

Ridge Historical Society

Newsletter

JUNE - JULY, 2001

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Ice & Water: Chicago Before Our Time

by Paul Petraitis

What stops a glacier?

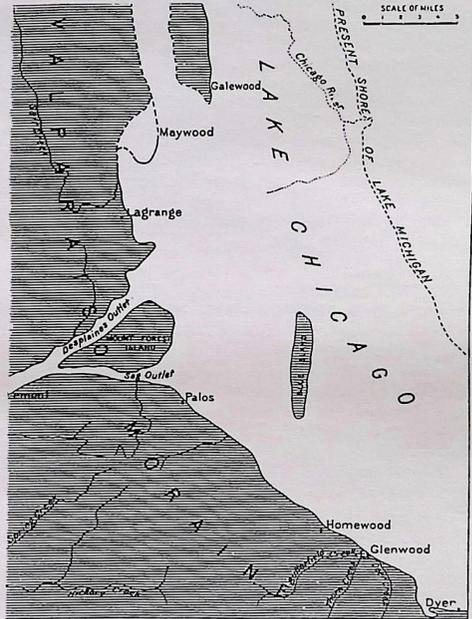
Some 20,000 years ago the Laurentide Ice Sheet, centered on Hudson's Bay, extended an icy finger southward, now called by geologists the Wisconsin lobe. This massive glacier, more than a mile high at its thickest, carved out the Lake Michigan basin, scouring the bedrock and pushing millions of tons of rock and dirt ahead of it. When the combined effects of this ever-increasing burden and ever warming temperatures began slowing the glacier as it passed the future site of Chicago 14,500 years ago, there was a major climatic shift that raised temperatures five to ten degrees in a relatively short geologic time. The mighty Wisconsin lobe began to break up, calving into small icebergs that were soon borne away by the rising waters of melted ice. The glacier gave its last gasp and deposited its burden where it stood, forming the massive Tinley Valparaiso Moraine— everywhere but here.

Our ridge was a fluke. What apparently happened was a major calving took place just east of the ridge, and a huge chunk of ice, with its share of rock and sand, just stopped there and stubbornly made the rest of the Wisconsin lobe proceed around it, pushing onward towards Palos, melting to slush.

In addition to leaving the Blue Island ridge, our glacier, in its demise, deposited thousands of boulders forming a "boulder belt" (as geologist William C. Alden spelled it in 1902) that extended from Park Ridge south to Harvey. Referred to as "fieldstones" by early pioneers, they proved to be useful resources for building foundations or fences. Mostly they were a pain, needing to be dragged away before farming could commence.

The earliest surveyors, in the 1820s and '30s noted their presence. State Road surveyors apparently used fieldstones to mark the route of Vincennes Road in 1833-34. Only a few of these so-called "milestone markers" have been located and identified. Finding others is where Newsletter readers can help.

Send Ridge Historical Society a photograph and/or description of the big old rock or rocks on your



Map showing the vicinity of Chicago during the Glenwood stage of Lake Chicago. Shaded portion represents land

property. Include whatever you know about them. Does such a rock delineate your property line? Does it appear to have been moved from another location? Does it have any marking carved into it?

Trail marker stones further south are reported to have markings describing how many miles to Vincennes, Indiana. We are already informed about the commemorative boulders at 92nd and Pleasant and at 112th and Lothair. Others need to be located and documented.

RHS also solicits readers for stories about underground streams (it seems everyone has them), seasonal ponds and those mysterious deep holes found in some residential yards. They might be old wells or even cooling cellars for early breweries. Pre-pioneer history is all around us!

CALENDAR of EVENTS

- JUNE 4 • RHS Board Meeting: 4 p.m.
JUNE 9 • Docent meeting & Orientation
Driscoll House: 10 a.m.
JUNE 10 • Members' meeting & Program
on Arthur Baer • 2:30 p.m.
JULY 9 • RHS Board Meeting: 4 p.m.
AUGUST 5 • Ice Cream Social
SEPTEMBER 15 • Annual Garage Sale
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STILL BANKS of the RIDGE

by Harold T. Wolff, Registrar

Still banks, as opposed to mechanical banks, are those little banks — piggy banks, if you like, though they are not usually pigs — in which you just insert money without the intervention of a mechanical device. In mechanical banks, the clown may stick out his tongue to receive your coin, tongue and coin then retracting from the weight to allow the coin to fall into the bank; or there may be a spring-driven device to shoot the coin from one part of the bank to the slot. A still bank may have moving parts so long as they are not part of the mechanism to get money into the bank.

From 1963 until his death in 1986 the foremost modern collector of still banks was a part of our community. He was I. Andrew Moore (1937-1986), who succeeded Arthur Baer as president of Beverly Bank in July, 1975 and retained that office until his death, March 14, 1986 at the age of 49. Mr. Moore kept his collection of banks in his North Beverly home. From there, he and his wife, Susan, published their 1984 book, *The Penny Bank Book: Collecting Still Banks*. (The library of Ridge Historical Society has a copy of this book, thanks to the generosity of the late Gary Saueremann.)

The Moore collection of Still Banks was mostly dispersed at auction after Mr. Moore's death and none of it came to the Ridge Historical Society. What RHS does have, however, is a small group of still banks associated with local institutions, given to the Society at various times.

Perhaps the oldest bank in the Society's collection is from the Morgan Park Trust and Savings Bank, given to RHS by David A. Ruhl in 1979. This bank is in the form of a book, is 4½" high by 3-3/8" wide and one inch thick. It is made of brass, with a leather cover embossed with the bank's name. On the spine "Book of Thrift" appears at the top while VIII is at the bottom. When unlocked, it opens on hinges like a book.

Most of the other still banks in the RHS collection were issued by the Beverly State Savings Bank of Chicago, as Beverly Bank was known until 1957. Probably the oldest of these is in the form of a barrel with a maximum diameter of 2-1/8" and standing 2-3/4" high. Made of brass, it has the bank's name on the slot end. The bottom carries the message, "A coin in the barrel today starts a barrel of coin on the way."

The largest of the Beverly State Bank banks in the

collection is in the form of a recumbent dog, ten inches long from toes to tail, 4-3/4" wide and 5-3/4" inches high. It is of composition material, surfaced with flocking to represent fur. Its dog collar has a metal tag bearing the name of the bank. The designer gave the dog a face, half expectant, half reproachful, looking up at the potential contributors.

We have two examples of Beverly State Bank's calendar bank. These Gerett Allcoin calendar banks were probably actually mechanical banks. One is in its original box which carries instructions for setting the month and day on its face by putting coins in the controlling slots. The back of each of these banks bears a "conscience slot" for making up short deposits and for inserting paper money.

From Beverly Bank (as the institution has been known since 1957) RHS has an iron liberty bell bank, 3-5/8" in diameter and 4½" high. Joan Wynne Murphy says that Beverly Bank commissioned a 1/5th scale replica of the Liberty Bell from Whiteside Foundry, London, in connection with the American Bicentennial. It was issued in the early 1970s.

Ridge Historical Society also has a bank formed as a horse-drawn *Chicago Tribune* delivery wagon issued as a premium to new subscribers, probably in the late 1970s. It is 7½ inches long. Lettering on the sides of the wagon tout the newspaper's "Big Thanksgiving Day Issue."

Thanks to donors like David Ruhl, the Ridge Historical Society has these examples of still banks with local connections, only one of which was represented in the Moore collection.

BOARD NOTES from May 7

Data recorded by Kate Eaton

Repairs to Driscoll House and the Society's finances were two main topics.

Doris Moulton and Bill Sandstrom, the House & Grounds Committee chairs, reported that:

Competitive bids for needed roof repairs are being sought; there are foundation and retaining wall problems to be evaluated by professional experts; interior screen frames are breaking; exterior paint needs updating; water damage to the terrace is greater than originally anticipated. The committee is developing data to apply for a \$50,000 grant to address these problems.

Treasurer Bill Sandstrom reported a \$2800 balance in the current expense account. The Society's endowment fund is a separate asset, recently tapped for \$4000 to pay for completed house repairs.

Board discussion included potential projects if funding becomes available, including publication of postcards and calendars to be sold to visitors

On the bright side, Sue Delves reported that the Holocaust Program, co-sponsored with Beverly A Center, netted more than \$800; and Vice President Eileen Klees informed the Board of a special donation from local author Joe Oswald who used RHS photographs in his recently published history of the area.

Ms Klees also reported that the RHS history packet, which was marketed at \$5, has been split to create two packets selling for \$5 and \$3. The change is designed to cut the society's losses on the history packet which she estimates to contain about \$10 worth of materials.

Other Board action scheduled an important meeting for current and future docents at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 9. Held at Driscoll House it will be an informational, orientation and training meeting. In addition to currently serving docents, those interested in being prospective docents are encouraged to attend.

President Dave Daruszka reported that an Historic Illinois web site has been created as a portal to historical society web sites around the state. RHS will contribute to this new web site, using material already accessible at

www.RIDGEHISTORICALSOCIETY-org

Currently the only material on the Historical Illinois web site is from Peoria.

There was discussion of the city's plan for a new police station on 11th Street. It is rumored that the current plan would eliminate the Edna White Memorial Garden and several houses on Esmond. Dave Daruszka, Sue Delves and Executive Director Paul Petraitis volunteered to attempt to determine precise facts on the plan and report to the Board.

www.ridgehistoricalsociety.org

to learn about Ridge Historical activities, exhibits, Harold Wolff's house articles and Dave Daruska's ongoing documentation of the 11th Street Rock Island Metra station restoration.

JUST ADDED: our new e-mail address:

[ridge history@hotmail.com](mailto:ridgehistory@hotmail.com)

RHS Seeks Sunday, Thursday Docents

It's a bright sunny Sunday afternoon and the Ridge family is looking for something to do. "Let's go to the local historical society," says Pa Ridge. "I want to learn more about that Bungalow Program from the city." "That's a great idea," Ma Ridge chimes in, "maybe we can start researching our house history while we are at it." "I've got a paper to do on the Underground Railroad," Junior Ridge says as he jumps up from a video game. "It might be a good place to start." "I want to find out more about pioneer women," Sis Ridge says enthusiastically. "I hear they had it tough back in the old days."

As the car enters the RHS driveway Pa Ridge notices something odd. "Say, don't they usually have that flag out that says 'OPEN'?" Junior is first out of the car and runs to the door. "It's locked, I'll try ringing the bell." Sis notices the sign on the door. "It says they are open on Sundays but it sure looks like it's closed." Disappointed and confused, the Ridge family drives away.

Most of the above is fantasy, except for the locked

door. There was no docent at Driscoll House and anyone who came that day found the Society closed. This has happened a few times over the last two months because RHS is short of volunteer docents.

Ridge Historical's principal community outreach is days the house is open to the public. Additional volunteers are needed to keep Driscoll House open Thursdays and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. Volunteers are sought from among RHS membership. Three hours, one day each month, or even every other month, would be helpful.

Docent duty can be very interesting hours. A fascinating array of visitors come to the house who are obviously interested in the information and insight into the community that the docent can provide, in addition to the local history exhibits they can see. Prospective docents are thoroughly trained so they can be at ease about providing information to interested and curious visitors.

Volunteer docents are the Society's public spokespersons. Consider the pleasure and satisfaction of this important role for RHS and call 773-881-1675 for more information.

RHS Plans Cooperation with Afro-American History Group

As Ridge Historical Society develops the Underground Railroad portion of its forthcoming Pioneer Exhibit it anticipates "networking" with the International Society of Sons & Daughters of Slave Ancestry. This group does significant work on African-American genealogy from its headquarters at 9134 W. 95th Street.

The group currently has an exhibit at the Woodson Library, 9525 S. Halsted St. It consists of photographs of former slaves and their accompanying histories.

"There were many different slave experiences," says Pat Beardon, a member of the Society. "Our goal is to tell more than one story."

Parachute Coming Down Replaced by Pioneer Exhibit

A principal element of the World War II exhibit, that is currently being replaced by a Pioneer Exhibit, has been the great parachute draped overhead in the Driscoll House living room. It was the first element to be installed and is the last to be taken down.

It was on loan from Joan Schneckner, wartime U.S. Army nurse stationed in Sa'pan who cared for servicemen wounded on Iwo Jima and other Pacific theaters. One of her specialties was administering the shock test.

The exhibit also included a blouse made for her by her mother from part of the material of that parachute. Mrs. Schneckner is the wife of a veteran of that theater of operations. Both she and her husband saw lots of wartime action.

Staff and Board of RHS express genuine gratitude to the great many veterans and their families who made World War II memorabilia available for this important exhibit.

Chicago 60643

10621 SEELEY AVENUE

Elmer H. Johnson, Editor

Newsletter

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DATED MATERIAL — FIRST CLASS MAIL



This photograph is estimated to have been taken during the 1860s. It shows the Bingle House, built in 1842, that once stood on grounds now occupied by Mt. Olivet Cemetery, north of 115th Street. Later owned by William Morgan, it was the site for the first wedding in this area.