a couple of factors. First, in the aftermath of World War I, demand for canned milk dipped sharply. Second, the company's policy of purchasing milk only from individual farmers and not from a co-op was doomed by the preference of dairy farmers to band together in order to exert influence over milk prices.

Farmers struggled to earn a living in the 1920s. In 1929 a major strike erupted when farmers represented by the Pure Milk Association attempted to get major distributors, such as Bordens and Bowman to pay more for their milk. Pickets blocked every road in Lake County. Strikers' tactics included dumping milk from trucks and train cars and contaminating milk-filled railroad tank cars with kerosene. The strike succeeded in getting the major distributors to recognize the Pure Milk Association and agree to purchase milk only from the PMA in the future.

In the 1930s cut-rate dairies sprang up in the Chicago milk shed. They purchased milk from farmers not in the PMA and sold it cheaply at roadside stands. In 1932 mobsters in Al Capone's gang used ransom money from a kidnapping to start their own cut-rate dairy, called Meadowmoor. The stage was set for a brutal milk war in early 1934. Picketing operations were directed from a garage in Grayslake. Milk bound for Chicago was dumped. Delivery trucks run by cut-rate dairies were pushed into the

Chicago River. Chicago's Mayor Edward Kelly brokered a truce that offered much less than the PMA had sought.

In 1935 another strike broke out, with the PMA siding with the distributors against farmers who wanted better prices than the PMA was able to negotiate. This strike turned neighbor against neighbor, with some farmers like Grayslake's Eb Harris feeling bound to honor their contracts with the PMA. In the end all but about 900 of its 17,000 members stuck with the PMA. Incentives were put in place to curb overproduction, but dairy farming continued to be a challenging way to earn a living. Eventually, dairy farms all but disappeared from the local area.

April 10, 2019 - Members of the Grayslake Historical Society told about their family history using a family heirloom.

Karen Eiserman Lenzen brought two family heirlooms. A hand-crocheted tablecloth that her maternal grandmother, Blanche Lucille Osborne Grinnell made and her domestic science book from high school. Karen talked about her Grinnell family heritage. Her grandfather Darwin Clinton Grinnell was born in 1875 in Kankakee, Illinois. He never graduated from high school. However, he graduated from McKillip Veterinary College in Chicago with his DVM in 1911. He moved to Libertyville in 1921 and married Blanche in 1931. They had three children: Clint in 1931, Frances (Karen's mom) in 1933 and John (Jack) in 1937. Karen's grandfather was very well known as a veterinarian. Clint had his diploma and some of his instruments. They were donated to the University of Illinois in Champaign and are displayed on a rotation in the Veterinary School. Karen had information and pictures for five generations. There are records of Matthew Grinnell arriving in New England in 1635. Grinnell's move across the United States from New York to Ohio to Indiana to Illinois and Iowa. Karen discovered and joined the Grinnell Family Association that continues to research and update the Grinnell ancestry.

Tracy Nielsen shared two books from her relative Alice Turner Curtis, a great, great, great aunt who wrote 60 books in the 1900s, original American girl stories from the Civil War era. Some of Alice's book series were put on bookmarks by Tracey and included: *A Little Maid* series, the *Little Runaways*, *Grandpa's Little Girls*, the *Marjorie* series and the *Yankee Girl* series, which was one of the books brought to the Historical Society meeting, and *A Yankee Girl at the Battle of the Wilderness* (1929). This book was signed by the author. Reprints of Alice's books were done in the 1950s with new illustrations and then again in 1990 with the original illustrations. In 1991, Derrydale Books combined two of the books into one volume for the last reprinting. Seven of her books can be found for free on Project Gutenberg website. The Maine State Library holds correspondence and a picture of Alice Turner Curtis, whose ancestor John Turner was on the Provincial Congress in the 1700s.

Elizabeth Davies shared two artifacts. They were the hand crocheted tablecloth and the Yugoslavian dolls her grandmother and father brought with them as they immigrated from Serbia to the United States. They embarked on their three week journey to the United States on a cargo/passenger ship in 1969. Her grandmother grew up in Europe during WWII and wasn't happy with the opportunities for her son in the country of Yugoslavia after the war. As a single mother she decided to take her son to the United States and with her hard work as a seamstress started the next chapter of the family's lives. With much emotion Elizabeth concluded, "So much of our family story

starts with the hard work that came from my Grandmother's hands, so to me there is nothing of more value than the tablecloth made from those hardworking hands and the dolls that symbolize the traditions of bravery and love brought along from the 'old country'".

Terry Norton brought a small iron dog which he uses as a door stop in his home. Holding the door stop he told about his mother's family. She was a Harris. Harris Road in the Prairie Crossing Subdivision southeast of Grayslake is named for her family. Terry's father was Buck Norton a Grayslake fireman for many years. The Nortons came from northern Wisconsin via Ingleside.

Lou Behm brought the oldest family heirloom. It was his family's collection of Native American projectiles which many people commonly call arrow heads. Lou had his collection evaluated at the University of Wisconsin to learn more about each piece. Some date back millions of years. He explained that the change in projectiles created a change in warfare and the killing of animals. This collection had been gathered from a family farm west of Grayslake and was found in the farm fields at various times.

May 8, 2019 - Robert Churchill presentation was full of Grayslake history as he told the story of his family and Grayslake's first law firm.

The law practice of Churchill, Quinn, Richtman and Hamilton has been located at the Center and Whitney street corner in Grayslake for 116 years, only relocating across street.

Oliver Churchill who is Robert's great, great grandfather fought in the Civil War from Vermont. Oliver initially lived in Libertyville prior to moving to Grayslake. Oliver's son, R.W. Churchill, started the practice in 1903. R.W.'s son, George joined the practice in 1940. George's nephew, John Baumgartner joined the practice in 1962. George's sons Robert and William joined the practice in 1972 and 1977, respectively and still practice today.

With ten attorneys, Churchill, Quinn, Richtman and Hamilton is the oldest and largest law firm in Lake County. The law practice started by R.W. Churchill over one hundred years ago continues to grow and maintain the original principals which have served our community in many ways over the years.

Editor's note: Robert's entire presentation can be viewed on the law firm's website.

July 20, 2019 - The topic for the Summer Reminisce session was the Grayslake Junior High School/Grayslake Middle School which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in the fall. In attendance were former student and teachers, present administration and school board members and community members.

When the school opened in 1969, it was composed of one gymnasium, a materials center, a band room, a teacher's lounge administrative offices, a nurses's room and classrooms. The sixth grade rooms were along a hall on the north side of the building. The seventh grade pod was west of the materials center with the eighth grade pod to the east. The pods were a cluster of four classrooms with a teacher's work area in the middle. The building has had major additions in its 50 years, including the north corridor, the big gym, the cafeteria and special rooms.

Memories were shared and included science and history fairs. It was recalled that there were gym shows with classes demonstrating their knowledge and skill. The year with four sports championships was highlighted. At one time the school held ski

trips for the students. The community member told that these trips influenced his child's adult life. Today the school offers many clubs and activities for the students.

Panther yearbooks and pins, class pictures and other items were on display. The new District 46 Superintendent Lynn Glickman attended and introduced herself and spoke briefly.

PREDICTING THE FUTURE

Wednesday, September 4, 2019 - Search & Share Genealogy Discussion Group. Public is invited to join an hour long sharing of brick walls and successful finds in their quest to learn their family's history. Hosted by the **Grayslake Historical Society**. Community Room. 2:00 pm. Free.

Sunday, September 8, 2019 - Grayslake Middle School open house. 440 North Barron Boulevard. Tours. Displays. Continuous video. Noon to 4:00 pm. Free. This event honors the 50th anniversary of GMS, which opened in 1969 as the Grayslake Junior High. Come and share your memories with former classmates and former teachers. This open house takes the place of the **Grayslake Historical Society's** September meeting. The Grayslake Lions Club Steer Roast is in the school cafeteria from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 - The Grayslake Heritage Center and the **Grayslake Historical Society** will have a booth at Grayslake Farmers Market. Center Street. 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm. There will be a hands-on activity about Grayslake's tall grass prairies.

Thursday, September 12, 2019 - Grayslake Heritage Center concert. Earthmother, a band inspired by 1960s and 1970s. Centennial Plaza. 7:00 pm. Free.

Saturday, September 14, 2019 - Grayslake Heritage Center Foundation event. "A Toast to Art", a wine-tasting and art auction fund raiser for the Heritage Center. Grayslake Village Hall. 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 at the door. Call 847-543-1745 for more information.

Friday, September 20, 2019 - Grayslake Central High School homecoming parade. Alumni are invited to stop at the Museum before the parade.

Saturday, September 21, 2019 - **Grayslake Historical Society** event. The Museum will be open beginning at 10:00 am for coffee and chat.

Wednesday, October 2, 2019 - Search & Share Genealogy Discussion Group. Community Room. 2:00 pm. Free.

Sunday, October 6, 2019 - **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, relatives and their friends. Performers will portray Fred Battershall, John Longabaugh, William Wilson, Clint Washburn, Cecilia Harvey, Dora Schlosser and Laura Gilbert.

Wednesday, October 9, 2019 - **Grayslake Historical Society** program. "The Great Lakes Gelatin Company" presented by Bob Busscher owner of the company. In 1988 Grayslake Gelatin Company became Great Lakes Company. Learn about past and present gelatin companies in Grayslake. Community Room. 7:00 pm. Refreshments. Free.

Thursday, October 17, 2019 - Grayslake Park District Pumpkin Fest. Central Park. **Grayslake Historical Society** volunteers will tell Grayslake ghost stories.

Sunday, October 20, 2019 - Grayslake Exchange Club pancake breakfast. Fire Station. Museum open. extended hours.

Saturday, October 26, 2019 - Downtown Grayslake Trick or Treat event. **Grayslake Historical Society** volunteers will pass out candy in the courtyard.

Wednesday, November 6, 2019 - Search & Share Genealogy Discussion Group. Community Room. 2:00 pm. Free.

Wednesday, November 13, 2019 - **Grayslake Historical Society** program. "Center Street Now and Then". Using images new and old, the history of various buildings on Grayslake's main street will be reviewed. The audience will be encouraged to share their memories. Community Room. 7:00 pm. Refreshments. Free.

Friday, November 29, 2019 - **Grayslake History Museum** - Giving Tree exhibit opens. Upper Gallery. Noon to 7:00 pm. Grayslake Chamber holiday market in Community Room . 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Free.

Wednesday, December 4, 2019 - Search & Share Genealogy Discussion Group. Community Room. 2:00 pm. Free.

Wednesday, December 4, 2019 - **Grayslake Historical Society** event. Society volunteers, board members and friends will gather for a holiday potluck supper. Community Room. 7:00 pm.

Sunday, December 8, 2019 - **Grayslake Historical Society** event. The public is invited to the Society's annual Holiday Open House. Santa in the Society's vintage cutter will pose for pictures. Children may do a craft project. The Warren Township Alumni Choir will perform. Heritage Center. 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Refreshments. Free.

Saturday, December 28, 2019 - Saturday Story and Craft. The Town Turkey. Family activity. Community Room. 10:00 am. Free.

Tuesday, December 31, 2019 - **Grayslake Historical Society** project. Deadline for submission of stories for the 125th anniversary publication *Stories of Grayslake*. See www.grayslakehistory.org for details.

January, 2020 - **Grayslake History Museum** event. A new exhibit will open in the Upper Gallery. It will highlight prohibition, Grayslake taverns and related topics. Learn the history of the buildings which now house bars.

A PAGE FROM THE PAST

Grayslake Times -October 5, 1922

GELATINE PLANT IN OPERATION

After several months of time consumed in making alterations and installing new machinery, The Grayslake Gelatine Company put its massive plant into operation last week.

It was the pleasure of the editor of the *Times* to be taken through the establishment on Tuesday. We would very much like to write a complete description of the plant, but as the machines, the process and the manner of operation is entirely strange to us we cannot do it. We will, however, write of what we observed, while there, in our own way.

What was formerly one of the most sanitary and complete milk plants has been completely transformed into another kind of manufactory of which we should say is in a class by itself from the points of sanitation and efficiency. The new company which is composed of Mr. and Mrs. Epstein, who is associated their son and Mr. Tenant, is to be

congratulated upon their achievement, and we may say that Grayslake can well feel pleased of its newest industry.

The first department visited was the refrigerator for the raw material. The raw material is pig skins and hide trimmings. They are received in bales of varying sizes. Each piece has stamped upon it the Government Food Inspector's stamp of approval. The trimmings there were in finest condition. In fact we have never seen a piece of meat leave any market that looked more edible than the trimmings which make up the basis of gelatine. The temperature of the room which the raw material is kept stood at freezing.

From this room the material was moved with tongs to the washer and then to the cooling vats. Here they are cooked for a given time, after which the liquid is drawn off and deposited in glass-lined aluminum vats. From the vats the liquid is pumped to the filtration plant and when it comes from the machine it is entirely pure, in appearance resembling glycerine with its purest sparkle.

All of this work is done in what was the warehouse building on the west side of the switch tracks. The liquid is next pumped to the main building where it flows on a wide belt conveyor. This conveyor is some 60 feet long and is ---- closely. From the far end comes a blast of cold air which chills the liquid so that by the time it reaches the far end it is formed into a substance more than a quarter of an inch thick. Then it is cut into given lengths and transferred to screens which are stacked upon tracks and are placed into magazines through which hot air is forced by mammoth power fans. When the gelatine enters the magazine it is of thickness above stated and about 95 per cent water. The hot air evaporates the moisture and when the gelatine comes out at the opposite end of that magazine from which it enters, it is about as thick as the blade of a table knife. The remarkable thing about the process is that human hands at no time touch the product. This is why the local plant is rated as the most sanitary in the entire United States.

Going back to the cruel gelatine it is taken from the dry end of the magazine to the grinders where it is ground and placed into barrels for shipment to the trade.

One reader will no doubt wonder about the refuse therefore we will explain as best we can. We estimate that the waste is greatly curtailed. After the material has gone through the boiling process and all properties have been extracted the remainder is taken to a rendering kettle which is much smaller than the ordinary feed cooker for hogs or about 18 inches in diameter. After the waste has been treated here it comes out in hard chips about like fried bacon, only the grease has all been removed and there is no noticeable smell. From then it goes in sacks and later is worked up in stock food as it contains a very high percentage of protein. It is undoubtedly shipped to a stock food factory.

On Tuesday 55 men were employed and we are advised that more will be taken on in the near future. We also took particular note of the jobs offered and saw not one where hard labor is required. Some of the men work eight hour shifts while others have longer hours. As it requires many hours to again get into operation it is the plan never to entirely lose down.

Grayslake can only hope that the company will prosper and if it does it will be the means of making this village one of the most prosperous in Northern Illinois.

Bon Ton; Patrick Crimmings - 1 pharmacy bottle, 2 Grayslake Gelatin containers; Linda Willhite - 2 children's books; Harold Holden - VCR tape; Linda Fassbinder - school pictures, Gelatin factory demolition photos; Elaine VanLeer- GMS yearbooks & items, G.C.H.S. numerals & school newspapers; Tracy Nielsen - Gelatin Factory items; Bob Busscher - Gelatin Company items; Joyce Campbell - 2 Oasis scrapbooks; Lake Region Historical Society - architectural drawings and receipts; Kevin & Cheryl Vassau - 8 G.C. H. S. yearbooks, 2 memory books, G.C.H.S. history, fire department image.

MEMORIALS

The Society continues to lose valued members. Condolences are extended to the families of Mary Friis, Marie Caviness, Mary Idstein, Ted Mueller and Jack Idstein. Donations were sent to the Society to remember them on the Society's Memorial plaque.

NEW EXHIBIT

"Sounds, Smells and a Smokestack, Remembering Grayslake Gelatin", the new exhibit in the first floor gallery, opened on July 20. The sections of the exhibit are Before Grayslake Gelatin, The Epstein Family, The Beginning of Grayslake Gelatin, How Grayslake Gelatin Was Made, Life at the Grayslake Gelatin Company, Gelatin on the Move and Impact on Grayslake. The desk and chair from the president's office occupy a space. There are two mini i-pads, one with Grayslake Gelatin recipes and one with pictures of the factory's demolition. Viewers may create a recipe and tell a memory. To complement the exhibit, the museum gift shop is selling t-shirts with the gelatin logo.

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